



RESEARCH MANAGEMENT

RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

Welcome to our Research Management page, a dedicated section with tailored support along the full research funding journey, from drafting powerful grant proposals to managing post-award success.

ECRSG



Research Management

Grant Acquisition Pathway for Early Career Researchers

Below is an overview of research grant management stages, with 5 distinct phases across pre-award, award, and post-award periods. It outlines the key activities and management focus areas for each stage, from initial opportunity identification through final impact assessment.

This framework is designed to help early-career researchers understand their responsibilities at each phase and the critical success factors that contribute to effective grant management



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Grant Acquisition Pathway for Early Career Researchers

Phase 1: Foundation Building

Step 1: Assess Your Research Profile

- Conduct an honest evaluation of your research record, publications, and expertise
- Identify gaps in your CV that need strengthening before major grant applications
- Document your research achievements, including preliminary data, pilot studies, and collaborations

Step 2: Develop Your Research Identity

- Clearly articulate your research niche and unique value proposition
- Create a compelling research statement that connects your past work to future goals
- Establish yourself as an emerging expert through conference presentations and publications

Step 3: Build Your Support Network

- Identify potential mentors with successful grant track records in your field
- Connect with institutional research support offices and grant specialists
- Join professional societies and early-career researcher networks

Phase 2: Strategic Planning

Step 4: Map the Funding Landscape

- Research funding agencies relevant to your field (National Institutes of Health (NIH), The World Bank, UNICEF, Grants.gov)
- Study successful grant proposals in your area through agency websites and institutional resources
- Create a spreadsheet tracking deadlines, requirements, and funding amounts for target opportunities\

Step 5: Start Small and Build Upward

- Apply for internal university funding, pilot grants, and small external grants first
- Target early career-specific opportunities (fellowship programmes)
- Use smaller grants to generate preliminary data for larger applications

Step 6: Develop Core Proposal Elements

- Write a compelling research narrative that addresses significant problems
- Prepare detailed budgets and justify all expenses
- Create a timeline with realistic milestones and deliverables
- Develop evaluation metrics and success indicators

Phase 3: Proposal Development

Step 7: Master the Application Process

- Read guidelines thoroughly and follow formatting requirements exactly
- Understand review criteria and scoring systems for each funding agency
- Learn about reviewer demographics and tailor language appropriately

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Step 8: Build Strategic Partnerships

- Identify collaborators who strengthen your proposal's impact and feasibility
- Establish letters of support from institutional partners, industry contacts, or community organizations
- Consider international collaborations for global funding opportunities

Step 9: Craft Compelling Proposals

- Lead with the problem and its significance to capture the reviewer's attention
- Present clear hypotheses and innovative methodological approaches
- Demonstrate feasibility through preliminary data and pilot results
- Show broader impact through potential applications and societal benefits

Phase 4: Application Execution

Step 10: Develop a Submission Strategy

- Create an annual calendar with multiple submission targets
- Stagger applications to manage workload and maximize opportunities
- Maintain 3-5 active proposals at various stages of development

Step 11: Handle Rejections Strategically

- Request reviewer feedback and use it constructively for resubmissions
- Consider alternative funding sources for rejected proposals
- Build resilience and learn from each application experience

Step 12: Manage Successful Awards

- Establish robust project management and reporting systems
- Use funded projects to generate publications and additional preliminary data
- Leverage success stories for future, larger grant applications

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Pre-Award

Finding Funding Opportunities

Funding agencies publish Funding Opportunities Alerts/Announcements (FOAs) on their websites and social media handles. These alerts include eligibility criteria, application requirements, funding amount, and deadlines. Applicants use these announcements to assess their suitability for the funding opportunity. These funding opportunities could be accessed through either paid subscriptions or free sources. Below are some sources of funding.

Paid subscriptions:

- Research Professional Africa
- Pivot-RP
- Elsevier's Funding Institutional platform
- Funds for NGOs
- United Nations Global Markets website:
<https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice/195658>

Some Free Subscriptions:

- Google
- Wellcome Trust
- Grants.gov
- NIH Grants & Funding:
<https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding>
- European Commission Funding & Tender portal
- Subscription to funders newsletters
- Follow funders on social media eg. X (twitter), LinkedIn

Critical Success Factors



Timing is Everything

- Start preparing 6-12 months before submission deadlines
- Allow time for multiple internal reviews and revisions
- Plan around your other commitments and institutional review processes



Quality Over Quantity

- Focus on fewer, well-crafted proposals rather than rushing multiple submissions
- Invest time in understanding what makes proposals successful in your field
- Seek feedback from successful grant recipients and review panel veterans



Institutional Support

- Utilise your institution's research development office and grant writing workshops
- Participate in internal review processes and mock panels
- Leverage institutional resources for budget development and compliance



Continuous Learning

- Attend grant writing workshops and professional development programs
- Study funded proposals and successful researchers' career trajectories
- Stay current with funding trends and agency priorities

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Proposal Development

Review the call guidelines

Proposals undergo internal review by departments, schools, colleges, and or the Grants Management Offices (GMO)/Office of Sponsored Programmes (OSP) to ensure compliance with institutional policies and funding agencies' regulations or guidelines.

Pay attention to Details

Extract relevant details – such as eligibility criteria, application requirements, funding amount, and deadlines.

Seek Feedback

Share with the University or Institution Community or the specific researchers with an interest in the area

Summary

Process grant applications to match funders’ requirements.

- Provide supporting documents and obtain necessary sign-offs i.e. Letters of support/intent
- Submit the application to the funder if that is required e.g. NIH, Wellcome Trust
- Other task: Perform Due Diligence (when requested)

Finding Funding and Dissemination	Development of proposals	Review and Submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding search engine the University of Ghana subscribes to is the Research Professional Platform• Generates a monthly Funding Opportunities Newsletter• Generates a quarterly funding Opportunity alerts• E-mail announcements of calls• Reference to funding database• Websites of funders or follow funders on Twitter• Faculty members themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordination of internal competitions (Limited Submissions)• Approval of budget• Provision of Letter of Support• Provision of Letter of Intent• Provision of Head of Term• Completion of Due Diligence Form• Agency/institutional Liaison• Editorial support• Any other support (e.g. demonstrating impact/pathway to impact)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review proposals to ensure compliance with university and sponsoring agency policies.• Consider: Budget and Payment schedules; deliverables; Ownership of Intellectual Property; Right to publish (Publications), Data Management, confidentiality etc.• Secure authorized signatures• Submit to funder, whether electronic or print.

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Proposal Development

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Underestimating time requirements for proposal development
- Failing to address review criteria directly and explicitly
- Submitting without adequate preliminary data or institutional support
- Neglecting to build relationships with program officers
- Writing proposals that are too ambitious for available resources
- Ignoring budget justification and administrative requirements