Grant Writing Workshop

Dr. Julia Staykova-McKinnon

Number of participants: 15-20
Target group: graduating PhDs and postdocs applying for fellowships and grant proposals
Format: instructor-led presentation, active group discussion, peer-to-peer exercises
Duration: 1.5 days
Free materials: booklet with authentic case studies, PowerPoint slide show (in PDF).
Language of instruction: English

Grant reviewers often say that many wonderful projects don’t get funded because the idea was not communicated clearly enough. This means that excellent science is not enough for writing a successful grant proposal. To get funded, you also need excellent grant writing skills. So how do you make sure the advantages of your work are understood and appreciated?

In this workshop, you will learn how to:

1. Interpret correctly your application form and evaluation criteria. The FWO application form will be used as our primary case study.
2. Use strong structure in the key sections, including State of the Art, Objectives, Methodology, and Work Plan.
3. Provide clear, convincing answers to the key requirements of novelty, impact, and feasibility.
4. Make a persuasive description of your research environment, skills, and collaborations that add value to the proposal;
5. Prepare a competitive CV that presents your track record to the best advantage.

The exercises in this workshop are based on excerpts from authentic, open-access grants.
Workshop Programme
Day One 09:00-16:00; Day Two 9:00-14:00

Day 1. 09:00-16:00 + 2 coffee breaks & lunch break

09:00-10:10. Evaluation criteria: interpreting novelty and feasibility.

    COFFEE BREAK 10 mins

10:20-12:00. Strong structure in State of the Art and Objectives sections

    BREAK 5 mins

12:05-12:30. What is impact?

    LUNCH BREAK 30 mins

13:00-15:00. Strong structure in Methodology and Work Plan
Focus on feasibility and risk management

    COFFEE BREAK 10 mins

15:10-16:00. Smaller proposal sections: “Describe your research environment”;
 “Describe the national and international context”.

Day 2. 9:00-14:00 + 2 coffee breaks

9:00-10:20. Focus on the CV. How our track record responds to the evaluation criteria.

    COFFEE BREAK – 10 mins


    COFFEE BREAK – 10 mins

11:40-13:30. Case study: the FWO evaluation criteria and application form

13:35-14:00. Lessons learnt & conclusions
Julia Staykova-McKinnon, Ph.D.
Scriptorium Founder

Profile
Julia has over fifteen years of experience as a lecturer and consultant in grant writing, research writing and communication, public speaking, and business proposals developed for private investors. She consults on proposals submitted to H2020, including ERC (StG, CoG, AdG, SyG), Erasmus+ Actions, Marie S. Curie Actions, FET/RIA. She also assists on proposals submitted to national agencies, including DFG (Germany), ANR, PIA3 (France), FWO/FNRS (Belgium).

Academia: Julia teaches workshops at research institutes and doctoral schools across Europe. She works mainly in life sciences, sciences, technology, and engineering. A selection of her clients includes Charité-Berlin, German Cancer Research Centre (DKFZ)-Heidelberg, University of Bordeaux, Institut Curie-Paris, Institute of Clinical and Experimental Research (IREC)-Brussels, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC)-Berlin, Max Planck-Potsdam, University of Zurich and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (UZH-ETHZ)-Zurich.

Excellence Cluster and consortia: NeuroCure, Neurasmus, MoveAge, Image Processing and Computer Vision (IPCV), Immunoshape, among others.

Industry: Julia has consulted and taught at Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals, Hengeler Mueller Partners in Law, HVB Banking Group, KPMG, and Servier Laboratories. With Janssen Pharmaceutica, she developed an innovative training programme implemented at KULeuven’s Doctoral School.

Academic Background
- Visiting Assistant Professor, University of Amsterdam (2010-11)
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow, Los Angeles, California (2009-10)
- Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (2007-09)
- Ph.D. in Shakespeare and Renaissance culture, Oxford and Sofia (2007)