Writing a Revised Grant Application
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• NIH budget crisis: http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/award/award.htm

Overview

The Three Rules to Writing a Good Grant Application
#1: State the obvious (but not so obvious)
#2: Keep it simple (don’t confuse the reviewers)
#3: Don’t upset the reviewers (avoid “negatives”)

Key Points for Writing a Revised Application
• Summary Statement
  o Read it carefully
  o Pay attention to strengths
  o Highlight the problems

Get advice from colleagues, your program officer, or SRA
• Don’t take the reviewer’s comments personally:
  o Reviewers are not always the expert in the field
  o Reviewers do not have a large amount of time to review application
    ▪ Make your grant easy to read (figures, tables and headings)
    ▪ Avoid small fonts, incomplete or missing references, errors
  o You need to convince them of the importance of your research

• Introduction to a revised grant application
  o Respond to all comments
  o If a particular criticism is not valid, politely explain why and provide references that support your claims Assume it was your error for not making the original application clearer – and state that
  o Have some colleagues read over your Introduction and see if it addresses the issues raised in the Summary Statement

• Major issues usually need major changes
  o Change experimental approach or direction
  o Consider changing the Study Section (this used to be possible by writing a cover letter with your application; it is not clear how the electronic submission format will allow for this)
  o If you do not change your approach, you have to explain better why it is valid and why the experiments are exciting
• Do NOT
  o Go into excessive detail for areas that are irrelevant to the central question
  o Ignore reviewers’ comments
  o Attack the reviewers, even if you plan to try for another Study Section
  o Make “stupid” changes just because the reviewer asked you to

And keep trying.

References
The first is a humorous look at the grant writing and reviewing process that includes serious advice. The others are serious advice books.

Fricker, L.D., 2004, How to write a really bad grant application (and other helpful advice for scientists), Authorhouse.
Yang, O. O., 2005, Guide to effective grant writing: How to Write a Successful NIH Grant Application, Springer.