

# Writing Research Grant Applications

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## Introduction

This workshop is designed to teach you a 'recipe' for a research grant application. As well as explaining the recipe and how it works, it includes practical writing exercises. If you have a suitable project in mind at the start of the day you should have an outline of the case for support by the end of the day. If you want to use the workshop to begin writing a grant application you can prepare by filling in the preparation form on [the resources web page](#).

The first part of the workshop covers the following issues:-

- Writing a grant application is very difficult unless you have designed a fundable project before you start. We will discuss how you can assess whether you have a fundable project.
- We will discuss the elements of an individual research funding strategy.
- I will explain what information to include in the case for support so that it convinces the reader:-
  - that your project is important,
  - that your project is likely to be successful,
  - that you are competent to lead the project, and
  - that the project is good value for money.
- We will discuss who reads your application and how they contribute to the funding decision.
- We will discuss the specification for a case for support that gives all the readers what they need.
- We will discuss how the requirements of a grant application dictate writing style.
- We will discuss how fellowship applications differ from grant applications.

The remainder of the workshop concentrates on exercises to help you develop the writing skills needed to follow the recipe. For several of these exercises you will need to work with a summary of a research project: if you have not yet designed a fundable project you can use a summary from a successful grant application. The workshop handout, which can be downloaded from [the resources web page](#), contains links to summaries from successful ERC, UKRI and NIHR grant applications. You can also find summaries in [the ERC](#) and [the UKRI](#) databases of funded projects and the [NIHR Journals Library](#).

The handout is designed to be read on a screen, not printed. It is important that you bring a WiFi enabled laptop, a smartphone or a tablet to the workshop. There is no need to look at the handout before the workshop.

Andrew Derrington

## Presenter



Andrew Derrington has in-depth experience of the research funding process. He obtained his first research grant, a Beit Memorial Fellowship for Medical Research, while he was writing his PhD. His research was continuously funded by fellowships, project and programme grants for the next 30 years. He served on research grant committees for The Science and Engineering Research Council, the Medical Research Council and the Wellcome Trust. His book, *The Research Funding Toolkit*, which he co-wrote with Jacqueline Aldridge, research and enterprise associate in the School of Psychology at the University of Kent, is the definitive guide to grant writing for early career academics and research professionals. It is based on Andrew's analysis of how grants committees make funding decisions.

Andrew has worked in eight Universities including two in the world top ten.

He has also worked as a journalist. Over several years he wrote two successful columns in the Financial Times. *The Nature of Things* covered science - from astrophysics to zoology. *Psych Yourself Up* was a guide to the different psychotherapies available in the UK.

Andrew set up [Parker Derrington Ltd](#) in 2013. He now works as a consultant, writing research grant applications and providing strategic advice and training to individuals and organizations.

## Testimonials

*I had a fantastically useful time attending your recent workshop at Leicester University. Writing the 10 key sentences was a very useful exercise and I have, since, worked on them to discover they are a fab tool for any kind of writing really.*

Dr Ranjana Das, University of Leicester

*Andrew blends easy authority and extensive experience with humour and approachability. The result is a workshop full of practical, memorable advice on how to compete more successfully for research funding.*

Professor Peter Clegg, Institute of Ageing and Chronic Disease, University of Liverpool}

*I attended one of Andrew's workshops when I was a senior lecturer. The hands on advice about how to structure my applications in a really appealing fashion enabled me to win a grant of nearly →£600K the next year. I still implement the advice that I received in that workshop, and pass it down to junior colleagues. I find that Andrew's advice has a high success rate!*

Prof Theresa Gannon, University of Kent

*I still use the tips you gave me for my successful Wellcome SRF application. Your advice on "12 key sentences" is spot-on and helps people focus on the aspects of the proposal that are critical to success instead of getting bogged down in reams of text.*

Prof Mark Baxter, Mount Sinai School of Medicine

*Andrew's grant-writing workshops teach you how to convince the world that it needs your research. They are the most useful training events I have ever attended. His advice about how to sell the big idea without compromising on the science was critical to the success of our →£9.3 million ESRC application.*

Prof Julian Pine, University of Liverpool