

INFORMATION & TIPS

On Writing a Successful FRF Proposal

Check with your department head about any required procedures and deadlines at the department or college level. All proposals require the signature of the department head or school director on the application form. Released-time and spring-summer applications require the signatures of both the department head and college dean.

- The FRF supports creative projects as well as traditional research. Projects involving professional development, curriculum development, or community service, however, are not eligible for this award.
- Released-time awardees are released from teaching only; they remain responsible for committee assignments, advising, etc.). If your research requires prolonged periods away from campus, explain in your proposal how you are arranging to cover your employment responsibilities. Your department head's endorsement should state that your department supports your absence.
- It's OK to apply for more than one award at the same time – even for the same project. However, a general rule is that you cannot be paid twice for the same scope of work. If you receive FRF released-time and a sabbatical during the same academic year, you must choose one or the other.
- Team proposals are allowed but they involve some risk, especially when team members are mutually dependent and when there are significant differences in their research records. Team proposals should explicitly state who will do what, and when. The URS LC will treat team proposals as a single proposal.
- URS LC review is not peer review. Think of your audience as an educated layperson – not a specialist in your discipline. Keep jargon to a minimum. Define unfamiliar terms. Use illustrations and examples. Keep it simple.
- A good idea is not enough; you must have a well-thought-out plan. Include a graphic timeline that shows activities and milestones.
- Anticipate potential obstacles; frankly acknowledge the weaknesses of your proposal and state how you plan to neutralize or minimize their impact. Include letters of permission or access to equipment or a research site as appendices.
- If your research entails human subjects or laboratory animals, you will need to officially apply for approval from the Human Subjects Reviews Committee. Explain where you are in the approval process, and append your application form.

After you've written your final draft, compare it to the checklist below:

PROPOSAL EVALUATION CHECKLIST

- _____ Does my proposal have a title page including a brief, understandable abstract explaining what I hope to accomplish?
- _____ Have I described the goals and objectives of the project clearly and concretely?
- _____ Are these goals consistent with the purpose of the award? Have I explained how the project is related to the purpose of the award and to my own background?
- _____ Have I justified the need for and significance of the project (with a literature review or by some other means)?
- _____ Is my methodology appropriate?
- _____ Have I described the status of the project to date?
- _____ Have I identified any needed resources and included a detailed budget? Can I foresee any potential obstacles (deficits, shortcomings)? If so, have I resolved these matters to the reader's satisfaction?
- _____ Have I included a realistic, detailed timeline that corresponds to my work plan (goals and objectives)?
- _____ Is the requested award adequately justified?
- _____ Have I stated my recent professional achievements truthfully and positively? Are they relevant to my project?
- _____ Have I stated the positive outcomes of my project (for me, for my discipline, department, and/or EMU)?
- _____ Have I highlighted any unique features or benefits of this project (possibility of external funding, book contract, interdisciplinary research, new undertaking, community service, etc.)?
- _____ Have I done what I can to garner internal support (personnel committee, department head)?
- _____ Did I have the latest copy of the guidelines?
- _____ Did I follow all instructions exactly?