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Writing Funding Applications and Business Plans

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2. Plan your personal research strategy
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Know your funders



First things first

- Who funds research in your area?
- Who funds your:
 - supervisor
 - colleagues
 - competitors
- Understand your funders' priorities
 - Delivery plans
 - Funders' web pages
 - GOW – what's been funded in the past



Get Connected

- Funders' Twitter and/or other social media
- Sign up to funders' email alerts
- Research Professional alerts
- Institutional funding opportunity emails
- Funder visits and workshops



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Plan your Personal Research Strategy



Planning and CV building

- Build your publications
- Build your funding history – start small
- Build your independence
- Develop a niche – who else is doing what?
- Useful short videos here:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGcyo9J-J_ERBL6_8CRnZrFJiSsENQM4I



Small funding pots

- Conference grants
- Travel grants
- Researcher-exchange programmes
- Discipline hopping grants
- Training grants



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Understand the schemes



Eligibility and fit to scheme

- Check early
 - Person = tenure, years post PhD, nationality, residency
 - Project = within remit, currently funded area, fits call
- Read guidance carefully: ‘understand the exam question’
- Contact your research office (queries and/or support)
- Funders welcome contact plus:
 - Some have remit query services
<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/basics/remit/>



Fellowship vs Project Grant

Fellowship

Investment is in you as a 'future research leader' as much as the project idea. Most fund 100% of your salary.

Primarily - you are 'selling' you. Person, Project, Place.

Project grant

The project is key. Can usually only apply if tenured or equivalent of lecturer. May be able to apply as a research co-investigator. **Primarily – you are 'selling' the project.**

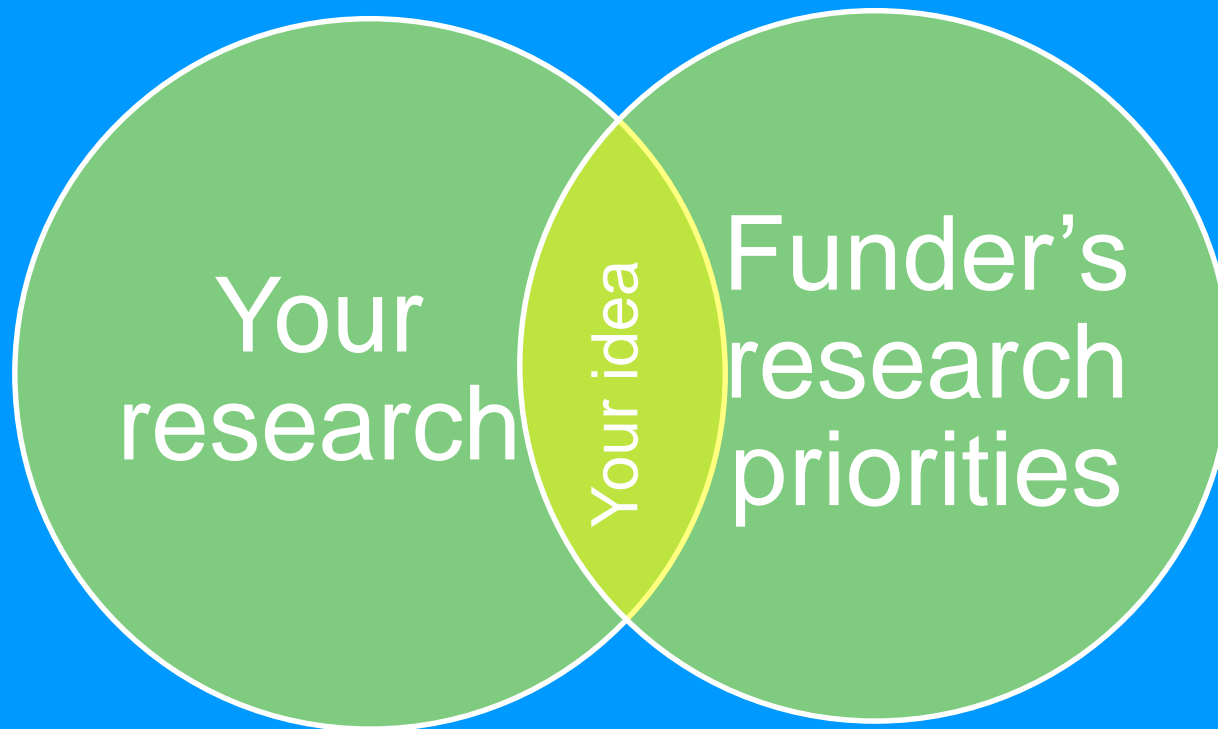


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Develop your idea



Know your funder



Obvious but important – remember
remit check option



In developing your idea....

- What is your aim... and why important, why you, why now?
- What is the background to your idea?
- Where does it sit in relation to the state of the art?
- What methods are you thinking about using, and why?
- What is innovative about your idea (new methods or new thinking)
- What are the potential impacts?
- Will you be, and should you be, collaborating with others – academics or users?

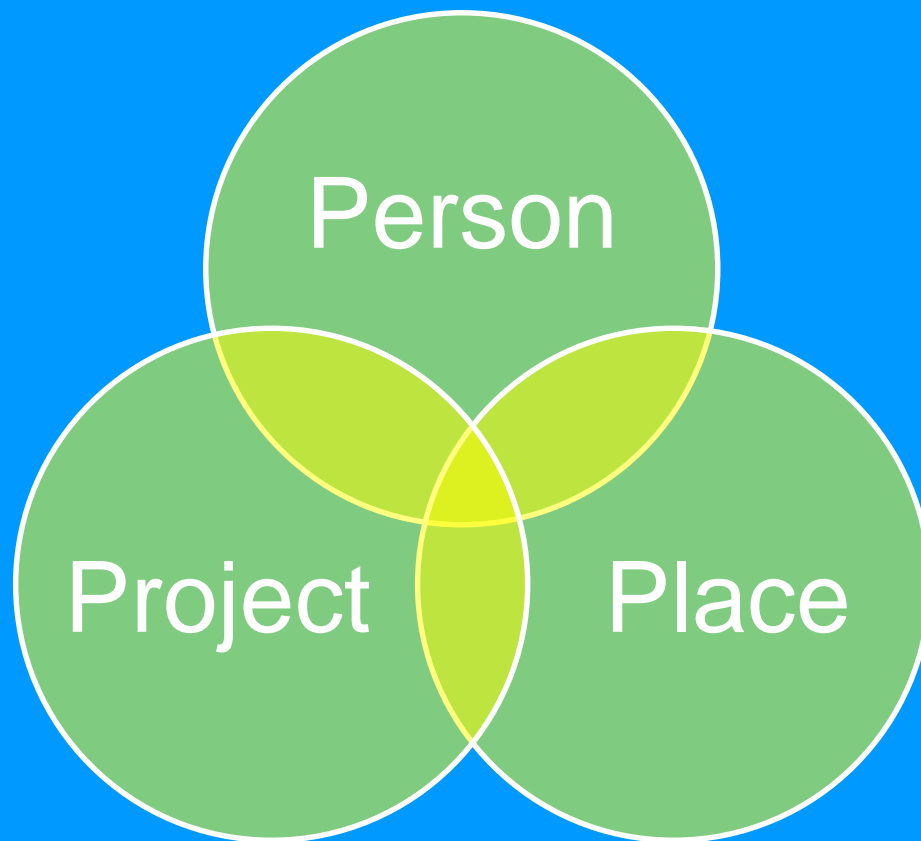


Get some early feedback

- Produce a brief summary that answers all of the above (1 or 2 pages)
- *If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough - Albert Einstein*
- Discuss your idea with colleagues and get feedback and suggestions
- Iterate 2 or 3 times



For a fellowship





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Drafting and submitting a proposal

Drafting your proposal - 1

- Start early
- Read and reread the guidelines
- Clear and logical structure to your proposal – make the reader’s job easy
- Sell the vision – what will change, what next for you and the field?
- Begin with a very clear and strong summary or abstract
- Pitch your application to the audience – generalist vs experts



Drafting your proposal - 2

- Less can be more
- Keep language clear, concise and jargon free
- Graphics – ‘a picture is worth 1000 words’
- Example applications
- Arrange peer review and allow time for revisions
- Strong letters of support can make a big difference
- Make sure you have properly costed your application
- All plenty of time for the extra bits



Submission: Make sure you know

- Electronic submission system of funder
- Approval routes (costing and application)
 - Basic approval
 - Special considerations (capital, estates, match)





Interview preparation

- This may be a once in a lifetime opportunity
- Make sure you have at least mock interview – but two is much better
- Include panel members who know the funder
- Ask previous awardees for advice
- Practice, practice, practice. You probably have a 1:3 chance if you have got to this stage.....



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Support



Identify support available to you

- You are not on your own
- Support will vary between and within institutions but identify where it is and what it comprises. For example:
 - Departmental
 - Peer review, mentoring, costing, 'project pitching' sessions
 - University research office or equivalent
 - Advice and guidance, workshops, costing, example applications, funding sources, institutional approval



Summary

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Good Luck!
Questions?



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To
Discover
And
Understand.