

Timeline

Writing an effective and persuasive proposal is a time consuming task. Although the groundwork for your research must start when you begin graduate school, here are the final stages in preparing to submit a grant proposal. While some people may be able to turn out a grant-winning proposal in a number of days, these are truly exceptional cases. Depending on whether this is your first effort, how familiar you are with your case or cases, how quickly you write and how quickly your colleagues and advisors can give you feedback, the process can take up to six months. What follows is a list of tasks that almost every writer will need to address. In developing this timeline, we have assumed that you already have a good idea of the kind of research you want to do.

In developing your own time line (and having personal deadlines is critical), consider realistically how long you will need to accomplish the tasks at hand. Also consider how best to use your faculty and friends. Doing this involves judicious requests for guidance and assistance and allowing plenty of time for them to write references and feedback. In asking for help, always be very explicit about your time line and as specific as possible about the kind of feedback or assistance you require.

| Time until due date | Task |
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| | PHASE Ia—Prewriting |
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| 26 weeks | Carefully review grant applications and foundation websites. Identify substantive and administrative requirements. Note due dates and submission requirements (e.g., transcripts, letters, writing samples). If possible, speak to previous grant recipients. |
| 25-23 weeks | Develop a one to two page preliminary statement of potential research question, topic, and approach. Identify relevant theoretical and empirical sources; develop a preliminary bibliography. |
| 23 weeks | Present short version and bibliography to advisor and graduate student colleagues. |
| 22 weeks | Use feedback to identify areas requiring further background research or conceptualization |
| 21 weeks | Research empirical context, history, background. Refine conceptual architecture. |
| 19 weeks | Write a 2-3 page document exploring various theoretical frames/justification, questions, and respective methodological approaches |
| 17 weeks | Speak to people about feasibility and academic relevance of various approaches. Also consider which methods best suited to your skills, the available data, and your disciplinary requirements. |
| 16 weeks | Continue research, Peruse existing works, and further develop your understanding of historical and contemporary contexts. This should help you become familiar with the reality of your case and how your work will relate (methodologically, empirically, and conceptually) to past approaches to the topic. |
| 14 weeks | Refine your question in light of the kind of data you are may be able to collect and the way such a question is embedded in a theoretical frame. |

PHASE Ib—Early Administration

- 20 weeks Identify and contact relevant data or support sources. This could be institutions, archives, organizations, or people who may facilitate your research once you are in the field.
- 18 weeks Begin budget research (living expenses, travel, etc.) and visa and residency requirements.
- 14 weeks Begin research protocol process
- 13 weeks Request transcripts (especially from other schools); Revise CV

PHASE II—Focused Writing and Administration

- 13 weeks Integrate research question, theoretical frame, and a provisional research design into a single document (5 pages)
- 12 weeks Spend a week gathering your thoughts and additional 'data' you may need to complete draft
- 12 weeks Reconnect with potential collaborators, institutions, or organizations and determine which will be useful and reliable
- 12-10 weeks Flesh-out document into a complete draft following the grant requirements
- 9 weeks Get feedback from colleagues
- 8 weeks Revise draft, create a tentative budget, and submit to faculty along with C.V. or other support materials. Ask faculty advisors for letters of reference

PHASE III—Editing and Submission

- 5 weeks Review specific requirements for grant application.
- 5 weeks Revise proposal to incorporate faculty suggestions
- 4 weeks Let sit for a week
- 3 weeks Gently remind faculty of letter due date
- 2.5 weeks Assemble materials (transcripts, c.v.)
- 2 weeks Review proposal, carefully edit, and finalize.
- 10 days Get help copy editing from friends and/or colleagues
- 3-4 days Print final copy and collect materials (allow time for last-minute catastrophes)
- 2-3 days Submit proposal

DUE DATE