Faculty of Humanities
Strategic Funding Team
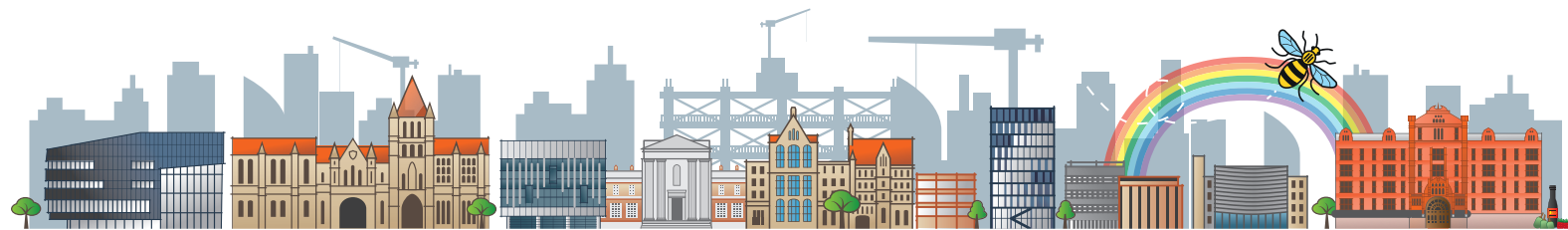
What makes a good case for support?

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The case support is the critical element in any application for research funding.

It contains all the essential information about your project and is where you sell your proposal and convince the funder that you and your team can deliver the project. There is a plethora of advice and guidance available (see links below), but it is still essential that you refer to the specific funder guidance for the call to which you are responding. A good case for support cannot be rushed, so allow yourself plenty of time.

There are some basic requirements for a case for support which are relevant to all calls. First, carefully read the funder's guidance notes and check that your proposal is a good fit to the call and to the funder's strategic goals. Second, remember that reviewers are busy people who will appreciate an application that uses clear and concise language, makes good use of white space and headings, and uses images/tables to break up text. Finally, proof-read the document for spelling or grammar errors and make sure that the document complies with instructions on font type and size, margins, and word/page length.

The section headings to be used will vary by funder, but in general a case for support would in-clude the following:

Introduction

This section should briefly summarise your proposal, making use of any key terms used in the call e.g. an application to a challenge fund call should talk about the challenge outlined, using the language of the call. Begin with a clear statement of the research question that your project will answer. Also explain who will benefit from your research and why you and your team are best placed to carry out the work. It is best to write this section last as by the time you have written the more detailed sections you will be able to clearly articulate what your pro-ject is about and why it is important and timely.

Tip!

Do not 'build up to' the research question. A clear statement of what you plan to do, and who it will benefit comes higher up in the application that you may think, and before you set out

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Context

This section provides more detail on the aims and objectives of the proposal in relation to the wider academic, economic or societal context. It explains how the project fits the call and sets out the project within the framework of previous and current work on the topic, includ-ing any relevant policy or practical background. Talk about the audience for the work and the expected beneficiaries e.g. academic, stakeholders and users. If appropriate, name your collaborators and explain their role in the project. Define the targets or outcomes that will be achieved by the end of the

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Research Programme and Methods

The research programme and methods section outlines the novelty and innovation of the proposal and needs to include as much detail as possible. This is where you describe:

• The methodology to be used, fully justifying your choices.

• What resources are required?

• The work programme:

• What will be done and how do the sections or work packages relate to each other?

• Describe the roles and responsibilities of team members.

• What are the milestones and how will you manage progress?

• What are the potential risks of your project and how can these be mitigated?

• What outputs are planned for the project and when?

• What plans are there for dissemination, impact and engagement?

• How the project will be managed? Advisory Group/ Steering Committee membership?

For further information and advice, contact us

https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/humanities/research/strategic-funding-team/

What makes a good case for support?

Useful links

ESRC - how to write a good proposal

ESRC Research Funding Guide

AHRC Research Funding Guide

EPSRC Case for Support

There are several excellent articles on Research Professional:

Aristotle's funding tips

Get the writing right for the research councils

Write grants like a boss