**GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING, FORMATTING, AND PROOFREADING CHECKLIST**

**Proposal-specific guidelines**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Funder: | |
| Title: | |
| Due date: | grants.gov other electronic/online paper (circle one) |

**Search-and-replace (as you go along, keep list of things to “search and replace” in final edit)**

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**Check for common word errors**

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| its vs it’s | your vs. you’re | then vs. than | there vs. their vs. they’re |
| affect vs. effect | i.e. for “that is” vs. e.g. for “for example” | | assure vs. ensure vs. insure |
| which (qualifies, not essential to make a sentence, offset by commas)  vs. that (restricts, essential to sentence, not offset by commas) | | | “irregardless” is not a word |

**Grammar, good writing, and clarity**

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|  | No first person (I, we, our, ours, me, my, you, your, yours) |
|  | Minimize abbreviations and acronyms - spell out the entire name the first time, then add the abbreviation in parentheses - Example: National Science Foundation (NSF) |
|  | If abbreviation or acronym is used less than 3 times, just spell it out instead of abbreviating |
|  | Ensure that acronyms and abbreviations are standardized and used consistently throughout |
|  | Spell out “percent” and number names in the text, but use the % symbol and numerals in tables |
|  | No jargon or lingo – ask yourself if your next-door neighbors would understand the language; assume your reader is intelligent but not necessarily knowledgeable about your field/topic |
|  | Check for overuse of “–ly” words ("I believe the road to hell is paved with adverbs.” – Stephen King) |
|  | Check for overuse of “appropriate” and “appropriately” (it’s not measurable in outcomes/objectives) |
|  | Write to inform – No biased language or words with strong connotations or emotional weight |
|  | Has someone else read the proposal and given critical feedback on the logic and readability? |
|  | Check for run-ons, comma splices, and subject-verb agreement |

**Proposal content and alignment with instructions**

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|  | Does your data come from reputable sources? Are sources cites for all of your statistics? |
|  | Did you address ALL sections of the grant guidelines and review criteria? |
|  | Did you answer the questions in the same order as they appeared in the instructions? |
|  | Do your headings correspond with each section or piece mentioned in the instructions? |
|  | Look at the introductory sentence of each paragraph (it is the most important part, and could be all they actually read!) |
|  | Use a PRINTED copy for the final proofreading and spelling/grammar check; reprint test page after PDF conversion |
|  | On printed copy, use a ruler to verify that actual margins as printed meet the requirements |

**Formatting, proofreading, and completeness**

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|  | Verify standardization of your use of headings, indents, bullets, footnotes, capitalization |
|  | Ensure table numbering is sequential |
|  | Ensure table cell shading is consistent throughout |
|  | Verify all table references in text (does the text refer to the correct name of the table or figure?) |
|  | Double check numbered lists to make sure numbers are sequential with no skipping or repeats |
|  | Review the required citation/bibliography format, or use a standard format (APA, MLA, etc.) |
|  | Forms – did you complete all boxes on all required forms? |
|  | Forms – did you mark N/A if a question was not applicable? |
|  | Did you adhere to all page limitations (full proposal as well as each individual section)? |
|  | Run a spell-check |
|  | Have you enforced a zero-tolerance policy for misspellings and sloppy formatting? |

**Budget**

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|  | Is your budget based on real costs? Did you use actual or exact costs whenever possible? Is the budget specific, realistic, and not inflated? |
|  | Are any atypical expenses well explained? |
|  | Does the budget balance (if you have both income and expenses listed, do they match)? |
|  | TRIPLE-check the math on your budget |
|  | Verify correct use of commas, dollar signs, and decimal points in all figures |

**Readability (visual)**

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|  | If possible, include some white space (try to make sure pages are not just all text) |
|  | Use left justification, not full justification |
|  | Consider how the document will look when printed or scanned  (If you are using color, what happens if the reader prints it in black and white?) |
|  | Use headings and subheadings, bold and underline, but minimize or avoid italics |
|  | Use bulleted items (or use hyphen, if entering into an online form), especially if space or character counts are tight |

**Graphics**

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|  | Use non-busy graphics in methodology and needs section, if appropriate |
|  | Are graphics large enough to be useful? |
|  | Place graphics close to the text they are meant to illustrate |
|  | Refer to graphics in the text |
|  | Number and title all graphs, and include captions |
|  | Label axes and data points and provide a legend, if needed |

Graphics info from “The Craft of Grant Writing: Understanding the Review Process” by Texas A & M Univ., 2006

**Paper Proposals**

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|  | Are multiple copies of the proposal needed? |
|  | Print graphics in color (if originals are in color) |
|  | Should final paper version be stapled, paper-clipped, in 3-ring binder, etc., or none of the above? |
|  | Print single-sided unless instructions permit double-sided. You can email and ask if it’s permissible to print double-sided, and whether they prefer the pages to flip on short side (“tumble” fashion) or long side (where top of page is same on both front and back) |
|  | Determine whether “due date” is postmark date or date proposal must be RECEIVED |

Some content adapted from GRANTWRITING101 (Whitmore) <https://www.whitworth.edu/Administration/AcademicAffairs/SponsoredPrograms/Workshops&Tutorials/Index.htm> and <http://carolynmappleton.com/home-2/posts/grant-writing-a-reality-check/>

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