

Suggestions for Student Summer Research Grant Applications **Prepared by Faculty Development and Scholarship Committee**

These guidelines for Student Summer Grant Proposals contain all of the information that you need to write a successful summer grant application. The purpose of these suggestions is to emphasize the features of successful proposals and to help you avoid common pitfalls.

- A successful proposal will propose an original and **specific** research **question** or hypothesis that is to be tested independently. This means that, to your knowledge, the question has not been asked by anyone before and you are the person who is primarily responsible for performing the research and following up with an appropriate “research outcome”. For example, proposing a reading list and a plan to discuss the reading on a weekly basis with an advisor would not be a fundable project. It does not seek to discover the answer to an original question that you have proposed and have not outlined a specific research methodology that is appropriate for your field of inquiry. Likewise, assisting a faculty member with her/his research project would not be fundable project, because you are not the one who has posed the research question and you are not primarily responsible for the research outcomes.
- Your proposal needs to demonstrate that the project is feasible, focused and has a clearly defined strategy or methodology. The proposal should explain the steps in which the research will be undertaken with sufficient detail for a person unfamiliar with the research area to follow and understand.
- A successful project must aim towards a meaningful outcome. Examples of a meaningful outcome could be an oral or poster presentation at an academic conference or research symposium either on or off campus, a manuscript to be submitted for publication, or a public performance, installation or showing. Your proposal should explain how your research project will culminate in some kind of “product”.
- It is very important that you demonstrate “ownership” of your project. A successful proposal should illustrate how you developed the project in collaboration with your advisor. Any proposal that appears to have been written by an advisor will not be funded. You can avoid this problem by explaining the genesis of your project and how it connects to your academic interests.
- Summer Grant Proposals are read carefully by a committee of six faculty from different disciplines. The committee has **one** source of information with which to evaluate your research project, your completed proposal. Make sure that they have all of the information and tools they need to approve your proposal. Regardless of the discipline in which you propose research, your proposal must make sense to all of the committee members. Provide sufficient background information so that the committee can understand the significance of the project. If they are not able to understand your writing, it will be difficult for them to develop an enthusiastic attitude towards your research. A reader of a particularly opaque proposal may wonder if the writer fully understood the material being explained.

- Demonstrate that you are academically prepared to conduct the research project. Outline the courses and experiences that you have had that directly relate to your being able to complete the project. What preliminary steps have you made to demonstrate the feasibility of your project?
- Make sure that your proposal is well written. Write several drafts. Have someone else proofread the application for you several weeks before it is due. Proofread a paper copy of your proposal before you turn it in. Read it out loud to make sure that the language is clear and ideas flow smoothly.
- Read the guidelines for faculty letters of support. How would you answer these questions if your only source of information was your proposal?
- Internal Review Board (IRB) approval for any research that involves human participants, including surveys and interviews. Everything you need to know about IRB policies is posted at <http://www.muhsenberg.edu/mgt/provost/committees/irb.html>. If you have any questions about whether your project needs IRB approval, ask your advisor. Remember, it is **your** responsibility, not your advisor's responsibility to make sure that you have taken care of your IRB approval. Research using vertebrate animals must indicate that animal protocols are approved and will be strictly supervised by the faculty sponsor. Approval is also required for study abroad.
- **Make sure that the proposal is complete!**
 - Cover Sheet with abstract
 - Sections A-E of the grant proposal
 - Letter(s) of support.
 - Other Documentation.