

Top tips for winning research funding

Professor Helen Snooks
Swansea University Medical School



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Top Tip #1

First step

- Match your topic and research question to your target funder and funding stream/call



Top Tip #2

How big?

- Be clear about the scale (funding requirement) of your project – match this to
 - Funding available
 - Value of your research
 - Consider overheads/fEC
- You can only do what you get funding for – be realistic; match your project to funding available
 - Small scale (local) evaluation?
 - Secondary research (analysis of existing data/systematic review)?
 - Feasibility study?
 - Definitive study to provide evidence to inform policy/practice?
 - Multi-centre?
 - Wales or UK?



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Top Tip #3

Top Team!

- Ensure your research team includes members with expertise and track record in:
 - Topic (from all relevant perspectives)
 - Methods
 - PPI
 - Delivery
- Look to strengthen strategic collaborations – local or wider – and identify/invite new partners where necessary
- Aim high

Tip #4 Project manage your submission 😊

- Allow time to develop bid and write proposal
- Use bid checklist
- Plan plan plan!
- Be flexible, allow for late flashes of brilliance!



Top Tip #5

Nuts and bolts

- Write outline first – and then last
 - This may be the Plain English Summary or Scientific Summary/abstract
 - Use this to communicate with team members – this is the first essential step and will not ‘emerge’ from group discussions – a draft for discussion is required to make progress
- Start with research aim or overall question
- Then think through and draft objectives (that should not include any methods!). Objectives should fit within and add up to overall aim.
- Draft methods to meet objectives – there must be a perfect match



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Top Tip #6

Details

- Read the guidance!!!!!!
- Ensure that you are aware of all requirements in terms of submission
 - Sign up (co-applicants)
 - Cvs
 - Costings/AMS
 - Sign offs (institutional – finance/head of department; NHS)
 - Date and time of deadline
 - Uploads – flow chart? References? Gantt chart?

Top Tip #7

Manage collaboration

- Build from outline to full research plan and other sections
- Write drafts for circulation
- Arrange Research or Trial Development Group meeting to discuss drafts and negotiate arrangements for funding split (may need to be done outside of main meeting)
- Manage the contributions of key team members – e.g. stats; health economics; clinical or topic experts



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Top Tip #8

Maximising success

- Build on previous research, preferably your own
- Clearly justify your proposal, particularly in response to any call guidance
- Explain your proposed study clearly ('11 o'clock test')
- No chinks – every aspect needs to get over the bar otherwise it will fail
- Use all available space on form ('White space rule')
- Do not crowd the sections – pay attention to layout, format, spelling, grammar
- Give the reviewers and the Funding Board an easy job!

Top Tip #9

If at first ...

- If your proposal is rejected don't be downhearted – take on board reviewers' or Committees' comments
- Reflect with partners
- Be your own harshest critic – do you believe in this proposal??
- If so, pick yourself up, address comments and resubmit when allowed
- Projects I have had funded on second or third attempt:
 - SAFER 2
 - ERA
 - STRETCHED
 - EVITE
 - PHRASE

Top Tip #10 Head above parapet!!

- Take the plunge
 - Keep abreast of funding opportunities
 - Match your topic to funder
 - Define research question to be addressed
 - Justify research question in terms of: volume; severity; cost (put yourself in funders' shoes)
 - Draft objectives matched to methods/study design
 - Seek comments and build team
 - Follow tips 1 – 9 😊 😊 😊