

Unit 4 Writing an executive summary of a grant proposal

By the end of this unit you will be able to

- recognise characteristics of a grant proposal
- structure an executive summary of a grant proposal
- recognise features of formal and informal writing
- analyse and use appropriate language for writing an executive summary of a grant proposal
- write essential parts of an executive summary of a grant proposal

Lesson 1 A grant proposal

Lead-in

1 Work in pairs and answer the questions below.

- 1 Have you ever applied for a grant? If yes, was it an international or an internal grant? If it was an international grant, did you need any help to fill in the application forms?
- 2 Have you ever had to write a grant application or proposal in English?
- 3 What do you think helps to get funding for an academic project?

2 Read what funders sometimes say when refusing grant proposals (1–3) and choose one recommendation from statements a–f to avoid each reason for refusal.

1 Sorry, but we don't think the problem raised in your proposal is serious.

2 We doubt whether it is possible to implement your project within the proposed period of time.

3 Sorry, but our fund is trying to achieve slightly different goals.

- a You should provide a clear proposal with an exact time-frame and the expected results of the research.
- b You should present clear objectives of your research project.
- c Your research purposes should correspond with the aims of a grant funder.
- d You should propose a solution to an important and critical problem.
- e You should find additional funding to your project.
- f Your proposal should contain detailed information about how you intend to conduct it.

Executive summary

3 Read the characteristics of an executive summary and tick the ones that make it attractive to funders. Compare your answers with a partner.

- 1 It provides a description of the project and expected results.
- 2 It gives the correct contact information.
- 3 It is very detailed and backed up by statistics.
- 4 It concentrates on the main point of your project, not all the side issues.
- 5 It may include a time chart and project organisation chart if there is space.
- 6 It clearly states what is expected from the funder.
- 7 It includes the one, best, most creative aspect (the 'hook') of the project.
- 8 It clearly states what your organisation and other partners are investing in the project.

4 Read this executive summary and say what they want funding for.

Step to Success

Marie Crump, Special Educational Needs Coordinator

^a Mission statement

The mission of the 'Step to Success' project is to improve students' academic performance in Lightwood High School. We are seeking a grant to help students with special educational needs to stimulate their autonomous learning. The objective is that by the end of the year they will have developed their cognitive skills up to the level of their peers. The project is based on the latest research on how to create an effective inclusive educational environment.

b

Lightwood High School faces problems caused by the growing number of students having learning difficulties. Our study shows that 78 students out of 342 suffer from attention deficit disorder and mental deficiency, leading to low academic achievement. ¹Also / *Additionally*, if these students ²are not given / *aren't given* an opportunity to improve their cognitive skills, they are more likely to miss classes or commit offences.

c

Our school will provide students with access to computers equipped with special educational software. Students will be able to implement various tasks presented in computer games. Standardised tests will be conducted at the beginning of the project to ³identify / *find out* the students' cognitive level. Finally, at the end of the school year, they will be assessed to determine their level of improvement.

d

The 'Step to Success' project hopes to enable students with special needs ⁴to make better / *to enhance* their cognitive skills in order to prepare them for further education. The project aims to help these students access the general curriculum and attend regular classes with their peers, so they can ⁵go on / *continue* learning in an inclusive environment.

e

Funding of €10,300 is requested ⁶to implement this programme / *to put this programme into action* and for the purchase of special educational software and hardware for the school's classroom. The budget includes funds for ten computers and programmes. This will enable ten independent desks, which will give students flexibility in working hours

5 Match headings 1–4 to sections b–e of the executive summary.

- 1 Budget
- 2 Problem statement / Statement of need
- 3 Expected results
- 4 Project summary / Project description

Formal style

6 Read this text and compare it with part (a) of the text in Activity 4. Which one is more formal? How do you know?

Our idea is to improve students' academic performance in Lightwood High School. We're looking for a grant to help weak students to do well and stimulate their autonomous learning. So, how do we formulate our objective? By the end of the year we want them to have developed their cognitive skills up to the level of their fellows. Luckily, the project is based on the latest research on how to create good inclusive educational environment.

7 Read the general guidelines for writing in a formal style. Use them to explain why certain words/phrases in the text in Activity 6 are inappropriate.

- 1 Avoid adverbs that show personal attitude (e.g. *unfortunately, surprisingly*).
- 2 Avoid too informal vocabulary (idiomatic or colloquial expressions, e.g. *thank goodness, kids*).
- 3 Avoid an informal use of multi-word verbs (phrasal verbs) when there is a suitable synonym (e.g. *set up = install*).
- 4 Avoid contracted forms (e.g. *can't, won't*).
- 5 Avoid rhetorical questions (e.g. *And why does it happen?*).

8 In the text in Activity 4, choose the more formal options (1–6).

A mission statement

9 Put the words in order to make sentences about the mission of an organisation.

- 1 is / high quality care and services / Our mission / to our members / to provide
- 2 in the city / to reduce / is / air pollution / Our goal
- 3 the development / Our primary focus / distance-learning courses / on / of / online / is
- 4 safely / electricity / The purpose / to deliver / is
- 5 is to serve / higher learning / Our aim / society / as a centre of
- 6 an increase of access to / programmes / Our institution / higher education / is responsible for

10 Which sentences from Activity 9 use the to-infinitive to state the mission? Which ones use a noun phrase?

11 Think about a grant proposal you or your institution could make. Complete the model below in a formal style.

The mission of _____ is to _____.

Our objective is to _____.

We are responsible for _____.

Our primary focus is on _____.

We will _____.

Stating a problem

12 Read a problem statement from an executive summary for a grant proposal. Answer the questions.

- 1 What is the main problem?
- 2 Who is affected by this problem?
- 3 How was the problem discovered?
- 4 What can help to solve the problem?

There is a tremendous need, especially for high-risk youth in low-income neighbourhoods, for programs that ¹_____ (provide) activities and support for children during the after school hours. In 1998, the Children's Defence Fund ²_____ (report) that violent crime by young people aged 10–17 peaks between 3 and 7 p.m. Previous research has shown that children and teens in poor neighbourhoods are struggling for direction and positive opportunities ³_____ (need) to keep them safe. In addition, a study published in *Pediatrics* magazine ⁴_____ (find) that eighth graders who ⁵_____ (leave) alone after school reported greater use of cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol than those in adult-supervised settings.

Current research ⁶_____ (indicate) that supervised after-school programs keep children safe and out of trouble. By implementing our project, we intend to enhance their academic achievement significantly.

13 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in brackets: active or passive.

14 Underline the phrases in the text which have a similar meaning to the phrases below.

- 1 Studies indicated that ...
- 2 A survey/An experiment showed that ...
- 3 We plan to improve ...
- 4 Present research states that ...
- 5 Prior research has reported that ...
- 6 There is a huge demand for projects which ...

15 Write the problem statement for your grant proposal. Answer the questions below.

- 1 Why is your project worth doing?
- 2 How did you decide that the problem exists?
- 3 Who/What does the problem affect?
- 4 What have other researchers done in this field?
- 5 What will your new work add to the field of knowledge? How is it innovative?

Lesson 2 Polishing an executive summary

Lead-in

1 Work in pairs. Complete the sentences.

- 1 If you want to get funding for your research project, you should ...
- 2 If you want to write a successful grant proposal, you should ...
- 3 Your executive summary of a grant proposal should consist of ...
- 4 The style you write your proposal in is ...
- 5 When writing a grant proposal, you should avoid ...
- 6 In order to present your organisation, you should ...
- 7 When stating a problem, it is recommended to ...

Project summary

2 Read the following project summary and choose the best title for the proposed project.

- A Development of relationships between America and Madagascar.
- B Evolution of the reproductive system in primates.
- C Major differences between lemurs and lorises.

^aWe will analyse the anatomical, behavioural, and physiological differences among lemurs and lorises and the social and ecological ¹*things / traits* that influence these differences. ^bThe proposed research will ²*address / look into* three topics of great significance to understanding primate biology and evolution: (1) comparative anatomy of the reproductive system, (2) evolutionary changes in the reproductive system, and (3) rates of evolution. ^cThe anatomical, behavioural, and ecological characters generated ³*here / in this study* will be used to test functional and evolutionary hypotheses about the reproductive system that ⁴*could not / couldn't* be tested with existing data.

^dThe proposed research involves international, collaborative research between scientists from the US and Madagascar. ^eThe results of this study will be of ⁵*major / big* importance both for the conservation of endangered species in the wild as well as the maintenance of captive colonies involved in biomedical research. ^fThe results of this study will be incorporated ⁶*at once / immediately* into educational programmes in both countries. ^gBecause this research involves attractive and endangered species, the results of this work are likely to be of considerable public interest and will reach a broad public audience.

lemurs and lorises = small animals similar to monkeys (primates) with thick fur and a long tail, which live in trees and are active at night

reproductive = relating to the process of having babies or producing plants

incorporate = to include something as part of something larger

endangered = animals or plants that may soon not exist because there are very few left alive

Module 4 Writing

3 In the text in Activity 2, choose the more formal words or phrases in options 1–6. Compare your answers with a partner.

4 Read the text again and match sentences a–g with the questions below.

- 1 Who will carry out the project? ____
- 2 What is the significance of the project? ____
- 3 How will the results of the research be applied? ____
- 4 What is the specific objective of the project? ____
- 5 What methods will be used to prove research hypotheses? ____
- 6 What is the main purpose of the research? ____
- 7 Who might be interested in the research results? ____

5 Paraphrase the project summary in Activity 2, using phrases from the Language Support box.

Language Support: project summaries

... will provide ...

The project starts with ... The next step is ... Finally, ...

Extra effort will be made to ...

Special attention will be paid to ...

The plan will include ...

This project will be completed within/in/over ... (period of time)

6 Write the project summary for a grant proposal. Use the Language Support box to help you.

7 Work in pairs. Read your partner's project summary. Does it contain the following information?

- a brief background of the project
- specific aims, objectives or hypotheses
- significance of the proposed research
- unique features and innovation of the project
- methods (action steps) to be used
- a description of how results will influence other research areas

Expected results

8 Read the text in Activity 2 again and find sentences about the results of the project. Answer the questions below.

- 1 What tenses are used in these sentences?
- 2 Which tense expresses a promise?
- 3 Which structure indicates that the author is not sure about the results?
- 4 Which structure would you choose to present your expected results?

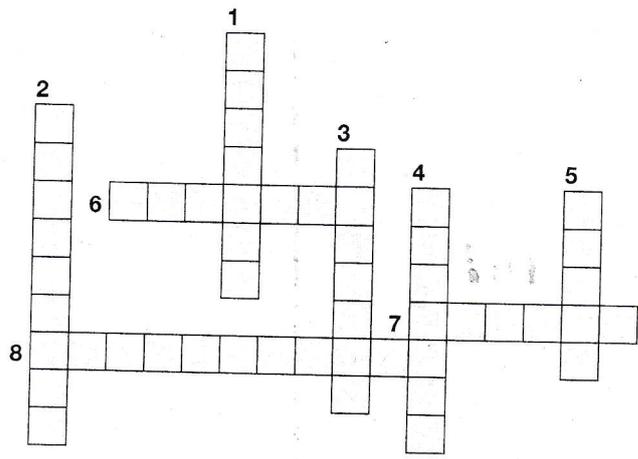
9 Read the text below and say what the outcomes of the proposed research are. Then fill in the gaps with a suitable verb.

will offer will have will promote will provide

The research ¹ _____ interdisciplinary understanding of urban green spaces from the ecological and sociological viewpoints. In addition, the outcomes of the research ² _____ important and applicable knowledge and tools for the planners and decision makers of urban land use planning. Furthermore, the research process ³ _____ collaboration between researchers, land-use officials, residents and other stakeholders. Although the research takes place in Finland, it ⁴ _____ international relevance, especially as the project has extensive international collaboration.

10 Study the Language Support box and find words to complete the crossword.

Language Support: expected results
 We expect to achieve ...
 The main expectation of the project / research is ...
 The results of the research will be published in academic journals (e.g. ...).
 The results of the project might be recommended to (scientists, students) in the field of (subject).
 ... will benefit from ...



Down

- 1 to make research findings available to people, especially in a book or magazine (verb)
- 2 to suggest using research findings for further studies (verb)
- 3 to be in a better position because you can use the research results (verb)
- 4 a serious magazine that is published regularly about a particular subject (noun)
- 5 an area of activity or interest (noun)

Across

- 6 to succeed in finishing something or reaching an aim (verb)
- 7 product, outcome, effect of the research (noun)
- 8 assumption, belief, prediction (noun)

11 Think about your research project and present its expected results in writing. Use the Language Support box in Activity 10 to help you.

Module 4 Writing

Budgets

12 Read Texts A and B and answer the questions.

- 1 Which budget description asks for more money than they already have?
- 2 In which example is the way of spending money expressed more clearly?
- 3 Which is more likely to influence a positive decision about funding a project? Why?

A

We seek £50,000 as funds to support the Education for the Disabled Youth Programme. With your assistance, we will be able to help 25 disabled students to attend A-level classes and to send 25 more to college. We believe that providing educational programmes to all qualified disabled students will help in the economic growth of our county.

B

Our institution is requesting \$18,000 from the Help Fund to support this program that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our youth. A contribution from our partners accounts for \$10,000 that will give us initial support and cover salary expenses.

13 In Texts A and B, underline words/phrases which help to describe the budget for an intended project. Why do you think the active voice is used here?

14 Study the Language Support box below. Substitute the words/phrases you underlined in Texts A and B with those from the Language Support box.

Language Support: budgets

We seek / are seeking ... (sum of money) to ... (to support ...).

We request / are requesting ... (sum of money) from ...

... is intended to fund ... (the staff positions) and provide ... (facilities).

The grant request is for funding for ... (a period of time).

Partners contribute ... to the project.

The applicant is covering (salary / travelling) costs.

15 Suggest improvements for the less successful budget description from Activity 12.

16 Add information about the budget to the executive summary of your project. Use the Language Support box in Activity 14 to help you.

17 Combine all the parts of the executive summary you have written and finalise it, paying attention to its structure and style.

Have you ...

- used formal language?
- given your project a title?
- given contact person information?
- presented the mission of your organisation?
- identified the main problem and your needs?
- described your project in brief?
- included expected results?
- stated the budget needed for your project?
- checked the grammar, spelling and punctuation?

18 Work in groups. Think about your joint research project and write an executive summary of a grant proposal in order to get funding.

Lesson 4 Writing a covering letter for a grant proposal

Lead-in

1 Imagine that you have found someone who might be able to fund your research project. What will you write in a covering letter to make a good first impression? Work in pairs to make a list.

2 Complete the sentences with words from the list. One word is used twice.

goals proposal institution (x2) research

Information to be included in a covering letter:

- 1 A description of your _____.
- 2 A statement explaining how you will help accomplish the funder's _____.
- 3 An explanation of the rationale and purpose of your _____.
- 4 An explanation of why the grant-awarding foundation is a fit with your _____.
- 5 A 'thank you' for the opportunity to submit the _____.

Structuring a covering letter

3 Read the email and answer the questions.

- 1 What do we learn about the applicant's organisation?
- 2 What is funding requested for?
- 3 How do they plan to achieve their aim?

Dear Mr Peeler,

On behalf of the Department of History, Cultural Studies and Ethnology, I am pleased to present this grant proposal for our project, titled 'Archives of Vologda monasteries and churches of the XV–XVII centuries'. It aims to complete our research work on compiling a list of documents from church archives in the Vologda region.

We are requesting financial assistance to enable us to organise trips to Saint Petersburg (to the Russian National Library) and Kiev (to the Ukrainian National Library) where we can get access to rare books and manuscripts about the history of our region for the period mentioned above.

We appreciate this opportunity to apply, as we consider this grant an important factor in the development of the whole nation. Please contact me if you have any questions about our work or our proposal.

Sincerely,
Dr Marina Okasova, Assistant Professor

4 Look again at the sentences in Activity 2 and check if all the information is included in the letter above.

Language focus

5 Underline phrases in the letter which match these functions.

- 1 giving contact information
- 2 introducing the reasons for funding
- 3 thanking the funder
- 4 introducing your organisation
- 5 describing the purpose of your project

6 Match the pairs of expressions A-E to functions 1-5 from Activity 5.

A _____

- In our department, we deal with ...
- Among our main activities are

B _____

- The long-term/short-term plan is/was designed to ...
- The purpose/goal of the proposed project is to ...

C _____

- Our organisation receives funding from state, city and federal sources. We need assistance/support in ...
- Your assistance will enable us to...

D _____

- Thank you for the guidance and help in the development of our project.
- We are grateful for the opportunity to apply for the grant.

E _____

- Should you have any questions or require further/additional information, please contact ...
- For answers to any questions about our project/application, please feel free to...

7 Complete the sentences with words from Activity 6.

- 1 If you are asking money for a short period of time, you want to receive _____ financing.
- 2 If you need financial help, you require the funder's financial _____.
- 3 The funder will contact you if they require _____ information (i.e. more information on the project).
- 4 When you are _____ to someone, you thank them for what they have done.

Writing a covering letter

8 Read the Table of Contents of a grant proposal (see Reading module Unit 4, page 55). Write a covering letter for the proposal.

9 Go to Activity 2 to check if all the elements are included in your covering letter.