

EPI258: Grant Writing Workshop

Week 5

February 3, 2021

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Plan for today

- Tips for the Approach Section
- Assignments for next week
- Small groups to discuss Assignment 4 (Significance)

Approach

- Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses you plan to use to accomplish your Specific Aims
- Usually at least 1/2 of your page count (3-4 pages of a 6-page proposal)

Approach Paragraphs

- Overview – brief summary of methods / study design
- Study population
- Eligibility criteria
- Recruitment strategies
- Retention (if longitudinal)
- Study procedures
 - Procedures
 - Measurements
- Data management
- Statistical considerations
 - Data analysis plan
 - Sample size or statistical power
- Potential pitfalls and solutions
- Future directions

Approach

- Need to give enough detail to assure the reviewer of the feasibility of all the steps of the study
- Reviewers can be especially critical of:
 - Enrolling a new population
 - Retention / follow-up
 - Non-validated measurements
 - Poorly specified analyses
- Include preliminary data if they support the feasibility – state explicitly that these data support the feasibility of XXX

Approach

- Briefly discuss how your approach addresses gaps in prior research
 - Ex: if all previous studies were cross-sectional and yours is longitudinal, note that your study design will overcome this previous gap
 - Use the words “rigor of the previous research” somewhere
- Point out any procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel or participants and precautions in place, reference human subjects’ section
 - *Most of this detail should go in the Human Subjects’ section. Briefly address things you think the reviewers will worry about in the Approach itself to show that you’ve thought about it.*

General tips

- Approach is a common section where reviewers find problems
 - *It is their job to find problems*
- Try to be as clear and detailed as possible
 - Well-labeled diagrams, flow charts, and tables
 - Section headers
- Be sure the details in this section are consistent with other areas of the grant (e.g., human subjects)

Organization

- Suggested: give an overview, then describe approach aim by aim
- Repeat the aims -verbatim- so the reviewer doesn't have to flip back to the aims page (use bolding to make them stand out)
- For any methodology that is not standard, include discussion of why you chose that methodology (with references) and potential alternatives if it does not pan out
- Consider having a future directions statement. Get reviewers excited about future research made possible by your project.
- Consider having a summary statement. Point out expected positive outcomes of the study. This can be overall or for each aim.
 - Don't duplicate future directions (could combine them).

Homework 5 due 8a Monday 2/8

1. Turn in a OUTLINE of your Approach section.
 - See instructions in the application guide for specific topics that must be addressed.
 - Include information on Preliminary Studies.
 - Note, you may not have finalized your study design and many details of the approach. That is OK! The outline process will help you identify the decisions that you still need to make and questions to ask your mentors.
2. Start on other Research Plan / Research Training Plan sections required for your grant mechanism (not to be turned in)

Preview of Small Group Discussion Next Week

Describe:

- ☐ Overview – brief summary of methods / study design
- ☐ Study population
- ☐ Eligibility
- ☐ Recruitment
- ☐ Retention (if longitudinal)
- ☐ Study procedures
 - ☐ Procedures
 - ☐ Measurements
- ☐ Potential pitfalls and solutions