

Research Lighthouse training course:

## Grant proposal training course for early-career scientists

*This training course uses a simulated and realistic proposal writing and assessment procedure to provide unique insights into the grant proposal review process. Each participant is engaged through the entire process, from drafting the proposal to the final funding decision. The mock review panel meeting—where participants listen to their own proposal being discussed and graded—is the central element, providing intense and unique insight that can be applied to all kinds of funding applications.*

*After completion of this course, researchers/applicants will have a significantly improved insight into the factors that determine the fate of their own proposals—and higher success rates.*



### Target group

The course is aimed for **early-career researchers** that will submit—or have submitted—their first grant proposals, for example final-year PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, assistant professors, or junior associate professors, and similar positions.

### Overview

The core principles of the grant proposal training course are: each participant uses one of their own real proposals, the highly realistic fictitious research fund, and the mock review panel.

Using a real proposal that will be—or have been—submitted allows applicants to develop the quality of their project at the same time that they acquire deep insight into factors driving success with grant proposals. Time spent on the training course contributes to developing the quality of the participants' science.

The course can either be related to a specific funder and deadline, or independent of any funder. Both modes of delivery are equally effective.

The course structure is:

1. The **first part** of the training course is preparation for submission and may include one or more presentations and/or exercises on how funders work, what characterizes a successful proposal, pitching your project and yourself, or any other relevant topic.
2. In the **next step** participants finalize and submit their proposals to the fictitious funder. Immediately following the submission, participants change from applicants to



reviewers, and receive proposals to review. Before the second day, participants/reviewers submit their written reviews.

3. The **final day** is dominated by the **meeting of the mock review panel** of the fictitious funder. The exercise closely mimics a real-life review panel meeting. The important difference is that each applicant is allowed to listen in on the discussion about his/her own proposal and respond to it. This provides a highly structured, secure (often playful) experience, offering deep insight into the strengths and weaknesses of one's own proposal.

Following the mock review panel meeting, the course wraps up by reflecting on the experience of the participants, and how this relates to the real reviewer experience.

4. **After the course**, each participant receives the anonymized written critique from the review panel, supplemented with comments and suggestions on how to strengthen the proposal from the trainer/-s. As an option, individual follow-up meetings with the trainer may be included.

## Learning points – what you get

After the training course, participants:

- understand the wider framework of external research funding, including the perspectives of the university management and the funding agencies.
- have insight into the factors and processes used by funders to select winning proposals.
- have acquired a “toolbox” for designing successful research projects and grant proposals.
- have a deep understanding of the proposal review process and how funders make decisions.
- will be able to interpret, understand and use feedback from reviewers.
- have significantly better chances of obtaining funding for their research projects.

## More information

The course concept was designed and offered for the first time at Uppsala University, Sweden, in 2005 and immediately proved to significantly boost participants' success rates with grant proposals. The concept has since been developed continuously, adapted and tested at many institutions and organizations in different countries.

The course can be adapted to the needs and wishes of each target group, to specific funders, disciplines, career levels, or any variation.

For further information on e.g. the contents of the training course, how it can be adapted, adding components, pricing, or follow-up activities and services, please contact Olaf Svenningsen at Research Lighthouse, either by [email](mailto:olaf.svenningsen@research-lighthouse.com) or book a meeting at [www.research-lighthouse.com](http://www.research-lighthouse.com).

