

Grant-writing skills in life sciences: A workshop for early-career researchers



Dr. Julia Staykova-McKinnon for Scriptorium

Dear Participant, welcome to Scriptorium's annual grant-writing workshop, hosted by Institut Curie!

This workshop will address persuasion skills in grant writing. We will use two examples as our 'baseline' case studies: the ANR and ERC application format and evaluation criteria. Further examples for clinical or fundamental research funding can be added on your suggestion. We will discuss, in particular:

1. Strong structure in State of the Art, Objectives, and Approach/Work Programme: the key sections in any research application.
2. How to provide clear, convincing answers to the key evaluation criteria of originality/novelty, feasibility and added value/impact.
3. How to respond to the complex candidate evaluation requirements, including emerging international recognition, a growing track record, and independence.
4. How to present a competitive funding CV and convey a compelling vision through a narrative statement.

The workshop will be held as a blended online/live format to minimise lab absences while offering a longer period for learning. Both online/live meetings are in Paris time.

Meeting 1 held on Zoom: 23 May Monday, 09:00-11:00.

Topic: *Introductory lecture on the three tiers of persuasion in a grant proposal.*

Period of self-study: 190 mins main series on grant-writing, 95 mins optional series on interviewing skills. The pre-recorded series of lectures in podcast allow you to listen on your own time. Based on past feedback, many participants hear some of the lectures more than once.

Meeting 2, held live on campus: 30 May Monday, 9:00-14:00

Topic 1: *Structuring the scientific proposal – objectives, methodology sections. application form*

Topic 2: *Analysis of funded examples and peer review based on the assignment (see p. 2)*

Topic 3: *The funding CV and personal statement.*

Please see p. 2 for details of the programme and p. 3 for the instructor's profile.

Podcast lecture series for remote self-study

Access to the podcast series is retained until one full month after the workshop is completed.

Series 1: General grant-writing skill: ~190 mins

Podcast 1. Persuasion in grant writing: 17.30 mins

Podcast 2. The State of the Art proposal section: 16 mins

Podcast 3. The Objectives section: 20 mins

Podcast 4. The Methodological Programme section: 26 mins

Podcast 5. Evaluation criteria - Novelty versus Feasibility: 26 mins

Podcast 6. Evaluation criteria – Impact: 13 mins

Podcast 7. The Abstract – 11 mins

Podcast 8: The CV and Personal Statement – 27 mins

Podcast 9: Writing skills: 36 mins

Series 2: Interviewing skills in research, with focus on funding and hiring interviews: ~95 mins

Podcast 1. Time Management during the interview: 13 mins

Podcast 2. Strategy for the talk and the Q&A session: 24 mins

Podcast 3. Common questions to expect in the Q&A: 37 mins

Podcast 4. How to engage with panel members: 23 mins.

Assignment for peer discussion (held during the live session)

Please prepare a written response of ~0.5-2/3 of a page in length.

Topic: Research contributions up to date and future directions. In a narrative statement interpreting your CV and future career vision, sum up your research track record and your motivation for applying. Think of this statement as providing both a past and a future perspective. **(1)** Present research achievements up to date. You can show quantitative indicators, including total publications, citations and talks given (esp. invited talks), as well as fellowships or awards obtained. **(2)** To substantiate how your research programme will evolve based on the funding requested, provide a perspective on:

- new technical skills or theoretical expertise you plan to acquire
- new collaborations or expanded existing collaborations
- targets for mobility (intersectoral and international);
- broader skills including mentoring or public outreach;
- dissemination plans and concrete deliverables: how many papers you plan to produce during this period, and what type of journals and conference venues you will target;
- the next research question you will explore following the requested funding period
- the next funding source you will target based on your longer-term research ambition.

Julia Staykova-McKinnon, Ph.D.

Scriptorium Founder, Consultant



Profile

Julia has over fifteen years of experience as a lecturer and consultant in grant writing and interviewing skills in research. She consults on proposals submitted to Horizon Europe (formerly Horizon 2020), including ERC (with an average of 8-12 proposals in each main category of StG, CoG, AdG, and 2-3 SyG supported per year), Erasmus+ Actions (European University, EMJMD, SwafS) and Marie S. Curie Actions (ITN/ETN, Doctoral Network, CoFund), with an average of 3-6 per year in these two categories, and FET-Open/RIA (2-3 per year). She also assists on proposals submitted to national agencies, for instance DFG and Helmholtz Foundation (Germany), ANR, PIA3 (France), FWO/FNRS (Belgium).

Teaching at leading European academic institutions: Julia regularly holds lectures and workshops for postdocs and junior/senior professors at universities and research institutes in the EU. A selection of her clients includes Charité-University Hospital Berlin, German Cancer Research Centre (DKFZ), German Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE), Grenoble Neurosciences Institute (GIN), Institut Curie and Institut Cervaux - Paris, Institute for Clinical and Experimental Research (IREC)-Brussels, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC)-Berlin, Max Planck-Potsdam, University of Bordeaux, University of Grenoble-Alpes (UGA), University of Cote-D'Azur (France), University of Zurich and Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (UZH / ETHZ, Switzerland).

Industry: Julia has consulted and taught at Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals, Hengeler Mueller Partners in Law, HVB Banking Group, KPMG, and Servier Laboratories. With Janssen Pharmaceutica, she developed an innovative training programme implemented at KULeuven's Doctoral School.

Academic Background

Assistant Professor in Language Studies, University of Amsterdam (2010-11)

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow, Los Angeles, California (2009-10)

Post-Doctoral Fellow, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (2007-09)

Ph.D. on rhetoric in Renaissance culture, studies jointly at Oxford University and Sofia University, defended at Sofia in 2007.