Towards post-doctoral research:
Preparing a research grant proposal

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Plan for the workshop

- Situate a research proposal within the broader system in which it is located and have strategies for engaging with relevant stakeholders
- Compare and contrast the persuasiveness of different proposals
- Reflect on your learning and set action items (p.7)
Who are you? Who am I?

- Where you are in your academic career?
- In pairs, discuss your proposal writing experience? Have you …
  - Co-written with a PI?
  - Co-written with a peer?
  - Written on your own?
  - Where have you applied?
  - Number of times?
  - Number of successes?
Post-PhD focus

- Building a distinct profile: How is your research different from others?
- Expanding expertise: New area? New methods?
- Creating a trail: Publications, funding
- Embedding: Strong network

➡ Moving beyond your PhD and PhD supervisor
What’s the major thing missing in this image?

- Frequent rejection
- Success rates = 10-15%
- Need to handle rejection, remain resilient, re-think, re-orient …
The research proposal: A genre

• What is a genre?
  ◦ A category of writing characterized by similarities in purpose, form and style

• What academic genres can you think of?
  ◦ Make a list, putting a tick next to the ones you feel you know well.
  ◦ Discuss with the person next to you to add to your list of genres.

• What makes a research proposal stand out as a genre?
  ◦ A promissory note: problem-oriented, promotional and persuasive
  ◦ Who are you trying to persuade?
The research proposal: Part of a genre system

- Any genre is situated in an interconnected system of other related genres.
  - What genres make up the research paper genre system?
- What genres might make up the research proposal genre system (RPGS)? (p.1)
  - In pairs, generate different genres in the RPGS.
  - Hint: think pre- and post-submission; look at diagram
Pre-submission: Part of genre system

- Call
- Other funding council docs
- Funding council officer
- University docs
- Research officers
- Research administrators
- PhD supervisor(s) for advice
- Mentor(s) for advice
- Colleagues who will be named
- Peers for feedback
- More remote others to provide feedback

How many of these stakeholders do you know?
Note gaps & strategies to address them on p.7, #2
Funding system(s): Success takes more than a proposal … ECR learning

Know options & choose
Submit: Proposal, CV, etc.
External peer review
Applicant response
Panel review: application, peer review, applicant response
Interview
Panel review: All of above

Exit at
- Pre-selection
- Panel review
- Panel review

... add to your genre list (p.7)?
Moves in a research funding proposal

- Brainstorm in pairs a list of what makes a good RP.
- Studies of US NSF, Canadian SSHRC and EU grants found common moves across countries & disciplines (Connor & Maurenen 1999; Connor 2000; Feng & Shi 2004)
Moves: (p.3)

- **Territory**: the situation in which the research is placed: two types: the world outside of academia, and that of the field of research
- **Previous research**, either by the proposers or others
- **Gap in knowledge/problem** in territory: explains motivation for study
- **Goal statement**, aim, general objective: what researcher wants to do
- **Means**: methods, procedures, plans of action & tasks that lead to goal
- **Achievements**: anticipated results, findings, or outcomes of the study
- **Benefits**: intended or projected outcomes of the study
- **Competence** claim: demonstrates individual/ group proposing work is well qualified, experienced, & capable of carrying out the tasks
- **Importance** claim: how the proposal, objectives, anticipated outcomes, or territory are important, topical, much-needed, urgent
- **Compliance** claim: makes explicit the relevance of proposal to EU objectives, usually with highly specific reference to directives and/or the set goals of the program in question.
- **Communication of results**: anticipated audience & means of communicating (SSHRC)
- **Content organization**: use of meta-discourse (SSHRC)
Additionally (p.4)

- More globally, three ‘big’ steps with sub-steps:
  - Establishing territory for study
  - Describing means
  - Claiming potential contributions

- May not be in this ‘lock-step’ order. Some strategies:
  - Setting the scene for the reader
  - A re-occurring niche-centred tide-like structure
  - Mixing moves to serve promotional purposes
Individual/pair work: Finding the moves in two proposal summaries p.4-7 (20-25 min)

- Please be prepared to report in plenary.
- **Individually,**
  - Read through each and mark the moves using the table below each text if you wish
  - Then compare and contrast as to what stands out about each that might make it successful
- **In pairs,**
  - Compare how you have marked the moves
  - Discuss what you each see as successful elements
  - Do you feel that one is more successful than the other? If so, why?
Linguistic markers of voice (p. 7) (Hyland, 2000; 2002; 2008)

- **Hedges:** explicitly qualify writer’s commitment, e.g., ‘it is possible,’ ‘perhaps…,’ ‘however, …’
- **Attitude markers:** express writer’s affective attitude to propositions, e.g., ‘it was surprising that …’
- **Emphatics/boosters:** express certainty and stress shared knowledge/agreement with reader, group membership, e.g., ‘clearly, x is the case’
- **Relational markers:** directly address reader, focus attention or invite participation, e.g., 2nd person; questions & statements that invite engagement, e.g., ‘is it, in fact, necessary to ..?’
- **Self-mention markers:** explicit author presence in the text, i.e., 1st personal pronouns/ possessive adjectives, e.g., ‘I believe,’ ‘we will undertake,’ ‘our project’

In pairs, find the markers in summary 2
Reflection  (p.7)

- What have you learned?
- What action items do you have? What are your deadlines?

NB Don’t forget appendix
The research proposal: External structure

- **Who**: PI, other researchers, location, time frame, keywords
- **Background/ theoretical background**: e.g., topic and method arising from PhD
- **(Research) Objectives**: itemized
- **Research methods, material and ethical issues**: research methods, data analysis, research ethics, data archiving, risk management
- **Implementation**: timetable/schedule, budget, distribution of work (*tables*), publications & dissemination
- **Researchers, research environment and mobility**: e.g., international collaborations and 2-way mobility (*table*)
- **Expected results**
- **Key literature cited**

NB careful use of formatting to highlight elements