

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



Dr. Julia Staykova-McKinnon for Scriptorium

Target group: clinicians (junior and senior) who are writing research funding applications.

Time commitment: 3 live meetings of 2.5 hours each. Access to a set of podcast lectures for self-study (230 mins listening time).

Technology: Zoom for live sessions, Scriptorium website for podcast lectures for self-study following the workshop.

Language of instruction: English.

Quick description. In this workshop, you will learn how to:

1. Interpret correctly the application form and evaluation criteria for a scientific research proposal.
2. Use strong structure in State of the Art, Objectives, and Methodological Programme: the key scientific sections in any research proposal.
3. Develop the Work Plan section using components such as milestones, deliverables, a timeline, and resource justification.
4. Present convincingly your academic and clinical CV, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative parameters of excellence. We will use the ERC's 4-page CV & Track record as a case study.

Funding instruments used as case studies: We will use the DFG Benjamin Walter and ERC Starting grant as two case studies. We will also refer to other examples of national and European funding instruments to broaden the relevance of conclusions drawn. If a clinical funding instrument of shared interest can be established, we will integrate it as a third major case study for analysis.

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

Workshop Structure

Each live meeting will take 2.5 astronomical hours, with a 5-min break in the middle.

Meeting 1: Focus on the proposal structure and analysis of typical evaluation criteria

Topic 1: analysis of application forms and evaluation criteria

Topic 2: how to structure a classic scientific proposal; variable solutions with different page length

Meeting 2: The “Work Plan” in national funding applications; analysis of examples

Topic 1: integrating milestones, deliverables, timelines, and resources justification into a proposal.

Topic 2: analysis of open-access examples from European funded grants.

Meeting 3: The candidate evaluation: CV structure and typical evaluation criteria

Topic 1: using quantitative and qualitative descriptions to optimise your profile’s presentation in the research CV.

Topic 2: the narrative CV; using a personal or motivation statement as a persuasion tool.

Podcast series for self-study: you can listen *a la carte*, selecting which lectures interest you. The lectures are supported by downloadable slides.

Series title: General grant-writing skills: ~230 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 and 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 in a funding application - 36 mins

Podcast 10: Five case studies in rejected proposals: 37 mins

ATTENDANCE TRACKING

Your coordinators will receive a report with screenshots to confirm attendance.

Julia Staykova-McKinnon, Ph.D.

Scriptorium Founder and Consultant



Consulting Profile

Julia has over fifteen years of experience as a consultant on grants and research interviews. She supports proposals submitted to Horizon Europe (formerly Horizon 2020), including ERC (with 12-15 proposals supported per call in StG, CoG, AdG; 2-4 in Synergy), Erasmus+ Actions (European University, EMJMD, SwafS), Marie S. Curie Actions (Doctoral Network, CoFund), and FET-Open/RIA. She regularly assists on proposals submitted to national funding agencies, in particular DFG and Helmholtz Foundation (Germany), ANR, IHU, PIA3 (France), FWO/FNRS, EOS and SBO (Belgium).

Long-term consulting and teaching commitments at academic institutions

Julia consults and teaches grant-writing workshops for postdocs and junior to mid-career professors at leading universities and research institutes across the EU, including, among others:

Belgium: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (KUL), Universite Catholique de Louvain (UCL), Vrije Universiteit Brussels (VUB), Universiteit Gent, Universiteit Hasselt.

France: Institut Curie and Institut Cerveau - Paris, University of Bordeaux (UB), University of Grenoble-Alpes (UGA), University of Cote-D'Azur Nice (UCA).

Germany: Charité-University Hospital Berlin, Max Planck-Potsdam, Helmholtz Centres: German Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE), Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine-Berlin (MDC).

Spain: University of Seville, Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM)

Switzerland: University of Zurich, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ).

Academic Background

- Visiting Assistant Professor in Renaissance studies, University of Amsterdam (2010-11)
- Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow, Huntington Library of Rare Books, California (2009-10)
- Post-Doctoral Fellow in Renaissance rhetoric, University of British Columbia, Vancouver (2007-09)
- Ph.D. in rhetorical arts in the English Renaissance, with studies done jointly at Oxford University and Sofia University, defended at Sofia in 2007.