Read the guidelines
Tips for SSHRC Grant Applications

Dr. Rosemary E. Ommer
ORS, SSHRC Grantscrafter
Working with your Grantscrafter

- Some Faculties have Grantscrafters available to assist you
- Not a guarantee that you will get the grant!
- Application material, ideas and discussion will remain confidential
- Positive criticism
- Technicalities not addressed
Evaluation Criteria

- These are what you write to
- Main headings are Challenge, Feasibility, Capability
- Subheadings are given with the criteria
- Headings/subheadings are what the committee uses to evaluate your proposal
- Web-based instructions are to be followed inside the evaluation criteria
Main Heading
1. Challenge

1.1 Originality
1.2 Literature Review
1.3 Theoretical approach/framework
1.4 Methods
1.5 Training
1.6 Impact
1.7 Viability*

* Partnership/Partnership Development Grant
Scoring Table: Challenge
Gold standard (score of 5-6)

Excellent: Highly original, at the forefront of the field. The theoretical approach or framework is focused, fully explained and well-developed. There are excellent training opportunities for students, emerging scholars and qualified personnel. The methodologies or partnership approaches are well described. The likelihood of influence/impact within and/or beyond the research community is excellent.
Main Heading
2. Feasibility

2.1 Attainment of the research objectives
2.2 Partnership and Governance*
2.3 Budget
2.4 Other planned resources
2.5 Knowledge mobilization
2.6 Strategies and timelines for activities

* Partnership/Partnership Development Grant
Scoring Table: Feasibility
Gold standard (score of 5-6)

Excellent: Alignment with the Insight and Connection programs, or a combination thereof, is clearly demonstrated. The strategies/timelines for the proposed research and/or related activities are coherent, realistic and appropriate. Host organization involvement is excellent, as demonstrated by its support to the partnership and to its research and/or related activities. All budget components are well justified, and the budget’s overall link to the proposed research is realistic. The knowledge mobilization/dissemination plan is appropriate, effective and very likely to achieve success. The governance and management of the partnership are well thought out. Existing partnerships have provided meaningful evidence to demonstrate the formality of the partnership (in the evidence of partnership section of the application and through letters of support from the host institution and partners). The formality of new partnerships is evident through the letters of support from the host institution and at least one of the partners, with these letters demonstrating significant commitment toward the partnership and its research and/or related activities. The potential for long-term viability is well demonstrated, and progress indicators are well developed.
Main Heading
3. Capability

3.1 Experience
3.2 Contributions
3.3 Contributions to the development of talent
3.4 Experience in formal partnerships*
3.5 Future contributions

* Partnership/Partnership Development Grant
Scoring Table: Capability
Gold standard (score of 5-6)

Excellent: Quality, quantity and significance of past experience and published outputs, such as publications (not limited to scholarly publications) or commissioned reports, of principal team members relative to their role in the partnership and to the stage of their career are clearly evident and well demonstrated. The partnership’s participants and partners have produced outputs that are highly relevant to their respective fields; have significant experience with collaboration and formal partnerships; and have the potential to make future contributions.
Template

• ORS has a template for each competition (available grants@uvic.ca)
• Use this to guide your writing
• Web-based instructions provide further guidance for what is needed
Proposal Layout inside the template

• Don’t squeeze so many words onto a page that the whole thing becomes a nightmare to read.
• A well-laid out proposal says to a committee “this person knows what they are talking about and they have taken as much care with their proposal as we are now doing.”
Committees are non-specialists

- Assessors may have the kind of specialized knowledge you need, but a committee will not
- Provide a rapid introduction for intelligent non-specialists
- Provide appropriate references
Logical and Connected Proposal

• Present research plans coherently, as a set of problems
• In a logical and connected order
• Point to where future research would go
• Always state the central problem of your work and why it is important
Critiques

• If you are critiquing existing models or approaches in the literature,
  – Do so lucidly, without partisanship, and
  – Demonstrate clearly why your approach is better.

• Be precise
New Research Direction
Insight Development

• If you are departing from your earlier work, make it clear that you have done your homework in your new area
• Literature surveys are essential
Practicality, Training, Publication

• Show practical applications of your work where appropriate
  – Training opportunities for your students
  – How these will be provided, institutional and other support

• Be precise about dissemination and communication
  – Names of likely journals, conferences, publishers
  – Probable publication sequence over the period of the grant and beyond
Team Research Insight and Partnership grants

• In some cases, the existence of a team (interdisciplinary or otherwise) will be helpful

• Show
  – How you will put it together
  – The contributions of each part
  – How it will help in training students, or how it will help a new scholar (or one who is starting up again) to integrate into the research world
Track Record

• Be clear about what’s a book, a chapter, a report, a talk, and “other scholarly production” (e.g., videos). Add appropriate ‘grey’ literature.

• Do **not** fudge contributions – co-authored means specifying how much was your contribution; forthcoming means accepted for publication, etc.

• Quality counts more than quantity

• Explain your restrictions if publications are limited
Special Circumstances

• Explain teaching loads, class sizes, administrative obligations, serious illness, and other relevant matters crisply and matter-of-factly

• Don’t apologize or editorialize – make a succinct case
Budget

• Do not inflate or underestimate
• Use quotations from UVic and (e.g.) Expedia to justify costs
• Don’t expect to get money for “fishing trips”
• Keep equipment budgets to a minimum
• Justify travel money for student or RA
• Secure other financial support if you can
• Provide information about where else you are looking for support (or why not)
Adjudication Committees

• Most of these committees are interdisciplinary; some have non-academics on them. They are your audience, so find out what you can.

• Committees get tired and impatient with complex obscure language, typos, poorly laid-out or explained budgets, and incomplete information.
Provide Information Clearly

• Committees are not only not infallible and tired, they are also starting with imperfect information about you and your institution
• Give them the information you know is essential to your case, straightforwardly and without editorializing
My Favourite Tip

• Ask a friend who is not overly familiar with your research to read your proposal some day/evening when he/she is tired and see if it makes sense
• Then ask your friend to tell you which bits are confusing, or that had to be read twice
• Then sit down again and work on getting rid of the jargon, or the long sentences, or …
Final Observations

• Grant competitions are still going to be, on occasion, unfair
• After one rejection, do not despair, sulk, or get angry…or at least, not for long
• There will be comments that come with the decision
• Take the advise that makes sense to you; ponder the rest, and then accept or reject it
QUESTIONS?