

SSHRC Workshop: Methodology

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Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Agenda

- ❖ 1:30 to 2:15 p.m.
 - ❖ Tips, tricks and examples for:
 - ❖ Articulating your research questions
 - ❖ Framing your objectives
 - ❖ Presenting your methodology
- ❖ 2:15 to 3:00 p.m.
 - ❖ Q & A, discuss and share
- ❖ Optional: 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.
 - ❖ Working session

Detailed Description: SSHRC Instructions

- ❖ **Write your proposal in clear, plain language.** Avoid jargon, acronyms and highly technical terms. Not all committee members will have an intimate knowledge of the subject matter of all proposals
- ❖ **Using the headings below,** describe the proposed research in enough detail to allow informed assessment by committee members:
 - ❖ *Objectives*
 - ❖ *Context*
 - ❖ *Methodology*
- ❖ Your detailed description **must address the Challenge and Feasibility evaluation criteria** listed in the funding opportunity description...

Detailed Description: a Few Other Things to Consider

- ❖ Core of the application
- ❖ Assessed using two of three evaluation criteria (challenge, feasibility)
- ❖ No external assessors for the IDG
- ❖ Perspective:
 - ❖ Imagine you are a reviewer
 - ❖ No *definitive* right way to present your proposal (but definitely a few wrong ways to go about it)
- ❖ Language and style are critical — variety; strong, inspiring verbs; active voice; confident; energetic; engaging

Research Questions / Statements

- ❖ Set the stage with a brief introduction:
 - ❖ What's the problem?
 - ❖ Why should we care?
 - ❖ Communicate the importance of your work

- ❖ Articulate your proposed research as questions or statements — either format works as long they're clear, succinct and achievable

- ❖ Use the research questions / statements to segue into the Objectives
or

- ❖ Frame the objectives as research questions / statements

Objectives (What)

- ❖ What will your project do to address the problem?
- ❖ What will your project achieve?
- ❖ Are your objectives clear, concise, easily identified?
- ❖ Are they feasible (considering timeframe, resources, capacity of PI / team / personnel)?
- ❖ No magic number; typically two or three objectives maximum

Methodology (How)

- ❖ Detailed plan that outlines how you will achieve the objectives (who, what, where, when)
- ❖ Demonstrate it's feasible — work plan, table, break down by year, activities, phases
- ❖ Justify the chosen methods
- ❖ Presentation *does* make a difference — logical, easy to follow, spacing, sub-headings, highlight key phrases and activities and tie them to objectives

Timeline

- ❖ A timeline is required for an IDG, but can be a strategic choice in IGs or other SSHRC applications
- ❖ The timeline should state what tasks will be done at different stages of the project, and some PIs also include who will perform each task
- ❖ Be specific: an unclear timeline may make the project seem unfeasible in the allotted time

Gleanings from Successful Applicants

- ❖ Be creative; capture the reviewers' attention
- ❖ Your application needs to be great, not just good; language is important
- ❖ Adjudication committees are interdisciplinary to varying degrees; simplify statements and avoid jargon to ensure your proposal is accessible
- ❖ The significance and benefits should jump off the page
- ❖ Give the nuts and bolts when describing community engagement
- ❖ Leave a bit of white space so reviewers can take a break
- ❖ Use the prescribed headings to make natural breaks in the text
- ❖ Most reviewers are reading applications on screen so you could use colour and figures

Resources

- ❖ [U of S Internal Review](#)
- ❖ [U of S Research Facilitation](#)
- ❖ [U of S Grants Repository](#)
- ❖ [Research – Archived Resources](#)
- ❖ SSHRC's [Resource Centre for Grants](#)
- ❖ SSHRC Program Officers
 - ❖ insightgrants@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca (613) 996-6976
 - ❖ insightdevelopment@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca (613) 996-6976
 - ❖ Previous U of S recipients and adjudicators