The Joys and Tears in Preparing GRF Proposals

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Writing a good proposal is not easy!
Why should we do it?

- Winning GRF is the dream of every good researcher
- A major element in many RAE internationally
- Good for individuals
- Good for Department
- Good for University
- An element in the Research Threshold

Can we do it?

- Policy shift: larger funding scale for each project
- Lower success rate, increasingly difficult
- Despite these, we won 4-5 GRF each year
  - 5 out of 23 in 2009/10
  - 4 out of 21 in 2010/11
Number of Successful Proposals

Prof. Q.P. Shen, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2010

Success Rate

Prof. Q.P. Shen, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2010
What support can you get?

- Peer review of your draft proposal
- Proof-reading/technical editing
- Examples of successful proposals
- Experience-sharing sessions
- Discussions on intended submissions

- HK$200,000 for every successful proposal
- HK$50,000 for every fundable but not funded
- 42 hours of teaching relief for winning GRF

- What else do you need?

What constitutes a good proposal?

- Research topic
  - Build on what you have done in the past, natural extension
  - Describe the problem you will address in this proposal
- Title of your project
  - Keep it precise and brief
- Abstract
  - Make it understandable to the non-specialists
- Research objectives
  - Keep it clear and explicit
  - No more than three objectives
- Significance of the research
  - Explain why your research is valuable/significant
What constitutes a good proposal?

- Review of relevant works (inc. refs)
  - Conduct a comprehensive and critical review of what has been done in the field
  - Identify gaps in previous research
- Research methodology
  - Explain what methods you are going to use
  - Why these methods were chosen
  - How they are going to be used in your research
- Research plan
  - Divide your research works into manageable tasks
  - Use a Gantt chart to plan your progress

What Qs we should ask ourselves?

- Is the project meaningful or worthwhile?
- Have you identified a problem?
- Have you put down explicit and adequate number of research objectives?
- Have you explained the specific research methodology to be used and why and how?
- Can you draw a logical conclusion from your data collection and analysis?
- Can you convince the readers about the need and the possible success of the project?
- Have you obtained sufficient support from industry collaborators?
FAQs

- When should we start preparing proposals?
- How much should we ask for?
- Should I put down referees?
- Should I invite leading scholars in my team?
- Should I apply for human ethics approval?
- Do I need support from Government/industry?
- Does luck play a part in this exercise?

- What else?