



Open advice to Google Faculty Research Awards proposal writers

As a part of the group of engineers that review proposals for this program, we read a lot of proposals. We'd like to read more good proposals. Over time this program has become more and more competitive. Here's some advice on how you can improve the content of your short proposal and make reviewing it easier.

A good research grant proposal:

- *Clearly specifies a problem.* Good research is driven by a great problem or question, and a good proposal starts with a clearly specified one.
- *Describes a specific, credible, relevant outcome.* Try to identify a specific and appropriately sized outcome, to give us a clear notion of what the research award would be enabling. What will likely come to be that might otherwise not happen? While this outcome should be a decisive step towards achieving your vision, it generally won't be adequate to completely achieve it. It often helps to describe both the minimum that is likely to be accomplished and a potential best-case. Since picking the right datasets and test cases is often important, tell us which ones you plan to use.
- *Crisply differentiates the proposed contribution from prior work.* Please apply normal practices (citations, etc.) for documenting how your work will materially advance the state of the art. Make it clear how your work will be changing the state of the art, and not simply trying to match it.
- *Tells us how the research challenge(s) will be addressed.* Successful research projects combine a great problem with ideas for solutions, too. We recognize that all the answers won't be known yet, but we'd like to feel that the direction has been established, and a plausible path has been identified. (Try to avoid proposals of the form "We want to look at problem X".) It's hard to have a big impact without taking risks, but please identify what the difficulties are likely to be and how you plan to mitigate them. It may help to explain how you succeeded in addressing such problems in other projects.
- *Puts the proposed work in context.* We are often asked to support work that would go ahead even if we can't fund it, but we prefer to enable research that might otherwise

not be possible. To clarify which this is, please explain what funding you already have for this area of research and how the proposal relates to your existing plans. Do you plan to build a capability for other research, provide a tool, reproduce a prior result, collaborate with others to try something out, follow up on a promising idea, or explore a new one? All are potentially of interest; we just want to know.

- *Makes the case to a non-expert.* While we try to have your proposal reviewed by a Google expert in your field, it will also be read by non-experts, so please make at least the motivation and outcomes broadly accessible.

One last note, please try to find a sponsor inside Google and ask them to provide feedback on your proposal before you submit it. Of course, you can still get funded even without a Google sponsor. But if you don't have a sponsor, following the recommendations above will improve your chances of getting funded.

Thanks for reading. We're looking forward to your [proposal](#)!

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