10 reasons why KVPY should accept you project

**Innovative:**

Your project has got to be something different. It has to be something that strikes the reviewers as being new, well-thought out and thus, reflect to them the fact that you happen to have a bright mind and a sharp one too. One of the projects that a friend made, which made it till the interviews but did not get selected in the final draw was acknowledged by the interview board to be one of the most intriguing studies they had ever come across. It was: “Acquisition of Homosexuality in Adolescents: A Risk Factor Stratification: Is it Environmental?”

“**So what?”**

Your study should answer the question “SO what?” By that, I mean that when you present your study and someone asks you “So what?” you should have a cogent reply to that. Lots of studies are being done which do not really have any outcomes, any impacts or effects whatsoever! It’s useless to submit such a project for the KVPY, nay; it’s useless to submit it anywhere for anything!

**Potential for further studies**

One of the major objectives driving research is that one study should form the basis for another one. Research should spawn more research, and thereby add to the body of knowledge. If your study happens to have dead end findings, either you are in line for a Nobel Prize, or…

**KISS**

Acronym for Keep It Short & Simple (I find saying Stupid on the last S a waste of an S.)

Need I say more?

**Presentation**

A last moment paper, written hurriedly, filled with typos, poor formatting, badly arranged headers, etc. is an eyesore. No one likes to see such a paper. Whilst I do not suggest that you should go to the extent of making a great expenditure to beautify your report, it should be neat and clean. Professional. If you are not sure how a paper should look, go download a paper from NEJM (www.nejm.org) or The Lancet (www.thelancet.com) or any other reputed Biomedical Journal and download a research paper and see how theirs are formatted. However, stick to any specifications for the KVPY.

**Methodology**

The key to a good study is proper methodology. A messy methodology not only clouds proper conclusion and decision making, but also raises serious aspersions on the originality and genuineness of the study. For example, I went to a research conference where someone presented a study where, he showed that there were 50 normal pregnancies and 50 eclamptic ones (which he encountered in 2 months’ time). Now the questions raised in this regard are:

Were the eclamptic patients not managed? It is unlikely to let 50 patients develop eclampsia at a tertiary care center over a period of 2 months only. This shows really poor obstetric management.

Did the study properly define eclampsia? Or were they just severe pre-eclampsia?

Did the researcher DO the study at all or was he just bluffing numbers?

And of all the questions asked, the last one is almost always deadly, lethal, so to say. No one looks kindly upon a researcher who cooks his books.

**Feasible and Realistic**

Well, if you want to do a study on induced pluripotent stem cells and happen to be a student in a rural medical college or one like mine where research labs are not that great, then, that is evidently not going to happen. Whilst it’s never bad to dream big, one should also remember the realistic bindings and issues as well. Otherwise, a great project will be envisioned, and never executed. And no one appreciates work you never did.

**Applications**

The KVPY application forms are an extensive exercise, and the applicants would be well advised to write them with a lot of thought, and imagination, if I might add. Questions like “What medical innovation has inspired you most?” or “What did you learn while doing this project?” or “Name a medical instrument that intrigues you and say why?” are often incorporated in them, eliciting, unknown to the student, and a graphic detail about him/her. So, by the time you get selected and reach the interview board, the interviewers know you well enough.

So, think before you leap!

Another thing that I almost messed up was the online application which I had to submit almost at the last moment; because I was not aware it existed. Thankfully, I managed to get things done properly and thereafter it was smooth sailing, but it is highly unadvisable to do that!

**Recommendations**

Can one ever over emphasize the need for a set of good letters of recommendation backing up his or her application? A recommendation that marks you the highest marks on all the factors is not always the best one. But, rather, the best one is where the recommenders’ assessment is at par with the recomendee’s assessment. For example, after I got selected for the interview, my recommender told me that he had written that he thought that though I have a poor hold over biostatistics, my strength lies in my ability to innovate and bypass problems using novel approaches, something I had also admitted in my application. So, ask your recommenders to give an honest opinion. It works.

**The X-Factor**

One can list reasons after reasons, but never come up with the perfect algorithm that can determine which project goes through and which does not. However, the X-Factor is something which is not within our powers to control, and hence, is best not bothered about.

# ELIGIBILITY

Stream SP (Basic Sciences): Students enrolled in XI/XII standard, I/II year (B.Sc./B.S./Int. M.Sc.) in Basic Sciences during the academic year 2010 – 2011 and have secured a minimum of 60% (50% for SC/ST) marks in aggregate in the X & XII Standard Board Examinations. A hard copy of an original and creative science based research project done by the applicant is required along with the application. In addition to this, students enrolled in I/II year B.E./B.Tech./B.Arch. during the academic year 2010–2011 and have secured a minimum of 60% (50% for SC/ST) marks in aggregate in X and XII Standard Board Examinations. Students enrolled in the II year B.E./B.Tech./B.Arch. program  must have secured a minimum of 60% (50% for SC/ST) marks in the I year examination. A hard copy of an original and creative science based research project done by the applicant is required along with the application

Note for Students applying for  Stream SP (Basic Sciences)

This has been started in order to  recognize and encourage creative and innovative talent of youngsters. The project done by the applicant as a part of this application must be based on a novel and innovative idea. The project can be experimental or theoretical in nature. However, the project must show that the applicant is creative and adventurous, and ready to explore. The project should not merely reflect use of certain techniques or reporting of routine experimentation, an improvement of an existing product or a technique may be accepted provided such improvement involves originality and creativity. One may try to incorporate some addition to the design or practical implementation that improves an existing technique. The main criteria that would be followed for selection for the interview would be originality and innovation. Only after these criteria are met, the level of sophistication and the nature of the project would be taken into consideration.

SP (Basic Sciences) and SP (Medicine)

KVPY applicant is required to submit the project report, chosen and executed by the candidate exclusively for this application. The projects done jointly with other candidates are not considered for KVPY Fellowship award. Applicant’s creativity and originality should be amply reflected in the project. This project has to be supervised by a teacher/professional in the relevant field. Based on the project submitted and scrutiny of the  application form, short listed candidates will be called for an interview, which is the final stage of the selection procedure. The interview will be conducted at IISc, Bangalore during the month of December 2010 or  January 2011.

Please Note that applications without the project report will not be considered. The project should not be a routine one (such as measuring a well known property of a material) The supervising teacher / professional is required to provide a recommendation letter certifying the extent of the applicant’s original contribution in the project.

Last date for receipt of the request for application form.        By post : 01 September 2010        In person at IISc : 09 September 2010 • Last date for closing of Online application : 09 September 2010 • Last date for receipt of the completed application (both Online/Hard Copy along with cast certificate, project report and processing fee)

* What sort of project would be preferred (a working model or theoretical study?)
* Is there a word limit for the project report?
* Is it compulsory to have a blue print of some proposal which has not been tried before?
* Should the project strictly deal with a theme or a topic?   
    
  Answers to 6, 7, 8 and 9:   
  We look for evidence of originality and innovativeness in the project. It should be precise, demonstrable if it is an experiment. It should have a new idea or a new concept, if it is a theoretical study. Routine improvement of an existing idea is generally discouraged.