

# Professional Development

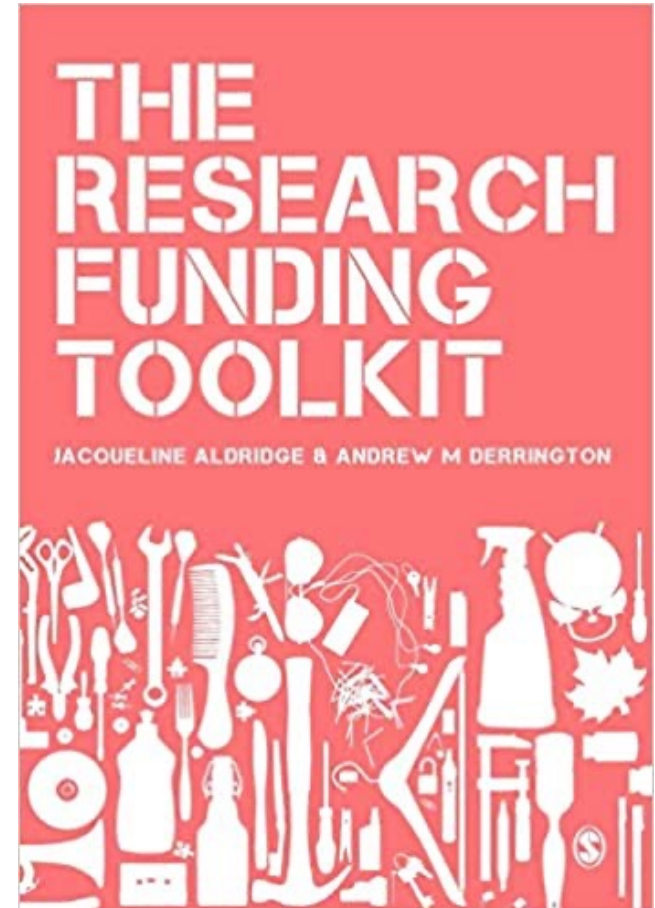
## Write a Research Proposal

Week 2: What should be in a Research Proposal?

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# Useful Reading

- Much of the material comes from chapter 7 of this book.
- Really useful summary of *“how to say what needs to be said in the case for support”*
- Read / scan chapter 7 of this book.
- I will try to summarise it here



# The 'fundable' project

Recall the 4 propositions

- Importance – this proposal asks an important question
- Success – this project is likely to answer the question
- Value – the likely gain is worth the resources requested
- Competence – the applicant (and team) are competent

# *The Case for Support*

- This is the heart of the application and this is what we are focussed on producing in the tutorials.
- Its role:
  - **‘Foot in the door’** – excite readers about your research plans and provide a preview of the project
  - **‘We have a problem’** – that needs a research project to solve it
  - **‘this project is the solution’** – convince decision makers that your project should go ahead.

# A 'foot in the door'

(from Research Toolkit)

- Probably around 20% of the full proposal
- Supports the 'importance' and 'success' propositions.
- Need to get readers excited, and preview information you will present later.
- Three stages to get foot in the door:
  - Attention and orientation
    - first sentence is crucial!!
    - Must be simple – get straight to the point
  - Importance of the question
    - Summarise why it is important to know the answer
  - Previewing the project.
    - Say what you will do in the project. These can be framed as activities or questions you will address.
    - You can also state how people will benefit from the project here.

# ‘We have a Problem’

## (from Research Toolkit)

- About 30% of your proposal
- Supports all 4 propositions.
- Use literature / arguments to show:
  - This problem needs solving - importance
  - You have the skills / experience to solve it - competence
  - The project is the best way to solve it – success and value
- Problem needs solving
  - Stick to evidence, don't over do it!
  - Limitations of existing methods?
- You are the person to solve
  - Harder for you guys, but have a think about what you can say here
  - Can you say why an approach is preferred over another from knowledge you have from other modules?
- The project is the best way to solve it
  - State your objectives.
  - This communicates the scale of the project to reader
  - and allows them to assess whether it is feasible.

# 'This project is the solution'

(from Research Toolkit)

- About 50% of your proposal
- Supports all success, competence and value propositions
- Detailed description of the work plan
  - Methods – can keep short – sometimes best to talk about methods with the activities.
  - How you will conduct each component of activity, including resources required
  - Timings / duration
  - What you will do with the knowledge produced
- Some notes
  - Activities – consistency: use same headings as research questions / objectives
  - Most important part – needs to be clear. Include enough information so that it can be replicated.
  - Descript the research activity
  - Say what each activity will tell us, and how you will arrive at the answer.
- What you will do with the knowledge?
  - Academic dissemination through thesis / dissertation?
  - Disseminate to the public? Pint of science? Etc, etc.

# Main points

- The nuts and bolts of what goes in a research proposal
- Everything supports the 4 key propositions
  - Importance
  - Success
  - Value
  - Competence
- Three sections
  - ‘foot in the door’ – 20%
  - ‘we have a problem’ – 30%
  - ‘this project is the answer’ – 50%
- Toy research problem: discuss in groups a toy research problem.  
Speed proposal writing



# Toy research problem

- Preventing dog poo in residential areas.
- Speed proposal writing...
  - Create the three sections
  - Produce bullet points for each section
  - Discuss the research methods / activities – put them in
  - We will do this in breakout groups and discuss