

# Writing Successful Research Proposals

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**Where will your Deans' Summer Research Fellowship take you? Applications due March 3.**

**Funding for Undergraduate Research**  
Applications for URS travel grants are now open. [Read More...](#)  
Summer fellowship applications open on December 2, 2013.

**Announcements:**

**Dr. Grunwald and Dr. Moskovitz will host a "Writing Successful Proposals" workshop in February.**

**Session 1: What is a successful research grant proposal?**  
Monday, Feb. 3, 11:00-12:00 in 270 Gross Hall, OR  
Tuesday, Feb. 4, 4:30-5:30 in BioSci 144

**Session 2: Revising your proposal to make it successful.**  
Tuesday, Feb. 25, 3:00-4:30 in BioSci 0076, OR Friday, Feb. 26, 11:00-12:30 in BioSci 0076

**Visible Thinking, Duke's showcase of undergraduate research will take place on Tuesday, April 22 2014.**

# What are reviewers looking for?

*In 4 minutes:*

Make a list of the **top four** big questions/criteria reviewers will use to judge your proposal.

# Answer #1

## Who is Your Faculty Mentor?



# Who is Your Faculty Mentor?

All Duke-sponsored grants require a Duke faculty mentor

[undergraduateresearch.duke.edu/started/faculty-research-links](http://undergraduateresearch.duke.edu/started/faculty-research-links)

- **Expertise:** *knowledge of the literature & methods*
- **Guidance:** *feedback on your proposal & project*
- **Resources:** *connections, equipment, \$\$*
- **Credentials:** *permits, IRB certification*
- **Ongoing mentoring:** *honors thesis, publication*

# Answer #2

## Is it worth doing?



# Is it worth doing?

What is the overall goal of this research?

What are the "big questions" in your discipline that you expect to address?

How does your proposed research relate to the work of others in this field? Are you contributing something novel?

Why is it important? What are your expected outcomes?

# Exercise 1

**Is it worth doing?  
Selling the project**

# Answer #3

Is it doable?





# Is it doable?

## Evidence that this can really happen

### Methods – Short-term, Specific Aims

- Driven by your big question & hypothesis  
*avoid fishing expeditions!*
- What exactly will you do?  
*where, who, how, when*
- Why use those methods?  
*eg., survey vs. ethnography vs. documentary*

# Is it doable?

This summer, I will focus on the activism surrounding Foxconn factories, and specifically look at Hong Kong, the center of labor activism in China, as well as three cities with Foxconn branches: Shenzhen, Chengdu, and Kunshan. ... I am interested in the activists' backgrounds, how they build their campaigns, how they publicize their activities, and what their specific organizing and networking strategies are. ... By examining both the activists and the workers, my research aims to understand the movement in a more comprehensive manner.

This will be a qualitative research project, utilizing interviews and participant observation as the central methods of information gathering. I will be based in Hong Kong for the duration of my nine-week stay, and take five-day trips to each of the three cities listed above. First, I will begin by analyzing the activism work done in Hong Kong, specifically looking at SACOM, a Hong Kong-based non-profit organization founded in 2005 that aims to bring students, scholars, labor activists, and consumers together to monitor corporate behavior and to advocate for the rights of Chinese migrant workers. I plan to conduct in-depth interviews, each with an individual activist or through attending and participating in staff meetings. For the interviews, I will prepare a set of predetermined questions, but mostly allow the interview the freedom and adaptability to unfold on its own. ...

# Is it doable?

## Evidence that this can really happen

### Resources

- Logistics: *equipment & materials, housing, transport, food & medical support*
- Partners: *Local officials, NGOs, collaborators*
- Permissions: *IRB (Institutional Review Board), travel permits, archives, collection*
- Time: *travel time, acclimation, downtime*

# Is it doable?

I am confident I will be able to work with SACOM and other labor NGOs, because my research advisor, Professor Ralph Litzinger, who is also an advisor at SACOM, and I have already been in contact with the organization about my research plan. Additionally, after helping to invite Mr. Han Dongfang, an advocate for workers' rights in China and a founding member of the Hong Kong based China Labor Bulletin, to Duke as a guest speaker for this year's China Leadership Summit, I have already established connections with him. These relations are extremely valuable in executing my research plans.

# Is it doable?

## Evidence that this can really happen

### Make a Budget

- Detailed: *exactly what you need*
- Real costs: *document, avoid estimates*
- Allowed expenses: *eg, no personal items*
- Justification: *connect to your proposal*
- Complete: *all expenses, even if not funded*
- Other Income: *list all sources, co-funding is ok!*

# Presenting a Budget

**Budget Total:** \$ 5,000      **Location:** Africa      **Dates:** 5/15/12 – 7/15/12

**Travel:**                      \$2,000 airfare  
                                      \$500 in-country travel

**Food:**

**Lodging:**                      \$500 room and board (2 months)

**Supplies & Equipment:** \$500 vaccinations and malaria meds (coartem), \$1,000 start-up expenses: visa, cell phone, mosquito net, room and board during orientation, assistant stipend, \$500 miscellaneous (phone credit, weekly supplies, internet, emergency needs)

**Additional funding sources (applied):**

**Budget Total:** \$ 5,000.00      **Location:** Africa      **Dates:** 06/03/12 – 08/02/12

**Travel:**                      Flight from Grand Forks, ND (GFK Airport) to Accra International Airport: \$2,470  
                                      In-country travel (daily travel throughout Accra to partnering institutions): \$240

**Food:**                         One meal per day not covered by host family:  
                                      \$3/day for 60 days: \$180

**Lodging:**                      Homestay Fee (includes 2 daily meals):  
                                      \$25/day for 60 days: \$1,500  
                                      Veronica and Edmond Kumordzie  
                                      Mempasem, Accra

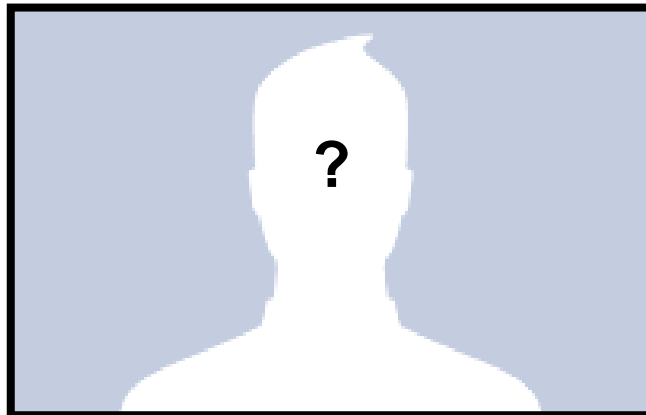
**Supplies & Equipment:** Visa: \$60  
                                      Health and Medication (anti-malarial): \$60  
                                      Ghanaian cellphone: \$60  
                                      Internet: \$60  
                                      Assistant Stipend: \$150 (This money would be used to fund the transportation and assistance of a Ghanaian to help me around Accra when going to new partner institutions. A part-time assistant was tremendously helpful when conducting this research previously.)  
                                      Misc supplies: \$100 (field notebooks, recorder, etc.)  
                                      Unanticipated Need: \$120

**Additional funding sources (applied):**

Duke Civic Engagement Summer	3,000.00	Duke Global Health Institute	5,000.00
International Studies Overseas Summer	3,000.00		

# Answer #4

Can you pull it off?



# Can you pull it off?

## Evidence of intellectual skills

- Relevant coursework
- Depth of thought evident in proposal



# Can you pull it off?

## Evidence of Social skills

Language skills

Prior relevant experience in this (or similar) context

Savvy identification and consideration of social issues in proposal

- Potential cultural challenges
- Potential language challenges
- Potential travel challenges (*ITOC approval*)

# Can you pull it off?

Lastly, my fluency in Chinese will allow uninhibited communication with the activists and the migrant workers. Conducting interviews in the informants' native language is also beneficial in building trust and yielding thorough and accurate knowledge. Additionally, having conducted a Duke Engage independent project as well as studied abroad in China, I have had experience with traveling and working on my own in China. I am familiar with the customs and I am confident in my ability of getting around in the city and traveling in between cities.

# Can you pull it off?

## Evidence of care and attention to detail

The proposal!

- Did you provide all information requested?
- Does the budget indicate that you have done your homework?
- Is the proposal thoroughly proofread and edited?

# How to write a first-rate proposal

1. Get a mentor.
2. Make a checklist of things to figure out, things to do, and things to include. (Keep a close eye on the grant guidelines!)
3. Write a first draft well before the deadline.
4. Get as much good feedback as possible.
5. Attend workshop #2 (Feb 25/28).
6. Revise!
7. Proofread and edit like crazy!

## Session 2

# Revising your proposal to make it successful

Wed, Feb 22: 11:30 - 1 ON **WEST** - Old Chem 025

Thurs, Feb 23 11:30 - 1 ON **EAST** - Carr 125