CCEL Grant Writing Toolkit
Overview

About the Grants
Our grants program was purposefully created to help you learn throughout your grants experience. We want the skills and experiences you acquire to help you become a more dynamic, flexible, engaged and thoughtful leader – from the moment you begin your application, until long after your project has ended. As a result, our application, adjudication and reporting process is designed to be transparent and easy to understand.

You are welcome, at all stages, to ask for help.

Successful proposals promote sustainable social justice and/or environmental goals and foster strong, long-term partnerships between UBC and the community.

Are You Eligible?
All grants have eligibility criteria that must be met by the applicant(s). Take the time to review the applicant and project criteria by the granting body.

CCEL’s grants have detailed criteria which must be met in order to be considered for a grant. Please review the Eligibility Guidelines.

If you have questions about your eligibility for the Connect to Community (C2C) or Chapman and Innovation Grants (C&I) you should contact CCEL at community.learning@ubc.ca.

Use of the Toolkit
This toolkit is designed to give you a basic understanding of what is expected in each section of the application. An explanation for each section is provided, alongside some ideas for how to get started.

We suggest you read the entire toolkit first, and then work-on completing one section of the application at time, using the toolkit as a reference. Focus on completing a single section first, before moving on to the next section. Don’t worry about completing each section in order; start where you feel most inspired. Once you finish your application, read it through to check for consistency. Links to additional, reputable resources are provided, should you need them.

The toolkit will also provide you with some basic grant writing concepts that can be applied to the broader granting world, should you wish to apply for other funding, but is by no-means a comprehensive guide to grant writing. If you’re interested in learning more grant writing skills, consider taking part in one of workshops.

Note: This toolkit is designed for the Chapman and Innovation Grants. The Connect to Community application does not include all sections listed in this toolkit. Follow your application package and skip to the appropriate sections.
General Grant Writing Tips

Adapted from a presentation by Sarah Dobson.

- Make your grant proposal easy to read and simple to understand. The people reading your application are humans with other proposals to read and busy lives to lead. Ask yourself: is my proposal easy enough to be read and understood by someone outside of my field, who is tired? Have a friend or family member read it for you.

- Strong grants should be able to pass the “skim test”, where someone skimming your application could quickly get a general idea of your project idea, proposed activities and expected outcomes by simply skimming through the text. Ask yourself: is my proposal clear enough to be understood quickly, by someone skimming the text, who knows nothing about me, the community partner, or my project?

- Anticipate questions and make connections for the reader. Think ahead to where they might get confused and answer those questions for them in clear, simplistic language. Ask yourself: if I didn’t know anything about this project, what concerns or questions would I have?

- Make your writing clear. Use active voice and plain language. Be consistent in your word choice and definitions. Describe things. Eliminate redundant sentences and words. Ask yourself: could someone not affiliated with my project explain what we’re doing after reading my proposal?

- Make the writing strong: tell a story, be compelling, and persuade the reader. Describe the stakes of not doing your project. Explain why your project matters. What will happen if life continues the way it is, and what could happen if your project intervenes? Provide evidence for your thinking.

- Remember: the funder is looking to fund projects that align with their objectives. Make sure your proposal aligns with the funders goals. Use the funder’s language and clearly show how your project connects with the fund’s objectives.

- Make sure your proposal is internally consistent. Do the objectives match the community need you’ve described? Does the budget match the proposal? Does the timeline match the budget? Does the team match the project?
Application Categories

Project Summary

Executive Summary
For many funders, the executive summary is the most important aspect of a grant application because it provides a clear and detailed overview of the proposed project idea and activities, alongside a brief description of the roles of the initiating organizations (you and your off-campus partner). Often, funders use the executive summary to gauge whether or not a proposal is worth reading in its entirety. Thus, a strong executive summary is an essential component of a successful grant application, serving as a succinct, but formal, introduction to your organization, your project and your proposed outcomes.

Imagine an executive summary as the blurb that is shared in newsletters, on websites and distributed to brag about the great work you are doing. Executive summaries should contain details about:

1) Who you are and who you are partnering with
2) The problem
3) Key components of your project
4) The approach you are taking and why it matters
5) How your partnership is well-suited to address this issue

Consider writing the executive summary last, once you have a strong sense of your project idea, timeline, budget and partnership.

From the Grant:

Q1: Provide an executive summary of your project. (Note: Word count is grant specific)

Project Description/ Overview
Provide a high level view of your project. Imagine these sentences to be used as an introduction to your work in your elevator pitch or a conference introduction. The specificity in this section does not need to get into the nitty gritty, instead should focus on a birds-eye summary of the work taking place.

For example, “where” the project is happening should not focus on the community centres’ address but instead can list the neighborhood of the city or the type of sites involved (i.e. community centres).

Avoid generalizations and “fluff”, get to the point and be pragmatic and factual.

The Problem
Some grants may call this section an opportunity statement. It offers you a chance to showcase the specific issue that is priority for community well-being, is amenable to change, and that you are looking to tackle. In preparing for this section and in the design of your proposal it should be clear that extensive research has been undertaken to understand the roots of the problem, previous solutions that were implemented as well as why they’ve not eliminated the problem.

Helpful questions to consider:
• When describing the problem, think about the information someone unfamiliar with your field needs to understand the importance of your initiative.
• What facts or stories are imperative to know to feel a sense of urgency?
• What information compelled you to take a bigger role in addressing this problem?

From the Grant:

Q3: What is the problem you have identified? What opportunity have you identified to make a difference in this selected area? (Note: Word count is grant specific)

Target Population
Clearly explain who’s affected and who will benefit from the project you are undertaking. Funders seek projects that align with their own mission and goals. For example, CCEL grants are focused on supporting students to “take initiative in tackling issues affecting under-represented populations in their local communities”. CCEL’s target population for our grants are students our goal is to: enable students’ broadened community perspectives; put theory into practice; and develop professional skills through hands-on projects. So, who is directly impacted by your work?

Paint a picture for the funder regarding the need for this project as related to this population.

Helpful questions to consider:
• Why have you selected this group to work with?
• What is the value for the individuals and the broader community?
• What are you able to learn through ethical engagement with this population?

From the Grant:

Q4: In five sentences or less, describe your project’s target population. Who is the population and what will they gain through your project? Why is it important to target this population?

Project Goals and Objectives
In the grant world, there is a notable difference between project goals and project objectives. Although similar, funders use these terms distinctly to specifically identify two separate ideas:

1. the broad ambitions of your project (called “goals”), and
2. the measurable initiatives of your project which will help you achieve your goals (called “objectives”)

Because this is not how we generally use these terms in everyday language, this can make this section particularly confusing for the novice grant writer. However, a simple way to think about these terms is visualized below:

Activities → Objectives → Goals

Activities are the tangible things you will physically do (ie. workshops, printing flyers, sending emails) to help you achieve your objectives.
Objectives are the anticipated metrics which will be used to measure whether or not you are working towards your broad goal. These are written in the S.M.A.R.T goal format: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-Bound.

Goals are the overall ambitions of your project. They are macro, eagle-eyed statements about what you hope to accomplish. Goals are not as specific as objectives (but should be within the scope of your project) and tend to be a bit loftier in their wording.

Below is an example of the difference in wording between goals and objectives in the grant world:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decrease the degree of malnutrition among young children in the southwest region of Baltimore.</td>
<td>By the end of year one (Time-Bound), provide 125 mothers (Measurable) in the southwest area of Baltimore (Specific) with a 2-hour training program that will provide health and nutrition information (Actionable + Realistic).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [https://www.thebalance.com/writing-goals-for-grant-proposal-2501951](https://www.thebalance.com/writing-goals-for-grant-proposal-2501951)

When completing this section, it is not only important to clearly identify your project goals and objectives, but also to demonstrate how those goals and objectives align with mandate of the grant you are applying for. In other words, how do your goals and objectives promote the goals and objectives of the granting organization? Use the funder’s language and clearly show these connections.

From the Grant:

Q5: Describe the goals and objectives of your project.

Project Activities and Timeline

This is where you get to share, in detail, what your project is and how your project will be implemented. In this section, be sure to elaborate on Who, What, Where, Why, When and How, giving the funder access to key information, such as dates, personnel, and activities in a chronological format. Use spacing and bold font to emphasize key information and connect your project details with your project goals and objectives. Use the same language throughout your application and make clear connections between activities and goals.

The best grant applications are engaging to the reader. They demonstrate passion for the initiative and often tell a story, rather than list details. Think about what would make your project compelling to someone who has zero experience in your field – what language, examples, ideas, outcomes, etc. would pique someone’s interest in what you’re doing?

Remember to write clearly, avoiding wordiness and specialist-jargon. Write for a broad audience and assume the funder knows nothing about you, your community partner or the problem you are working on. Instead of giving too much information, think about what information is fundamental, necessary and captivating. Make sure you speak to all three components of this section: (1) the project description (2) the timeline and (3) the major project milestones. What will you actually do? When will it happen?
Where will it take place? How will you do it? Why are you doing it? Give clear details, timelines and examples. Demonstrate how these actions align with your goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task (what)</th>
<th>Deadline (when)</th>
<th>Lead (who)</th>
<th>Details (how, where)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From the Grant:*

Q6: Provide a project timeline that outlines key milestones, major activities (workshops, campaigning, volunteer recruitment) and the who, what, where, when and how of your project.

**Innovation**

When investing in new projects, funders want to know: “What makes this project different compared to the hundreds of other projects tackling the same issue?” And “How do I know this innovation is worthwhile and that our money will actually make a difference in the community?” Use this section to specifically answer these questions for the funder.

- Spend time thinking about what skills, assets, programming, approach or resources make your project different from other projects addressing the same issue. Be sure to include that information.
- Think about why this solution – in your unique format- has not been implemented before? Why is there an opportunity to implement it now? Why haven’t other solutions fully alleviated the issue and how will your programming help fill a gap? Answer those questions for the funder.
- Articulate why you believe your approach is unique compared to other projects and why you believe this unique approach will be successful. Be specific.

*From the Grant:*

Q7: What makes your project unique or innovative? What other work is happening in this area and how is your project addressing this differently? Why do you think this approach is necessary? (Note: Word count is grant specific)

**Partnership Summary**

**Collaboration**

In this section, you are asked to provide a brief, but clear rationale for why your partnership is well-suited to design and implement your proposed project. In a few words, you are asked to state the strength of your relationship with your community partner, as well as identify any key skills, expertise, specializations or opportunities you, or your partners, bring to the table. Strong partnership statements show evidence of good collaboration between the student and partner, as well as evidence of how important skills and assets will be leveraged to help your project succeed.
First, describe the relationship you have with the partner organization and staff lead. Helpful questions to consider:

- How long have you worked together?
- What prompted you to start this initiative together?
- Which components of the project are you collaborating on?
- What is your process to gather feedback from the partner?

Second, describe the skills, expertise and connections your project will utilize to showcase how the two of you are best matched to tackle this problem. Helpful questions to consider:

- What are you both bringing to the table?
- Where do you fill in each other's gaps in knowledge and skill?
- How do you complement each other?
- How do you two provide a balanced and informed approach?

When describing your relationship with your community partner, think carefully about the adjectives that describe the special aspects of your partnership. Are you collaborative? Innovative? Synergistic? Cooperative? Reciprocal?

*From the Grant:*

**Q1:** Describe how you and your community partner are collaborating to develop this project. How will you work together to design and implement the project? How are you and your partner best positioned to initiate this project? (Note: Word count is grant specific)

**Impact**

Funders want to invest in projects that can continue to positively impact the community, long after the original funding runs out. This is because sustainable projects are often better for the overall health of a community, compared to projects where resources will disappear once the project is over. With this rationale in mind, think about how your project or the impacts/outcomes can be sustained once it ends and write a clear statement which answers the following: *What skills, resources or materials can the community continue to use after your project comes to a close? How will your project build the capacity of the community or the community organization once your project ends? How will your project benefit your community partner long-term?* Be sure to state the specific resources, materials, skills or expertise that makes your project sustainable.

Similarly, funders are interested in knowing exactly how your project will positively affect the community. Be as clear as possible, using numbers, wherever possible.

Helpful questions to consider:

- What is the substantial way your innovation and approach will produce positive change for the target population?
- How many people will you help and how?
- Why does this matter?
• What skills, resources or materials will the community gain?
• Why does this matter?

From the Grant:
Q2: Describe how your proposed project will meaningfully impact the community. How does the project connect with your community partner’s long-term goals? What are the short and sustainable benefits?

Ethical Engagement
Funders want to know that efforts will be made to show-up and engage in community in ways that value the members of that community, individually and as a whole. Engaging ethically takes intentional thought, practice and learning. Many projects tackle sensitive topics, request personal stories to be shared or work with vulnerable populations. These activities must be undertaken with forethought. Use this section as an opportunity to highlight the activities, literature, guidance, training you will seek, or offer to others to engage ethically through the duration of your project. This is also a great opportunity to highlight the depth of your relationship with your partner, who likely has a breadth of experience with the community.

From the Grant:
Q3: Describe how you and your community partner will ensure your project will respectfully engage with the community. (Note: Word count is grant specific)

Learning Summary
Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives is an internationally recognized tool used by educators to create and assess learning objectives and activities. The tool enables program planners to quickly, and purposefully think about the skills their participants will acquire by participating in their programs.

Bloom’s Taxonomy can be used in extensive ways, but for the purpose of our grant, we have two objectives: 1) to simply introduce you to Bloom’s Taxonomy (because it is utilized in many educational, non-profit, grant and professional settings and is super useful) and 2) to provide you with a tool that will help you craft thoughtful learning objectives for your proposed project.

Personal Learning
Have a look at Bloom’s Taxonomy of Verbs, and think about which word best describes the skill you and your participants will acquire. Notice that the verbs presented are all observable, and measurable; be sure that your learning objectives are the same.

• What will you learn by participating in this grant writing and project planning process?
• What will you learn through leading a project?
• What skills will you gain through the specific activities undertaken?

Identify skills that are meaningful to your professional, personal or academic journey. Further, be sure to select learning objectives that are realistic for the scope and scale of your project. It won’t be realistic within the scope to “Build research and evaluation skills” in a project that does not include a distinct and robust research component. It also isn’t realistic in the scale of a project to “Learn strategies that fix
homelessness”, although it is possible to “Learn effective ways to collaborate with a diversity of organizations to reduce hunger rates of homeless youth in Vancouver”.

From the Grant

Q1: CCEL grants are learning grants, driven to support student in building professional and personal skills. Set three (3) learning objectives for yourself as the project lead.

Assessment

Now that you have written learning intentions, think about the type of activities that will best enable you to accomplish those learning goals. How will you confirm your participants have learned something as a result of your initiative? How will you record your learning? Remember, activities don’t need to be academic or formal, but they should guide you and your participants towards the learning outcomes of your initiatives. Your learning/reflection opportunity should strategically match your learning objectives.

Some Learning Check-In Suggestions:

- An oral check-in
- A creation (poem, sign, writing, artwork etc)
- A survey
- A journal

From the Grant

Q3: Describe how you and your participants will demonstrate your learning. What specific opportunity will you provide to others and undertake yourself to discuss and process the project experience (e.g. blog, survey, reflection journal, and check-in).

Participant/ Audience Impact

- What are the participants gaining by participating in your project?
- For example, a participant can build awareness, learn strategies to X, identify how to better Y.
- What tools or measures will you embed in your project to assess the impact of the project?
- What is the value of this tool/measure for the community partner?

From the Grant

Q3: What are two ways you will measure impact on the participants or community members?

Budget

The budget is critical to show funders that your requests are reasonable compared to your project aims. Thus, crafting a quality budget, that benefits both the project team and the funding organization, requires strong estimates, based on strong research. You don’t want to shortchange your team, and you don’t want to be extravagant in your request to the funder.

Key tips include:
• Dedicate time to identify the actual cost of items. Funders understand this is an estimate but it should be a well-researched one.
• Use formulas to calculate line items and totals. This makes it easy to modify as you edit and helps the funder “see your work”.
• Key project activities should have a line items associated with it, even if the cost is zero ($0). This tells the funder that you have not overlooked the associated costs.
• In-kind costs such as donations and volunteer time are captured to assist the funder to know the full-scope of the project and to enable the replicability for future iterations of the project.
• All costs should be researched and not guessed (e.g. room booking costs are often available online and should be included with the level of accuracy available)
• Detailed descriptions allow the funder to understand how far each dollar is going. For example, $500 for a volunteer luncheon without a listed number of participants can place doubt into the use of funds. However, a description added that stated “Luncheon for 75 volunteers, includes pizza ($10x40) and veggie trays ($15x6)” paints a fuller picture.

You are required to use the template provided, but bear in mind that it is not necessary to include all the suggested categories: you can use more, less or different categories altogether to suit your project needs. Double check that your budget explicitly includes everything you need to complete your project.

*Please note:* Chapman and Innovation applicants are able to allocate up-to 30% of the total grant towards a personal stipend for participating in the project. This allocation is intended to reduce financial barriers towards project participation. Students are encouraged to use this allocation, if needed, without concern.

**Additional Items**
The following materials are required to complete your application for CCEL grants. All details regarding these materials can be found in the application package.

• Partnership Expectations Agreement
• Letter of Support
• Unofficial Transcript
• Proof of Enrollment
• Resume/CV

**Acknowledgements**
The team from the Centre for Community Engaged Learning would like express their sincere appreciation to Stéphanie Black and Jessica Sutherland for their valuable support during the planning and development of these grants.