risd/careers/
Proposal Development Considerations – Key Content

A grant proposal should include the **Key Content** below. Use these bullets as headers and respond to each to get started. This is in a sense a way for you to interview yourself. The process will help you develop your project, your writing, and ensure you are developing a compelling proposal.

Consider your audience carefully – is it reviewers in your discipline, academics, government officials, community members? If a variety of people from a variety of backgrounds will review your proposal, **write for the well-educated person and don't rely on exclusive art/design jargon.**

Follow the proper required formatting! If the formatting is up to you, consider Times New Roman 12-point font, single-spaced, 1 inch margins. Be sure to include a header with your name, project title, and date.

KEY CONTENT

- **Hook / Enticing Introduction:** A passionate/catchy opening (part or all of the introduction paragraph) to get the reader excited about or intrigued by your topic. Consider starting with a statement, question, story, or visual to draw in your reader. Give the readers a sense of what it is you want to learn and explore.

- **What / Overview:**   Within the first or second paragraph, provide a 2-3 sentence overview telling the reader what you are going to do. "I propose to X in order to X by doing X at X." AND, outline your goals for your grant within the first or second paragraph. This brief what, who, where why statement in sense acts as an index to the rest of your proposal. You'll spend later paragraphs explaining the details more fully. What are the questions you want to investigate?

- **Why:** What is the purpose of your project? Think of the Why section like a funnel. Start with the big picture and then narrow in – from the broader context to the location/community to you….

    - **Why / Context:** Provide needed background context and scale to inform the reader. Describe the problem or issue historically and/or currently, and who and what it affects. Include research that supports your statement to show your investment in the topic. Why is this important / relevant – to environment, to humans, to a community, to your field? What do you know now AND what do you want to explore and learn?
    - **Why This Location / Community:** Identify and defend/explain the location of the project. Why is this the perfect place for you to explore your topic? Why this community or this organization or these partners? What are they doing in terms of research or in addressing the above problem/issue outlined?
    - **Why You / Your Experience:** How does your current training relate to the project? What skills/experience do you have to make this possible and make your project a success? Address relevant education or employment experience and include any independent research experience.

- **How / Plan:** What exactly will you do and how? What is the nature of the project and what form will it take – study, independent research, and/or studio or field work? With whom? For whom? What support will you need and receive – mentorship, facilities access, resources, networking? What might you give back? Explain how your intended goals outlined above will be realized.

- **When / Timeline:** Outline a chronological breakdown of your plan. This timeline may be incorporated into the above how/plan or a separate paragraph. Depending on the grant, the time qualifiers may be open estimates such as "in the first two months" or "in the first third of the grant." While it is hard to be specific when the grant is not in the near future and there are so many unknowns, a timeline helps prove feasibility. This is where your reviewers can see your project happening.

- **So What / Results or Outcome:** What do you see happening at the end of your grant? How will your work, research, study culminate? Be specific as possible but show openness and flexibility. How will your work contribute to the community or organization or partners? How might you include them in the celebration of the accomplishments at the end of the grant? Talk about outputs (the actual things, products, services - the "stuff" that results from your work, research, study). Talk about outcomes (the benefits of your "stuff?" - the knowledge that is transferred or behaviors that are changed. Outcomes are the differences made by the outputs. Outcomes here should reflect your goals outlined in the first paragraphs. No new grant goals should come up at the end of your proposal.

- **Impact / Future Plans:** What is the bigger picture significance of this experience? How might your exploration and the results be applied back to similar communities and/or to your field of study or discipline? What contribution will this experience have on your future academic/artistic plans or professional development? How will this prepare you for your next steps? Long term goals that may become possible because of this grant may come up at the end of your proposal

Double check your ending! Do not wait until the final paragraphs to tell your readers what your grant goals are. If you see goal statements at the end, move them up to the first paragraphs.