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**Grant Writers' seminars return in October**

--- **Dawn Chalaire**

The Department of Scientific Publications is bringing back to MD Anderson the widely acclaimed “Write Winning Grant Proposals” and “Write Winning NIH Career Development Award Proposals” series of seminars, presented by John D. Robertson, PhD, of Grant Writers’ Seminars and Workshops. The two seminars address both practical and conceptual aspects of the proposal-writing process.

The “**Write Winning Grant Proposals**” seminar, which will take place on October 9 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., is a thorough description of what study sections look for in well-written
applications. This seminar will focus on

- writing for reviewers and engendering advocacy for funding
- developing ideas and organizing grant proposals using a linear progression of logic to guide reviewers through the application

In "Write Winning NIH Career Development Award Proposals," which will be held on October 10 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the presentation will focus on individual mentored training grants and Career Development Awards and is recommended for trainees, junior faculty members, and their mentors and/or advisors. This half-day seminar will include tips and strategies for

- requesting reference letters
- selecting a mentor
- using review criteria for writing a Career Development Award proposal
- deciding what type of research and training to include in the proposal

A significant discount will be offered to individuals who attend both seminars. Attendees will receive extensive handouts, including the slides and examples used during the seminars, as well as a copy of the Grant Application Writer’s Workbook.

For more information about Grant Writers’ Seminars and Workshops, visit www.grantcentral.com.

Priority registration for MD Anderson faculty and staff opened on Monday, July 10, 2017, and will last until Friday, August 11, 2017. The seminars will then be offered to people from other TMC institutions. The final cutoff for registration is Friday, August 25, 2017.

For details, contact John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

**Increase INTEREST in your grant proposals**

-- Don Norwood

As the amount of National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant money devoted to biomedical research has decreased over the past few years, the competition for that money has increased. Researchers need every possible advantage to have their studies funded. One vital advantage is a well-written proposal. Fortunately, MD Anderson has many resources for grant writers, a prime example of which is the Internal Review Study Section, or INTEREST.

The INTEREST program is open to all faculty at MD Anderson and is led by Sanjay Shete, PhD, a professor in the departments of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at MD Anderson and a member of the NIH National Advisory Board. It consists of a series of mock study section meetings in the same format as that of NIH study section meetings. In these meetings, researchers have their proposals presented and reviewed by MD Anderson faculty who have experience in securing extramural funding. By critically examining proposals just as NIH reviewers do, the INTEREST reviewers help applicants improve and enhance their proposals and gain a better understanding of how grant reviews work for both applicants and reviewers.
In preparation for the upcoming NIH grant submission deadlines in the fall, the INTEREST program is offering its next mock study section meeting on September 13. To be a part of this meeting, a faculty member must submit an intent form and a proposal abstract in PDF form to INTEREST@mdanderson.org by August 14. The deadline for submission of the full grant proposal, also in PDF form, is August 25.

Junior faculty who have never received an R01 grant must first submit their proposals to their department chairs or to one of the senior faculty in their departments or laboratories for preliminary review. Senior faculty and those who have received an R01 grant can submit their proposals directly to INTEREST@mdanderson.org.

Participants must attend the portions of the mock study section meetings in which their proposals are discussed. In addition to hearing the comments of the reviewers in the meeting, participants are given written critiques of their proposals.

Although the timing of the September 13 mock study section meeting was planned to help researchers prepare for the October/November NIH deadlines, proposals for other agencies also are reviewed in INTEREST meetings. Specifically, proposals for the American Cancer Society and the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas are eligible. Furthermore, not only R series NIH grant proposals but also K and P series proposals are reviewed.

You can obtain more information about INTEREST at https://myteams.mdanderson.org/cop/fc/SitePages/INTEREST.aspx.

**Academic search engine optimization: Help readers find your research**

--- *Sunita Patterson*

Search engine optimization (SEO) is a common buzzword in the commercial world; it refers to designing websites and writing text in such a way that online content will easily be found and indexed by search engines such as Google. Scientific publishers also pay attention to SEO principles so that their journals’ articles will rank as highly as possible in search results for relevant topics. The author information for journals published by Wiley and Elsevier, for example, now explicitly mention SEO (1, 2). However, even if your target journal doesn’t mention SEO, it can’t hurt to incorporate the following techniques. The easier your article is to find, the more it will be read and cited.

The most important thing you can do is to use key words. Wiley recommends: "Make sure you have an SEO-friendly title for your article. The title needs to be descriptive and must incorporate a key phrase related to your topic. Put your keywords within the first 65 characters of the title" (1).

Use key words not only in the title but also in the abstract, subheadings, text, figure legends, table titles, and even the file name. However, such terms should be used in a natural way and should not call attention to themselves by being repeated awkwardly.

SEO is a good reason to not abbreviate a key phrase using an uncommon abbreviation. For example, no one is going to do a Google search for “BC” to try to find information on breast cancer.
For more in-depth information on choosing and using key words, visit https://methodsblog.wordpress.com/2015/12/18/seo/.

Links also enhance SEO. Once your article is published, link to it from Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, the MD Anderson website, ResearchGate, and other websites and social media. And when appropriate, cite it in your future publications as well.

References


Plagiarism policies of journals preferred by MD Anderson authors

-- Kathryn Hale

Plagiarism in scientific publishing has gained unprecedented attention in the past decade. In the age of online publishing, plagiarism is both easier to carry out and easier to detect than ever before. To keep our readers informed about shifting practices concerning plagiarism in scientific publishing, we reviewed the current plagiarism policies of the 20 journals most often selected by MD Anderson authors submitting manuscripts for editing.

The basic definition of plagiarism is representing another author’s work as one’s own, a practice universally condemned by academic institutions, research organizations, and science publishers and editors. In their zeal to prevent this form of scientific misconduct, some journal publishers have come out with very strong statements against plagiarism, using terms such as “zero tolerance” and “unacceptable in any form” and raising the possibility of exposure and other punitive actions. Authors, however, often struggle to reconcile such statements with the publishing demands they face.

A somewhat less rigid approach has been adopted by independent cooperative organizations such as the Council of Science Editors (CSE), the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE), and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). These groups have developed extensive guidelines for authors, journal editors, and publishers on preventing plagiarism and interceding when it is suspected. Their recommendations recognize degrees of plagiarism and the importance of intent. Reporting another author’s idea as one’s own with intent to deceive is vastly different, they conclude, than “recycling” passages of one’s own Methods section in a second paper with no intent to pass this material off as new. These groups recommend, therefore, that each case of suspected plagiarism be evaluated and resolved individually. They do not rule out punitive action in severe cases, but they are prepared to accept a limited amount of “recycling” of certain types of material. Many journals, including some of those with the highest impact factors, have adopted similar policies.
The 20 journals most often specified by MD Anderson authors submitting a manuscript to the Department of Scientific Publications were identified by searching the department’s database for FY2016. (A list of the journals is provided at the end of this article.) The published editorial policies of those journals were reviewed to identify their policies on plagiarism. Policies on other areas of scientific misconduct were not reviewed.

All but 3 of the 20 journals, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Cancer Cell*, and *Annals of Surgery*, had an explicitly stated anti-plagiarism policy. Those three journals had “duplicate publication” policies that did not mention or allude to plagiarism. Eight of the 17 journals that had a stated anti-plagiarism policy used CrossCheck/iThenticate or similar software, either universally or selectively, to identify plagiarized material in manuscripts. Nine of the 17 indicated that they follow the recommendations of ICJME, COPE, or both regarding plagiarism. Two of the 17 stated only a simple “zero tolerance” policy without qualification. While 6 of the 17 explicitly distinguished degrees of plagiarism and indicated that the journal’s action depends on the circumstances of each case, 14 specified the actions they might take against authors found to have committed unacceptable plagiarism, including exposure, retraction, refusal to publish other works by the offending author, and notification of the offending author’s research institution and funding organization(s). These findings suggest that top science publishers are proactive about plagiarism and will exert whatever pressure is necessary on authors to keep plagiarism out of their journals.

Any of the potential punitive actions could damage a researcher’s reputation, opportunities, and career and shed doubt on the validity of their results. Researchers at MD Anderson should be aware of the issues surrounding scientific misconduct, including plagiarism, and take steps to avoid such practices. For those wishing more information, a list of resources is provided below.

**Top 20 journals preferred by MD Anderson authors, FY2016**

*Journal of Clinical Oncology*
*Clinical Cancer Research*
*Blood*
*Oncotarget*
*Cancer Research*
*Cancer*
*Physics in Medicine and Biology*
*PLoS One*
*Medical Physics*
*Cancer Discovery*
*International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*
*Nature Medicine*
*Radiology*
*Oncogene*
*Nature Communications*
*New England Journal of Medicine*
*Cancer Cell*
*Annals of Surgical Oncology*
*International Journal of Cancer*
*Annals of Surgery*
Tips for writing Introduction sections for NIH “resubmission” grant applications

-- Stephanie Deming

If you apply for a grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and your application is reviewed but not funded, you may decide to revise the application in response to the reviewers’ comments and then resubmit it. The NIH refers to such an application as a “resubmission application.” Each resubmission application must include an attachment called the Introduction, in which the principal investigator “responds to the issues and criticism raised in the summary statement” and “summarizes substantial additions, deletions, and changes to the application.” Introductions for almost all applications, including those for R01, R03, R21, fellowship, and individual career development awards, are limited to 1 page. Here, we offer suggestions for writing an effective Introduction within the 1-page limit. Much of this advice is based on the excellent suggestions offered by Stephen W. Russell and David C. Morrison in The Grant Application Writers’ Workbook.

- Start by formatting your document to maximize the amount of text that fits on the page. Turn on automatic hyphenation, use the narrowest margins allowed (0.5 inch), use the smallest allowable font, and do not leave blank space between paragraphs; rather, indent the first line of each paragraph.

- Begin the Introduction with a 1- or 2-sentence paragraph in which you thank the reviewers and say that the proposal has been revised and strengthened. Previously, this paragraph would contain a sentence explaining how changes had been marked in the revised proposal. However, in December 2014, the NIH stopped requiring the use of special formatting to indicate changes. Thus, such a sentence is no longer needed.

- After this opening paragraph, list the reviewer criticisms and your responses. If there are few reviewer criticisms, you can copy and paste each one verbatim into the Introduction. It is helpful to use special text formatting, like bold or italics, in addition to quotation marks to distinguish criticisms from responses. For example,

  **Reviewer 1**
  “The data supporting experiment 2.2 are very limited.” Since the time of our original submission, we have completed additional experiments, the results of which further support our working hypothesis. These results are presented in new Figures 3 and 4.

  “There is no explanation of sample size calculation for aim 1.” We have now outlined the sample size determination in section 3.1.3, Statistical Analysis.
Reviewer 2

“Second paragraph section 1.2.2 refers to Figs 2A and 2B. I believe the authors mean Figs 3A and 3B.” We apologize for this mistake. The reviewer is correct, and we have corrected the figure numbers.

“Aim 3 is not well focused and may be overly ambitious.” We have omitted studies 3.3 and 3.4 to allow us to focus on the most critical questions.

“The description of alternative approaches for aim 2 seems cursory. This reviewer does not have confidence that the alternative approaches have been carefully considered.” We have expanded our description of the alternative approaches that could be used.

More commonly, there are many reviewer comments, and it is a challenge to fit everything on 1 page. In that case, we recommend that you follow Russell and Morrison’s advice to “concentrate on the most important criticisms” (3). It is common to group comments by theme and paraphrase them. It is also common to present several criticisms and responses one after the other in the same paragraph, with only text formatting used to indicate where one comment ends and the next begins. For example,

SIGNIFICANCE. Reviewer 1 (R1): Limited data supporting experiment 2.2. We have performed additional experiments, the results of which further support our working hypothesis (new Figs. 3 and 4). R2: Incorrect figures cited in section 1.2.2. We have corrected the figure numbers.

APPROACH. R1: Lack of sample size calculation for aim 1. Now provided (section 3.1.3). R2: Aim 3 overly ambitious. We have omitted studies 3.3 and 3.4 to allow us to focus on the most critical questions. Cursory description of alternative approaches for aim 2. Alternative approaches now described in detail.

You might choose to group comments by NIH review criterion (the criteria are Significance, Investigators, Innovation, Approach, and Environment), listing only the criteria with related reviewer criticisms, as in the example above. Another common way to group comments is according to issues raised by the reviewers, in order of importance. For example, if 2 of the reviewers mentioned potential problems with antibodies, the Introduction might contain a paragraph beginning with the subheading “Antibodies.”

In the example above, the responses are very brief because we wanted to keep the example short. However, for the most important reviewer comments and for comments that require you to explain your decisions in detail, your replies might actually be several sentences long rather than a single sentence or phrase.

• Follow Russell and Morrison’s advice to “proportion your responses to the relative importance of weaknesses” (3). For example, if the reviewers had major criticisms of the study design but only minor criticisms related to significance, more of the Introduction should be devoted to study design than to significance.

Scientific Publications editors are available to edit your resubmission grant applications, including the Introduction section. For information about how to request editing, see our Intranet site.
Unusual terms used in scientific writing and publishing: Journalology

-- Bryan Tutt

If you google “journalology,” you may find references to journalism or travel writing; but in scientific publishing, the term journalology refers to the systematic study of medical and scientific publication.

Stephen P. Lock, a former editor of the British Medical Journal, is credited with coining the term in the 1980s to describe the use of statistical analysis in evaluating biomedical journals (1). The Ottawa Hospital Research Institute’s Centre for Journalology (2) defines journalology more broadly as “the science of publication practices and the study of these activities.”

The discipline of journalology is still in its early stages. In the past few decades, proponents of journalology have decried the declining quality of published reports, but so far, few prospective studies and meta-analyses of journal quality have been done (3).

However, efforts by various groups are under way to advance the quality of publishing. Some of these efforts focus on finding ways to improve research reporting and peer review (3); others seek to improve the techniques used for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (4). It will be interesting to see what changes will come from the nascent field of journalology.

References


Upcoming events for authors

Please see the Scientific Publications website for more information on our educational courses.

Third Thursday Writing Retreat. The Department of Scientific Publications and the Research Medical Library are sponsoring afternoon writing retreats for faculty and trainees. These retreats, offered the third Thursday of every month from 12 to 4 pm in the Research Medical Library conference room (FCT21.6040), will allow 4 hours of protected time for researchers to work on their grants and manuscripts. A scientific editor will be present the entire time to answer questions, offer advice, and provide consultations on early drafts. (A separate room will be available for lengthy consultations.) A librarian will also be present to help with literature searches, reference formatting, EndNote issues, etc.

August 17, 2017
September 21, 2017
October 19, 2017
November 16, 2017

Short Courses in Scientific English for Non-Native Speakers of English. Courses last 7 weeks and meet twice a week for 1 or 1.5 hours each day. Classes are held early in the morning, during the lunch hour, or late in the afternoon. Classes are free of charge. Participants must speak English at the intermediate or higher level and be familiar with research and general biomedical terminology.

Dates are subject to change. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications and ends September 13. Details: Mark Picus (mapicus@mdanderson.org), 713-792-7251, or John McCool (scipubeducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

Session 5 – October 2 through November 16, 2017
Pronunciation 1, Pronunciation 2, Conversation 1, Conversation 2, Writing 1

Friday Conversation Group. The Friday Conversation Group provides an informal atmosphere for non-native speakers of English to practice their conversational abilities, learn more about American culture, and meet new friends. The class meets every Friday in the Mitchell Building (BSRB), room S3.8003, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm.

No registration is required. Details: Mark Picus (mapicus@mdanderson.org), 713-792-7251, or John McCool (scipubeducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

Writing and Publishing Scientific Articles (WAPSA). WAPSA is a structured, practical, in-depth writing-education program for postdoctoral fellows and clinical trainees of MD Anderson taught by the Department of Scientific Publications. This 16-contact-hour course provides an excellent opportunity for advancing participants’ skills in writing and publishing research articles while developing their in-progress manuscripts under the guidance of scientific editors.
Locations and times to be announced. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications. Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

September 12 & 19, 2017

November 7 & 14, 2017

Writing Scientific Articles (WSA): A Workshop for Faculty. WSA is a structured, practical, in-depth writing-education program for clinical and basic science research faculty of MD Anderson taught by the Department of Scientific Publications. This 1-day, 8-contact-hour course provides an excellent opportunity to advance your skills in writing research articles with focus and clarity.

Locations and times to be announced. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications. Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

September 21, 2017

Panel Discussion: Responses to Reviewers. As part of the Annual Postdoctoral Science Symposium, Dawn Chalaire (Associate Director, Department of Scientific Publications) will participate in a panel discussion on the topic, "Lessons on providing responses to reviewers for journal articles or grant proposals."

September 28, 2017

Basic Science Research Building (BSRB) (12:20-1:25 pm)

Write Winning Grant Seminars

“Write Winning Grant Proposals” and “Write Winning NIH Career Development Award Proposals” will be presented by John D. Robertson, PhD, of Grant Writers’ Seminars and Workshops, LLC.

Seminar 1: Write Winning Grant Proposals

October 9, 2017 (8:00 am-5:00 pm)

CPB8, Rooms 1-8 (Duncan Building, 8th Floor)

Seminar 2: Write Winning NIH Career Development Award Proposals

October 10, 2017 (8:00 am-12:00 pm)

CPB8, Rooms 1-8 (Duncan Building, 8th Floor)
Priority registration for MD Anderson faculty and staff opened on Monday, July 10, 2017, and will last until **Friday, August 11, 2017**. The seminars will then be offered to people from other TMC institutions.

Final cutoff for registration is **Friday, August 25, 2017**. Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.

**Writing Persuasive R01 Proposals.** This grant-writing workshop for clinical and basic science research faculty at MD Anderson focuses on the content, organization, and structure of an R01 grant application. Taught by senior editors in the Department of Scientific Publications, this 1-day workshop includes lecture, discussion, and guided grant outlining and development.

*Locations and times to be announced. Registration is required through the Department of Scientific Publications. Details: John McCool (scipubseducation@mdanderson.org), 713-792-3174.*

**November 9, 2017**

**Scientific Publications Now Charging No-Show Fees.** Scientific Publications’ popular full-day courses—Writing and Publishing Scientific Articles, Writing Scientific Articles, and Writing Persuasive R01 Proposals—are available to MD Anderson faculty and trainees free of charge. For many courses, we have more applicants than spaces available; and sometimes those accepted do not show up for the courses. Therefore, to ensure that as many faculty and trainees as possible can participate in our courses, we implemented a new cancellation/no-show policy in June 2017. Registrants are able to drop a course without penalty until a specified date and time (typically 2 work days before the course begins), but those who do not withdraw from the course by that deadline and who do not show up for the course will be charged $95 to the chart string provided at the time of registration.

**Webinars Presented by the Department of Scientific Publications**

Over the next several months, the Department of Scientific Publications will host webinars on topics that include adjusting to scientific writing and publishing at a U.S.-based institution, reducing wordiness, and creating effective graphs. Specific topics, times, and dates will be posted as they become available on the Department of Scientific Publications website and in the department’s “Educational Events” newsletter.

The following webinars have already been presented and recorded:

**Ask the Editors** (presented July 26, 2017)

In this webinar, two editors from the Department of Scientific Publications field questions about writing, editing, and publishing. A [recording of the webinar](#) is available.

**Avoiding Plagiarism and Self-Plagiarism** (presented April 19, 2017)

In this webinar, two scientific editors from the Department of Scientific Publications discuss the pitfalls of plagiarism, how plagiarism is detected, and how authors can avoid
plagiarizing. The concept of “self-plagiarism” is also discussed. A recording of the webinar and the webinar slides are available.

Creating Effective Tables (presented January 19, 2017)

In this webinar, Joe Munch, a scientific editor in the Department of Scientific Publications, discusses when to use a table, the elements of a table, some basic principles of effective table design, and how to use Microsoft Word to design a clear and useful table. A recording of the webinar and the webinar slides are available.

Grant Writing Advice. The Department of Scientific Publications now offers grant writing suggestions (Writing R01 Grant Proposals) in the Writing Advice section of our website. This information, stemming from the Grant Writers’ Seminars and Workshops (developed by Drs. Stephen Russell and David Morrison and presented annually at MD Anderson) and from the NIH’s SF424 (R&R) Application Guide, focuses on R01 grants but can be applied to other types of NIH grants as well.

Writing the Specific Aims Section of a Grant Application. In this video, Scientific Editor Sunita Patterson presents a summary of the National Institutes of Health’s grant-review process and how it affects the grant proposal, an overview of the structure of an R01 grant proposal, and a model for writing the Specific Aims section. The video is available on the Scientific Publications website.

Writing Abstracts Online Tutorial. Writing Abstracts, an interactive, Web-based tutorial, covers the most important aspects of writing good abstracts. The lesson includes many examples and an optional self-assessment.

Improve Your Chances for IRG Funding. This PDF presentation by Walter Pagel, the former Director of the Department of Scientific Publications, guides researchers through the process of applying for institutional research grants.

Anatomy of a Research Article Video Presentation. In this video, Senior Scientific Editor Stephanie Deming presents advice on writing the parts of a research article: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, title, and abstract. The slides shown in the presentation and the presentation handout can be downloaded as well.

Classes and Webinars Presented by the Research Medical Library. More classes will be posted on the Research Medical Library website once they have been finalized.

Classes are located in the Research Medical Library classroom in the Pickens Academic Tower (in either FCT21.6008 or FCT21.6040). Details: Laurissa Gann (lgann@mdanderson.org), 713-794-1111.

August 2, 9:00 am, class: EndNote Basics
August 9, 9:00 am, class: EndNote Advanced
August 16, 9:00 am, class: Library Essentials for Administrative Assistants
August 16, 11:00 am, webinar: EndNote Best Practices for Sharing a Manuscript
August 24, 2:30 pm, class: Introduction to Systematic Reviews
September 5, 9:00 am, class: EndNote Basics
September 12, 9:00 am, class: EndNote Advanced
September 14, 11:00 am, webinar: EndNote Online
September 26, 9:00 am, class: PubMed Basics
October 25, 12:00 pm, webinar: Open Access Publishing

To register for a Research Medical Library webinar or class, please visit the library's Class Calendar. When you click on a webinar or class link on the calendar, you will be directed to a registration screen. Also at this site are class and webinar descriptions and printable handouts.

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