

The Genre: Major Funding Applications

Office of University Initiatives
Gil Harootunian, PhD, Executive Director

What Is a Genre?

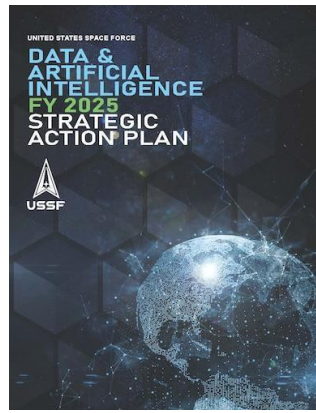


Some scholars define genre as a “social act.” We write an op-ed to persuade readers to agree with our view. We write a science article to share a new finding. We write a campaign speech to get citizens to vote for us. We write a major funding application to implement a project.

Common Elements

Each genre (op-ed, campaign speech, science article, and major funding application) will have its own (1) content, (2) style, and (3) conventions.

As faculty, you are (1) content experts, (2) masters of style, and (3) knowledgeable about the conventions of many genres. You are skilled at drafting articles that can pass the juried process. Yet, not all graduate schools explicitly address composing a major funding application.



The Good News

1. Most sponsors now specify the conventions in their funding opportunity announcements.
2. Make an outline of convention requirements. Consult this frequently, especially during times when your workload is daunting.
3. Read the fine print. Program officers have to pack an awful lot of information into funding announcements.

Sample for Discussion: Conventions of USDE Minority Serving-Institution Proposal

- Priorities (Absolute, Competitive, Invitational)
- Comprehensive Development Plan
- Project Design
- Activity Objectives
- Implementation Strategy
- Project Management Plan
- Quality of Key Personnel
- Evaluation Plan
- Budget (resources and allocations)

Use of Conventions

1. Present each convention (e.g., Activity Objectives, Evaluation) as a bold header.
2. Program Officers will train reviewers to read for the conventions (sections).
3. Reviewers will use a scoring sheet that assigns points to conventions (sections) only.

ENLISTED EVALUATION SYSTEM

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION SCORE

TOP
PROMOTION
RECOMMENDATION

+

2ND
PROMOTION
RECOMMENDATION

+

3RD
PROMOTION
RECOMMENDATION

PROMOTE NOW	250 points
MUST PROMOTE	220 points
PROMOTE	200 points
NOT READY NOW	0 points

PROMOTE NOW	20 points
MUST PROMOTE	15 points
PROMOTE	10 points
NOT READY NOW	0 points

PROMOTE NOW	15 points
MUST PROMOTE	10 points
PROMOTE	5 points
NOT READY NOW	0 points

Can you make any changes?

It depends...

Some guidelines will state that the program requires a proposal to include specified sections in the order listed. This is good news in that you know exactly the structure of your proposal.



Are there other times we can
make changes?

Some...

The conventions rarely change, but presentation of
them can and should be the result of your
thoughtfulness.



Can you add a section?

YES...

...if the section is generally acceptable in your field.
Example: You can add an “Overview” section at the beginning of an NSF proposal to orient readers to your complex project. If space permits, adding an “Overview” is a best practice, especially as a proposal can be lengthy and detailed.

Can any sections be re-arranged?

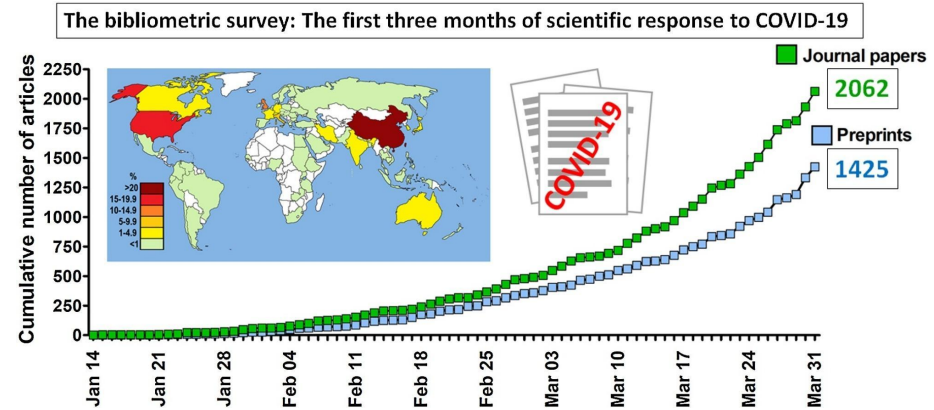
You have discretion with a few sections. Examples:

1. Results from Prior NSF Support: You can place this at the beginning to emphasize the excellent track record of your university or the excellent performance of NSF Awardees at your university, or you can place this at the end to showcase your proposed project first.
2. Broader Impacts: You can also place this at the beginning or the end depending on what you want to showcase, where.

Visuals (tables, graphs, charts)

Here are your choices:

1. The sponsor might require a table and give you the format. You decide where to place it.
2. The sponsor might ask for certain information, but you can design the table, chart, or graph and decide where to place it.
3. You may decide to present required information in a visual rather than written paragraph(s). For additional guidance, see [“Visuals: Tailored To Major Applications.”](#)



Contact anytime:

Dr. Gil Harootunian, Executive
Director, University Initiatives
gharootunian@csufresno.edu

278-4850