Introduction to Grants

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What are grants?

Grants are an amount of money paid by a particular organization to someone else to accomplish something.

- Public projects like installing a bike path, money for renting art gallery space for cultural art installation, funding for after school program, etc.
- Research

Research Grants

- faculty salary
- graduate student stipend, tuition
- Lab equipment
- Specimen upkeep
- Fieldwork travel
- Lab tech salaries
- Publishing fees
- University operations

Other Grants

- Travel to conferences
- Dissertation writing (typically as Fellowships)

Why apply for grants?

- Will fund your research
- The writing process helps you develop your ideas and make plans
- Jumping off point for abstracts and papers
- Successful proposals build your CV and make you more competitive
  - Sponsored research is critical to research universities. They want to hire people that attract research support
- Practice for your future (If you're going into academia, pay attention to how often your advisor talks about grants)
- Another skill that makes you employable (just look at me!)

Academic Skill Tree: Invest “points” in grants

Why give money away?

- Research is a public good
- Charitable organizations want to improve the world
- Tax benefits
- Cheaper for private companies to have someone else do the bulk of R&D for them

Types of Funders

Grant funders can be a lot of things including:

- Your own institution
- Private foundations
- Professional societies
- State or Federal Government

How do I get grants?

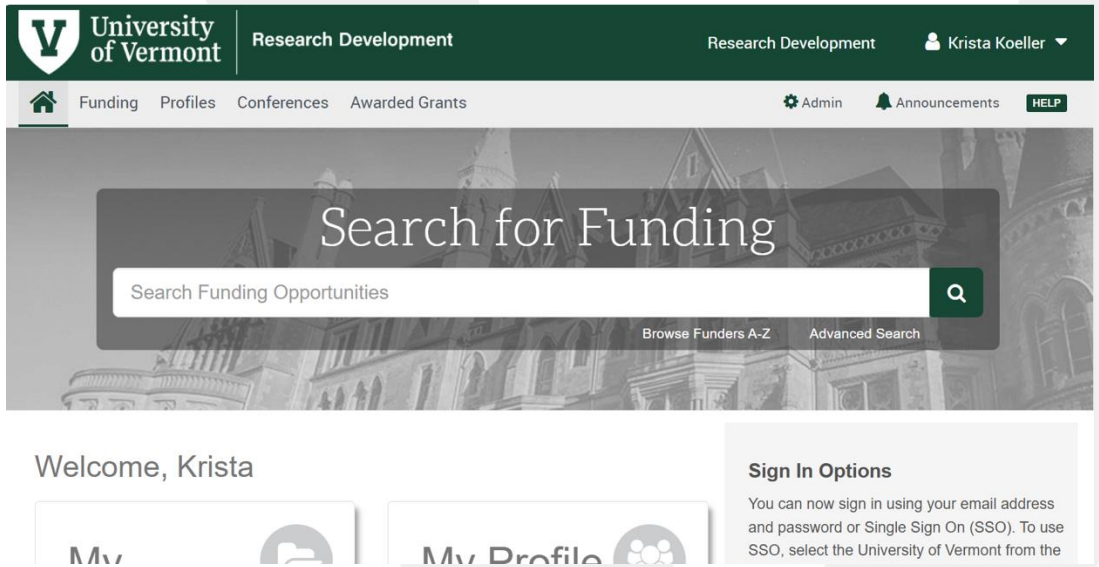
- Most grant “mechanisms” are things you need to apply to
  - Orgs will have open funding calls
    - They will have a webpage or document that has instructions and information called a “Funding solicitation”, “Request for Applications” (RFA), “Request for Proposals” (RFP), or “Notice of Funding Opportunity” (NOFO)
  - Many are annual
  - Must apply
    - Submit application, usually a summary of your research idea and plan
    - A review panel reviews it, selects a winner (or winners)
    - Sometimes, if you get a grant, you will need to give the org updates or deliverables after you’ve made progress or have finished.

How do I find funding opportunities?

- UVM Graduate College: resources to identify external funding
- Pay attention to the people you're connected with
  - What are people in your lab applying for?
  - What have peers or your mentors/advisors gotten?
  - What organizations are others highlighting in their acknowledgements slides at conferences?
  - Look on people's CVs
  - Ask people what they've applied for
- Scientific Societies
- Social Media
- Think outside the box!
- Pivot RP Funding database

Pivot RP

- Funding Database
- Everyone at UVM has access
- Conduct a search for grants that suit your needs
- Use the curated searches as a starting point
- Link to PivotRP: http://pivot.proquest.com/dashboard
- Link to short intro video: External Funding | Research Development | The University of Vermont



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Strategies for Competitive Applications: The Basics

The groundwork

- Make sure you're eligible
- Make sure the opportunity fits with your goals
- Read and follow directions carefully

Tips

- Start the application as soon as you decide you might apply
  - Fill out all the easy parts like your name and email
  - Figure out what format everything needs to be in
- Give letter of rec writers a heads up as soon as you can
  - Send letter of rec requests 3-4 weeks in advance (2 weeks minimum!)
  - In some circumstances, do it even earlier!

Strategies for Competitive Applications: Writing the Application

- Align your research with the organizations mission/goals
  - Read their website
  - Look at what projects have been funded (If that information is available)
- Look at example proposals, preferably successful ones, to that organization
  - Ogrants.org
- Look up what the reviewers will be like and tailor your proposal to their probable knowledge level
  - Are they experts in your subfield? Are they laypeople?
- Look up the review criteria
  - What are reviewers likely to value?
- Keep in mind, this is persuasive writing!

Strategies for competitive applications: Editing

- Have others look at your proposal
  - Take advantage of the writing center

- Tips:
  - Join or start a peer editing group in your lab or scientific society
  - Read your own work out loud or have the computer read it to you
  - Have a separate document for phrases and sentences that you really like but know in your heart must be cut
  - Use a citation manager like EndNote or Zotero to make references sections easier

How To Improve

- Read other people's writing and figure out what you like and dislike
- Do a workshop or class if one is available
- Practice!
- Consider other communication-based experiences
  - Creative writing class
  - Social Media
- Join the Awards Committee at your scientific society
- Serve on review panels
- Success begets success: apply for things and build a reputation

Breakout Rooms

- What do you think makes scientific writing persuasive?
- What do you anticipate being the most challenging part of the grant application process?
  - What will you do to address these challenges?

Federal Opportunities

- Graduate Research Fellowship Program
- National Institutes of Health Fellowships (F-Series)
- United States Department of Agriculture's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, Education and Workforce Development Program

National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program

- for 1st year grad students
- 2025 deadlines early November
- $37,000 covering 3 years of grad school

Graduate Research Fellowship Program

To get started

- Familiarize yourself with the GRFP solicitation
- Make sure you're eligible
- Look through the fields of study (major fields and subfields listed in the solicitation) and try to narrow down which to choose.
- Pick who your reference letters will be from
  - You need three!
  - They should be your thesis advisor, lab manager, professor (preferably academic/research related) but also know you well. Find a balance.
    - Get to know your profs better by going to office hours!
- Look at examples!

National Institutes of Health Fellowships (F-Series)

- Ruth L Kirchstein National Research Service Award
- Graduate student (F31) and postdoc opportunities (F32)
- Propose a research project and training plan in scientific health-related fields relevant to the participating Institutes and Centers
- Grad students (F31): up to 6 years of funding which covers: stipend, tuition, fees, Other costs
- Postdocs (F32): up to 3 years of funding for stipend, fees, other costs
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NIH F-Series

Tips

- Make sure you're eligible.
- Familiarize yourself with the Institutes and Centers at NIH
- Think about who potential mentor(s) will be
- Read and familiarize yourself with the NIH F-Series grant opportunity announcement relevant to you
- Look at examples

United States Department of Agriculture Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Grants Program

Education and Workforce Development

- Read the RFA (Request for Applications) from last year
- Program to help develop new scientist and professionals enter research, education or extension fields within the food and agricultural sciences.
- Graduate Student and Postdoc opportunities
- Postdoc (A7201): $225,000 for up to 24 months
- Graduate Student (A7101): $180,000 for up to 36 months
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