

Bid-writers checklist

Before you start

- Read the funder's guidelines
- Note down the main points you want to get across - the reasons why this particular funder will see you as a good match with their aims.
- Note down all requirements - what additional documents you'll need to send, who will need to sign or countersign the form. Make sure you'll have plenty of time to get what you need before submitting.
- If applying online check how this will work - how often you need to save your answers, what format uploads need to be in.
- If you allowed to contact the funder to check you are applying for the right thing then do so.
- If there's a deadline work out when each stage will need to be done so that you won't be rushing. I always take 14 days away from the deadline and work back from there - that fortnight gives you some spare time for emergencies.
- If you need to set up an online account in order to apply, do so then share the log-in and passwords with at least one other person.
- Read through the form several times so that you get the hang of the questions and how they work together before you start to answer anything.

Before you submit your application

- Make sure you have answered every question completely.
- Make sure your key messages come across clearly.
- Give your final version to at least one other person to read and comment on. NEVER send off an unchecked application. Comments from a complete outsider are particularly valuable as they can't make assumptions about what you meant.
- Check again that you have met all requirements in terms of documentation etc.
- Make sure the budget headings match the project description.
- Add the budget up right!
- Submit your application in plenty of time, particularly if it is online.

When you get an answer

- If “yes” make sure you do everything you are asked to in the way of reporting back. Help them to like you and be more likely to fund you in future.
- If “no”, don’t take it personally. You could have put in a superb application that still failed because of things outside your control. If you can get feedback ask for it and act on it.

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