

Handbook of Research Design & Social Measurement

PART 8 RESEARCH PROPOSAL, FUNDING, BUDGETING, REPORTING, AND CAREER PLANNING

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[p. 661 ↓]

PART 8 RESEARCH PROPOSAL, FUNDING, BUDGETING, REPORTING, AND CAREER PLANNING

The end product of research designing is generation of a proposal. The student setting forth on his or her first independent research and the professional with a lifetime of research achievement both face the same requirement: They must produce an acceptable proposal. Other professionals will critically examine the proposal and decide if it is acceptable. The planning and submission of proposals may take a year or more—always longer than expected—and the competition for research funding is often intense. Almost always, more proposals are rejected than are accepted because of the limited amount of resources available. A promising development is the increasing number of places to apply for support. The researcher must know where the money is and develop the skill of research negotiation.

Section 8.1, “The Research Grant Proposal,” describes the preliminary planning of a proposal and offers a few useful hints that are especially appropriate in regard to how such proposals are evaluated. A general outline of a research proposal is included.

Section 8.2, “Research Funding,” lists various guides to major research agencies.

Section 8.3 lists major sources of funding information.

Section 8.4 identifies major reasons why proposals are rejected.

Section 8.5 provides readings and other information sources on grantsmanship and proposal writing.

Sections 8.6 through 8.11 present detailed discussions of selected federal government agencies and private organizations offering fellowships and grants. For example,

funding opportunities are described for two of the largest federal funding sources, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

[p. 662 ↓]

Section 8.12 discusses the difficult task of setting budgets. Most researchers have never had formal training (in graduate school) in this aspect of research, and they acquire their knowledge through experience and the process of trial and error. Most researchers drastically underestimate the time and effort required to complete their proposals, and almost everyone experiences unforeseen hindrances and delays. These delays are costly, but without some previous experience, it can be difficult to estimate how expensive.

Section 8.13, "Research Reporting," discusses planning for the research report and reviews both the specifications for a report and a set of criteria that can be used for evaluation.

Sections 8.14 through 8.16 are devoted to the process of publishing research reports in books and journals.

A professional research life includes professional communication and reporting to professional meetings. Section 8.17 describes the leading sociological associations and the role they play in professional socialization.

Finally, section 8.18, "Planning for a Career in the Social Sciences," provides guides for job applicants in sociology and other behavioral sciences.