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By Lisa Chasan-Taber

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Competition for research funds in epidemiology, preventative medicine, and biostatistics has never been more intense and, at the same time, the grant application and review process at such agencies as the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is undergoing significant transformation. **Writing Dissertation and Grant Proposals: Epidemiology, Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics** targets effective grant proposal writing in this highly competitive and evolving environment. Covering all aspects of the proposal writing process, the text:

- Provides summary checklists and step-by-step guidelines for grant structure and style alongside broader strategies for developing a research funding portfolio
- Explains how to avoid common errors and pitfalls, supplying critical do’s and don’ts that aid in writing solid grant proposals
- Demonstrates proven tactics and illustrates key concepts with extensive examples from successfully funded proposals

Written by an established NIH reviewer with inside knowledge and an impressive track record of funding, **Writing Dissertation and Grant Proposals: Epidemiology, Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics** is a virtual cookbook of the appropriate ingredients needed to construct a winning grant proposal. Therefore, the text is not only relevant for early-stage investigators including graduate students, medical students/residents, and postdoctoral fellows, but also valuable for experienced faculty, clinicians, epidemiologists, and health professionals who cannot seem to break the barrier to obtain NIH-funded research.

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Editorial Review

Review

"…by reading the book, following the tips and taking note of the examples, the to-dos, and the not-to-dos, students and academics in epidemiology and medicine should gain an understanding of how to put together a highly competitive proposal.
Although the examples focus on epidemiology, the summary checklists and guidelines for grant structure can be applied when seeking research funding in any discipline. The book is written as a textbook with graduate students and young academics as the target audience, but researchers at any stage of their career may also find key ingredients that they have missed that will help make their grant proposal a winning piece…All chapters include annotated examples from successfully funded proposals, as well as examples in need of improvement with comments on how the writing could be enhanced. The author has also noted important caveats, potential pitfalls, and friendly reminders on specific topics with emphasis on avoiding common errors and important features to incorporate into a proposal…This book can serve as teaching material or as a review for researchers to better understand potential statistical issues, for example, study design and analysis techniques to minimize biases that may arise in studies (see Chapter 13). Overall, the book is a great reference. The organization and step-by-step guidelines make this book a comprehensive resource for anyone writing a dissertation or a grant proposal. I now reference this book when I have to write a grant proposal, and wish a text like this had been available during my graduate studies. I recommend this book to anyone in academia. It would be a practical addition to the libraries of both new and experienced researchers."
?Maggie Chu, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, in *The American Statistician*, March 2016

"… a must-have book for young investigators, including graduate students, postdoctoral students, and junior faculty. Even seasoned grant proposal writers can benefit from the information provided in this book. … The table of contents is very elaborate and specific, which makes it quick and easy to look up any particular subject. Additional tips and examples that will be extremely useful for novice researchers are sprinkled throughout the book. I highly recommend this book for budding scientists."
?*Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, December 2014

"**Writing Dissertation and Grant Proposals** by Lisa Chasan-Taber is a unique and much-needed text for students and fellows in epidemiology, preventive medicine, and biostatistics. This text is unlike any other to date in this field, as it is comprehensive in scope, very well organized, and accessible to students and the faculty who teach them in the classroom and in the field in general. Dr. Chasan-Taber has been teaching grant proposal writing for over 15 years, and this text reflects her talents and vast knowledge and experience in this area. Whether you are looking for training in scientific writing, developing and formulating hypotheses, guidelines on proposal organization and time management, or assistance in submitting proposals, there is something in this text for all of these subject areas and a whole lot more. Additionally, there are up-to-date chapters on statistical analyses, study design issues, and biases that must be dealt with carefully when proposing research for dissertation topics or for acquiring funding from competitive mechanisms such as the NIH and elsewhere. This text should become a very popular, required text for graduate students, fellows, and faculty in the fields of public health, medicine, and related disciplines."
?Mark A. Pereira and Bernard L. Harlow, Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, University of Minnesota School of Public Health

"Having taught the development of scientific research proposals for several years, I appreciate the numerous pearls of wisdom to be found in this comprehensive manual for writing dissertations and grant proposals. Dr. Chasan-Taber identifies the problems in scientific logic and writing that commonly interfere with the clarity of scientific proposals, and skillfully guides the reader through every component of the grant writing process."
?Nigel Paneth, MD, MPH, University Distinguished Professor, Michigan State University

"This comprehensive and well-designed guide to successful dissertation and grant writing is long overdue and should serve as an important addition to the literature. This book will not only be of use to doctoral students and newly minted faculty but also should serve as an excellent checklist and review for more seasoned investigators. The text is divided into a number of discrete sections. The first section deals very nicely with the process of developing and clearly describing the study hypothesis, the background literature supporting the research proposal, and a statement of how the study is likely to add to our scientific knowledge. The section also provides a helpful list of traps to avoid in scientific writing and includes a number of useful examples. Part two is a step-by-step tutorial that takes the reader through the development and writing of the dissertation proposal. Part three deals with writing grant proposals and proceeds in a similar fashion by starting with a discussion of how to select the right funding source, followed by a description of how to submit the grant and a description of what is usually involved in the grant review process. The section dealing with resubmission of grant applications is especially important given the recent stagnant nature of federal research funding. Success is often measured by the ability of the principal investigator to accurately interpret the message being sent by the initial review panel. I would recommend that all students and faculty have a copy of this text on their office bookshelves."
?Philip C. Nasca, MS, PhD, FACE, Dean, University at Albany, The State University of New York

"Getting grants continues to be a condition of tenure in many biostatistics departments, yet the NIH has not grown in real terms for several years. As such, grant-writing skills are more important than ever, and this engaging book fills an important niche here. The author’s wealth of experience shines through, and the book is full of examples and great advice. It’s a strong book and one I’ll recommend to my junior colleagues."
?Bradley P. Carlin, Professor and Head of Biostatistics, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota

"Like a good research study, this new book fills an important knowledge gap. In this case, the gap is the absence of a comprehensive guide to the writing of both dissertation and grant proposals. This book, designed for both graduate students and early career researchers, admirably meets this need. While the content is targeted to those in public health-related fields, most of the information will be perfectly applicable to students and researchers in a wide range of disciplines, including kinesiology, nutrition, and the rehabilitation sciences.
The book format is very user friendly, with each step of the proposal-writing process clearly explained and accompanied by valuable guidelines and tips. I found the section on ‘grantsmanship’ especially effective in taking the mystery out of the grant writing, funding, and review process. This section should be a must read for any budding researcher beginning the grant-writing process."
?Michael D. Schmidt, Department of Kinesiology, University of Georgia

"Chasan-Taber provides an accessible ‘soup to nuts’ approach to the often challenging and stressful process of thesis and grant proposal writing with this step-by-step guide. Full of examples and stylistic tips, this text breaks down the proposal writing process into easy-to-accomplish tasks. For doctoral students and junior faculty alike, the insider knowledge she shares from her years of experience as a mentor and proposal reviewer is invaluable. I highly recommend this as a go-to text for doctoral students as they craft their theses, and will employ much of the advice Chasan-Taber provides in my own proposals."
?Renée Turzanski Fortner, Ph.D., Division of Cancer Epidemiology, German Cancer Research Center (DKFZ)

"Dr. Lisa Chasan-Taber makes the often elusive skill known as ‘grantsmanship’ readily accessible to the early career investigator in her new textbook, **Writing Dissertation and Grant Proposals: Epidemiology, Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics**. With more than a decade of continuous NIH funding, she has successfully translated her vast personal experience and success into a user-friendly guide. Following the tips she offers in this clear, concise text could make the difference between writing a good proposal and a funded proposal. Although the wisdom imparted might be obtainable over many years through mentorship and trial-by-fire, this is the first comprehensive guide that puts the ‘secrets’ of successful grant writing into an efficient, easy-to-read package. As a junior investigator transitioning to independence, I would highly recommend this textbook to anyone seeking to pursue grant-funded research in the fields of epidemiology, biostatistics, preventive medicine, and health services research."
?Sarah L. Goff, MD, Center for Quality of Care Research, Baystate Medical Center/Tufts University School of Medicine

"Chasan-Taber provides a straightforward guide to putting together a winning research proposal. As this book makes clear, if one is to make an impact, it is not sufficient to reach the truth; you must persuade your colleagues of it. This rich resource provides comprehensive and clear step-by-step instructions toward that aim. I wish I had such a guide when I was starting out."
?Meir Stampfer, MD, DrPH, Professor and Former Chair, Department of Epidemiology, Harvard School of Public Health; Director, Chronic Disease Epidemiology Unit, Channing Division of Network Medicine, Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School; and Former Chair, NIH Cancer Epidemiology Grant Review Panel

"Dr. Chasan-Taber’s book **Writing Dissertation and Grant Proposals: Epidemiology, Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics** is truly remarkable. It takes historically stressful, complicated, and often non-transparent processes, like dissertation and grant proposal writing, and transforms them into relaxing and even enjoyable experiences. She breaks down these processes into clear, simple, and logical steps. I don’t know how it is possible but she has written an epidemiology/biostatistics (plus so much) more book that is literally a joy to read from beginning to end but also perfectly organized to as a reference book. There are near constant ‘ah-ha’ moments throughout the book as the proposal process is demystified.
This book is perfectly suited for early-career faculty, post-docs and even doctoral students. I anticipate mid-career researchers will also have interest and can appreciate some of the finer points and illuminating moments. I wish this book existed when I was starting out. A copy will sit on my desk as a companion reference and I will be providing a copy to my trainees, advisees, and mentees.
Dr. Chasan-Taber’s years of teaching and mentoring shine through this book. As you read, you have the sense of being instructed, guided, nurtured, and supported by a very invested and knowledgeable mentor. The mix of didactic instructions and illustrative examples intermingled with some opinion, advice, and preference guides readers not only caringly through the book but will also take them calmly, logically, and thoughtfully through their proposals."
?Tiffany A. Moore Simas, MD, MPH, MEd, FACOG, Director, Research Division and Associate Director, Residency Program, Dept. of Ob/Gyn; Associate Professor of Ob/Gyn and Pediatrics, University of Massachusetts Medical School/UMass Memorial Health Care

About the Author

Dr. Lisa Chasan-Taber is a professor of epidemiology and the former associate dean for research at the School of Public Health and Health Sciences at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. She has taught proposal and grant writing for over 15 years, during which time she has been continually funded as a principal investigator of National Institutes of Health Research Awards and has been recognized for her research through the Chancellor’s Medal, the highest recognition bestowed to faculty by the university. She

has served on national review panels and as a mentor on Career Development Awards. She received her post-doctoral and doctoral training in epidemiology from the Harvard School of Public Health, master's degree in public health from the University of Massachusetts, and bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

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