



Global Young Academy

The voice of young scientists around the world

GYA statement on Grant Application Mechanisms May 2012

Excellence in scientific research, a hallmark of modern societies, requires the partnership of researchers, funding agencies, and other stakeholders. Across the globe, governments and private organizations allocate typically scarce resources to facilitate investigations that ultimately benefit society. The responsibility of funding agencies includes the development and maintenance of vibrant and healthy scientific environment. Accordingly, fostering and promoting Young Scientists is a fundamental duty that has to be addressed.

Unfortunately, the process of applying for funding is in many cases inefficient and unnecessary complex, which negatively impacts all stakeholders. Writing proposals is very time consuming and often overpowers a scientist's core tasks of teaching, mentoring, outreach and the actual scientific research. This situation is particularly damaging to Young Scientists who cannot count on the administrative and financial support available to established researchers to secure research funds. In addition, the evaluation process usually penalize Young Scientists who are still in the process of developing a track record and societal impact.

Accordingly, the Global Young Academy, as the voice of the Young Scientists of the world, calls on funding agencies to reevaluate their practices to better accommodate early career applicants. In particular, funding agencies should strive to implement the following:

1. Provide application and funding information in a visible and readily accessible format.
2. Condense a description of the application process into a single page in which all steps are clearly highlighted.
3. Limit proposal guidelines to no more than 3 pages.
4. Structure the submission process for minimal complexity.
5. Employ two-stage application processes, which can reduce workloads for applicants, peer reviewers and funding agencies.
6. Standardize grant description, submission templates and review processes to the extent possible across funding agencies.
7. Funding should be pre-allocated to Young Scientists.
8. Request detailed budgeting only for approved projects.
9. List expected success rates, as well as winning proposals and their proposers on a publicly accessible website.
10. For non-scientific aspects, such as societal impact, set a clear differentiating factor between mature scientists and Young Scientists who are establishing their research activity and starting to prove the impact and validity of their research.

The realization of these good practices in grant application mechanisms will promote excellent scientific research which is critically important to the advancement of science and in particular to the development of Young Scientists.

We ask funding agencies around the world to review and where possible implement the concepts outlined above. We believe that this will help creating optimal conditions to foster research excellence and improve the chances of Young Scientists to flourish in the competitive and demanding environment of modern science, while delivering innovative insights and solutions to society's challenges.

For more information: <http://www.globalyoungacademy.net/>