

The Africa Research Excellence Fund

AREF Essential Grant Writing Skills Workshop – December 2020 / January 2021

Open Call

The Africa Research Excellence Fund (AREF) works to strengthen health research capacity of scientists in Sub-Saharan Africa who are engaged in tackling the sub-region's significant health challenges.

AREF is calling for applications from active, emerging health-researchers in Sub-Saharan Africa to participate in its sixth Essential Grant Writing Skills Workshop. This fully on-line programme for 16 participants will be held over eight 3-hour sessions during the weeks of 14 December 2020 and 4 January 2021.

The Workshop series

Workshop aim

The Workshop aim is to enable talented early-career health- and health-related researchers to build skills to develop their own research and fellowship proposals of the quality required to win competitive international, regional and national funding.

What the Workshop will cover

1. Why competitive-proposal writing matters
2. Understanding funders' requirements
3. Formulating your compelling research question
4. Writing in plain English
5. Writing your Letter of Intent / Concept Note / Preliminary proposal
6. Key parts of a typical Case for Support / Project Description
7. Planning your proposal project plan and budget
8. Principles of managing your collaboration and team
9. Understanding and practicing peer review
10. Preparing for a Fellowship interview.

What the Workshop will *not* cover

The workshop will *not* cover the following: how to research ethics approval; how to complete individual funders' application forms; the details of intellectual property management; practice in research communication.

The facilitators will use examples of real funding applications. However, they will not be assisting participants directly with the participants' own specific proposals.

Format of the Workshop series

The Workshop series will be held as

- Monday 14 to Friday 18 December 2020: five daily 3-hour on-line sessions,
- Wednesday 6 to Friday 8 January 2021: three daily sessions 3-hour on-line sessions.

Participants will be provided with appropriate learning materials including preparatory exercises before the first session and between sessions. Each session will be delivered through Zoom or an equivalent platform. Participants will work in on-line groups and subgroups.

Expenses

AREF does not provide funding for participants to access equipment or internet services with which to participate. Nor do we reimburse you or your institution for any other expenses associated with the programme or any form of per diem payment.

Our expectations of participants

Inputs

You will need to

- be able to commit a total of 24 hours (eight x 3-hours) to the on-line sessions
- commit about two-days of preparation time distributed in advance of the Workshop and between sessions
- have access to good bandwidth and a computer or laptop that is set up to use the Zoom platform (IT department may control your ability to use online platforms)
- be able to use a smart phone simultaneously with the Zoom platform.

Outputs

Through your application, you will need to demonstrate that you are highly likely to apply your learning to winning research funding.

You will also be expected to participate in AREF monitoring and evaluation surveys to track outcomes.

Scope

AREF welcomes applications for this Workshop from researchers who are actively working on challenges to human health and are trained and experienced in one or more of the following disciplines: biomedicine; physiology and pharmacology; clinical sciences; epidemiology; mathematics and statistics; environmental health; “one health” (veterinary science); behavioural, social and economic sciences; and health policy and systems research.

Eligibility

To be eligible, you need to provide evidence that:

- You are a citizen of a country in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- EITHER You have been awarded a research doctorate (PhD/DPhil/MD) from a recognised academic institution within the previous 6 years, i.e. awarded on or after 1 January 2015);

OR you have a medical/clinical qualification plus a research-relevant Master's degree awarded within the previous 6 years.

- AND you are currently employed in Sub-Saharan Africa by a recognised university and/or specialist research institution.
- You have not participated already in equivalent proposal development / grant-writing training.
- A significant part of your current employee role is to develop and conduct health research.
- You have been applying for grants but the combined value of your international research-grant portfolio is no more than \$300,000.

Criteria for selection

Capacity to benefit

Your application will be assessed in terms of your capacity to benefit from the training, using the following kinds of evidence:


1. Your research experience, outputs and other achievements as an emerging researcher up to now.
2. How you will use the training to achieve your personal vision for your development as a scientist who can address key health challenges important to Sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Practical support committed by your sponsor(s) and mentor(s).
4. Adequate command of English.

Applicants will be shortlisted from the eligible applicants by the Workshop facilitators using these criteria. Only applicants who meet the capacity to benefit criteria will be on the shortlist, from which the final selection will be made.

Diversity and inclusivity

To ensure equity across research organisations, no more than two shortlisted participants will be finally selected from any one employing institution. We aim also to ensure between 40 and 60% of the final selection of participants are women and that at least 25% of participants are from francophone or lusophone institutions.

How to apply

To apply, download the Application Form by double-clicking on the paperclip . Send the Form and accompanying letters from your Sponsor(s) and Mentor(s) (as defined in the Form) to aref@aref-africa.org.uk

Key dates

Call launch	Deadline for your application	Date by which AREF informs applicants about the outcome of their application

2 September 2020	16:00 hours GMT/ UCT on 28 October 2020	18 November 2020
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Contact

If you have any enquiries, contact Irene Coker via irene.coker@aref-africa.org.uk

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