SUBMITTING A SUCCESSFUL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR AOTA 2020.

Neil Harvison, PhD, OTR, FAOTA
Chief Officer, Professional Affairs

Objectives

- Identify critical elements of a strong research proposal.
- Understand the submission process and application of scoring criteria.
- Identify strategies from successful research presenters.
First Step: Read the criteria!

• Read the criteria for a Scientific Research Proposal
• Read the scoring criteria
• Read the instructions
• Read them again!

What makes it Scientific Research?

• Scientific Research proposals support the AOTA’s Vision 2025 of occupational therapy as being science-driven and evidence-based.
• Proposals must focus on research projects which will contribute to the occupational therapy body of knowledge, articulate and promote the distinct value of occupational therapy and demonstrate rigor in design.

Priority will be given to the following identified research priorities (AOTF, 2016):

• Health Behaviors to Prevent and Manage Chronic Conditions
• Functional Cognition
• Safety and Injury Prevention in Home, Clinical, and Community Settings
• Technology and Environmental Supports in Home and Community
• Development and Transitions for Individuals and Families
• Emotional and Physiological Influences
• Family and Caregiver Needs
• Health care experience: access, care coordination, utilization
Is it a Scientific Research Proposal?

- Scientific Research Proposals require data that has been collected and analyzed. If you do not have data, select General Proposal or submit at another time.
- Research-related topics such as methodology, research challenges, or capacity building should be submitted as a General Proposal, because the scoring of the Scientific Research Proposals relies heavily on study design and data.
- If it is a research work in progress, preliminary data analysis must be included, if you are to have any chance of meeting minimal scores.

Scoring Criteria

Maximum possible total point = 50:

- Purpose (/5points)
- Rationale/Background (/5points)
- Design (/5points)
- Participants or data sources (/5points)
- Methods to obtain data (/5points)
- Analytical methods/analysis (/5points)
- Results (/5points)
- Conclusion (/5points)
- Impact statement (/5points)
- Relates to research priorities (/5points)

Scoring Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Additional Guidance for Scoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with no weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Strong but with some minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths but with some moderate weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>Not addressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title: First impressions…

• Do make it:
  – Interesting (e.g. Predictors of Depressive Symptoms Among Elders in Senior Residences)
  – Descriptive (e.g. Predictors…Elders…Senior Residences)
  – Content rich and conveys the message on why this proposal is important.

• **DO NOT** make it too long (e.g. A holistic survey of occupational therapists in order to understand how occupational therapist use power and the roles occupational therapists play in the healthcare and educational systems in order to help develop more leaders in the profession.)

• **DO NOT** make it too short (e.g. OT works!)

Formats

• Research Paper:
  – 15-minute duration.
  – 3 to 4 papers will be grouped together with 15 additional minutes for facilitated discussion. Total session length is 60 minutes or 90 minutes.

• Poster:
  – Displayed on a 4-ft x 8-ft cork bulletin board.
  – Posters will be on display during a designated 2-hour time period.
  – Presenters are required to be with their poster for the entire 2-hour session.

Early Career Scientists Event

• Speakers present their research for 15 minutes on the Early Career Scientists Stage located within the assigned poster room.

• Eight posters - during each 2-hour poster session will be selected
Choose primary and secondary focus

Primary
• Assessment/Measurement
• Prevention and Intervention (e.g. Efficacy)
• Translational Research (e.g. Effectiveness)
• Basic Research
• Health Services Research

Secondary
• Academic Education (included Fieldwork)
• Children & Youth
• Developmental Disabilities
• General & Professional Issues
• Home & Community Health
• Mental Health
• Productive Aging
• Rehabilitation & Disability
• Sensory Integration & Processing
• Work & Industry

Objectives: At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

• Communicate your intent
  — Use active voice, action words
• Reflect audience level you will target
  — Introductory: define, list...
  — Advanced: explain, analyze...
• Common issues:
  — Missing
  — Do not reflect content
  — Are not realistic in time frame

Structured Abstract:

• Character Maximum Limit (includes spaces): 3,800 approximately 750 words.
• The abstract must include statements of: (1) Purpose; (2) Design; (3) Method; (4) Results; & (5) Conclusion.
• Headings are NOT required.
• Note: If accepted for conference the abstract will be published in the American Journal of Occupational Therapy and MUST be submitted ready for publication.
Structured Abstract: Purpose

- Clearly state the purpose of the study and research question(s) (5 points).
- Provide the rationale/background. Explain why your research is needed and how your research addresses an important problem or issue in occupational therapy. (5 points).

Structured Abstract: Design

- Describe the study design (e.g. experimental, quasi-experimental, descriptive, ethnographic, narrative, phenomenological) (5 points).
- Describe the criteria and method(s) used to recruit and select participants or data sources for study (e.g. diagnosis, age, severity level, studies) (5 points).

Structured Abstract: Method

- In quantitative designs describe the instruments or methods used to collect data (e.g. measurement tools), or in qualitative methods (interview, approach, etc.) (5 points).
- Describe the analytical methods/analysis procedure (5 points).
Structured Abstract: Results

• Summarize findings and link findings to your research question and analysis. (5 points)

Structured Abstract: Conclusion

• Explain the conclusion(s) you have drawn from your findings, clearly linking them to the research question(s). Include knowledge translation or implementation strategies, if relevant. (5 points)

• This section must include a brief Impact Statement (recommended length: <300 characters; these characters are included in abstract limit of 3,800) explaining: (1) How is the proposal important to practice, policy, and/or science? or (2) How likely will it exert a powerful influence on occupational therapy? (5 points).

References

• References to the literature should be formatted using APA style; they are NOT required and should be kept to a minimum.

• All references to journal articles should include the doi.
Common Issues:

- **Learning objectives** not supported by content
- **Research question and rationale** not clearly stated
- **Methodology** does not support purposes of study
- Too much text on background – **not enough on methods and findings**
- **Data analyses** omitted, inappropriate, poorly described
- **Results too general**- suggesting that data has not been collected
- **Conclusions** unjustified based on results; poorly described
- **Contribution to OT unclear**
- If research **work in progress**, lack of preliminary data analysis

Abstract Synopsis

- **Character Maximum Limit:** 300 (including spaces)
- Summarize the major points of your abstract and describe how this topic will advance either the practice/professional development of the participant or the field of occupational therapy.
- **If your proposal is accepted, this information will be printed in the onsite Conference Program Guide and the American Journal of Occupational Therapy and MUST be submitted ready for publication.**
- Do **NOT use subheadings** in the abstract synopsis.

Rejections….

- Often it is just a matter of the volume of the submissions!
- Take a minute. Then……
  - Regroup,
  - Rethink,
  - Revise (if appropriate), and
  - Resubmit next year.
Last thoughts…

- If accepted for conference the abstract will be published in the American Journal of Occupational Therapy and **MUST** be submitted ready for publication!
- **Late breaking poster submission** is another option if your data is not there yet?