

Specific Aims

One Page

The single most important page in a grant

Specific Aims

- Specific Aims should be '*specific*'
- The entire grant is summarized in one page
- The specific aims should cover:
 - Your broad, long-term goals
 - The significance of the work
 - The specific testable hypotheses
 - The experiments you will carry out to test the hypotheses

Specific Aims – Structure

- Should begin with a brief narrative (1-2 paragraphs) describing the long-term goals and the major hypothesis guiding the proposal.
- Should briefly summarize your preliminary data
- Paragraph leads into numbered aims

Specific Aims 1st paragraph

My disease is super important because millions of people have it.....

The gene that causes my disease has been shown to be a lysosomal channel.....

Recently, we have shown that my gene plays a role in protein transport into the lysosome....

The goal of the current proposal is to build on this finding and determine if this alters cell viability.....

SPECIFICALLY, WE AIM.....

1. To.....

Specific Aims – The Aims

- Follow with 3 – 5 ‘surgically precise’ Aims
 - each should be clear & lucid statements of work scope beginning with “To define, elucidate, identify, chronicle...
- State the hypothesis clearly (make it a positive statement)
- Each aim should be one sentence followed by a brief paragraph with more detail
- Be certain aims are related, but avoid having them ‘build’ on each other if an outcome could preclude going further
- Carefully consider the order of the aims

Specific Aims

Foreshadows all other sections if written correctly:

- Preliminary Data/Progress Report
- Background/Significance
- Experimental Design

Descriptive or Discovery Aims

- Not hypothesis driven:
 - I'm going to clone a gene
 - I'm going to make a mouse
 - I'm going to establish a cell culture system
- No longer a death sentence, but avoid multiple discovery aims and make sure they are related to or required for the other aims

Important Points

- Don't write a grant with 7 specific aims
- Focus on aims where you have good supporting preliminary data and expertise
- Don't CRAM – leave a space between the introductory paragraph and each aim. Indent.
- Watch margins and font size
- Use ***bold and underline but don't overdo it!***
- PROOFREAD

Example

- To determine the role of mucolipin-1 in lysosomal exocytosis. (lousy aim, could take 30 years)
- To determine if mucolipin-1 modulates membrane fusion during exocytosis via an interaction with protein X. (good aim, suggests preliminary data (interaction), contains a testable hypothesis)

Example – descriptive Aim

- To collect DNA from families with AD
(poor, too vague)
- To collect DNA from 1000 well-characterized multiplex families with AD
(descriptive, but detailed)

Specific Aims – Personal notes

- I write the aims first, and I write them over and over and over until they sound perfect and I show them to people
- This page is my guide as I write the rest of the grant
 - B&S, Preliminary Data, RD&M
- Go back and finesse the aims if necessary
- Once the application is written ask yourself – are they in the right order?
- Can you read this one page and know exactly what I will do, how I will do it, and why it is important that I do it?

Specific Aims – personal pet peeve

- Avoid:
 - Aim 1
 - Aim 1a
 - Aim 1a.i
 - Aim 1a.ii
 - Aim 1a.iii
 - Aim 1b
 - Aim 1b.i
 - Aim 1b.ii
 - Aim 1b.iii