Criteria for selection – writing a good application

Michael Grove

University of Birmingham

M.J.Grove@bham.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM
Mathematics Support Centre
PART OF THE ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTRE

sigma Σ

Grant Writing 'Process'

Before you write

- Interpreting the Call
- Aims & Objectives
- Planning the Project

The Proposal

- Structure
- Writing Style
- Costings
- Do's & Don'ts

Follow-up

- Feedback
- Iteration

The **sigma** call

- Two components:
  - New face-to-face mathematics support provision
  - Enhancement of existing provision
- Up to £15k per centre available
- HEIs in England eligible, also FECs with provision at HE level
- Can be based in any department/central unit.

Important detail

- Successful centres required to contribute to work of **sigma** network.
- Funds must be used for student benefit – not to fund research projects.
- Delivery of support before early 2014/15 (October).
- Application through a dedicated form that must be completed in full with clear senior management support (letter).

Assessment criteria

- 9 criteria for assessment
  - All must be fully addressed
  - Competitive – ranking of proposals
  - All sections of form must be fully completed – noting word limits
- Enhanced centres:
  - Initial expression of interest
  - Full proposal

Understanding the criteria

- *"Clearly specified outline for the proposed centre initiative which is relevant to the specified aims of the funding"*
  - How does your proposal meet the intention of the call?
  - How will you use the funds?
  - What will be different within your institution?
  - How will this impact upon learners?
  - How does this align with institutional priorities?
  - What is the longer term vision?

Understanding the criteria

- *"Extent of need/demand explained"*
  - Why do you, **as an institution**, need mathematics support?
  - How do you know? What evidence/data do you have?
  - What particular issue/problem will it tackle?
  - Consider using a case study example

Understanding the criteria

- *"Clear outline of the student groups to be targeted and the numbers of students this would involve"*
  - This should be linked to your need/rationale
  - What cohorts of students will you target?
  - How many learners (approximately) will this involve?
  - How many learners in Year 1? Year 2? Etc.

Understanding the criteria

- *"Expertise of the staff involved"*
  - What expertise do you have in mathematics? In providing mathematics support? Supporting non-specialist learners?
  - If the project lead doesn't have expertise how will you develop it? Who else will be involved?
  - Involvement of more than one staff member
  - Academic or disciplinary input?
  - Senior management involvement with/oversight of proposed activities
  - Accountability and overall oversight – who?

Understanding the criteria

- *"Quality of approach and feasibility of timetable"*
  - How will your model be implemented?
  - Consideration of design, implementation and delivery.
  - Realistic timetable – lead-in. How will you know milestone achieved – success measures
  - What does your model look like? How will delivery take place? Who, when and how often?
  - What existing models might you build upon?
  - Need for interim arrangements?
  - Longer term development of provision
  - **Evaluation and dissemination**

Understanding the criteria

- *"Commitment to provide (at least) matched funding"*
  - Getting institutional buy-in or sign-off takes time!
  - Actual Financial contribution plus contribution in kind
  - Be cautious of an fEC contribution in kind!
  - The 'matched' requirement is there to get buy-in from your institution to help support you!
  - Consider articulating financial contribution beyond Year 2 but matched component requires during first two years.

Understanding the criteria

- *"Outline of how the funding will be spent"*
  - Initial start-up costs: facilities, furniture, IT equipment, resources, promotion/awareness raising, website
  - Operating costs: Staffing costs, postgraduate support costs, tutor training/mentoring, consumables, licenses
  - Other costs: Evaluation, dissemination, networking, travel, consultancy, contingency

  - Realistic and accurate!

Understanding the criteria

- *"Clear commitment of the senior management of the institution to the ethos of mathematics support."*
  - Consider several letters of support or collect supporting statements in a single letter.
  - Reinforce why mathematics support is important to the institution – embed within OFFA agreements
  - Opportunity to get an explicit statement as to how others will support you and your work
  - Address issue of sustainability explicitly

Understanding the criteria

- "Clear plans for continuation at the end of the funding period"
  - How will your centre continue?
  - Key requirement of funding to **sigma** from HEFCE – legacy and sustainability.
  - Senior management commitment in advance
  - Seeking certainty – not "we will explore the possibility…"
  - Consider a sustainable model – moderate ongoing delivery costs

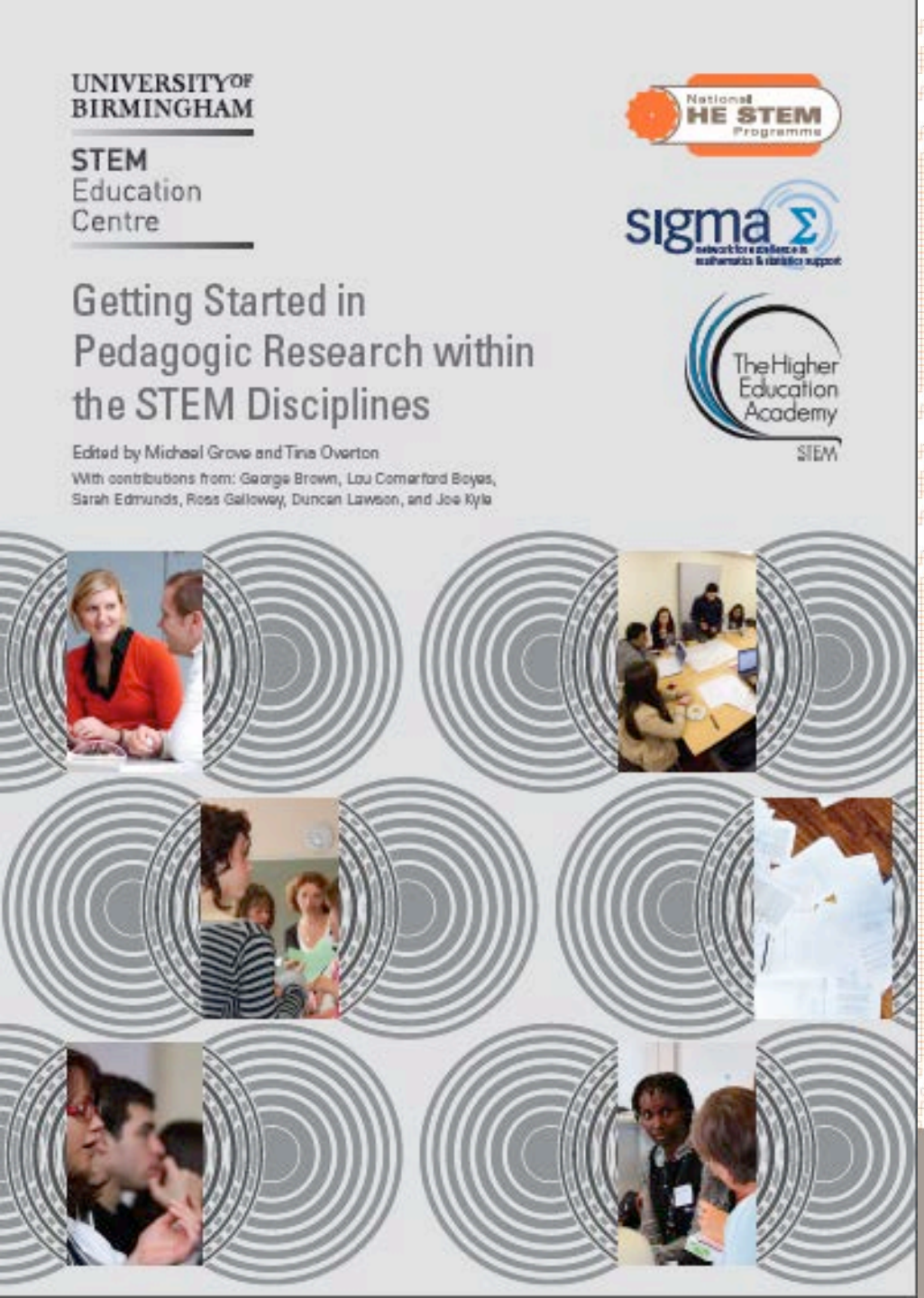
Key Points

- Senior management buy-in to your proposal is essential. This may require time and a formal process. Start early.
- Build a team - engage them in proposal development for ownership
- There is a lot of practice upon which to build. Explore models, approaches and practices from elsewhere: www.sigma-network.ac.uk

Seek feedback

- Get feedback on your ideas and proposals from others within your institutions.
- Use links with those at existing centres.
- Contact **sigma** to explore ideas.

- If unsuccessful – consider the feedback. A second call will take place in 2013/14.



Preparing your proposal

- Section on preparing grant proposals.
- http://www.sigma-network.ac.uk/news/

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Questions & Discussion

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