

Academic Grant Writing (B001792)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 4.0 **Study time 120 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2025-2026

A (Year)	Dutch, English	Gent
B (semester 1)	Dutch, English	Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2025-2026

Vandeviver, Christophe	RE23	lecturer-in-charge
Akdemir Ekizoğlu, Seda	RE23	co-lecturer
Lievens, Eva	RE21	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2025-2026

	crdts	offering
Master of Laws in Laws	4	B
Master of Science in Criminological Sciences	4	B

Teaching languages

English, Dutch

Keywords

Scientific writing, science communication, grant proposal, acquisition of academic funding, doctoral research, FWO, BOF

Position of the course

This course supports students who wish to apply for funding to conduct research in law and/or criminology, and trains them in scientific reporting of research ideas. It covers the essentials of academic grant writing by focusing on the content and structure of an academic research proposal. Throughout the course, students are taught how to write a research proposal and present its main ideas to an audience of experts. Topics that are being covered include how to identify and articulate a suitable research question, engage with the extant research literature and embed the own research in the state of the art, and identify suitable research designs to address the research questions. In the end, students will have learned how to write an academic research proposal, and will have written an academic grant application on a self-selected topic.

Contents

Students develop a full grant application that complies with the guidelines for a PhD Fellowship fundamental research (in Dutch: "Aspirant fundamenteel onderzoek") set out by the Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO). This requires students to independently select an appropriate research topic that is related to law and/or criminology for their research proposal. Prior to enrolling in this course, students are strongly recommended to contact a member of academic staff of Ghent University Faculty of Law and Criminology to be their grant application supervisor (for eligibility criteria, see regulations of FWO). In addition to developing a grant application, students pitch their initial idea for a research proposal and present their final research proposal in elevator pitch-style presentations to an audience of peers and academic experts with a view to convince the audience of the value of their idea and appropriateness of their research objectives as well as to obtain feedback and input to strengthen their proposal. Students review research proposals of fellow students to help identify common mistakes in grant writing and identify key elements of grant applications. To develop their grant

application, students rely on the guidelines and information that are provided by the lecturers during the theoretical classes, information from the international literature, feedback obtained through refereeing research proposals written by fellow students, and the feedback obtained from the lecturers and their peers.

Initial competences

Students hold a bachelor's degree that allows enrolling in the Master of Science in Criminological Sciences and/or the Master of Laws in Laws.

Students have sufficient written and spoken proficiency in English.

Prior to enrolling, students are strongly encouraged to obtain the written commitment of at least one member of Ghent University Faculty of Law and Criminology academic staff to be their grant application supervisor. For eligibility criteria, see regulations of FWO.

Final competences

- 1 Identify and develop a theoretical and methodological framework within which research questions are embedded and formulated.
- 2 Design an appropriate research strategy to answer the research questions.
- 3 Develop a temporal framework, work packages, and appropriate (measurable) research output indicators.
- 4 Develop an innovative but feasible research proposal that includes a critical and creative analysis of the state of the art of the proposed research questions, articulate an appropriate research aim and research objectives, formulate testable hypotheses and research questions, and design a methodological strategy in order to translate the research proposal into quantitative and/or qualitative data.
- 5 Communicate the research proposal in written and oral format to an audience of experts and non-experts in English, with the communicative goal set to secure research funding for their project.
- 6 Frame a research proposal within a broader scientific and societal framework.
- 7 Demonstrate the link between the researcher and the research proposal.
- 8 Students who wish to apply for research funding can rely on these competences and the research proposal that is developed in this course to apply for a PhD Fellowship fundamental research from the Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO) together with their supervisor.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lecture: during lectures, students are informed about the fundamentals of grant writing, how to structure a research proposal, and what information should be included in the grant proposal including in the administrative sections as well as the presentation.

Independent work: students individually develop a grant proposal in a self-reliant manner. During the project, students get feedback on the structure and format of their research proposal from the course lecturers. Students produce a written research proposal in English that complies with the guidelines for a PhD Fellowship fundamental research (Aspirant fundamenteel onderzoek) set out by the Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO).

Peer teaching: combination of three assignments

- Students (1) individually review one or more research proposals written by fellow students beforehand and prepare at least three questions per proposal in advance. Proposal reviews will be conducted on the basis of a review template that will be made available to students. Afterwards, student review reports are shared to help improve grant proposals.
- During plenary sessions, students (2) first pitch their proposal idea in English in a brief oral presentation (course beginning) followed up by a group discussion, and (3) later present their research proposal in English in a timed 1 minute oral

presentation (course end) followed up by up to 20 minutes of oral discussion in group. In the initial pitch, students focus on the innovative character of their proposal and establish the need to know. The follow-up discussion is initiated by the course lectures and all students participate by raising questions using the presentation and lecture notes as input. The goal of the initial pitch is primarily to acquaint students with the presentation format, train students in providing feedback to fellow students, and elicit feedback from course lecturers. In the final presentation, students deliver an elevator pitch of their full proposal and seek to convince the audience of the value of their proposal. Students who have reviewed the presented proposal will rely on their review report to initiate the follow-up discussion. All other students participate in the discussion by raising at least one question, using their lecture notes and the presentation and points raised by the presenting and reviewing students as input. The course lecturers will keep time and moderate the discussion, in addition to ensuring the scientific integrity of the discussion and giving comments and feedback. The goal of the final discussion is to train presenting students into thinking on their feet while on the clock and improving their performance during critical presentations, and challenge reviewing students to spot weaknesses or unclarities in research proposals.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides Academic Grant Writing

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader Academic Grant Writing

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Available on Ufora : Yes

References

- www.fwo.be
- Browning, B. (2008). *Perfect phrases for writing grant proposals*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Cooksey, R., & McDonald, G. (2019). *Surviving and thriving in postgraduate research*. New York: Springer.
- Hamper, R.J., & Baugh, S.L. (2011). *Handbook for writing proposals* (2nd edition). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Keith, P. (2000). Developing effective research proposals. London: SAGE.
- Porter, R. (2007). Why academics have a hard time writing good grant proposals. *Journal of Research Administration*, 38(2), 37-43.
- Terrell, S.R. (2016). Writing a proposal for your dissertation: Guidelines and examples. London: Guilford Press.

Course content-related study coaching

- Collectively, in class
- Individually, by appointment with the course instructors
- N.B. in addition the support offered by the course instructors, students are strongly encouraged to regularly consult with their actual grant application supervisor throughout their academic grant writing process

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Oral assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Permanent evaluation: Combination of one individual paper (that consists of an individual research proposal, and one or more proposal review reports), and an oral exam (that consists of a timed presentation and follow-up questions).

• **Individual paper:** students write a grant proposal (10 pages incl. references) in English that complies with the guidelines for a PhD Fellowship fundamental research (Aspirant fundamenteel onderzoek) set out by the Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO).

- **Grant proposals** will be marked on their (1) rationale and positioning with regard to the state-of-the-art (Is the scientific motivation for the project proposal based on scientific knowledge gaps? Are the issues and/or problems that the student wants to solve with the project elaborated?), (2) scientific research objectives (Are the scientific objectives and research hypotheses clearly articulated?), (3) research methodology and work plan (Is the choice and applicability of the research design motivated? Is the cohesion between work packages explained? Are contingency plans proposed to mitigate risks that might endanger reaching project objectives? Is the timing of the planned research activities clear and is it feasible to complete the project within four years?). Failing to comply with the guidelines for a PhD Fellowship fundamental research set out by the Research Foundation—Flanders (FWO), including going over the page limit, results in a fail.

- **Proposal reviews:** each student reviews one or more research proposals written by other students and writes a 500 word structured review report for each research proposal. Review reports will be structured according to a review template that will be made available to students. Review reports will be marked on their (1) ability to succinctly report on the thesis and main points of the reviewed proposal, (2) scientific quality of the arguments delivered to review the proposal, and (3) the points of improvement and topics for discussion. Significant deviation in review report length (+/- 10%) will be cause for a reduced grade.

- **Oral exam:** Each student will orally present their research proposal in a timed 1 min. presentation. Presentations will be marked on their (1) ability to convey the research idea clearly and succinctly within the allotted time, (2) form of the presentation, and (3) individual presentation skills. Significant deviation in presentation time (+/- 10%) will be cause for a reduced grade. The presentation is immediately followed by a Q&A-style oral exam regarding the grant proposal. Topics that could be discussed during the follow-up Q&A include (but are not limited to) rationale, feasibility, individual match, etc.

Calculation of the examination mark

Continuous assessment (100%)

- Continuous assessment
 - Project: 15/20, individual score.
 - Grant proposal: 10/20
 - Proposal evaluations: 5/20
 - Oral evaluation: 5/20 final score, individual score.

Students are required to participate in all evaluation moments and all components thereof. Specifically, this means participation in all components of the continuous assessment. Furthermore, students must pass both evaluation moments separately (i.e., at least 7.5/15 for the project and at least 2.5/5 for the oral evaluation).

If the student does not meet the above participation and passing requirements, the student in question will be declared 'not passed' for this course component. If the student does not pass one or more evaluation moments and still achieves 10 or more (out of 20), the grade will be reduced to the highest non-passing grade (9/20). If the student does not participate in one or more evaluation moments and the final score for this course component would still be 8 or more (out of 20), the final score will be reduced to the highest non-deliverable grade (7/20).

Failure to meet deadlines for submitting (part) assignments of the continuous assessment results in the inability to assess the assignment and leads to a non-passing grade for the respective assignment (i.e., 0). Students who miss a deadline due to a justified absence can submit the specific part assignment at another time, provided this does not affect the functioning or assessment of other students.

Failure to comply with the guidelines and format requirements as described on the online learning environment will result in a reduced score.

Only the final scores are rounded, in accordance with the rounding rules specified in the OER. Partial scores for (components of) evaluation moments are not rounded in the final score calculation. In exceptional cases, this may mean that a final score of >9.49/20 still means that the student has not passed the course component.

Partial results are carried over to the second exam period within the same academic year, provided the student has passed the respective evaluation moment. The instructor retains the right to the final decision in transferring this score to the second exam period.

Facilities for Working Students

To be discussed with the teaching team.