A GUIDE, NOT THE GUIDELINES
This document is offered as a helpful guide on preparing a good proposal. This is not meant to replace the guidelines included in the College of Arts and Architecture 2012-13 Competition for Faculty Research Grants announcement. For complete guidelines, refer to that announcement.

THE SECTIONS OF AN A&A PROPOSAL
The following are the sections prescribed for the College of Arts and Architecture 2012-13 Competition for Faculty Research Grants.

Abstract (For A&A competition, not to exceed 150 words)
Note: Other granting agencies may refer to this section as an “Executive Summary.”
Your abstract is the first thing a reviewer will read. It must represent your project accurately but it should also capture the reviewer’s attention. All good grant proposals begin with a compelling idea. The abstract is where that idea should be introduced in a concise compelling summary. If there is a place for superlatives or bold statements in proposal writing, the abstract is it.

Objectives
State the objective of your project. What do you intend to accomplish? If applicable, your project may be presented as a need, or as a problem in need of a solution. Of course, you want to present your project as important, or the problem as serious, but you must also convey optimism.

Background
Describe broad context for your project. Provide a general history of the topic prior to your involvement. Explain how others have addressed this topic/problem. Review previous literature, scholarship, and/or activity. If your project lends itself to the narrative format, here is your opportunity to tell the story.

Plan of Work
Describe exactly what you plan to do including specific procedures, methodology, schedule and resources. Exactly how do you plan to accomplish the objective you stated above? How are your actions going to resolve the problem you’ve identified? How does your approach to this problem differ from previous attempts? If scheduling is important, you might want to include a timeline. Timelines can be presented in paragraph form or as a chart. Explain the availability of existing resources and/or the need for additional resources.

Anticipated outcome
Describe the anticipated product, research findings or creative work. Explain why you believe that the process described in the Plan of Work will achieve the outcome described under Objectives.

Dissemination of Results
All granting agencies want to know how the results of your research that they funded will be disseminated. Describe any publications, exhibitions, and/or performances you
plan as a result of this project. Written documentation of specific commitments and/or guarantees (i.e. publication contracts, scheduled exhibitions or performances) strengthens the proposal.

**National and International Significance of the Project**
An important factor in ranking proposals is the significance of the project. Does it have regional, national or international implications for the applicant, for Penn State or for the discipline at large? In some cases, the significance of a project might be best addressed here in conjunction with the Dissemination of Results. In other cases it might fit better with the Anticipated Outcome.

**Relationship of the project to prior research**
Explain how the project described in this proposal relates to your previous professional work. Why should you be the one who is funded to undertake this project? How are you uniquely qualified to solve this problem? How has your previous work prepared you for this project? How is it like your previous work? How is it different?

**Identification of External Sources for Funding**
The A&A review committee expects to see evidence of your attempts to secure funding from sources outside Penn State. The attempts must have been within the past year (since October 2008) but they need not be for this specific project.

**Budget** (for A&A competition, amounts should be rounded off to the nearest ten dollars)
The basic elements of a budget are estimated expenses followed by estimated income (or assets). The difference between the two reflects the total amount needed or the “Total Amount Requested.” Anticipated funding from other grant applications should be included in the income section of the budget.

Please use one of the provided budget templates as the basis for your budget.

- >Budget Template – Research
- >Budget Template – Production
- >Budget Template – Performance/Exhibition

Each lists slightly different budget items. Select the one best suited for your budget. You are not limited to these forms, but please use one of them as a template for your budget.

The amount requested should be reasonable. Your proposal will appear unrealistic if your budget amounts are too low and it will appear fraudulent if your pad your amounts. Also, keep in mind the assets and guidelines of the granting agency. You are wasting everyone’s time if you request an amount well beyond the amount the agency will consider.

Funding agencies want to know exactly how their money is going to be used. A budget must be clear. Each budget item must be explained through either a brief descriptive
caption within the budget or through a budget narrative appended to the budget page. If your budget items are self explanatory, a budget narrative may not be necessary.

If your request is for a small portion of a large project, your budget could consist of one column for the entire project and a separate column for the funds requested in the proposal.

**Curriculum vitae**
For the A&A competition, an abbreviated CV, a maximum of five pages.

Make sure your CV is up-to-date and relevant to the project.

**GENERAL ADVICE**

**Tell a Story**
Try to make your proposal reader-friendly and engaging.

**Make your proposal interesting.**
Write in a conversational style, using first person and active voice.
If statistics are important to making your case, keep them simple and interesting.

**Write concisely.**
If you can say it in fewer words, do so. Reviewers will appreciate it.

**Avoid jargon.**
Write for a general audience. Remember, most reviewers are not in your discipline.

For a Proposal Writing Short Course on-line visit:

http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/index.html