The Write Checklist for

Proposal Writing

This checklist covers the most important elements of an effective proposal. If you can tick 'yes' next to all the statements below, your proposal is much more likely to be a winner!

How to use the checklist

- Use this checklist before you start writing to focus your thinking on what you'll need and what to keep in mind. Use it while you're writing, and again before you submit, to assure yourself that you're staying focused and doing everything you can to make your proposal successful.

- Adapt the checklist to your own context. For example, next to 'the proposal gives evidence for claims, such as case studies, awards, testimonials and customised CVs', you could add 'to avoid duplicating work, check our database for previous examples you can adapt to this proposal'.

- Think of your competitors as you use this checklist. What small and large distinctions can you make that will set your proposal apart?

- Download the Write Plain Language Standard (free to use under Creative Commons) to polish your proposal even more.

The Write Checklist for Proposal Writing

Focus on the client

Your proposal:

1. makes the client feel understood and reads as a solution to their problem ☐

2. emphasises what you can do for your client — their company's name (or 'you') appears much more often than your company's name (or 'we') ☐

3. reflects your client's language and values ☐

4. draws on research into your client's spoken or unspoken needs and anticipates their questions. ☐

Get the substance right

Your proposal:

5. starts with a summary of your client's needs and your solution ☐

6. answers all questions in the RFP in a way that focuses on the client and gives you the edge over competitors ☐

7. clearly links features and benefits to the specific outcome the client wants ☐

8. includes evidence to support your claims and inspire confidence — such as case studies, testimonials, awards, and tailored CVs ☐

9. includes only relevant information, without any 'padding' ☐

10. uses statement headings and graphics to break up text and bring your words to life ☐

11. clearly takes account of the evaluation criteria set out in the RFP. ☐

Polish for credibility

Your proposal:

12. uses plain English and avoids or explains technical or industry-specific terms as appropriate ☐

13. reads as if one person wrote it, even if it had multiple authors ☐

14. is formatted using any template the RFP requires ☐

15. is free of errors — such as inconsistent client or project names, typos, or incorrect punctuation. ☐