Tips for Applying for a C. R. Anderson Grant

October 2021

The Business Communication Research Foundation is the 501(c)(3) affiliate of the Association for Business Communication. The Foundation administers several awards and grants including the C. R. Anderson Research Fund grants.

The C. R. Anderson Research Fund (CRARF) supports innovative business communication research, that is, research exploring how people communicate effectively within and outside business organizations to get work done. The field pays particular attention to writing and speaking effectiveness for workplace transactions. It draws its theoretical perspectives and qualitative/quantitative research methods from diverse fields, including composition, information systems, intercultural communication, linguistics, management, and rhetoric.

CRARF grants provide up to USD 5,000 for expenses related to the execution of the business communication research within the course of a project of up to 12 months. Expenses that are considered include software for data collection and analysis, justified project-related travel expenses, tokens of appreciation for research subjects, and pay for research support staff, such as data coders, transcribers, and staff to run complex statistical analyses. Grants do *not* cover expenses for computers or educational programs.

All members of ABC, including graduate students, faculty, and professional members, are eligible to receive a CRARF grant.

General Tips

1. Read through the call for proposals and other materials on the ABC website carefully as you prepare your proposal. Make sure your proposal fits the scope, significance, timeline, and budget guidelines of a CRARF grant.
2. Keep in mind the timeline: The deadline to submit proposals is January 1. The review, revision, decision, and funding process can take up to three months. Your one-year timeline begins when you receive the funds from CRARF.
3. If you have questions about your proposal or about how to situate your research project within the parameters of CRARF's mission, feel free to contact CRARF Committee Chair, Jacob Rawlins (jacob_rawlins@byu.edu) or any member of the committee.
4. Keep in mind that, while we will review your proposal carefully to ensure it meets the academic standards of CRARF, we *want* to fund research projects and we are excited to hear about the many ways ABC members are expanding our discipline.

Abstract

"(1) Abstract (no more than 100 words) – A one paragraph overview of the proposed research including the research question, the primary reason why this question needs to be answered for business communication academic and/or professional communities, the research methods to be used to obtain, analyze, and validate the data, and the new knowledge the research is expected to bring to business communication."

- Cover all parts of your study
- Ensure that your abstract aligns with your research questions, your research methods, and your theoretical foundation.
    - Check the abstract for this alignment after you've written the proposal, but before submitting.

Research Questions

Research Question & Significance for Business Communication – What is the specific research question that this research will answer for business communication? How will this research contribute to business communication effectiveness? What gap in the business communication literature will this research address? What makes this research original or innovative?

- Write research questions that add new knowledge to business communication and have transformational vision and align with your research methods.
- Read example research questions from journal articles that align with your proposed study, especially those from *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* and the *International Journal of Business Communication.*
- Pay close attention how your research questions add unique value and useful knowledge to business communication knowledge and how they move the field forward.

Theoretical Foundation

Theoretical Foundation with Key Citations – What is the theoretical foundation of this research? (For example, the research might "extend our understanding of agency and genre theory," or "apply and extend Toulmin's components of argument.") What key literature does this research draw upon, depart from, or synthesize?

- Use *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, *International Journal of Business Communication,* and past ABC presentations as a starting point for engaging in the literature.

- Outline what is missing from the literature and how your research extends it.

Research Methods

Research Methods & Rigor – What qualitative and/or quantitative research method(s) will be used to investigate the research question and validate the findings?

Examples of questions that might be relevant for the proposed research include: How will the data be obtained? How much data will be needed for this kind of research? Is access to the data assured and how so? If human subjects are used, how many will be included and what is the rationale for their selection? If interviews or focus groups are used, what will be the general focus of the questions used? What methods will be used to analyze the data?

- Have your Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in progress when you apply.
- Ensure that your research methods are the best way to answer your specific research questions.
- Note how human subjects research (e.g. face-to-face interviews and/or focus groups) might be more difficult and higher-risk during COVID-19.

Anticipated Results and Implications

<u>Anticipated Results & Implications</u> – What are the anticipated results of this research? What are target publications for these results? What are the implications of the results for practitioners? If applicable, what will this research contribute to theory?

- Highlight the following in this section:
  - what you expect to find in your research and its implications,
  - where and how you plan to share your research, and
  - how will your implications make a significant contribution to business communication.

Timeline

- Research must be completed within a one-year timeframe. The clock starts from the time you receive the funding.
- If you are planning a multi-year research project, you might think about securing funding for a well-defined portion of your research project. For further information about this option, contact Jacob Rawlins, CRARF Chair, jacob_rawlins@byu.edu.
- To develop your timeline, consider each of the major steps of your research project. For example: literature review, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. Then, estimate the time it will take to complete each phase. Be generous with your estimates to allow for unforeseen issues you might encounter.
- Within each step or phase of the proposed research, think about each task, the amount of time, and resources you might need to accomplish each task. For example, within the data collection stage, will you use human subjects and need approval from your Institutional Research Board? What's the realistic time frame for getting an IRB approval for your project? If you choose a survey method, could you use MTurk or Dynata? If so, how long might that take? As you create your detailed timeline, you can also estimate costs associated with each of the tasks.
- If funds are delayed or other unforeseen circumstances occur, you can revise your timeline, explain the reason for the delay, and submit it to the CRARF committee.

Budget

- Specify the total amount that you are requesting from CRARF. Be sure to show all sources of funding for your research including funds that you've already secured or funds you are hoping to secure from other sources.
- Every budgeted item will be reviewed by CRARF committee members and the Business Communication Research Foundation Board of Directors, so be sure to provide adequate justification for every item. In other words, each item must show direct relevance to the research, and the cost for each item must be reasonable.
- Itemize all your relevant expenses with a breakdown for every item such as the number of coding hours needed and the cost per hour.
- Expenses can include software for data collection and analysis, project-related travel expenses, tokens of appreciation for research subjects, and pay for research support, such as data coders, transcribers, and staff to run complex statistical analyses.
- Grants do NOT cover expenses for faculty labor, computers, or educational programs.
- Be sure to acknowledge the financial support of the CRARF in all conference presentations and publications (both print and online).

Timeline and Budget Example

Proposed Timeline

Task	Dates
Allocation of funds	March 15 2021
Recruit 2 graduate research assistants (Literature review, coding, & analysis)	March 15-April 15
Conduct literature review	March 15-May 31
Refine research questions	April 1-15
Develop interview and focus group pilot protocols	April 15-May 15
IRB	April 15-June 15
Purchase Leximancer academic license	April 15
Recruit research participants	June 15 – July 31
Conduct interviews/focus groups	August 16-19
Transcribe interviews	August 19-31
Code interviews	September 1 – September 30
Thematic data analysis	October 1 - December 30
Write results	December 1 – February 2022
Research complete	March 15
Submit conference proposal	about March 15
Prepare 1,000-word CRARF final report	June 15
Give presentation at ABC conference	October 20

Submit manuscript for publication	November 30 2022

Proposed Budget Plan

We plan to employ two graduate students to assist with the literature review, coding, and data analysis. University policy sets graduate pay at $20/hour. Fifty (50) study participants will each be offered $5 coffee cards as allowable by IRB guidelines. Transcribing service will complete transcripts from recordings. Grad student will use Leximancer software to conduct textual data analysis. Coding will be conducted by the two grad assistants for inter-rater reliability. Five days travel will be necessary to conduct 10 interviews and 10 focus groups (approximately 4 participants per focus group). Faculty researcher and student research assistants will conduct the interviews and focus groups. Faculty travel to be covered by CRARF. Student travel to be covered by a university fellowship grant.

Detailed Budget Plan

Activity	Cost per participant	No of participants/hours	Total
2 Graduate Assistants Work to be split between 2 graduate students. Both will participate for coding inter-rater reliability	$20/hour	Literature review (20 hours) Coding (40 hours) Analysis (40 hours)	$2,000.00
Transcribing Go Transcript	.77/minute Average interview/focus group (90 min)	10 interviews & 10 focus groups * 90 minutes * .77	$1,386.00
Leximancer software one-month academic cloud license	$199		$199.00
Gift cards	$5 coffee card	50 participants/interviews and focus groups	$250.00
Travel (5 days) Airfare PHX-SAN Lodging – San Diego	$345 round trip $625 ($125/night)	Faculty researcher 5 days (conduct 10 interviews & 10 focus groups)	$970.00
TOTAL			**$4,805.00**

Supplies and Services
Request $199 to purchase an academic license for Leximancer.

External Funds
Two graduate assistants will accompany the faculty researcher to conduct the interviews and focus groups. A university fellowship research grant for $1,940 has been secured that covers student travel. These short-term fellowships provide allowances for student research travel.

Communicating Quality and Significance

Clearly show how your research addresses a business communication topic. For CRARF, we define business communication research as a study exploring any communication related to business processes or structures, and that occurs within, between, or outside business organizations.

Demonstrate your work's business communication nature
- General – you can link your work to an existing business communication theory (or theories) or build one.
- For the business side – link to an existing business research theory (or theories) or a major business process or outcome.
- For the communication side – link to an existing communication research theory (or theories) or a major communication process or outcome.

Make a strong argument for how your work will contribute new, valuable business communication knowledge.
- Present this argument in the first page of your proposal description.
- Show how your work contrasts with and adds to our current view of the general topic.

Ground your work in theory and the field.
- Clearly show the link with relevant research scholarship.
- Draw from prior research by incorporating specifics from these works rather than just "name checking" other studies.

Show how your work will improve the work place or work life.
- Make an argument for how your work will improve the workplace – either for the workers or an organization's outcomes.
- Support that these improvements have a substantial effect on the workplace.

Show that you will use (or have used) rigorous methods.
- Qualitative research
  - Discuss what qualitative school/method you will use to ground your work.
  - Discuss how you will obtain your observation group.
  - Show how you will control for researcher bias.
  - Discuss your validity and reliability checks.

- Quantitative research
  - Discuss your data collection method.
  - Show that you will have an adequate sample size.
  - Discuss the sample's generalizability.
  - Clearly present all measures (e.g., scales) you will use in your work and their validity and reliability.
  - Discuss your proposed analytic method.