Composing CFPs for Conferences and Edited Collections

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Overview

- Explain role of CFPs in research initiatives
- Review structure and strategies for writing your own CFP
This lecture will not discuss process of organizing a conference or publishing an edited collection.

We will focus on the writing strategies used to compose effective CFPs.
What is a CFP?

- Call for Proposals (CFPs) are used to elicit submissions for research initiatives
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- Call for Proposals (CFPs) are used to elicit submissions for research initiatives
- Academic conferences
- Edited collections
- Grants or other funding
What is a CFP?

- CFPs identify the themes or theoretical frameworks that all participants will discuss in their respective work.
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- CFPs identify the themes or theoretical frameworks that all participants will discuss in their respective work.
- CFPs act as the “glue” that holds together a collection of research.
What is a CFP?

- Example: Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)
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- National conference for English, writing, and literacy studies
- Theme of previous conference was “Language and Labor”
What is a CFP?

- My proposal questioned the “labor” or work that students undertake in English classes
What is a CFP?

- My proposal questioned the “labor” or work that students undertake in English classes
- What intellectual labor should English classes encourage?
- How can we translate the work that happens in English to professional fields?
What is a CFP?

- Conference CFP identified key terms
What is a CFP?

- Conference CFP identified key terms
- My proposal applied these terms to my own research and teaching
- Through this application, new ideas and potential connections emerged
What is a CFP?

- Main goal of a CFP: give potential participants a set of “raw materials” they can use.
- Up to participants to apply these “raw materials” to unique research undertakings.
Composing Your Own CFP

- Let’s discuss some strategies for writing your own CFP
- Assumption is CFP will be for a conference or edited collection
Composing Your Own CFP

- Several steps to discuss, will go through each step one-by-one
Composing Your Own CFP

- First: clearly identify the common ground that you expect all submissions to build upon
Composing Your Own CFP

- First: clearly identify the common ground that you expect all submissions to build upon
- Common ground = central idea, theoretical framework, or keystone author/text that all submissions will respond to
- CCCC example: “Language and Labor”
Composing Your Own CFP

- You can offer your own interpretation of the common ground
- The more detailed you are, the easier it will be for participants to build upon these ideas
Composing Your Own CFP

- Keystone author
Composing Your Own CFP

- Keystone author → Which text? Why this author in particular?
Composing Your Own CFP

- Keystone author → Which text? Why this author in particular?
- Theoretical framework
Composing Your Own CFP

- Keystone author → Which text? Why this author in particular?
- Theoretical framework → Exemplary research? Are we doing something unique with this framework compared to prior work?
Composing Your Own CFP

- Second: explain the occasion for exploring these ideas
- What is unique about our current moment that warrants an investigation of your common ground?
Composing Your Own CFP

- Can respond to surrounding socio-cultural conditions
Composing Your Own CFP

- Can respond to surrounding socio-cultural conditions
- Are there recent events that illustrate the relevance of your main ideas?
- Can our current moment help us re-approach traditional ideas in new ways?
Composing Your Own CFP

- Can respond to discipline-specific developments
Composing Your Own CFP

- Can respond to discipline-specific developments
- Have there been advancements in research?
- Have new problems emerged? Have older problems been solved?
Composing Your Own CFP

- Third: you can offer a list of potential research questions
Composing Your Own CFP

- Third: you can offer a list of potential research questions
- These questions should demonstrate the flexibility of your main ideas
- These questions are not pre-determined topics that participants must analyze
Composing Your Own CFP

- The questions you pose can subtly telegraph the disciplinary affiliation of your initiative
Composing Your Own CFP

- The questions you pose can subtly telegraph the disciplinary affiliation of your initiative
- Questions can also direct participants towards the ideas or outcomes you want to explore
Composing Your Own CFP

- Example: “How can English instructors render visible the work of literary analysis for professional writing scenarios?”
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- Example: “How can **English instructors** render visible the work of **literary analysis** for **professional writing** scenarios?”

- English instructors are intended participants

- Literary analysis and professional writing are potential sub-fields for participants
Composing Your Own CFP

- The questions you pose will directly impact the proposals you receive
Composing Your Own CFP

- The questions you pose will directly impact the proposals you receive
- As a scholar, I read potential research questions when gauging whether a CFP is worth the time and energy
Composing Your Own CFP

- Let’s recap
Composing Your Own CFP

- First: identify common ground
- Second: explain the occasion for this initiative
- Third: pose possible questions and topics
Composing Your Own CFP

- Sequence of first two steps depends on disciplinary conventions
- You can start with either the common ground or the occasion
Composing Your Own CFP

- Sequence of first two steps depends on disciplinary conventions
- You can start with either the common ground or the occasion
- Possible research questions are usually included towards the end of a CFP
Issues to Consider

- Conclude by discussing writing strategies to incorporate and strategies to avoid
Issues to Consider

- You can cite scholarship in a CFP
Issues to Consider

- You can cite scholarship in a CFP
- If there are texts and quotes that reinforce common ground or occasion, then cite and analyze these quotes
- Use citations to position your initiative amid other trends
Issues to Consider

- Be clear with deadlines and expectations
Issues to Consider

- Be clear with deadlines and expectations
- Decide on a feasible word count
- Clarify important deadlines
- Explain submission procedure (include contact information)
Issues to Consider

- Be strategic with where your circulate CFPs
Issues to Consider

- Be strategic with where your circulate CFPs
- If your CFP is discipline-specific, go to discipline-specific outlets
- If your CFP is interdisciplinary, try to circulate it across several different outlets
Conclusion

- The ORSSP Lab has consultants to help with both quantitative and qualitative research questions
- Webinars that discuss writing strategies
- Resources to help authors draft writing at every stage