

EXPLORING CAREERS IN AGING

Advanced Graduate Activities (3rd year and above students)

The purpose of these activities is to help students at varying levels of knowledge, skill, and development gain an understanding of and have tools to pursue careers in aging.

The activities are separated by student developmental level, and they are further divided by area of interest at the advanced levels (e.g., practice, research).

They are designed to be used in conjunction with the Exploring Careers in Aging Roadmaps, developed by the American Psychological Association's Committee on Aging.

Please refer to the website: on.apa.org/careers-in-aging

ACTIVITY 4.3**GRANT WRITING: START WITH THE SPECIFIC AIMS**

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CONCEPT

Few graduate students get experience with grant writing. Yet, many psychologists who pursue research careers write grants to fund their research projects and salary. Grant writing is a complex skill that is different from other writing tasks such as manuscript preparation. The purpose of this activity is to expose students to information on grant writing. In addition, students will practice grant writing by preparing a specific aims page for a research project of interest.

Writing a specific aims page is a difficult task, even for seasoned researchers. The objective of this activity is not for students to write a fundable specific aims page. Rather, the goal is to expose students to information on the grant writing process and to provide preliminary writing experience.

The product of this activity is the completed specific aims page. Given that students will be pursuing research during their careers, receiving feedback on the specific aims page could be helpful. This feedback could come from the instructor or fellow students. The purpose of the feedback is to help the student further improve their research idea and specific aims. The method for obtaining this feedback can be selected by the instructor based on the class structure. Options include feedback from the instructor, small group discussions, an oral presentation with large group discussion, and/or online discussion boards.

MATERIALS

1. Careers in Aging: A Guide for Graduate Students
on.apa.org/careers-in-aging-graduate
2. National Institutes of Health
National Institute on Aging: www.nia.nih.gov/research
National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/research/index.shtml
3. Guidelines for a specific aims page
www.niaid.nih.gov/grants-contracts/draft-specific-aims
bit.ly/NIH-grant-applications-specific-aims
bit.ly/cfar-specific-aims-guide
bit.ly/NIH-specific-aims-page

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The first step is for the student to select a research topic of interest. Students may benefit from selecting a topic they are interested in pursuing after completion of their graduate training.
2. Students should review the provided materials on writing a specific aims page.
3. The instructor can decide the parameters of the assignment based on the size and nature of their class. In particular, the instructor can decide how to provide feedback to students on their prepared materials. Options include feedback from the instructor, small group discussions, oral presentations followed by large group discussions, or online discussion boards.