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This page lists common mistakes cited by grant reviewers as to why a proposal was not funded.

-  The proposal lacks significance or new and original ideas.
-  The proposal raises ethical concerns.
-  The research has a low impact on advancing scientific knowledge.
-  The scientific rationale is not provided or is not valid.
-  The proposal is too ambitious with too much work proposed. This is when you should seek advice or vet your proposal with senior faculty.
-  The proposal has unfocused aims and unclear goals.
-  The aims rely too much on the success of prior aims.
-  The studies are based on a shaky hypothesis or data, or alternative hypotheses are not considered.
-  The proposal contains too much unnecessary experimental detail, or contains insufficient detail, especially for untested approaches.
-  The experiments are technology-driven, rather than hypothesis-driven.
-  The direction or sense of priority is not clearly defined.
-  The proposal lacks alternative methodological approaches in case the primary research does not work out.
-  The proposed model system is not appropriate to address the proposed questions.
-  The proposal is innovative but lacks enough preliminary data.

-  The preliminary data do not support the feasibility of the project or hypothesis.
-  The proposal lacks appropriate controls.
-  The proposal does not include discussion of potential pitfalls.
-  The proposal does not include discussion of interpretation of data and alternative explanations.
-  The investigator does not have enough experience with the proposed techniques or has not recruited a collaborator who does.
-  The proposal does not clearly show which preliminary data were obtained by the investigator.
-  The investigator has few recent papers.
-  The investigator failed to recruit collaborators or did not include letters of support from collaborators.
-  The proposal shows little institutional commitment.
-  The investigator has suboptimal access to necessary equipment or technologies.