

# **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

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- 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?

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- Academic conferences
- Edited collections
- Grants or other funding

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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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- **Example: Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)**
- **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

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- 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?

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- Conference CFP identified key terms

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- 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

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- **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
- CCC 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

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- 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

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- 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 you circulate CFPs

# Issues to Consider

- Be strategic with where you 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