TOP TIPS FOR QUANTITATIVE PROPOSALS

Refine your research idea by completing a review of existing evidence
[See top tips for systematic reviews]

Identify the team with required skills; this should include statistician, a health economist, public patient involvement (PPI), and other specialists relevant to the study e.g. a clinical pharmacist. **Don't** expect experts to give you all the information you need with a days notice – you are likely to end up disappointed and may not meet your deadline!

Have a clear and focused question and be prepared to refine it so it is achievable.
The following considerations should be made:

- Consider what the intervention will be and how it will be implemented and what it will be compared with – what is standard practice?
- Decide on the study design. If design involves other types of study e.g. economic evaluation or qualitative study then how these will be conducted should also be considered [See top tips for economic evaluations and qualitative studies]
- Identify the study outcomes – these should be unbiased and robust. Consider how these will be collected, whether they are routinely collected or whether a questionnaire is needed. Decide what are primary and what are secondary outcomes.
- Sample size – needs calculating for all primary outcomes. Where will the information for this come from e.g. existing literature, expert opinion? Be realistic about attrition and build this into the sample size calculation.
- Make sure it is feasible to collect the information you need on an appropriate sample and that you will meet the recruitment numbers identified in the sample size calculation. Consider running a pilot study if it is practical to do so.
- Make sure the statistical analysis is appropriate to the type of study you are designing.
- If informed consent is needed design a patient information leaflet and include it (as an appendix) with your proposal. Involve PPI to help design this [See top tips for PPI].

Identify an appropriate funding body and be clear of their requirements.

Identify appropriate support bodies and involve/inform them early on, e.g. PCT"s, CRN, academic partners, CTU. Remember a local unit might not always be the most appropriate one for your study as one further afield may specialise in the clinical area you are investigating.

Don"t leave study costings to the last minute, contact finance departments early on and establish when they need things for in order to approve costings. Remember to let collaborating institutions know when the deadline is too.

Identify all ethic issues and consider how these will be accounted for in your study.

Decide how data will be collected and who will be responsible for this process. Will a database need building? Who will entre the data? What data entry checks will be used? Make sure the data collection process and management is costed into your study. Don"t forget NHS cost implications.

Be realistic about deadlines and the length of time you give each phase of your study, if these seam unrealistic (either too little or too long your study may not receive approval).