



# How to:

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# Research Proposals

# Important notice



At the end of this presentation there is a link to a Microsoft Forms quiz. It is recommended that you score an 80% or higher.

Please take your time viewing and studying this material before you proceed with the quiz.

# Objectives

After studying this module, students will:

- Understand the process of creating a proposal.
- Learn how to organize the information for research.
- Become aware of the different sources needed.
- Familiarize themselves with the possible structures for a proposal.

# What is a proposal?

In a research proposal, the author demonstrates **HOW** and **WHY** their research is relevant to their field. They demonstrate that the work is necessary to the following:

- **Filling a gap** in the existing body of research on their subject
- **Underscoring existing research** on their subject, and/or
- **Adding new original knowledge** to the academic community's existing understanding of their subject

A research proposal also demonstrates that the author is capable of conducting this research and contributing to the current state of their field in a meaningful way. To do this, your research proposal needs to discuss your academic background and credentials as well as demonstrate that your proposed ideas have academic merit.

# What is the purpose of a research proposal?

- To propose a research project that will result in a significant contribution to knowledge.
- To formulate a detailed plan of the project including the methodological approach and theoretical framework.
- To ensure that the proposed research is achievable within the required time and with the available resources.
- To demonstrate that you have adequate expertise and experience to complete the project.

Writing a research proposal will encourage you to clarify your objectives and key ideas. It will help you think about each stage of the research process so that you can develop a clear and detailed plan. It can also help you to foresee problems you may encounter and how you will manage them when they arise.

# Types of proposals:

## Internal

An internal proposal is written for someone in your own institution or organization. With this type of proposal, you may not have to include certain sections or as much information.

## External

An external proposal is written from an individual to a separate independent institution or organization. It is necessary to include all the information about your project in a clear and concise manner.

## Solicited

A solicited proposal is written to a recipient that has requested it. It is important to follow the instructions laid out by the institution or organization in which you will be submitting your work.

## Unsolicited

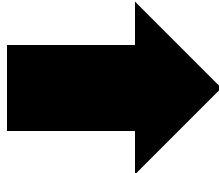
An unsolicited proposal is one that has not been requested by the recipient. The main component in this type of proposal is that you must convince the recipient about the importance of your research.

# Structure

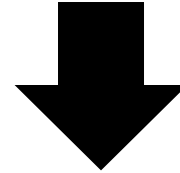
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How to write your research proposal

**Introduction**

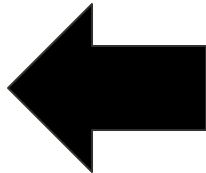


**Background and Significance**

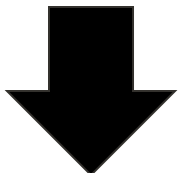


The following slides are based on multiple sources

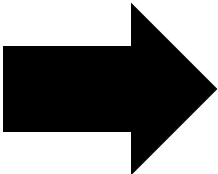
**Research Design**



**Literature Review**



**Suppositions and Implications**



**Conclusions**



# Introduction

In a research proposal an introduction can be a few paragraphs long. It's main purpose is to make the reader excited about your research. It should briefly answer the following:

- What is the **research problem**?
- What **methodology** will be used in this investigation?
- Mention your **expected findings**.
- Why is this **research important**?

You may be asked by your instructor to provide an abstract with your proposal. This will be a much shorter and succinct version of your proposal, generally written in 120-250 words.

# Background and Significance

This section could also be referred to as 'Problem Statement'. Provide the necessary information to understand how your research is significant. Remember not all readers will be as informed on your topic as you are. For this, all of the sections in your introduction should be elaborated on.

- **State the research problem** in more detail than in the introduction by presenting your research questions and aims.
- **Define key concepts and terms** from your central argument(s).
- **Provide context to your research.** If it's a scientific investigation, discuss the places where you will be studying your topic. If it's a cultural research project, provide social and historical information of the place or time period that you are studying.

# Literature review

This section is a summary of the sources you've examined about your research topic. It has three main components:

- **Overview of the topic:** It's a survey of the most recent and important contributions about your topic. Mainly, it shows how your research interacts with prior scientific and academic knowledge.
- **Comparison:** Do not provide only individual summaries of each source. Compare and contrast your sources. This can be done by discussing your sources' credibility, weaknesses, and strengths; and then identifying similarities and differences between them. You can also organize them by conceptual categories or themes.
- **Justification** for your research: In order to explain the necessity of your research, the gaps of knowledge that are missing about your topic should be clearly stated.

# Research design and Methods

- Research methodology defines the research methods and practical steps you will take to answer your research questions.

You should provide an outline of your methodology in a research proposal:

## 1. Research type and approach:

- Will you do qualitative or quantitative research?
- Will you collect original data or work with primary or secondary sources?
- Is your research design descriptive, correlational, or experimental?
- What will be the theoretical framework for your research?

## 1. Population and sample:

- Exactly what or who will you study (e.g. high school students in Puerto Rico; El Nuevo Dia newspaper archives 1958-1960)?
- How will you select subjects or sources (e.g. random sampling, case studies)?
- When and where will you collect the data?

## 1. Research methods:

- What tools and procedures will you use (e.g. surveys, interviews, observations, experiments) to collect and analyze data?
- Why are these the best methods to answer your research questions?

## 1. Practicalities:

- How much time will you need to collect data?
- How will you gain access to participants and sources?
- Do you foresee any potential obstacles, and how will you address them?

# Suppositions and Implications

Although you can't know your research results until you've actually done the work, you should be going into the project with a clear idea of how your work will contribute to your field of study. This section is perhaps the most critical to your research proposal arguments because **it expresses exactly why your research is necessary.**

In this section, make sure you cover the following:

- Any ways your work can challenge existing theories and assumptions in your field.
- How your work will create the foundation for future research.
- The practical value your findings will provide to practitioners, educators, and other academics in your field.
- The problems your work can potentially help fix.
- Policies that could be impacted by your findings.
- How your findings can be implemented in academia or other settings and how this will improve or otherwise transform these settings.

In other words, **this section *isn't* about stating the specific results you expect.** Rather, it's where you state **how your findings will be valuable**

# Schedule, cost and resources required

Most proposals contain a section that shows not only the projected completion date but also important milestones for the project. If you are doing a large project spreading over many months, the timeline would also show dates on which you would deliver progress reports or cite amounts of time for each phase of the project.

- **Detailing the costs** of the project is also common in most proposals. With external projects, you may need to list:
  - Hourly rates
  - Projected hours
  - Costs of equipment and supplies
  - Etc.
- Then calculate the **total cost** of the complete project. **Internal projects**, are not free, so you should still list the project costs:
  - Hours you will need to complete the project
  - Equipment and supplies you will be using
  - Assistance from other people in the organization
  - Etc.

It is important to note that proposals at a bachelor level may not require too much cost depending on the focus or goal of the project.

# Conclusion

Your conclusion should **briefly summarize** your research proposal and **reinforce** your research's stated purpose by bringing readers back to focus on the positive aspects of your project.

# Bibliography

All of the sources used to develop your research project should be properly referenced and cited. The format of your references will depend on the citation style required by your instructor and your field of study. Common citation styles include: MLA, APA, and Chicago.

## What sources **not** to include:

- That have more than two items incomplete in the entry.
- That have great amount of biased language.
- The author does not cite or have evidence to backup their claims.
- It is not from a respectable or well-known container.
- The online source does not end in .net, .edu or .org

## Sources to include:

- You can complete the bibliographical entry or verify the reliability of the source.
- The author provides evidence for their claims.
- The work has been included in an academic journal or a container that verifies what they publish.
- The online source is from a good domain (.net, .edu, .org, etc.).



# Helpful Material

The following material is available at the CDCL page and may be useful for finding proper sources and the structure of your reference/bibliography:

- 1) Infographics
  - a) **APA Reference List**
  - b) **MLA Reference List**
  - c) **Chicago Reference List**
  - d) **How to Check a Source's Reliability**
- 2) Posters
  - a) **APA Annotated Bibliography**
  - b) **MLA Annotated Bibliography**
  - c) **Chicago Annotated Bibliography**
  - d) **CRAAP Test**
- 3) Module
  - a) **Annotated Bibliography**

# Common Mistakes

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Avoid these when writing your proposal

# Oversharing

Although it is a good idea to include a large amount of information to defend your investigation, **beware of oversharing**. It is essential that every source and detail integrated in the proposal be pertinent and easily comprehended as to why it is related to the subject at hand. When revising your segments, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does this relate to the subject of my investigation?
- How does this support my point of view? Is it even related to it?
- If I eliminate the following sentence(s) is it still intelligible?
- Does my context overreach to other fields/topics/subjects/angles/opinions that are not relevant?
- Am I digressing by mentioning this point?

# Generalized or Over Explained Writing

Research topics are centered around topics that belong to a larger more generalized field. Since investigations are meant to study a specific area or theme, the writer has to keep in mind that the reader will most likely have **prior knowledge**. For this reason, basic information that is **common knowledge** should not be included. It is also important not to focus on minor details of little relevance to the project or to reiterate the same ideas.

The following questions to ask yourself are:

- Would people in my field know this terminology prior to my paper?
- Have I mentioned this idea in another segment? If so, where is it more relevant?
- Do these extra sentences integrate a new idea to the subject?
- Is the focus point specific enough or does the subject have more subdivisions with vast information available?

# Obscure or Unexplained Writing

In a proposal and in your final paper, the readers should **NEVER** have unclear ideas **due to lack of information available**. This can happen in various ways:

1. Usage of advanced terminology that is outside of common knowledge.
2. Referencing theories, studies or papers without providing background.
3. Simplifying an explanation to the point of incoherence.

To avoid this issue, here are a few tips to keep in mind when revising:

- Make a list of terminology to ask your advisor how common they are to the members of the field.
- Always include the title of the source you are referencing when it is mentioned the first time. Afterwards, write a shorter version that can be easily identified (i.e., Baudelaire's poetry collection, Newton's Law or Chomsky's theory).

The following questions are also important:

- Did I develop the argument enough?
- Do I explain the idea of the relevant authors of my investigation?
- Have I disclosed the proper names of each theory, source, and author mentioned\* (limited to the ones pertinent to your arguments)?

# Checklist

After finishing the first draft of your proposal, verify if:

- I have completed the structure of the proposal established by my instructor, including following the format APA/MLA/Chicago.
- There are no redundancies or “echoes of ideas” that result in repetition in my content.
- I verified the relevancy of my sources to the investigation.
- I manage balance between contextualizing and being direct with my subject.
- I have used academic language that is appropriate and pertinent to my field.

It is important to keep in mind that a proposal is a work in progress; it can be fixed and adjusted as you receive recommendations from your instructor.

# References:

*A sample proposal with comments.* [A sample proposal with comment.pdf \(uh.edu\)](#)

Gross, A., Hamlin, A., Merck, B., Rubio, C., Naas, J., Savage, M., & DeSilva, M. (n.d.). *3.2 types of proposals*. Technical Writing. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/technicalwriting/chapter/3-2-types-of-proposals/>.

Kramer, L. (2021, October 11). *How to write a research proposal*. How to Write a Research Proposal | Guide with Examples. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from [https://www.grammarly.com/blog/how-to-write-a-research-proposal/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAys2MBhDOARIsAff1D1c4Rvnx34gpgWID4hVZgrimSG67LseSL4WtZEly4rPBBqP6Ajb4E6AaAt-5EALw\\_wcB&gclidsrc=aw.ds](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/how-to-write-a-research-proposal/?gclid=Cj0KCQiAys2MBhDOARIsAff1D1c4Rvnx34gpgWID4hVZgrimSG67LseSL4WtZEly4rPBBqP6Ajb4E6AaAt-5EALw_wcB&gclidsrc=aw.ds).

Monash University. (2020, November 20). *Writing a research proposal*. Research & Learning Online. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://www.monash.edu/rlo/graduate-research-writing/write-the-thesis/writing-a-research-proposal>

Sheppard, V. (2020, April 6). *14.3 components of a research proposal*. Research Methods for the Social Sciences An Introduction. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/jibcresearchmethods/chapter/14-3-components-of-a-research-proposal/>.

University of Westminster. (n.d.). *How to write your research proposal*. How to write your research proposal | University of Westminster, London. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees/entry-requirements/how-to-write-your-research-proposal>.

After completing the module, click on the following link to take the quiz and send the report to your professor:

<https://forms.office.com/r/EfQgVtyGgZ>

Thanks for using our resources!



To know more about our center and the services we provide, visit:  
<http://generales.uprrp.edu/competencias-linguisticas/>



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