

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

WHAT IS A RESEARCH PROPOSAL?

A research proposal presents the plan for a research project that you intend to conduct. The purposes of a research proposal are to propose a research question or problem, convince a committee that your proposed project is worth doing, and prove that you have the experience and the work-plan to complete it.

Your proposal should demonstrate how and why your research is relevant and significant in your field of study and clearly indicate the methodologies that you intend to use to collect your data, as well as your timeline. You want to clearly demonstrate an understanding of the project's relevance, context, approach, and achievability. They are typically submitted to a university, an academic department, a funding agency, or another organization that would support or fund the research.

Keep in mind that research proposal expectations can vary among disciplines, so consider any assignment prompts or templates provided to you when approaching your research proposal.

ORGANIZATION

Organization is key to writing a strong research proposal. You will typically divide your proposal into sections, and the sections needed will depend on the requirements of your assignment/prompt. The most common sections that you will need to include and the questions each should answer are the following:

- **Abstract:** What are the overarching goals of the project? How would you summarize the significance and your methodologies?
- **Introduction:** What specific question(s) will the research answer? Who has interest in this research? Why is this research important, and why should someone reading the proposal care about the outcome(s)?
- **Background and Significance:** Are there any key terms that need to be defined for your audience? What are the existing key debates and developments in the field? How will your research further the existing discourse?
- **Literature Review:** What questions have other researches asked? What are their methods and findings? What are the major areas of debate? What gaps are there in the existing discourse?
- **Methodology:** What research approach (or theoretical framework) will you use? Why will you take certain steps and not others? What are the advantages and limits of that approach?
- **Expected Outcomes:** What real-world implications or application does the project have? Is there a tangible product that will be produced as a result of the research?
- **Conclusion:** What questions does the research attempt to answer? What might the results mean in regard to the theoretical framework that you applied? What will be changed as a result of the proposed research? How long do you expect the project to take?

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- **Reference List:** What literature or external sources did you use within your proposal? What additional sources are needed to conduct your research?

BUDGET

Occasionally, you will be asked to submit a detailed proposed budget alongside your research proposal if you are submitting it to a funding body or university. If this is requested, you will want to make sure that you provide the following for each item included in the budget:

1. Cost - Exactly how much money do you need?
2. Justification - Why is this cost necessary to complete the research?
3. Source - How did you calculate this amount?

You will want to consider travel costs, materials, and any additional labor costs from hiring research assistants.