



Writing Centre

Research Proposal

A research proposal is intended to convince someone that your research is necessary, and that you have an effective plan to complete it.

Proposal Structure:

- Make it short, usually a maximum of two pages, and between 200 and 500 words long.
- Format using a citation style (APA, MLA, or Chicago).
- Use headers to separate sections, but do not give the Introduction a header.

Sections of a Research Proposal:

The parts of a research proposal may vary, but the order is always the same. This outline represents one way to organize a proposal. **Always confirm with your instructor if you are unsure what information to include.**

Abstract	
Structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One page. • 250 words or less. • No citations. • Include up to 5 keywords. 	Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the problem your research will help solve. • Outline the benefits of solving this problem. • Outline the proposal's parts, giving each a summary sentence
Introduction	
Structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do <u>not</u> use a header. • Usually one paragraph. 	Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the problem your research will help solve. • Reference research to prove that the problem exists. • Explain how your research will help solve the problem. • End with your hypothesis (or tentative thesis).
Background & Rationale	
Structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the paper does not include this section, add to the Introduction. • Can be several paragraphs. 	Content: <p>Focus on persuading the reader that the research is important and that you should be the one to conduct it. Use research to support your claims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the seriousness of the problem. • Explain the benefits your research can offer. • State your qualifications.

Literature Review	
<p>Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the paper does not include this section, summarize at the beginning of the Background & Rationale section. • Organize topics either chronologically or by theme. 	<p>Content:</p> <p>Demonstrate your expertise on the topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize what is already known about your topic. • Connect the topic to wider issues. • Point out remaining problems or gaps in the research. • Remind the reader how your research will address these gaps.
Research Question(s)	
<p>Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your paper does not include this section, include the research question in the Introduction near the hypothesis. • Make each question into a sub-heading, or organize as a numbered list. 	<p>Content:</p> <p>State your research question or questions. Follow with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions for technical or subjective terms used. • A summary of how you will answer it. • The hypothesis (or tentative thesis).
Methodology	
<p>Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use standard paragraphs. 	<p>Content:</p> <p>Show you are serious by presenting a specific research plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State whether your research is primary or secondary. • State your focus: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods. • If secondary, state the types of sources you will use. • If primary, state the specific actions (tests, etc.) you will take. • Explain how you will assess the results.
Schedule	
<p>Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a table or embedded calendar. • Include any budget information as a sub-section. 	<p>Content:</p> <p>Show your estimated dates of completion for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research. • Analysis. • Drafts. • Revisions.
Sources	
<p>Structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to Citation Style. 	<p>Content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List your sources. Sometimes this section is annotated.