

WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

What is a research proposal? A research proposal is a concise and coherent summary of your proposed research. It sets out the central issues or questions that you intend to address. It outlines the general area of study within which your research falls, referring to the current state of knowledge and any recent debates on the topic. It also demonstrates the originality of your proposed research.

The proposal is the most important document that you submit. It gives you an opportunity to demonstrate that you have the aptitude for research, for example, by demonstrating that you have the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly, concisely and critically. In Post Graduate research, the proposal also helps match your research interest with an appropriate supervisor.

What needs to be included?

1. Title

A tentative title for your intended research.

2. Concise statement of intention

The proposal should include a concise statement of your intended research, setting out the problem that you want to explore/the central question that you wish to address.

3. Research Context

You should explain the broad background against which you will conduct your research. You should include a brief overview of the general area of study within which your proposed research falls, summarising the current state of knowledge and recent debates on the topic. This will allow you to demonstrate a familiarity with the relevant field as well as the ability to communicate clearly and concisely.

4. Research Questions

The proposal should set out the central aims and questions that will guide your research. Before writing your proposal, you should take time to reflect on the key questions that you are seeking to answer. Many research proposals are too broad, so reflecting on your key research question is a good way to make sure that your project is sufficiently narrow and feasible

The proposal should also explain your intended approach to answering the questions

5. Research Methods

The proposal should also explain your intended approach to answering your question.

The proposal should outline your research methods, explaining how you are going to conduct your research.

6. Significance of Research

The proposal should demonstrate the originality of your intended research. You should therefore explain why your research is important (for example, by explaining how your research builds on and adds to the current state of knowledge in the field or by setting out reasons why it is timely to research your proposed topic).

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF FOR PRODUCING A SUCESSFUL RESEARCH PROPOSAL

WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT TO DISCOVER?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO EXPLORE THIS?

WHEN IS YOUR RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED – OVER WHAT PERIOD?

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH?

WITHIN WHAT AREA/CONTEXT WILL YOUR RESEARCH TAKE PLACE?

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PARTICIPANTS AND HOW MANY WILL THERE BE?