

Lecture II: Writing a Research Proposal

A research proposal is a relatively brief document that contains an outline plan for a research project. It is produced at the beginning of the research process in advance of any data collection. A well-constructed research proposal offers a blueprint for the research that shows what the parts look like and how they will fit together. It describes what will be done, explains how it will be done, and justifies why the research should be undertaken.

A research proposal is written in a form of a document of usually ten to twenty-five pages that informs others of a proposed piece of research. A reason to get the proposal right is that this can save the student time in the long run.

Proposals are informative and persuasive writing aims to make the supervisor/committee believe that the solution is practical and appropriate. A research proposal is an important part of the research process because the success of any project depends on forward planning and organization. A good proposal is based on careful thought about how the research will be conducted and involves the kind of advance planning that is required if a research is to run smoothly.

It is particularly useful in this respect for those who need to write a research proposal for:

- A bachelor's degree project.
- A master's degree dissertation.
- A PhD thesis.

Regardless of the research area and the chosen methodology, all research proposals must address the following questions:

What you plan to accomplish?

Be clear and succinct in defining the research problem and what it is you are proposing to research.

Why you want to do it?

In addition to detailing your research design, you also must conduct a thorough review of the literature and provide convincing evidence that it is a topic worthy of study. Be sure to answer the "so what?" question.

How you are going to do it?

Be sure that what you propose is doable.

A good place to begin is to ask yourself six basic questions:

- *What do I want to study?*
- *Why is the topic important?*
- *How is it significant within the subject areas covered in my class?*
- *What problem will it help solve?*
- *How does it build upon research already conducted on the topic?*
- *What exactly should I plan to do, and can I get it done in the time available?*

Therefore, research proposal should contain the following information about the study:

1. **Background** this section can be melded into your introduction or you can create a separate sections to help the organization and narrative of your proposal

2. **Statement of the Problem** this section provides a clear and concise description of the issues that need to be addressed.

3. **Research Questions** this section present the research as a series of research questions to be examined by the thesis.

4. **Research Hypothesis** this section provides assumptions about the tentative solution of the research.

5. **Research Objectives** this section contains a list of goals that will be achieved through the proposed research, the benefits, and the impact.

6. **Significance of the Study** this section indicates the importance of the study and highlights the potential good (unique) contribution this study provides.

7. **Literature Review** this section is devoted to a more deliberate review and synthesis of prior studies related to the research problem under investigation. It helps you get inspired about the research design and methodology that suites your topic.

8. **Research Design and Methods** This section **must** be well-written and logically organized because you are not actually doing the research, yet, the reader has to have confidence that it is worth pursuing.

9. **Dissertation/Thesis Structure** In form of paragraphs, this section provides an overview on how the thesis/dissertation is divided and on the content of each chapter.

10. **Key Terms** list they key words of the research.

11. **References** list only the literature that you actually used or cited in your proposal.