

## 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:	Content:
• One page.	• State the problem your research will help solve.
• 250 words or less.	• Outline the benefits of solving this problem.
• No citations.	• Outline the proposal's parts, giving each a summary sentence
• Include up to 5 keywords.	
Introduction	
Structure:	Content:
• Do <u>not</u> use a header.	• State the problem your research will help solve.
• Usually one paragraph.	• 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:	Content:
• If the paper does not include	Focus on persuading the reader that the research is important and that
this section, add to the	you should be the one to conduct it. Use research to support your
Introduction.	claims.
• Can be several paragraphs.	• Explain the seriousness of the problem.
	• Explain the benefits your research can offer.
	• State your qualifications.

Literature Review		
Structure:	Content:	
• If the paper does not include	Demonstrate your expertise on the topic:	
this section, summarize at	• Summarize what is already known about your topic.	
the beginning of the	• Connect the topic to wider issues.	
<b>Background &amp; Rationale</b>	• Point out remaining problems or gaps in the research.	
section.	• Remind the reader how your research will address these gaps.	
• Organize topics either		
chronologically or by		
theme.		
Research Question(s)		
Structure:	Content:	
• If your paper does not include	State your research question or questions. Follow with:	
this section, include the	• Definitions for technical or subjective terms used.	
research question in the	• A summary of how you will answer it.	
Introduction near the	• The hypothesis (or tentative thesis).	
hypothesis.		
<ul> <li>Make each question into a</li> </ul>		
sub-heading, or organize as		
a numbered list.		
Methodology		
Structure:	Content:	
• Use standard paragraphs.	Show you are serious by presenting a specific research plan.	
	• 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		
Structure:	Content:	
• Use a table or embedded	Show your estimated dates of completion for:	
calendar.	• Research.	
• Include any budget	• Analysis.	
information as a sub-	• Drafts.	
section.	• Revisions.	
	Sources	
Structure:	Content:	
• Adhere to Citation Style.	• List your sources. Sometimes this section is annotated.	