

SEARCH Research Proposal Guide

Background

What is a Research Proposal?

A research proposal is a specific genre of persuasive academic writing, and typically answers the “So What” questions...

- **WHY** is the research being conducted?
- **HOW** will the research be conducted (design and methods), and how will the researcher comply with appropriate research protocol?
- **WHAT** will the research contribute to the discipline/current discourse?

Note: While the contents of a research proposal are discipline and context specific, certain elements are common to all proposals.

Why Compose a Research Proposal?

- The proposal serves as a guide or roadmap for an intensive research project such as an undergraduate research experience, thesis or dissertation.
- Proposals are required for most grant applications. Thus, writing a research proposal is great practice for grant writing, and a key skill for the world of work.

The SEARCH Research Proposal Narrative (100 points total)

Proposals must include ALL five sections/criteria outlined below.

Proposal Formatting Instructions: Setting Up the Document

Download the Proposal Template to make certain your document meets the formatting criteria.

- Set all margins to 1 inch.
- Include a page number on each page of the proposal narrative (except cover page).
- Organize the document by section (Project Description, Research Methods and Design, etc.)
- Proposals must be double-spaced using 12- point font.
- Proposal narrative must not exceed 5 double-spaced pages. The cover page and references are NOT included in the narrative page limit.

1. The WHY

Project Description/ Research Objectives (30 points)

- *Clearly identify the research topic/problem/issue to be addressed through this project*
- *Identify the proposed research question(s), thesis statement, or hypothesis*
- *Provide an overview of your approach to the research topic. This section typically frames or positions the research within the discipline, problem area, or discourse with reference to relevant literature.*
- *Identify the research objectives that you plan to achieve. For example, what is the gap in the literature that your research aims to fill?*

2. The HOW

Research Design and Methods (30 points)

- *Provide an overview of the proposed design, methods, and conceptual framework (i.e., specify how the research will be conducted. Example: This narrative inquiry will involve two in-depth interviews with ten participants.... I will develop interview guides from the literature....)*
- *Explain why the proposed methods are the most appropriate to accomplish the study goals.*

3. The WHAT

Project Significance (30 points)

- *Explain the “So What” of the research project. What is the significance of the research, and what do you hope to discover by conducting this research?*
- *What will the research contribute to the discipline/ current discourse?(Example: We expect that study findings will show...OR... Data may reveal two related points... OR... By inhabiting the role of researcher and artist I hope to discover...).*

4. Budget Justification (5 points)

- *Itemize and include a detailed justification for each projected expense.*

5. Student Merit & Need (5 points)

Address each of the following points in this section

- *Provide a brief overview of your background including your major, skills and expertise relevant to this research project, academic interests, and future professional goals.*
- *Why did you decide to apply for this award?*
- *How do you see the opportunity to conduct research “fitting in” with your academics, and future professional career?*
- *What do you think you will learn about yourself through this experience?*