

Research Proposal Guidelines

CATEGORY	COMPONENT	EXEMPLARY	SATISFACTORY	UNACCEPTABLE
Topic	Researchable topic	Involves an issue important to the profession; leads to new knowledge (big R); both engages your attention and begs for a solution	Involves an issue important to you and the profession; leads to new knowledge (big R) and compilation of existing knowledge (little r); engages your attention	Involves an issue important only to you; only a personal lack of knowledge (little r); competes for your attention
	Application of concepts	Incorporates and explains many research ideas, methods, and readings we studied this semester	Incorporates and explains several research ideas, methods, and readings we studied this semester	Incorporates and explains few or none of the research ideas, methods, and readings we studied this semester
	Approach	Creatively combines qualitative and quantitative methods	Uses well-defined qualitative or quantitative methods	Violates or does not use well-defined qualitative or quantitative methods
	Assumptions	Includes logical underlying assumptions necessary to complete the research; questions assumptions that others have made	Includes logical underlying assumptions necessary to complete the research	Does not include assumptions
	Definitions	Defines important terms; compares definitions	Defines important terms	Defines only unimportant terms or does not include definitions
	Limitations	Includes enough limitations to permit exhaustive investigation	Includes enough limitations to permit in-depth investigation	Includes few significant limitations; leads to shallow or superficial investigation
	Feasibility	Feasible and efficient in terms of time and resources	Feasible in terms of time and resources	Unfeasible; topic too vast or too vague
Content	Problem or need	Stated clearly; explains causes or events leading to problem or need	Stated clearly	Vague; general; ambiguous
	Hypotheses, questions, issues, or propositions	Stated clearly; appropriate in number	Stated clearly	Vague; general; ambiguous; or not included
	Literature review	Discusses prior research relevant to topic and methods	Discusses enough prior research to support methods and procedures	Discusses irrelevant literature; or not included
	Citations	Cites relevant literature; includes citation for every fact not part of general knowledge; uses consistent, standard format	Cites relevant literature; uses consistent, standard format	Cites irrelevant literature; includes too few citations; uses inconsistent or non-standard format

Content (continued)	Bibliography	Includes all literature cited; uses consistent, standard format; lists additional references with annotations	Includes all literature cited; uses consistent, standard format	Does not include all literature cited; uses inconsistent or non-standard format
	Methods and strategies	Discusses appropriate research methods; fully describes their use and application to your topic	Identifies appropriate research methods; describes their use and application to your topic	Identifies inappropriate research methods; vaguely describes their use and application to your topic
	Tools	Identifies appropriate research tools; fully describes their use and application to your topic	Identifies appropriate research tools; describes their use and application to your topic	Vaguely describes research tools and their use and application to your topic
	Data	Fully describes data/evidence needed; seeks ways to validate findings; leads to valuable conclusions	Clearly describes data/evidence needed; leads to valuable conclusions	Vaguely describes data/evidence needed
	Data procedures	Completely describes procedures for obtaining data/evidence; completely describes appropriate analysis procedures	Clearly describes procedures for obtaining data/evidence; describes appropriate analysis procedures	Vaguely describes procedures for obtaining data/evidence; omits appropriate analysis procedures
	Tasks / steps	Includes logical complete list of major research activities; enough description to justify use of your valuable time and other resources	Includes logical complete list of major research activities	Includes illogical or incomplete list of major research activities
	Schedule	Includes a month-by-month schedule of important steps or tasks; includes practical information about graduate college forms and deadlines; expressed in the form of a bar chart	Includes a month-by-month schedule of important steps or tasks; includes practical information about graduate college forms and deadlines	Vague; general; ambiguous; or not included
	Qualifications	Describes current qualifications and strategies to acquire additional skills and knowledge	Describes current qualifications	Does not include current qualifications
	Costs / funding sources	Includes both logical costs and funding sources	Does not include either	Includes erroneous costs and funding sources
Proposal format	Organization	Closely follows general outline in Leedy or Yin; customized to your topic	Follows general outline in Leedy or Yin; somewhat customized to your topic	Doesn't follow general outline in Leedy or Yin; not customized to your topic
	Headings	Logical hierarchy that clearly shows your organization; consistent in capitalization, font, indentation, numbering	Hierarchy that shows some of your organization; consistent in capitalization, font, indentation, numbering	Illogical hierarchy that shows little of your organization; inconsistent in capitalization, font, indentation, numbering

Proposal format (continued)	Title page	Includes complete information; title that is descriptive of your topic, creative, and succinct	Includes complete information; title that is descriptive of your topic	Includes incomplete information; title that is not descriptive of your topic
	Thesis format	Follows thesis manual guidelines for page size, margins, page numbers, headings, figure and table captions	Follows thesis manual guidelines for page size, margins, page numbers, headings, figure and table captions	Does not follow thesis manual guidelines
	Length and detail	12 to 30 pages (excluding appendices); detail sufficient to explain and make readers confident that you've thought through your topic and methods	10 to 20 pages (excluding appendices); detail sufficient to explain your topic and methods	Less than 10 pages or more than 30 pages; insufficient detail or excruciating amounts of detail
	Appendices	Includes relevant explanatory material helpful to readers	Does not include appendices	Includes irrelevant material
Writing	Continuity / transitions	Includes continuity between topics; includes transitions from topic to topic	Includes continuity between topics	Lacks continuity between topics
	Sentences	Includes complete sentences; uses parallel construction; uses subject-verb agreement	Includes complete sentences; uses subject-verb agreement	Includes incomplete sentences; lacks subject-verb agreement
	Clarity	Uses active voice and conversational tone to make it an easy read; engaging	Uses a mixture of active voice and passive voice to make it readable, but with some effort	Uses passive voice; awkward, convoluted, run-on sentences that make it difficult to read
	Tone	Uses precise language	Uses clear, but imprecise language	Uses glittering generalities, unsubstantiated superlatives, exaggeration
	Writing mechanics	Less than 5 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation	5 to 10 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation	More than 10 errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation
	Fog index	12 to 18	8 to 22	Less than 8 or more than 22
	Audience	Committee members and others	Committee members	Others