
HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

PREPARATION

1. Know what you need to do, and when you need to do it!
 - a. Gather and read any relevant documentation
 - b. Catalogue the materials you need
 - c. Make note of your deadline!

WRITING

1. Introduction: Aims and objectives – What is the proposed research aiming to achieve?
 - a. What gap in knowledge does the research aim to fill (brief)?
 - b. What is/are the main research question/s (brief)?

2. Background

- a. Summarize current knowledge in your proposed area of research
 - i. Aim 1: To demonstrate your knowledge of the topic
 - ii. Aim 2: To identify the gap in knowledge you propose to fill
 - iii. Aim 3: To evidence the relevance and value of your research

Stay focused on YOUR PROPOSED RESEARCH. This is not an essay, but if it were the title would be 'Why is the proposed research important? How will it advance criminological knowledge?'

3. Methods - What are you going to do?

- a. Describe the methods you will use to answer your research question/s
 - i. Aim 1: Demonstrate your knowledge of the methods and its appropriateness for answering your research question/s
 - ii. Aim 2: Convince your reviewer that the method is feasible and you will be able to carry it out
 - iii. Aim 3: Recognize potential challenges and discuss how you will minimize their impact
- b. Describe how you will analyse the information/data you collect
 - i. Aim 1: Demonstrate that you have thought about how you will use the collected information/data to answer your research question/s
 - ii. Aim 2: Demonstrate your knowledge of appropriate analytical methods
- c. Discuss relevant ethical issues
 - i. Aim 1: Demonstrate your knowledge of research ethics
 - ii. Aim 2: Explain how you will ensure your research is ethically sound

Be creative but reasonable. Make sure your research methods are the best methods for answering your research question. Consider the practical aspects of the proposed research in detail and address any challenges that might undermine the research or the proposal (e.g., be realistic about what you can achieve). Although your analytical methods will not be set in stone, make it clear that you have thought through what you will do with the information/data you are proposing to collect and how this will effectively address your research question/s. Consult and refer to established sources of guidance on research ethics.

4. Timeline

- a. Detail the life-course of the proposed research (a table is helpful!)
 - i. Aim 1: Explain how you will complete the research in the given timeframe (showing that you have thought this through!)
 - ii. Aim 2: Demonstrate your understanding of how long things take (leave plenty of preparation time!)

Note: The biggest element in your timeline is of course your data collection, so build your timeline around this. Think realistically about the time it will take to collect your data, taking into consideration factors like travel time and schedules you may be constrained by (e.g., participants' school calendars or work schedules).

5. Conclusions

- a. Describe expected outcomes (contributions to knowledge, practice)
 - b. Summarize your key message that the proposed research is important, original and feasible research (this is the last chance to sell your idea!)
-