### How to Write a Good Postgraduate Research Proposal



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* A research degree (e.g. Masters and PhD,) can be one of the best experiences of your life.
* What you gain along the way will serve you for the rest of life, if only to make you a more confident and knowledgeable person.
* In addition to making friends, meeting researchers and being part of the research community.
* It will help you to develop research skills as well as invaluable transferable skills which you can apply to academic life, your current job or a variety of professions.

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# What is a thesis proposal?

oAn academic document, in which you as a the graduate student exposes your plans for the research project or thesis.

oA contract between the student, the supervisor, and the other Committee member(s), stating that the student’s plans would normally lead, upon completion, to the approval of a thesis or research project (based on relevance, originality, feasability).

oA plan that might be adjusted and modified throughout the process of the thesis completion

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Who is responsible for the thesis or research project proposal?

oThe thesis proposal is:

oWritten by the graduate student only.

oOriented and corrected by the supervisor.

oOriented and approved by the thesis committee

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Your proposal describes your proposed plan of work:

* What you intend to study (scope and research questions).
* How you intend to study your topic (methodology).
* Why this topic needs to be studied (significance).
* When you will complete this work (timeline).
* (Occasionally) Where you will conduct this work.

# Writing Thesis Proposals

Purpose:

* Justify and plan (or contract for) a research project.
* Show how your project contributes to existing research.
* Demonstrate that you understand how to conduct discipline-specific research in an acceptable time-frame.

Audience:

* Your academic advisor and committee
  + Understand that the proposal will be negotiated--be

prepared to revise!

* + Think of the proposal as an introduction to your thesis or dissertation.
  + Remember that your proposal is not meant to limit ideas, but to help you think practically.
  + **Talk to your advisor!**



Statement of the Problem

* Answer the question: “What is the gap that needs to be filled?” and/or “What is the problem that

needs to be solved?”

* State the problem clearly early in a paragraph.
* Limit the variables you address in stating your problem or question.
* Consider framing the problem as a question.

## Parts of a Proposal

* Title
* Abstract
* Introduction/Background
* Problem Statement
* Purpose/Aims/Rationale/R esearch Questions
* Review of Literature
* Methodology
* Significance/ Implications
* Overview of Chapters
* Plan of Work
* Bibliography

What is the role of the graduate studies committee (GSC).

The committee is charged with ensuring that the three purposes of postgraduate proposals are met.

* They must verify that your topic is sound.
* That you are prepared to do the work.
* That the work seems to be interest.

To ensure this, the committee carefully read and review your proposal making comments intended you to improve any deficiencies in your proposal and /or proposed studies.

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What is the role of your advisor and of you, the student**?**

The role of your advisor in the development of your thesis proposal is primarily to:

* + Advise and proofread.
  + Guid you to a specific, well-defined thesis topic.
  + Suggest some initial background reading you should do.
  + Suggest a structure to follow in writing your thesis proposal

(if not, a structure suggested by the university).

* + propose one or more potential solution

strategies? methodologies for the work you will propose.

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What is your role?

* + - It is your responsibility to do the necessary background reading to be able to clearly and concisely summarize the work related to your proposal.
    - You must ensure that this summary is complete and that all work discussed in it is relevant to your proposal.
    - Your proposal should be written by you (with your advisor’s input if you want it). Your advisor should proofread what you write and may suggest changes in everything from structure to grammar and spelling.

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