

5 Components - Research Proposals

Study Skills – Conduction Research

The 5 components of a research proposal (appropriate for both undergrad

(1) A Working Title

This will probably change many times as the research progresses but using careful and precise wording here will help to keep your research focused and act as a guide.

The working title of a research proposal must be clear and accurate because it is the first thing that a reader will see. It must include the following formation:

- Describe the main *theme*, the *type*, and the *location* of the research.
- It should have twelve words or fewer in length to be catchy and precise

(2) An Introduction to the Topic

This includes a brief description of the topic, the aim, research objectives and research questions to be answered with the research.

- The *aim* of the research gives a description of what you want to achieve from the research.
- The *objectives* of the research give an overview of the particular issues that you need to complete in order to achieve the aim above. The objectives are more specific than the aim, in that they outline the particular dimensions of your research topic, which are relevant to the overall aim of your research.
- The *research questions* are more specific than your research objectives and specify the various insights/information that need to be collected in order to complete the objectives. Often these questions being with a *Why, How, or What*.

There are four variations in the structure for this part:

- 1) (Just) Research objective (*one reason for the objective and several research questions*)
- 2) (Just) Research Question (*one research question and several research objectives*)
- 3) Research question / Research objectives
- 4) Research objective / Research questions

Adapted from <http://www2.hw.ac.uk/sml/nostgraduate/downloads/dissertations/dissertationguide.pdf>

Important points to take into account for this section:

- When writing the aim of the research do not use normative words or normative phrases
- Don't try to get your research aim into a perfect final state.
- Be careful with the use of words what, how and why.
- **What** for exploratory research, **How** for descriptor and **Why** for explanatory research.
- Don't overestimate what is possible in the time and your personal abilities, but make sure the research is original in some way.
- Ask for feedback about your research aim from your colleagues/classmates.

(3) A Preliminary Literature Review

This part indicates:

- (i) that you have studied the work of the major authors in your research area
- (ii) that you are familiar with the major themes relevant to that subject area
- (iii) what further investigations you intend to pursue as part of this thesis.

For this section take into account:

- This section should show the existing field of research (what work has been done previously, and more importantly what is missing).
- A preliminary literature review should also help with your research aims objectives, as it will highlight what you can contribute towards the field with your research.
- It can also help to build your theoretical framework with the relevant concepts.
- Don't forget to reference properly here to demonstrate the current field of knowledge.

(4) The Research Methodology which you intend to use.

This section should discuss what methods you are going to use in order to address the research objectives of your thesis.

Here you need to justify why the chosen methods were chosen as the most appropriate for your research, against the many alternative ones, given its specific objectives and constraints you may face in terms of access, time etc. In the methodology you will explain **what steps** you took to carry out the research, **how** you carried that out, and you will **justify** any choices and decisions made for your research.

The methodology is generally divided into five sections:

1. **Choice of research design** ⇒ **How** to carry out research and **why**. (Are you looking at primary and/or secondary data?). **Include any ethical considerations and also the limitations of your methodology here.**
2. **Details of the methodology** ⇒ **Describe** and **explain** the method used to collect data - . (Use of books, journals, interviews, etc.).
3. **Sample** ⇒ Decide **which data**/information should be gathered and from who – and why. (You must **justify** the choices that you make for this data gathering).
4. **Procedure** ⇒ Steps taken to collect the data.
5. **Analysis** ⇒ How you will analyze the data/information you collect.

<https://he.palgrave.com/studentstudyskills/page/choosing-appropriate-research-methodologies/> - this website is useful to help decide on your methodology.

(5) Timetable showing how you plan to complete the thesis by the due date. Make sure this is realistic, flexible, and allows extra time for the diversions and changes that research often takes.