



RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDE

A guide on how to write a research
proposal for your thesis-based Masters/
PhD program

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ABOUT GETIN EDUCATION CONSULTING

Getin is an education consulting, advocacy and advisory social enterprise founded to help Africans access quality education and global opportunities. In just two years, we have built a supportive community of over five thousand African graduates and we have successfully secured over \$1.6 million in scholarships for Africans to attend graduate school! Our students and passion partners have been able to secure admissions with scholarships into the best of schools around the world including, Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, Cornell, NYU, etc. Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and subscribe to our [mailing list](#) to receive the latest scholarship opportunities and excellent application preparation tips. We are excited to start the journey to graduate school with you.

Welcome!

WHERE YOU
WILL FIND OUR
CLIENTS



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Penn
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

and many more

GETIN EDUCATION CONSULTING'S SERVICES;

A. GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION BOOTCAMP

Our boot camp is a 2-week, self-paced online course, culminating in a Live Q and A session and subsequently a 30 days' accountability support program which equips graduates with the needed skills to prepare and submit excellent Master's and Ph.D. applications that cannot be ignored. The modules cut across graduate school CV preparation, personal statements and scholarship essay writing using our proven frame works, research proposal writing, secrets to get into the best schools, and strategies to get into graduate school even with low undergraduate grades!

<https://getinedu-academy.thinkific.com/courses/graduate-school-application-bootcamp>

B. FINAL APPLICATION REVIEW

A thorough review service by our experienced education consultants to ensure clients application documents are wholesome, properly written, and sells their strengths and unique abilities in order to secure admissions and scholarship opportunities.

<https://www.getineduconsulting.com/final-application-review-payment>

C. GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION SUPPORT

A highly personalized and comprehensive support service for African graduates applying to graduate school. It entails, consultation with an expert education consultant, revisions of application documents (CV, personal statements, research proposals), scholarship advice, interview preparation, referee selection and management, transcript related advice, comprehensive timelines and deadline tracking, access to our boot camp and accountability support program.

<https://www.getineduconsulting.com/application-support-contact-form>

D. CONSULTATION SERVICES

Our experienced education consultants work with clients to get a clearer picture of their career paths, and strategic education and graduate school goals. Click here for more information.

<https://www.getineduconsulting.com/services-for-students>

E. FREE RESOURCES

We have quite a number of free resources you can take advantage of to equip yourself to access global opportunities. Resources include:

- cold emailing course

<https://getinedu-academy.thinkific.com/courses/cold-emailing-101>

- 100 scholarships for Africans resource

<https://getinedu.ck.page/45f9495d8b>

- Get It Done accountability program
- Scholarship opportunities post
- Chevening Conversations
- PhD in Canada webinar
- Emerging African Scholars mentorship program, etc.

Check out our websites and social media pages (@getinedu) to grab these opportunities!



RESEARCH PROPOSAL RESOURCE BY GETIN EDUCATION CONSULTING.

1. WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL.

A research proposal is a document proposing a research project, generally in the sciences or academia. It is normally a request for sponsorship of that research, and it is intended to convince sponsors/reviewers that a project is worthwhile. Research proposals play a vital role in the pursuit of a graduate degree.

Furthermore, a research proposal is a form of intellectual scholastic contract between a researcher and a research committee/sponsor. A research proposal functions to persuade the reviewer that the project contains all the three kinds of merit all disciplines value, namely; conceptual innovation, methodological rigor and rich substantive content. It specifies what a researcher wants to do, how they will do it, and how the results of a research will be interpreted.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF A RESEARCH PROPOSAL.

The main objective of a research proposal is to obtain the approval of a review committee/sponsor. A research proposal should be able to answer the following questions;

- What is the problem?
- What will the research contribute towards solving the problem? (Objectives of the research)
- How will the problem be investigated? (Methodology)
- How qualified is the researcher in undertaking the project? (Researcher's background)
- How will the results be evaluated?
- How much will the research cost, and how much time will it take?

The proposal should be able to answer these questions in a language that a general reader understands. A good proposal must be clear about these questions from the beginning to help the researcher complete their project in a timely fashion.

3. TYPES OF PROPOSALS.

There are five main types of research proposals;

- Solicited proposals which are submitted in response to a call by a sponsor. Also called Request for Proposals (RFP), solicited proposals usually have specific requirements for format and technical content. They may also specify certain award terms and conditions.
- Research proposals written to schools for a thesis-based program or PHD.
- Unsolicited proposals which are submitted to a sponsor that has not issued a specific solicitation but is believed to have an interest in the area of research.
- Pre-Proposals which are requested by a sponsor who wants to minimize an applicant's effort in preparing a full proposal. Pre-Proposals are usually in the form of a letter of intent or brief abstract. After the pre proposal is reviewed, the sponsor notifies the investigator if a full proposal is needed.
- Continuing or non-competing proposals confirming the original and funding requirements of a project which a sponsor has provided initial funding for.
- Renewal or competing proposals which request continued support for an existing project that is about to end.

4. GUIDE TO WRITING A GOOD RESEARCH PROPOSAL.

A clean well-thought-out proposal forms the backbone for the research itself and hence becomes the most important step in the process of conducting a research. There are very few universally accepted guidelines for writing a good research proposal but all good proposals hinge on a good idea. It is easier to draft a proposal once a researcher has a good idea of what they want to do. A researcher wanting to write a good proposal should bear in mind that many other applicants are applying for sponsorship, supervision, funding from foundations, agencies and the university. They are not alone in writing an interesting, worthy proposal for approval.

Researchers/applicants should note the following;

4.1 CHOOSING A PROBLEM.

Choose a realistic, well-defined problem that can be addressed in the proposed time and with the funds available. Researchers/applicants are advised not to take on 'too grand' problems that would take too long or more money to complete. Choose well-focused projects that are convincing to reviewers.

4.2 STATING THE PROBLEM.

State the research problem at the beginning of the statement of purpose. Give some of the historical background on the project and describe some of the other research that has been done, while showing the uniqueness of their own project.

4.3 WHAT WILL THE RESEARCH CONTRIBUTE TOWARD SOLVING THE PROBLEM?

This refers to the objectives of the research. The research proposal must show what the research project/problem will accomplish. What important gaps of knowledge will the work fill? In this part of the proposal, the researcher will state what they believe their project will accomplish.

4.4 HOW WILL THE PROBLEM BE INVESTIGATED?

Here, the methodology will be described- how the researcher plans to carry out the project.

The methods employed be according to the proposed objectives, and justification should be provided for the methods chosen. State the reasons for carrying out the project in the chosen manner, what methods have been used before and the results obtained from using those methods. The cost of carrying out of the project comes from the methodology, the execution of the project. Well-justified and sound methods increase the chances of convincing a reviewer/sponsor that the project is feasible.

4.5 HOW IS THE RESEARCHER UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO DO THE WORK?

A good proposal should include the background of the researcher, what piqued their interest in the project and what previous related work they have done. In some cases, a résumé or a personal statement may be needed to explain the qualifications of the researcher. A researcher should make sure to include their accomplishments and the kind of work they are interested in graduate school.

Letters of recommendation also attest to the qualifications of a researcher and the ability to carry out the intended project. If possible, get recommenders to read through the proposal before it is

submitted. This will make them well-informed in writing a good recommendation. They might also be able to offer ways of improving the proposal.

4.6 BUDGETS.

If the reviewer requires a budget, the researcher should make sure to follow stated guidelines. Other sources of funding that are expected can be mentioned. It may help convince the reviewer that the project is worthy of support. Remember to be realistic in describing the cost of the proposed project.

4.7 ACCURACY.

There is no place for typographical errors and misspellings when conducting research work. Researchers should ensure they cross check their work with software programs like Grammarly to avoid grammatical errors. In addition, if there is required length, be sure to keep to it.

5. COMPONENTS OF A RESEARCH PROPOSAL.

5.1 TITLE PAGE.

The title of the project should be short, accurate and interesting. It should provide the key words of the research. A good title will clue the reader into the topic but it cannot tell the whole story. It should also include the name of their researcher. The researcher should also check with the reviewer to see if there are any specific formatting requirements.

5.2 ABSTRACT AND TABLE OF CONTENT.

An abstract is a short summary of the research work. The abstract should concisely report the aims and outcomes of your research so that readers can understand exactly what your research is about. An abstract includes; Your research problem and objectives, your methods, your key results and arguments, and your conclusion. It usually is about 150-300 words and it is important you cross check with your word limits. In addition, a table of contents helps provide a means of assessment and navigation of your research document.

5.3 INTRODUCTION.

The main purpose of the introduction is to provide the necessary background for the research problem. It gives a brief overview that tells a reader what the proposal is about. The introduction begins with a general statement of the problem area, with a focus on a specific research problem, followed by the rationale or justification for the proposed project. The introduction generally covers the following elements;

- The research problem statement, also often referred to as the purpose of the project.
- Objectives of the project.
- The rationale of the proposed project, and why it is worth doing.
- The major issues and sub-problems to be addressed by the research.
- Key independent and dependent variables of the research.
- The research hypothesis.
- Limitations or scope of the proposed research.

5.4 LITERATURE REVIEW.

The literature review provides adequate background information on the proposed research. It places the proposed research in the context of what is already known about the topic. It provides the theoretical basis of the research, shows what others have done in that area of research and sets the stage for the project. The literature review should be brief.

The literature review serves the following functions;

- Credits those who have laid the foundation for the proposed research
- Shows the researcher's knowledge of the research problem.
- Shows the understanding of the theoretical and research issues of the research question.
- Shows the researcher's ability to critically evaluate relevant literature information.
- Points out the researcher's ability to piece the existing literature together.
- Gives new theoretical insights into the research.
- Convinces the reviewer that the proposed research will make a significant contribution to already existing literature i.e. fills a major knowledge gap in the literature.

5.5 METHODOLOGY.

The methodology of a proposed research tells the reviewer the intended approach to a research problem and the techniques and logic that will be used to address the problem. In addition, it provides the work plan and describes the activities necessary for the completion of the project.

The methodology consists of the following sections;

- Study design- Is it a questionnaire study or a laboratory experiment?
- Selection of research location.
- Subjects or participants- Who will take part in the project?
- Sample collection- What kind of sampling method/procedure will be used?
- Sample size
- Data collection- A description of the instruments that will be used, and the data that is anticipated.
- Data analysis and interpretation- This includes plans for processing and coding data, computer software to be used, choice of statistical methods etc.

5.6 ANTICIPATED RESULTS.

This section tells the reviewer what is expected from the research. It should connect the data analysis and possible outcome to the theory and research problem that has been raised.

5.7 PLAN

The proposed project plan is the time frame and schedule of activities for the proposed research. It should include time for;

- Purchasing and obtaining relevant consumables and facilities needed to conduct the research.
- Conduct of research.
- Data analysis.
- Writing of a research report.

5.8 BUDGET.

The proposal should provide adequate justification and estimation of the costs of carrying out the project. It should include travels and transportation, consumables, salaries, services, rentals, equipment, utilities, repairs, etc. Remember, do not be too grand in budgeting.

5.9 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCING.

A referencing style is a set of rules on how to acknowledge the thoughts, ideas, and works of others in a particular way. It is important to confirm the kind of referencing style expected in your chosen faculty or school and reference appropriately. This is the final section of the research proposal. It should contain detailed references of the secondary data (mostly from the literature review) referred to in the proposal. Referencing softwares like Mendely, and Endnote can be used to ensure accuracy. Remember, a particular style of referencing should be followed.

6. ARTICLES/BOOKS ON WRITING RESEARCH PROPOSALS .

Writing Research Proposals in the Social Sciences and Humanities: A Theoretical and Practical Guide by Prof. Jayadeva Uyangoda.

- In this book, the professor of Political Science addresses significant issues postgraduate students and researchers face in carrying out serious research in the disciplines of Social Science, Humanities and Management in Sri Lanka.
- <http://www.povertyportal.lk/resource-library/writing-research-proposals-in-the-social-science-and-humanities-d8d3a5e4a9c6310466237146bbeef003.html>

On The Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions by Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon.

- The paper gives competitors for the Social Science Research Council fellowships or funding insights into what the reviewing committee expects in a research proposal. It talks about how to capture the attention of a reviewing committee.
- <https://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/>

USC Libraries Research Guide: Writing a Research Proposal

- This guide defines the goals of a research proposal, how to approach writing a research proposal, mistakes to avoid when writing a research proposal, the structure and writing style of a proposal.
- <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal>

Social Research Method Series: Proposal Writing Guide by Anthony M. Wanjohi

- This book is a detailed guide on the various sections of writing a research proposal for an educational or social research.
- <http://www.kenpro.org/research-methods-series-proposal-writing-guide/>
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://kenpro.org/elibrary/resources/e_resources/research-methods-series-proposal-writing-guide.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjRsomOwuDqAhWQy4UKHZFZDncQFjAAegQIARA&usg=AOvVaw3MQjeZfxE_P3McdVt3F_G

Guide to the ALM Thesis: Developing the Proposal by the Harvard Extension School

- This article provides a practical step-by-step guide into developing a research proposal, not only in the social sciences but across all disciplines.
- <https://thesis.extension.harvard.edu/developing-the-proposal>

University of Exeter College of Social Sciences and International Studies: Writing a Research Proposal

- This article defines a research proposal, gives six important steps in writing a successful research proposal for a PhD study. It also discusses the ideal length of research proposal.

- https://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/study/phdsedd/research_proposal/#a2

Writing Research Proposals for the Social Sciences and Humanities in a Higher Education Context by George Damaskinidis and Anastasia Christodoulou

- This comprehensive book discusses all about writing research proposals at different levels of higher education in the social sciences and humanities.
- https://www.academia.edu/38671327/Writing_Research_Proposals_for_the_Social_Sciences_and_Humanities_in_a_Higher_Education_Context

7. ARTICLES/BOOKS ON WRITING RESEARCH PROPOSALS IN THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Harvard Writing Project: A Student's Guide to Writing in the Life Sciences

- This 83-page guide written by a team of authors/collaborators discusses different types of writing in the life sciences, from laboratory notes to research papers and research and grant proposals.
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://writingproject.fas.harvard.edu/files/hwp/files/life_sciences.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj0mrKtyd_qAhUnyIUKHRLIDf0QFjAREgQIBhAB&usg=AOvVaw2k4UjoLDf46hrAXSgJfTx4

Oman Medical Journal: How to Prepare a Research Proposal by Asya Al-Riyami

- In this article, Asya describes how to write a research proposal with respect to medical research. The article explains the different types of research variables.
- https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3282423/#_ffn_sectitle

Biology Research Proposal: Guidelines and Examples- A blogpost on indiastudychannel.com

- This blogpost gives guidelines and examples in writing research proposals in the biological sciences. It is concise and straight to the point.
- <https://www.indiastudychannel.com/resources/158504-Biology-Research-Proposal-Guidelines-Examples.aspx>

Writing Successful Science Proposals by Andrew J. Friesland and Carol L. Folt

- This book touches on all aspects of writing a science proposal, beginning from the concept of an idea to referencing the research proposal.
- <https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Successful-Science-Proposals-Second/dp/0300119399>
- <http://libgen.is/search.php?req=Writing+Successful+Science+Proposals&open=0&res=25&view=simple&phrase=1&column=def>

Fundamental Principle of Writing a Successful Grant Proposal by Kevin C. Chung and Melissa J. Shauver

- In this article, the authors identify the key elements important to writing a grant proposal when seeking funding to carry out clinical research on hand surgery.
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://surgeryresidentresearch.ucsf.edu/media/6881793/5_fundamentals_of_writing_successful_grant.pdf&ved=2ahUKEw-ijfS7juDqAhXV3YUKHeIDDm4QFjAQegQIChAB&usg=AOvVaw38KzIHGF6J7sunSOJOD-Y6&cshid=1595397821673

Writing a Successful Research Proposal by Dani Or

- This presentation outlines the need for writing a research proposal, what makes a research proposal competitive and the format for writing proposals.
- https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://www.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/usys/ibp/soil-terrestrial-env-physics-dam/education/scientific_comm/2015/6-Writing_scientific_proposal_ethz_2015.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjQ8JvNj-DqAhXEy4UKHZvcCRA4ChAWMAR6BAGFEAE&usg=AOvVaw2eq9gbiHuUa4ywwx80JRHG

Writing Thesis and Dissertation Proposals- UTSA

- This article explains the basic principles involved in writing thesis and dissertation proposals across all disciplines. It gives examples that can help researchers figure out how to write their own proposal.
- <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=http://www.utsa.edu/physics/resources/WritingProposals.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjQ8JvNj-DqAhXEy4UKHZvcCRA4ChAWMAh6BAGCEAE&usg=AOvVaw2nVEIxKYy0GnH48klEzzuL>

Research Proposal | How to Write a Research Proposal?

- This blog post discusses how to write various aspects of a research proposal and 13 elements of a research proposal.
- <https://ascholarship.com/research-proposal-how-to-write-a-research-proposal/>

Writing a Good PhD Research Proposal

- The blogpost talks about the significance of research proposals and how to structure a PhD research proposal.
- <https://www.findaphd.com/advice/finding/writing-phd-research-proposal.aspx>

How to Write a Research Proposal by Paul T. P. Wong,

- Here, the doctor of Counselling Psychology gives general guidelines to follow when writing a research proposal and common mistakes made when writing a research proposal.
- http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art_how_to_write_P_Wong.htm

How to write a research proposal for a strong PhD application- University of Sydney

- This article by the University of Sydney highlights important things to be included in a research proposal for a PhD application.
- <https://www.sydney.edu.au/study/how-to-apply/postgraduate-research/how-to-write-a-research-proposal-for-a-strong-phd-application.html>

How to Write a First-Class Research Proposal: 5 Essential Ingredients For A Dissertation Or Thesis Research Proposal by Derek Jansen (MBA)

- In this blogpost, the author discusses how to write a research proposal using 8 important headlines.
- <https://gradcoach.com/how-to-write-a-dissertation-proposal/>

How to prepare a research proposal by Martin Davies

- This article helps to understand the main elements that comprise a research proposal and how to prepare a well-structured and well-written research proposal.
- <https://thesishub.org/research-proposals/>

SURP Sample Proposals

- This webpage provides sample research proposals in various fields.
- https://www.urop.uci.edu/SURP/surp_sample_proposals.html

8. RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- Guidelines on writing a research proposal: <http://www2.hawaii.edu/~matt/proposal.html>
- How to write a research proposal: <https://www.scribbr.com/dissertation/research-proposal/>
- Writing a Research Proposal:
<https://guides.library.illinois.edu/c.php?g=504643&p=3454888#s-lg-box-10672847>
- The Graduate (A Newsletter for Graduate Students, University of California, Berkeley): The Making of a Successful Proposal Vol. III, Number 1. 1987
- MohdSidik, Sherina&Mmed, Sidik & Med, Fam. (2005). HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PROPOSAL. The Family Physician. 13