

Research Proposal

You will pitch 3 experimental ideas to members of a “grant approval board” (us) as well as an expert committee (your fellow students). Although the audience may look nice, they can be extremely tough! So, make sure you have prepared a well thought out research proposal. The proposal doesn't have to have anything to do with the experiment we are building in the seminar, but instead needs to be within the topics of Cognitive Psychology (Allgemeine Psychologie I). In addition, the proposal should be feasible for a project within the department (e.g., you probably will not be able to test the effect of zero gravity on badgers who have been fed nothing but grüne soße). We have outlined a structure which may help you organize your ideas. You will have 5 minutes to pitch each idea (with the aid of a slide or two), and the review panel will have 5-10 minutes to ask questions/critique your idea. The panel will be primarily concerned with novelty of the research question, feasibility of the design, and clarity of the experimental approach. You should do your best to convey your ideas as well as incorporate the suggestions of the panel. Please come prepared with 3 proposals.

See the example structure below to help you get started. You can use this structure to organize your pitch in front of the panel, if you leave out one of these sections, it is very likely the panel will ask you about this!

Introduction/Motivation

What has already been done? Prepare some examples of past research that may be the inspiration for the current design. You should paint a picture for the panel in which there is a “hole” or “gap” in the current research, which provides the motivation for the study you are proposing. Our ideas don't exist in a vacuum so make sure you contextualize the proposed experiment.

Research Question

Always make the research questions explicit! Maybe write this on the slide. This should be the main question you wish to answer with the proposed experiment.

Methods

Here you need to explain in DETAIL how you will answer the question. Having an explicit methods section will make it easier for the panel to assess the feasibility of the experiment. When the methods are not thoroughly explained the panel will be forced to assume the experiment is not possible.

Expected Results/Hypothesis

What do you think will happen? You should propose some possible results, as well as interpret what these results would mean for the research question.

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Written Assignment

In case you have chosen to submit a written report as a graded assignment, you can choose between two options. For both options, the page limit is 10 pages (excluding title page, references and formalia). This is a strict limit, so please try to be concise but specific.

The two options are:

1. Write a full research proposal about a novel study idea that you are excited about. It can be based on one of the ideas presented during the seminar. Make sure to take a lot of notes during the discussion and feedback part of the idea you want to write about. Please structure the research proposal in accordance with this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp8eCzYYxbg> and try to follow standard APA formatting as much as possible (<http://www.people.vcu.edu/~jldavis/resources/apa/APAproposal.pdf>). The proposal doesn't have to have anything to do with the experiment we are building in the seminar but needs to be within the topics of Cognitive Psychology (Allgemeine Psychologie I).

2. Write a report (similar to your EXPRA report) based on the study we programmed during the seminar. This includes Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. Keep it brief and importantly, include one big sub-section into your Discussion: *Research Proposal*. This research proposal should propose a follow-up experiment which fits nicely with the experiment that you have described in the rest of the report. A rough guide should be: Introduction (1 Page), Methods (2 pages), Results (2 pages), Research Proposal part of the Discussion (2 pages), Rest of the Discussion (1 Pages). You see, there are some pages left, so you can make some of the sections longer as you see fit.

Deadline

The deadline for submitting the report is always 6 weeks after the date of the seminar. Please contact Bettina Schultz (b.schultz@psych.uni-frankfurt.de) for further information.