

Large Scale Research Plan

*Note: While we will tackle this in greater detail in Unit 3, it makes sense at this point for you to familiarize yourself with the steps necessary to complete a research paper. We do not recommend actually making your large-scale research plan until you have attended the live session for Research Seminar 2 **and** read this entire document. Please check with your professor to see what timing may make the most sense for you.*

This website (https://www.postgrad.com/uk_research_planning/) provides a useful overview of the research process and of all the components of writing a research paper, divided into ten stages. As it was originally written for Ph.D. students in the UK, we adapted their 10 stages for Pioneer students.

While this exact process will be different for each student (*again, please check with your professor!*), the general stages we expect students to move through include:

1. Organizing your daily and weekly time management plans, drafting your large-scale research plan
2. Choosing the research topic (we covered this more in-depth during the live session)
3. Conducting an initial literature review (initial research), organizing sources in “Source Management Worksheet” (available in Course Materials, Research Seminar 2 folder)
4. Drafting the research question, seeking feedback from your professor
5. Choosing and developing the methodology, seeking feedback from your professor
6. Data collection and finalizing which sources to include, organizing sources in “Source Management Worksheet” (available in Course Materials, Research Seminar 2 folder), writing a draft for the methodology section, and sharing with your professor, a peer and/or the Pioneer Writing Center (more on this in Research Seminar Unit 3) as appropriate
7. Drafting the thesis, seeking feedback from the professor, and drafting your paper’s outline, seeking feedback from the professor, consider sending a draft of your research question, methodology, thesis, and outline to the Pioneer Writing Center (more on this in Unit 3)
8. Analysis of data and all sources, revising the research question and thesis, and seeking feedback from your professor
9. Drawing conclusions and interpretations, revising the research question and thesis, and seeking feedback from your professor
10. Preparing the final research paper, using the Pioneer Writing Center (more on this in Unit 3), and seeking feedback from your professor, using the peer review and self-review process, writing the abstract (if required by your professor) – note, we will cover this section in much more detail in Unit 3

Note: “Writing the research paper” is only one stage out of ten, and it’s the very last! Preparing well will set you up to write a great research paper - and preparing well requires proper planning and sticking to the deadlines you set for yourself.

Using these ten stages, we developed a sample “large-scale research plan” template for students to use. On the next page is an image of the “Large Scale Research Plan” document – please find the editable file in your Course Materials. **Note that some professors may recommend getting started on this after you’ve completed the Unit 2 live session and read this entire Unit 2 document, where others will ask you to wait until closer to the individual sessions. If you have any questions about when it makes sense for you to begin drafting your plan, please reach out to your PC and/or professor.**

Backward planning:

Backward planning is a useful tool to help you arrange the previous steps in order to meet your final paper deadline goal. Start from stage 10 and input the final deadline that your professor set on your syllabus. Then estimate how long it will take you to write and revise the final paper (we recommend giving yourself at least 3-6 weeks in this final stage – but check with your professor!) and work backward to stage 9, then 8, etc.

Although you will (almost certainly) need to update your plan, it’s worth remembering,


“Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

Many students work better under pressure so setting up some timing expectations and deadlines may work very well to help you avoid procrastination!

At each stage, we recommend sending yourself a backup of your work or saving it to the cloud, etc. Plan ahead and make sure you have a method to save your work each step of the way.

Losing your work is a terrible experience we do not want any Pioneer Scholar to go through!

Large scale research plan (example):

Start from deadline and use backward planning		Stage	Description	Expected duration [days]	Date range focused on this stage	Deadline	Notes
		1	Organizing your daily and weekly time management plans, drafting your large-scale research plan				
		2	Choosing the research topic (see the live session for more information about this -but basically, follow your interests and work with your professor to develop and revise options)				
		3	Conducting an initial literature review (initial research), organizing sources in "Source Management Worksheet" (available in Course Materials, Research Seminar Unit 2 folder)				
		4	Drafting the research question, seeking feedback from professor				
		5	Choosing and developing the methodology, seeking feedback from professor				
		6	Data collection and finalizing which sources to include, organizing sources in "Source Management Worksheet" (available in Course Materials, Research Seminar Unit 2 folder), writing a draft for the methodology section and sharing with your professor, a peer and/or the writing center as appropriate				
		7	Drafting the thesis, seeking feedback from the professor, and drafting your paper's outline, seeking feedback from the professor, consider sending a draft of your research question, methodology, thesis, and outline to the writing center (more on this in unit 3)				
		8	Analysis of data and all sources, revising the research question and thesis and seeking feedback from professor				
		9	Drawing conclusions and interpretations, revising the research question and thesis and seeking feedback from professor				
		10	First draft of the research paper				
			Share draft with writing center and revise				
			Seek additional feedback and revise				
		Deadline	Start here and plan backwards!			(Input the deadline from your syllabus here)	