



RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDELINES For My Independent Study Students

Abstract: This Independent Study project involves writing a research proposal on your chosen topic. It should provide an integrated and coherent – yet succinct – review of the empirical research that has been conducted, your research hypotheses, and a summary of the methods you propose using to address those hypotheses.

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Procedure and Rules for Completing the Proposal

Procedure: In order to achieve this goal, follow these steps:

1. Find and read at least six sources on your topic. Summarize your research articles by writing an Introduction section. Provide a logical and *integrated* argument for your proposed study, including hypotheses to be tested by the study.
2. Describe the methodology research study that you are proposing by writing a complete Methods section. Be sure that your Method section has four components: Participants (or Subjects if animals will be used), Materials, Procedure, and Design (a section which is, admittedly, a little uncommon for journal articles).
3. Summarize the proposal as a whole in an Abstract. In less than 150 words, summarize the main features of your entire research proposal (Introduction, Methods, and Expected Results). You should also create a Title for your research proposal. Though written latter, these should be placed at the beginning of the proposal.
4. Use APA style for all citations, references, and document formatting. These rules are best described in the most recent version of the APA Style Manual.

Checklists for the content of these sections are given on the following pages. Also, you may wish to examine the research articles and examples given in class as samples.

General Rules: Throughout the course of the research proposal development, following guidelines apply:

Collaboration: You should work with research lab members on this proposal. Only one proposal should be submitted at the end of the semester.

Due Dates and Late Policies: The proposal must be handed in by the date set by the instructor. Late proposals may result in an Incomplete for all students involved.

Paper Length and Quality: This proposal should be an integrated, though, and concise document (perhaps in the 5-10 page range). Nonetheless, this proposal should reflect your best undergraduate work to date.

Extensive guidelines for the proposal are provided on the following pages.

Proposal Content Guidelines

Abstract Content: The Abstract should be an integrated summary that addresses the following issues:

- ☐ Describe the essential concepts and purpose of the proposed study
- ☐ Describe the basic question or hypotheses being tested
- ☐ Describe the basic methodology proposed for the study (along with the variables under study)
- ☐ Identify how the proposed methods and expected results answer the questions being tested

Introduction Content: While the general order of the Introduction should follow that listed below, you should also address them in the manner that makes best sense for your topic and proposed study.

Introductory Paragraphs:

- ☐ Identify the general topic of the research proposal
- ☐ Describe the important theories or terms that need to be defined prior to reviewing the research
- ☐ Explain how this topic is important for research in psychology

Literature Review Paragraphs:

- ☐ Identify what has been studied previously and how it is relevant to your proposal
- ☐ Describe aspects of previous research's methodology as relevant to your proposal
- ☐ Identify how and why previous results are relevant to your proposal
- ☐ Describe the strengths and weaknesses of previous research in order to provide justification for your study

Purpose and Hypotheses Paragraphs:

- ☐ Identify why your topic requires further research
- ☐ Describe how your research would expand or build upon the literature you reviewed
- ☐ Describe the concepts and variables your proposed study will test
- ☐ Explain the specific predictions you can make about your concepts and variables

Methods Content: Here again, be sure to provide an integrated argument and not a simple listing of responses to these issues. Also, if something is not relevant to your study, do NOT include it.

Participants:

- ☐ Describe who will be in your study and what sampling procedures will be used
- ☐ Indicate the type of rewards participants may receive for being involved in the study

Design:

- ☐ Describe the type of methodology your study will use and why is this method being proposed
- ☐ Describe the type of design your study will use and how this design addresses your research hypotheses

Materials:

- ☐ Describe, in reasonable detail, any types of instrumentation to be used in the study
- ☐ Describe, and provide examples, of the types of materials and measures to be used in the study
- ☐ Explain how and why the materials were adapted from previous research

Procedure:

- ☐ Describe what the participants in your study will experience, including important instructions to participants
- ☐ Explain any randomization, manipulation, and counterbalancing that will be used in the procedure
- ☐ Describe how any forms of deception or any confederates will be used in the study

Expected Results with Discussion:

- ☐ Explain what you would expect to find (e.g., which group means would be different, etc.) in your study
- ☐ Describe how these results would support your hypotheses (and potentially previous research)

Proposal Grading Rubric

Evaluation/Grading: Evaluation for this assignment is based on a breakdown as follows:

Category	Element	Unacceptable	Problematic	Satisfactory	Commendable
Overview (10% of Total)	Title and Abstract (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Introduction (30% of Total)	Definitions and Context (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
	Literature Review (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
	Purpose and Hypotheses (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Methods (30% of Total)	Participants and Design (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
	Materials (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
	Procedure (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Results (10% of Total)	Expected Results (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Vague <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Implied <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies <input type="checkbox"/> Too Broad	<input type="checkbox"/> Relevancy Described No Inaccuracies Thorough
Writing Style (20% of Total)	Scientific Writing Style (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Improper <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect	<input type="checkbox"/> Haphazard <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies	<input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies	<input type="checkbox"/> Proper Format No Inaccuracies
	APA Style (0 – 3 Points)	<input type="checkbox"/> Improper <input type="checkbox"/> Incorrect	<input type="checkbox"/> Haphazard <input type="checkbox"/> Major Inaccuracies	<input type="checkbox"/> Inconsistent <input type="checkbox"/> Minor Inaccuracies	<input type="checkbox"/> Proper Format No Inaccuracies