

SEARCH Award Research Proposal Guide

Use this guide to prepare your SEARCH research proposal.

Background

What is a Research Proposal?

A research proposal is a specific genre of persuasive academic writing, and typically answers the “So What” questions...

WHY is the research being conducted?

HOW will the research be conducted (design and methods), and how will the researcher comply with appropriate research protocol?

WHAT will the research contribute to the discipline/current discourse?

Note: While the contents of a research proposal are discipline and context specific, certain elements are common to all proposals.

Why Compose a Research Proposal?

- The proposal serves as a guide or roadmap for an intensive research project such as an undergraduate research experience, thesis or dissertation.
- Proposals are required for most grant applications. Thus, writing a research proposal is great practice for grant writing, and a key skill for the world of work.

The SEARCH Research Proposal (100 points total)

Proposals must include ALL five sections/criteria outlined below.

Proposal Formatting Instructions: Setting Up the Document

Download the Proposal Template to make certain your document meets the formatting criteria.

- Set all margins to 1 inch.
- Include a page number on each page of the proposal narrative (except cover page).
- Organize the document by section (Project Description, Research Methods and Design, etc.)
- Proposals must be double-spaced using 12- point font.
- Proposal narrative must not exceed 5 double-spaced pages. The cover page and references are NOT included in the narrative page limit.

1) The WHY: Project Description/ Research Objectives (30 points)

- *Clearly identify the research topic/problem/issue to be addressed through this project*
- *Identify the proposed research question(s), thesis statement, or hypothesis*
- *Provide an overview of your approach to the research topic. This section typically frames or positions the research within the discipline, problem area, or discourse with reference to relevant literature.*
- *Identify the research objectives that you plan to achieve. For example, what is the gap in the literature that your research aims to fill.*

2) The HOW: Research Design and Methods (30 points)

- Provide an overview of the proposed design, methods, and conceptual framework (i.e., specify how the research will be conducted. Example: This narrative inquiry will involve two in-depth interviews with ten participants.... I will develop interview guides from the literature....)
- Explain why the proposed methods are the most appropriate to accomplish the study goals.

3) The WHAT: Project Significance (30 points)

- Explain the “So What” of the research project. What is the significance of the research, and what do you hope to discover by conducting this research?
- What will the research contribute to the discipline/ current discourse? (Example: We expect that study findings will show...OR... Data may reveal two related points... OR... By inhabiting the role of researcher and artist I hope to discover...).

4) Budget Justification (5 points)

- Itemize and include a detailed justification for each projected expense.
- You should consult with your faculty advisor/mentor before you prepare the project budget. Use the worksheet on page three of this document to guide the budget discussion with your faculty advisor/mentor. You will enter the information below on the online application form so make certain to answer each section thoroughly.
- You may include charts, tables, and other graphics to detail the budget items.

5) Student Merit & Need (5 points)

Address each of the following points in this section

- Provide a brief overview of your background including your major, skills and expertise relevant to this research project, academic interests, and future professional goals.
- Why did you decide to apply for this award?
- How do you see the opportunity to conduct research “fitting in” with your academics, and future professional career?
- What do you think you will learn about yourself through this experience?

Budget Request Worksheet

You should consult with your faculty advisor/mentor before you prepare the project budget. Use this worksheet to guide the budget discussion with your faculty advisor/mentor.

Personnel Expenses – Note: All personnel must be added to payroll in order to be paid for work completed.			
Name and Role of Student Researcher (add lines if multiple students are working on project).	Time Required (Student hours per week)	Time Period (e.g. summer, fall, spring semester)	Funds Requested (whole dollars)
Fringe Benefits			
Students Estimate @ 9% of wages requested above in Personnel Expenses			
Travel			
<i>Identify purpose, location, and duration of each trip, and show calculations for specific costs (e.g. airfare, mileage, lodging, meals) per current UT travel regulations.</i>			
Minor Equipment			
<i>Identify each minor instrument/piece of equipment needed to carry out proposed project.</i>			
Operating Expenses			
<i>Identify expenses such as printing and duplication, supplies, postage and telephone, maintenance and repairs, computer services, or other expenses and show calculations used to determine their costs.</i>			
Total Project Costs Requested			