

Proposal Structure Guidelines.

This is a generalised structure for a proposal that can be used for most projects but when you come to do the proposal for PRJ701/702 you may need to make adjustments to it depending on the kind of project that you are doing. However, for the assignment in RES701 I would suggest you use the headings that I have provided here.

The proposal must be presented in a clear and concise form. It needs to be absolutely clear what you are proposing to achieve. It must be in formal, written English of a high standard and correctly referenced where appropriate.

You may also find that the guidelines and template for project proposals on the PRJ701/702 NMIT Online site are useful.

Proposed Project Title: This needs to be a clear statement of what the project is about. The clearer your title is the easier it is for the reader to understand what you are going to do. If you are able to write a clear title it also shows that you are thinking clearly about what you want to do and that will make it much easier to write the rest of the proposal.

Preferred Supervisor (if known): If you have already spoken to a staff member about supervising your project, you can put their name here. If not you can suggest who you would like to be your supervisor. If you don't know or have no preference, then leave this part blank.

Background: This should describe several things about your proposed project. It should explain the context of your project, why you are interested in doing it, what the main purpose of the project is and why it is something worth doing. This is an important section as it gives you the chance of showing that you already know a little about what you will be doing and that you have already done some reading about the subject. I would expect this section to be at least 1 page long.

Project Goal/Research Question: This should be a clear simple statement of the overall final goal for your project or a clear statement of the research question that you intend to answer.

Proposed Project Design and Activities: This section will describe what research approach you will take in your project and what you will actually do. This should be quite a detailed description and will provide the basis for the timeline that you develop. It should list all the major activities that you will do during your project, for example you might include a literature review or describe how you will do a survey or do an experiment.

Anticipated Project Outcomes: This section will be a list of the major outcomes that you expect to get from your project. One major outcome of course will be your project report but it may also include software that you might develop, or systems documentation that you produce.

Required Project Resources: This will have two parts to it.

Personal Skills: Here you should list the skills you need to have in order to do the project. You should also indicate whether you have those skills already or whether you need to learn new things (e.g. a new programming language). If you need to learn new skills you should say how you intend to learn them.

Project Resources: Here you should list anything that you think will need to do

your project. This is particularly important if you need hardware or software that is not currently available at NMIT. There is not usually any money to buy additional resources so you should indicate how you will acquire them if they are necessary.

Potential Limitations and Issues: Here you need to try and think of the problems that you might have with the project or the things that you would like to be able to do that might not take place. A common limitation for most people will be only having a limited time and a final date for the work to be completed. However, if you need to learn a new language or experiment with new hardware you may find that there are technical problems.

Ethical Considerations: Here you will identify any ethical issues that may arise in your project. This is likely to be the case if you are involving people in your project by interviewing them or by building a system for them. You may need to apply for ethical approval for your project and this section will help to identify if that is the case.

Statement of Ownership (if appropriate): If you will be creating something such as new software you will need to make a statement as to who will own it once the project is complete. Generally, you will own your work unless you have entered into an agreement with a company.

Anticipated Timelines: Here you will need to create a simple project plan. You should list all the major activities that you will need to do and identify when you need to have them done by. You also need to identify at least 3 milestones for your project. These will be points when some significant part of the project will be completed. Your plan should include dates (some people find it helpful to do it on a week by week basis) and an approximate time it will take to complete the major activities. Remember that you have 450 hours (300 hours for a graduate diploma) to complete your project and that you may well have assignments for other courses to take into consideration too.

References: If you have mentioned anything that has come from someone else it should be referenced as usual (APA style is preferred). This will usually apply to things you might say in the Background section.

Who is the audience

You

Your supervisor(or prospective supervisor)

The Committee who will approve it

What do these different people need?

You -

making concrete plans for what you are going to do
making a clear choice of question/activity
giving yourself a map of what you hope to do
giving yourself clarity about what you are doing
whether what you are doing meets the requirements for the project

Supervisor -

is there a realistic timeline?
is the project realistic and manageable ? (and interesting!)
does this person seem to know what they are doing?
do they have the skills needed?
give them reasons to support it?

Committee -

are there any ethical implications (or legal) - is it low risk?
are there resource implications in the project?
are there benefits to
a) institute, b) department c) the supervisor d) student e) industry f)

.....?

does it fulfill the academic requirements (intellectual challenge)?
does the student have the skills (or can they acquire them)?
impact on industry relationship
who will own any outputs?

Supervisor - Feel free to talk to staff before you hand in your proposal if you know for sure who you would like to work with.

Current supervisors are Clare, Todd, Mark, Craig, Matthias and Neil.

If you have no preference - just say so.

Research/Project Design

What are the activities/things I will do in my project?

How will I do them?

First say what approach you are taking - e.g. case study, secondary research only, action research, devt (design research).....

Try to list them in order!

1. gather initial information (literature review, writing up initial spec)
2. discover if anything similar exists and if so find it about
3. Gather information/research on a) first thing b) second thing c) third thing/or if devt project - collect user requirements/analysis (SAY HOW! e.g. research - what sources, keywords - for devt - how are you going to document the user reqs?)
4. Run an experiment, do a survey, design the website, interview participants.....

5. (build the website, or system)
6. Review and analyse the results that you found.looking for themes (testing the product)
7. Think about/identify future directions for my project
8. Write my final report

Project Outcomes

Report
Poster
Answer to my research question or
A constructed artefact (e.g website or system) or
A new framework or
A set of recommendations or
A set of analysed results.....
A paper for a conference.../publications

Anticipated Timelines

BIT = 450 hours total
DipIT = 300 hours total

100 hours for report writing (150 hours for international students)
Try to put hours on your other activities
Don't forget milestones.