

Guidance to write your research proposal for thesis approval

Abstract for Research Proposal

The abstract is a summary of the entire proposal, typically ranging from 150 to 250 words. It summarizes the research proposal and should outline the proposal's major headings: specific aims, background, research design, methodology, and discussion.

After reading the Abstract, the committee should understand the general area of your research.

Specific Aims/Purpose of the study

State concisely the goals of the proposed research and summarize the expected outcome(s), including the impact that the results of the proposed research will exert on the research field(s) involved.

List succinctly the specific objectives of the research proposed, e.g., to test a stated hypothesis, create a novel design, solve a specific problem, challenge an existing paradigm or clinical practice, address a critical barrier to progress in the field, or develop new technology.

After reading the specific aims, the committee should understand what specific research topic you are addressing.

Background and Significance/Introduction

Explain the importance of the problem or critical barrier to progress in the field that the proposed project addresses.

Explain how the proposed project will improve scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice.

Describe how the concepts, methods, technologies, treatments, services, or preventative interventions that drive this field will be changed if the proposed aims are achieved.

After reading this section, the committee should understand the importance and relevance of this line of research. The literature review provides the background for the research problem and illustrates to the committee that the researcher is knowledgeable about the scope of the theory. Research as many studies pertaining to the theory as possible and summarize them in a succinct manner.

Research Design and Methods

Describe the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the project. Include the proposed research design of the study, whether it is a survey, experiment, observation, secondary data of analysis, etc. Then, explain how this design will derive results.

Outline any instruments that will be used in the study, including any and all surveys, interviews, or observation grids. For other types of research projects, please include details on the proposed experiments and how they will be conducted.

Include how the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Include what statistics or analytical tools will be used for analyzing the data. If necessary, you should include the following information, outcome and predictor variables, confounding factors.

Please state if this is a pilot study. If not, please provide a justification of sample size. Please relate statistical methodology to specific aims.

If applicable, discuss what efforts will be taken to protect human subjects. Note if an IRB is in place, if not, provide a time frame for applying to the IRB. Describe how the subjects' confidentiality will be protected and how they may receive a copy of the study when it is finished.

If animals are involved in the research, please include approval from the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

Discussion

The Discussion focuses on the implications of the proposed study, such as how the study's results will affect future research, practice, etc. Therefore, write this section with the focus on how the study's results will benefit others. Identify any weaknesses to the proposed study and why they were not addressed.

References

These should be formatted in the AMA style.