Proposal Writing in Social Science

By

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Recommendations through the process of writing

1- Pre-writing.
2- During writing.
3- Finishing up.
4- Selecting the right school and supervisor.
(1) Pre-writing

1- Novel ideas, concepts, and techniques.

2- Contribution to existing knowledge.
(2) During writing

1- Literature review.
2- Clear and interesting objective and the value added of the research.
3- Soundness of methodology.
4- Appropriate formatting and structure.
5- Readability.
Structure

1- Title page.
2- Introduction (overview about the subject – the structure of the proposal)
3- Literature review.
4- The purpose and the value added of the research.
5- Methodology.
6- Timetable.
7- Research requirements.
8- Research outcomes.
(3) Finishing up

1- Language check.
2- Circulation and feedback.
3- Final draft.
4- Selecting the right school and the right supervisor.
(4) Selecting the right school and the right supervisor.

1- Start with your network.
2- Search for the top schools in your field.
3- Search for the appropriate supervisor.
4- Send your proposal for many supervisors.
THANK YOU
How to write a winning research proposal

By

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• This is the first impression the reader gets.

• The title should be short and clear, and the reviewer should be able to understand from the title the intentions of the research.
Good

- Concise title that gives reviewer a general sense of what you are investigating.

Reject

- Too long and technical of a title will not gain the reviewer’s attention or interest.
- Too short and broad a title will make the reviewer too critical of grant.
Abstract

• Should be a concise summary of the WHOLE proposal.
• Use the abstract to identify the need for this research, state what you intend to do, and how you intend to do it.
• Do not include unnecessary detail; make each phrase count.
• Remember it is the first impression a reviewer gets of an applicant’s worth!
Abstract

• Good
  – give a short but informative background to justify the research hypothesis and objectives.
  – Clearly state the hypothesis.
  – State the objectives and/or aims of this proposal.
  – State the impact, significance and innovation in this proposal.
  – Define acronyms as much as possible.

• Reject
  – Technical and condensed phrasing of the project.
  – No clear statement of what is the purpose of this study.
Background

This section should be used to put the work into context:

• what has been done before, and how will the proposed work add to it?

• What is the innovative aspect in the research proposal?
- Good

- Give the reviewer the needed information to understand the objectives and approaches in this proposal.

- Structure the background to go from broad information.

- Build up the background towards answering a specific question that is unknown.

- There should be section within the background to discuss preliminary data.

- Connect preliminary data to background.
— Reject

• Do not expand background to unnecessary information that does not support the hypothesis.

• Background should not exceed one third to one half of proposal.

• No preliminary data generally negatively impacts the proposal in two ways.
  — No indication that the proposal will feasible.
  — No indication the applicant can do the proposed work.
Aims and objectives

The aims should describe:

• what you intend to achieve by doing this piece of work.

• Your objectives are the small steps you need to reach in order to achieve your aim.

• Aims and objectives should be realistic, consistent, and link them to methods, time table, and outcomes.
Aims and objectives

• Specific Aims
  – Reject
    • Many specific aims is bad. This is a two year proposal and if it is too ambitious, will negatively impact on reviewers.
    • Structure aims so that aim 2 is not dependent on aim 1.
Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically.
The Gantt chart or diagrammatic work plan should also be accompanied by a written description.
Outcomes, outputs and impact

In this section one should describe the contribution to knowledge and importance for future research, the benefits to users, and the broader relevance to beneficiaries. Highlight how results will be disseminated (publications, conferences, commercial exploitation, websites, ....).
• Significance and Impact:
  – Good
  • Last chance to impress the reviewer on the importance of what you are proposing.
  • Give a sense of future directions for this research.
  • Why is this proposal innovative?
  • Impact on the field.
The review process

What are reviewers looking for?

– High scientific quality;
– Proposals that meet the funder’s priorities or fill a knowledge gap;
– Novelty ad timeliness;
– Value for money;
– A clear and well thought out approach;
– An interesting idea – catch their attention!
Thank You