Write your research proposal

STUDYSMARTER RESEARCH SERIES

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"If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?"
- Einstein

“The time will come when diligent research over long periods will bring to light things which now lie hidden.”
- Seneca
To determine whether the project is
• relevant
• coherent
• innovative enough
• appropriate for
  o degree type
  o time
  o length
  o method
  o resources

To clarify
• what you are investigating – your purpose
• why it’s worthwhile
• how you will investigate it
• if the project is possible

Why bother?
A persuasive document

- The research design
- The research problem
- Contribution to knowledge

What am I trying to find out?

Why is it worth doing?

How am I going to do it?

It may change
Getting clear about your research question ... it’s a process

1. Identify broad area of study
2. Read around topic
3. Identify a problem and an aim. Test them with your friends, supervisor
4. What interests you?
5. Has a researcher suggested X as an area of research?
6. Keep reading, refine your question
7. Make a decision
A proposal

- Provides background/context
- States your aim, rationale
- Comments on significance
- Discusses conceptual/theoretical framework
- Includes an hypothesis and/or research question
- Outlines a plan for achieving the aim (methodology)
- Refers to the literature throughout
- Is written in clear, precise English (for an intelligent non-specialist)
- Is formatted according to unit guidelines
Background rationale, aim

Significance, benefits

Theoretical framework, question / hypothesis

Methodology

Literature review

References

Timeline

Budget

What to include Check your unit outline for specific details
To investigate the relationship between national development and the availability of household energy.

Aim - What you want to find out

Hypothesis - A starting point for investigation – a proposition to be tested

Development in X country depends on the adequate provision of household energy supplies
Aim
To find out if the amount of study students do affects their academic performance.

Question
How does the amount of study students do affect their academic performance?

Hypothesis
The more a student studies, the better the student’s academic performance.
My research project...

My aim is...

My research question is... OR
My hypothesis is...

I already know... about my research topic

... has been overlooked in previous studies

What I need to do next is...

Have a go
Be thought provoking
Max 20 words
**Try these techniques**

**Free writing**
- Write for a set time (e.g. 10 minutes)
- Don’t stop writing
- Write in sentences
- Write whatever comes into your head
- Don’t have to stick to a single topic
- Write for you alone: no-one else to read it

**Generative writing**
- Write for a set time (e.g. 10 minutes)
- Don’t stop writing
- Write in sentences
- Stick to one topic (possibly a topic from your free writing)
- Let someone else read it (optional)
Reminders

Thinking
Reading
Writing
Talking

Don’t wait for a flash of inspiration

realistic & clear

SET GOALS

Action
Motivation
Action
Let’s look at some examples
Introduction

- Provide a context/background information
  - Locate in space/time/culture
- Refer to existing theory/practice
- Mention any gaps in the research
- State aim

Reference to the literature is essential
The core of your project

- State how your project will address your aim
- Outline the theoretical/conceptual framework
- Describe why you are undertaking your research – significance
- State your hypothesis/research question
- Outline your methodology

Reference to the literature is essential
Methodology

The practices you will use to gather, present and analyse your data.

- Identify the methodology.
- Describe the specific techniques or procedures you will use to collect and analyse your data.
- Convince the reader that these techniques or procedures are appropriate for the type of study you are proposing.
- Mention any limitations, e.g. ethical, resources, skills

Use the literature to provide credibility
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin writing</td>
<td>Now</td>
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<td>Begin experiments</td>
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<td>Submit proposal</td>
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<td>Submit literature review</td>
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<td>Finish first draft</td>
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<td>Give oral presentation</td>
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<td>Finish final draft</td>
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## Upcoming Honours & Masters workshops

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<tr>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>17 March</td>
<td>12-1</td>
<td>Write your literature review</td>
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<td>19 March</td>
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<td>Tues</td>
<td>24 March</td>
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<td>Write your thesis or dissertation</td>
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<td>Tues</td>
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<td>Communicate your research to an audience</td>
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<td>Tues</td>
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<td>Practise your seminar presentation</td>
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Coursework Research Forum

References & additional resources


