

Studieren und Forschen in Deutschland

How to Write a Research Proposal

The **aim of a research proposal** is to convince the academic community that you have:

1. identified a scientific problem
2. a methodological approach to solve the problem
3. a realistic time frame to complete the project at reasonable expenses

1. General Information

- ⤴ Length: between 5-10 pages (minimum 2000 words)
- ⤴ Proper layout: typeface, line spacing, table of contents, page numbers
- ⤴ Be clear, concise, and relevant in your writing!

2. Title Page

- ⤴ Personal data: name, academic title (if applicable), position at your own university, date of birth, nationality, work and home address including phone number and e-mail address
- ⤴ Title of planned dissertation → concise, clear, and understandable
- ⤴ Research area (e.g. Political Science)

3. General Overview of Research Area and Literature

- ⤴ Short and precise overview of the current state of research related to your research project
- ⤴ Name the most important contributions of other scholars
- ⤴ Clearly indicate an open problem, which will be the motive for your project.

4. Citation

The research proposal has to be written by you. Any passage/ sentence from another source or author has to be appropriately cited. **Plagiarism will result in disqualification!**

5. Key Research Questions and Objectives

This section should establish the relevance and value of the proposed research and justify the research effort!

- What do you intend to find out?
- What are your objectives?
- What is the relevance of your research for your academic field?

6. Methods (most important and longest section of the proposal)

- ✦ Provide detailed information on the theoretical/methodological framework that will be used in your research:
 - How do you intend to answer your research questions?
 - What sources will you consult?
 - What analytical techniques/ methods will you employ?
 - How will you collect the required data?
 - How much time will you need (timetable)?
 - Are there anticipated difficulties or ethical issues in collecting the required data?

7. Tentative Timetable (table format)

- ✦ Give information about the research phases and the time required for each phase

8. Research Bibliography

- List only publications that you have used for drafting your proposal!
- Use recent publications!
- Do not copy bibliographies from other papers!
- In case important publications are not available in your home country, list them separately and make clear that you had no opportunity to read them.

9. Text Editing

- ✦ Check grammar and spelling!
- ✦ Check that title and content correspond!
- ✦ Have someone within the academic community proofread your proposal in order to make sure it conforms to international academic standards

10. Checklist

- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- Introduction to the General Topic
- Problem Statement and Justification of the Research Project
- Hypothesis and Objectives of the Study
- Literature and Research Review
- Research Method(s)
- Data Collection, Analysis and Evaluation of Data (empirical research)
- Analysis of Texts and Documents
- Expected Results of the Study
- Bibliography
- Appendix, e.g. Tables, Graphs, Questionnaires, etc.
- Timetable