



Research Proposal Template

A Complete Framework for Dissertation Proposal Writing

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Cover Page Information

Proposed Dissertation Title

Your Full Name

Program / Degree

Department and Institution

Advisor / Committee Chair

Submission Date

Section 1: Introduction & Background

1.1 Background of the Problem

Guidance: Provide context for your study. What broader issue or field-level problem frames your research? Begin broadly and narrow toward your specific focus.

Write your response here:

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Guidance: Clearly articulate the specific problem your research addresses. This should be 2–3 sentences, precise and grounded in evidence.

Write your response here:

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Guidance: State the purpose in one sentence: 'The purpose of this [qualitative/quantitative/mixed methods] study is to [examine/explore/determine] [topic] among [population] in [setting].'

Write your response here:

1.4 Research Questions

Guidance: List your central research question and 2–4 sub-questions. Questions should be open-ended for qualitative, testable for quantitative.

Write your response here:

1.5 Significance of the Study

Guidance: Explain who benefits from this research and how. Address both theoretical and practical significance.

Write your response here:

Section 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Literature

Guidance: Summarize existing research relevant to your topic. Identify major themes, trends, and debates. Use thematic — not source-by-source — organization.

Write your response here:

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Guidance: Identify 1–2 key theories guiding your study. Explain how each theory informs your research design and analysis.

Write your response here:

2.3 Gaps in the Literature

Guidance: Identify what existing research has not addressed. State clearly how your study will fill this gap.

Write your response here:

Section 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Guidance: Identify and justify your research design — phenomenology, case study, survey, experimental, mixed methods, etc.

Write your response here:

3.2 Participants / Data Sources

Guidance: Describe your population, sample size, sampling strategy, and inclusion/exclusion criteria.

Write your response here:

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Guidance: Describe your instruments and procedures in detail — interviews, surveys, observations, or archival records. Include consent process.

Write your response here:

3.4 Data Analysis Plan

Guidance: Explain how you will analyze the data. Name specific procedures. For quantitative studies, specify statistical tests.

Write your response here:

3.5 Trustworthiness / Validity

Guidance: For qualitative: Address credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability. For quantitative: Address internal and external validity and reliability.

Write your response here:

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Guidance: Describe your IRB plans, how participant confidentiality will be maintained, and any risks or benefits associated with participation.

Write your response here:

Section 4: Timeline & References

4.1 Proposed Timeline

Guidance: Provide a phase-by-phase timeline from IRB submission through final defense. Be realistic about time needed for each phase.

Write your response here:

4.2 References

Guidance: Include all sources cited in your proposal formatted in your required style — APA 7th, Chicago, Turabian, or MLA. Minimum 20–30 peer-reviewed sources.

Write your response here:
