Research Proposal Template

(taken from Researchnet – How to apply for a research degree)

Proposal guidance

- Provide an overview of your research question, explaining why it is of academic and or practical importance
- Outline the main objectives of your research, providing details of two or three key aspects
- Write a short literature review, indicating the importance of previous related research or investigated literature and how your own research question might make a useful contribution to the area
- State the main research techniques (interviews, case studies, modelling etc.) you might use
- Indicate your suggested data collection procedures, indicating sources and any possible difficulties
- Explain any analytical techniques you intend to use
- State your proposed timetable of activities
- Finally, list the references in your proposal or provide a short bibliography.

Some of the common problems

In our experience, there are a number of common reasons why proposals from well qualified potential students are rejected.

Some common problems are outlined below:

- Your research topic is inadequately specified. You must write to a very tight format stating what you plan to research, why and how. The format is clearly outlined above.

- Whilst your proposal may identify a practical managerial problem it does not demonstrate its analytical importance. A study that merely aims to discover new empirical information or simply solve a current issue will probably not be accepted. Your proposal must engage with controversies, new ideas/thought and demonstrate strong critical insight into one or more academic disciplines to succeed in your research.

- Other proposals are rejected because their 'geographical' focus does not fit with our supervisory competencies. Our perspective is international, whereas some overseas students seek to study an issue which is exclusively in their home country. If you intend to do this, it should be indicated clearly and how Coventry University will add value to your work.

The format of your Research Proposal

Your proposal should be a maximum of 2,000 words, in addition to your timetable and references or a short bibliography. *We do not expect the proposal to be perfect at this stage, nor do we expect you to stick to it very closely as your ideas will almost certainly change once you start to study, but we do expect you to write it as follows*:

Project Title The title of your project must reflect the content. (20 words)
Aims and Objectives Supply an overall aim and approximately 3 or 4 objectives that the research will address. (300 words)
Relevance to Professional or Academic Field/Literature review Describe using referenced material (no more than six key texts)   - How your proposed research will fit in to the existing body of academic knowledge and practice in the professional field.   - How your research will enhance knowledge or contribute to new understandings in the subject   (1000 words)
Research Approach or Methodology   - Describe the methods you intend to use to deliver your aim and objectives.   - Provide detail of data source and any specialist resources or facilities you may require   (400 words)
Expected Outcomes   Summarise the outcomes/personal development that you hope will result from the project. (280 words)