



How to write a research proposal (Research proposal guide)

The research proposal of a thesis is a fundamental summary of the research project. The challenge of the topic proposal is to choose a satisfactory topic. Do not be disheartened, if you do not find a suitable topic right away.

Component of the research proposal

Title: The title should impart the core of the research project explicit and concise.

Hypothesis or research enquiry (objective): Describe, which paradox you are trying to solve and what the motivation behind it is. Show why this topic is worth working on. Your proposed problem should be precisely focused, but not trivial. Articulate specific hypotheses that you would like to test in your thesis.

Data: Specify what data you will use and where you will source it from. The data set you will use must be clearly described and you must explain its suitability. Before submitting the proposal, check whether the data you are looking for is accessible to you and whether the data quality is sufficient.

Method: The method of the thesis (theoretical or empirical) must be clearly presented. The method for the data analysis must be explained and justified, in particular how your hypothesis will be tested with the chosen data set.

Context of the research (literature): The literature should provide a solid theoretical and empirical base (quote various article from leading academic journals, like Journal of Finance, Journal of Financial Economics and Review of Financial Studies, etc.), which additionally emphasizes the relevance of your research. Also use [Social Science Research Network](#) to find literature.

The hypothesis or the research enquiry must conform to the existing literature or arise from it. The overview of the existing literature will help you to formulate your topic and to construct your hypothesis.

Remarks

- In case that the proposed topic is not formulated as a hypothesis or a distinct statement, you must further specify the problem. It must be precisely expressed and specified.
- You must justify your topic, by explaining, why it is worth to invest time and effort.
- Make sure, that you provide a good overview about the previous research in the specific area.
- How would you like to achieve the target of your research? Briefly explain your approach with references to alternative methods. The described processes do not have to be finalized, but your approach must be realistic.



Checklist

Please, check your research proposal for completeness before handing in:

1. Is your proposal insightful?
2. Is the problem clearly described?
 - a. Are the hypotheses comprehensible and testable?
 - b. Is the project too extensive?
3. Are the methods feasible?
 - a. Is the data obtainable?
 - b. How will the data set be analyzed?
 - c. Is it possible to confirm or reject the hypothesis with the analyzed data?
4. What are the possible outcomes of the thesis?
5. Is the project realistic and workable?