

PROPOSAL TEMPLATE
for writing an undergraduate research proposal

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Northwestern University

ADVICE FOR USING THIS TEMPLATE

- Use this template to draft and revise your research proposal. Plan to do several drafts.
- Start with a longer document to make sure that you capture all of your ideas (perhaps four pages instead of two).
- Revise the draft using the template and feedback from your peers. Then solicit feedback from the faculty who is supporting your work and perhaps from the Undergraduate Research Office or the Office of Fellowships.
- Finally, revise your proposal again, making sure that it meets all requirements, and then do your final editing.

PROPOSAL TEMPLATE	
	<p>Introduction to the topic and background (including literature review)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Explain the relevance of the topic you are going to study: who has been studying this area (or who cares about it) and why?▪ What problems still remain? Present previous approaches and describe the gap in the literature that you are filling with your study.▪ What is the significance of your study within your area and the larger social world?▪ Provide relevant literature here with citations; these should be correlated with a reference list at the end.
	<p>Research question(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ List the aims of your project or state the main question(s) you are trying to answer.▪ Use a concise and specific sentence to describe what you will accomplish in this project.
	<p>Research Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Describe the specific methods that you plan to use to answer your research question(s).▪ Describe particular lab protocols and techniques involved.▪ Demonstrate knowledge of how long various the tasks will take.▪ Explain when you plan to conduct the research.▪ Describe your expected outcomes.
	<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What courses have you taken that have prepared you to undertake this project?• Describe your laboratory experience (labs where you've worked, techniques you've learned).• If you plan to work at the lab between March and summer or to take courses (to learn additional techniques or expand your knowledge base), mention these plans.
	<p>Need / Impact of the research on your academic career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Describe how this grant will help you achieve your future goals; how will this particular summer experience benefit you?▪ How will you disseminate the results of your research (journal publication? Undergraduate Research Symposium? honors thesis?)▪ Does your work have publication potential? If so, indicate the journal(s) you are considering.
	<p>Letter of Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask the faculty member at the lab where you plan to work to write a letter of support for you.• Provide the faculty member with information about your background and preparation (consider providing a curriculum vitae).• Ask the faculty member to talk <i>specifically</i> and <i>positively</i> about the merits of the project and about your potential to do this research.