

# Memorandum

TO: All Associates of 300 Technical Writers  
CC: Hayley Blackburn, Branch Supervisor  
DATE: Due August 7 by Midnight  
SUBJECT: Final Project—Research Proposal

For the final project, you will submit a research proposal to a stakeholder in your industry regarding an issue your field faces. Proposals are persuasive documents to convince readers that you are prepared to complete a needed and beneficial project. A strong proposal quickly communicates what your project topic is, how you intend to complete the project and the benefits of the project for the stakeholders involved. You will use credible sources, research techniques, and effective writing skills to meet the objectives of a research proposal.

You may propose empirical research or a feasibility report. **Empirical reports** answer research questions and test hypotheses through primary data collection (surveys, experiments, big data analysis, etc.). **Feasibility reports** consider if a solution/policy/change is viable within a specific organization by measuring and weighing criteria (costs, logistics, space, effectiveness, desirability, technology, etc).

## Tasks:

The first task is determining your issue, your stakeholder, and the best project to confront that issue.

*For example*, as an educator, I might determine the lack of collaborative learning to be an issue in my industry. I could propose an empirical report by outlining an experiment. Alternatively, I might propose a feasibility report by considering if it is viable to add a new class focused on group work dynamics and communication. My stakeholder would be my Department Head.

The next task is establishing the project method. Both project types require clear explanations of the concepts or variables at play and analytical frameworks for understanding the data. An empirical report requires specific procedures to collect your data while a feasibility report requires a justification for each criterion.

*For example*, when writing an empirical report on collaborative learning, I would explain the details of my experiment: one class may adopt more discussions and projects while the other maintains traditional teaching styles to measure the differences in learning outputs. For the feasibility report, I would justify how the logistics (space and scheduling), the desirability from students, and the academic success metrics serve as key determinants of viability.

Another task for the methods section is **estimating the costs, ethical concerns, and timeline** of the project research. Consider how long the survey would run for, if you need research assistants, the price of lab equipment, etc. This section explains the details that a stakeholder—the one funding your project—needs to make informed decisions to approve the work.

The last task is critically analyzing the benefits of the project. You need to explain, using secondary research data, how the project is helpful to the industry as well as who might be harmed or opposed to your project. With all the information above, you will write the proposal with Five sections.

### **Section Details:**

The proposal includes five core sections: front matter to aid in navigation; a literature review that explains the issue the project confronts; the procedures and methods for the project; the benefits of completing the project; and back matter resources. You must integrate at least **eight** credible (scholarly or trade) sources into your proposal to support and justify the topic, research techniques, and benefits you propose.

1. *The front matter* of the proposal begins with a **letter of transmittal** that addresses the stakeholders while summarizes the content of the proposal. You will then create a **title page** and a **table of contents** to orient the reader to your document.
2. *In the literature review*, you need to provide the background, context, and existing research on the topic you are proposing. As you discuss the nature of the issue, you should be persuading your stakeholders to care about the topic. As you explain what is known about the issue, try to identify gaps in the knowledge that your proposed research would fill. *Aim for 4-5 pages.*
3. *In the procedures/methods section*, you will explain the logistics of the project. Your proposal represents the guide for future researchers to follow, so you must clearly explain the analytical framework, outline the methods, and define the key concepts in this section. You need to justify the type of report you are proposing. *Aim for 3-4 pages.*
4. *In the summary of the benefits*, you must persuade your stakeholder to approve and fund the project. As part of the benefits, identify who or what your issue affects, who benefits from the issue, who are marginalized by the issue, and how your stakeholder might use the information. *Aim for 2-3 pages.*
  - a. *For example*, my collaborative learning topic would benefit students by providing more engaging and practical learning strategies. But professors and the department would need to re-train and create new materials. Overall, the quality of the education would produce stronger students and aid in recruitment and retention for the department in the future.
5. *The back matter* includes the reference list and appropriate appendices.

### **Expectations:**

The proposal will be 10-12 double-spaced pages with clearly defined sections. Incorporate concepts from the course within your writing, organization, and document design to increase the usability of the document. You must include the following minimum elements:

- A cover letter summarizing the report
- A table of contents to aid in the navigation
- One graph or chart containing critical information (NOT a cover image or decorative image)
- Sections for the literature, methods, and benefits
- A reference list with eight credible sources

To earn an “A,” you must meet the minimum expectations WITH critical and creative additions that persuade the reader your research proposal is do-able and worth completing. You must demonstrate why the topic is worthy of research beyond personal interest. The final product must be polished with minimal technical errors and clearly organized.

### **Skills to Practice**

- Planning a large project within your industry standards
- Writing to persuade stakeholders
- Drafting, revising, and editing technical writing
- Finding and synthesizing trade and academic sources to gain information
- Distilling complex issues into accessible frameworks
- Creating graphics and illustrations to express information/data
- Thinking critically about your future industries and careers

### **Objective:**

*To identify an issue within your industry and persuade others of the importance of researching the issue*

*To develop a persuasive proposal for a large project*

If you have any concerns, questions, or other commentaries, please do not hesitate to contact your 300 branch supervisor (recitation instructor).