

Guidance on writing a PhD Research Proposal

The School of the Built Environment and Architecture (BEA), London South Bank University, requires specific information in the Research Proposal (RP). Students need to be both imaginative and practical in drawing up their research proposal. Innovative research ideas are welcome, however devising a realistic and practical research plan is essential. The RP should provide a good idea of your research 'problem' and some indication of why you think it is important. We need to know that your research proposition is worth undertaking, that you can achieve it, and that you are aware of the constraints of time and other difficulties which affect all research projects. The School of the Built Environment and Architecture (BEA) will assist students in refining their proposals where appropriate.

Typically, a RP has a standard set of sections which are presented in the following table. The length of your Research Proposal (RP) should be a maximum of 2000 words.

Section	Description
Working title	A 'working' title is relatively short and simple. It provides an understanding of the breadth/scope of the study. This title will be refined as the research progresses.
Introduction/justification/rationale	Introduces the topic area justifying why there is a need for the research.
Aim/hypothesis/research question	<p>The aim of the research is the overall purpose of the study, and should be clearly and concisely defined. It is therefore the broad statements of desired outcomes, or the general intentions of the research, which 'paint a picture' of your research project. Emphasize what is to be accomplished (not how it is to be accomplished).</p> <p>The aim should be fairly focused to demonstrate that you have narrowed down the topic to something that is both achievable and manageable.</p> <p>Alternatively, the aim may be considered as a hypothesis (question). A hypothesis is a conjectural statement of the relationship between two or more variables that are measurable.</p> <p>A research question guides and centres your research. It should be clear and focused, as well as synthesize. It must end with a question mark (?).</p> <p>Multiple sources to present your unique argument.</p>

Section	Description
Objectives	5-6 bullet statements of intended outcomes from the research written as statements. They are written as though you have completed the research and are looking back on what you did in order to meet the aim of the research. Another way of looking at objectives is to think about what it is you need to demonstrate an understanding of in order to meet the aim of the research. Use the SMART Principles (Specific; Measurable; Achievable/Attainable; Realistic; and Time bound/Timely) to document your research objectives.
Literature review	<p>Undertaken in two stages to provide a critical review (analysis and evaluation) of the literature such that it informs the RP:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Searching for and finding relevant literature; 2. Analyzing/reviewing what has been found. <p>The literature review included in the Introductory section contextualizes the subject area and a full literature review is provided as a stand alone section.</p> <p>In addition, a literature review is also concerned with literature on research strategy/techniques and data analysis methods.</p>
Research methodology and methods	<p>Provides a discussion of the research strategy (general approach) to be adopted with appropriate justification including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail of the implementation of the strategy in relation to the proposed research • The technique(s) to be used including justifying appropriate technique(s) for the research strategy adopted. • Possible problems that may arise in administering the technique(s) along with identifying strategies to minimize the impact of any potential problems.
Analytical approach	The approach to analysis needs to be considered. This addresses the range of data that will be gathered from the research techniques and how this information will be analyzed.
References	A list of references cited within the main text following a system of referencing such as Harvard Style, British or Vancouver.