

CAL POLY-LSAMP RESEARCH SCHOLARS
GUIDE TO WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

What is a research proposal?

A research proposal is a document that lays the ground work for research that is yet to take place. As described by Paul Wong, “a research proposal is intended to convince others that you have a worthwhile research project and that you have the competence and the work-plan to complete it.”¹

Why should my proposal be one page?

A 1-page proposal provides the opportunity for you to emphasize the most important details about your proposed research.

Research Proposals should
ALWAYS answer three
questions:
What are you doing?
Why are you doing it?
How are you doing it?

How should I organize my one-page proposal?

- **TITLE:** Your title should be concise and specific to your research proposal.
- **RESEARCH TOPIC & RESEARCH QUESTION:** What is your research topic and research question? (If your discipline utilizes hypotheses, include your hypothesis here.)
- **CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCIPLINE/FIELD:** What is known about your research topic? What is unknown? How will your research contribute to the production of new knowledge in your discipline/field to address what is unknown?
- **GOALS:** What do you plan to accomplish this summer? NOTE: Your summer research may be part of a longer research project but you should identify specific goals or outcomes for the summer research period.
- **DESIGN, METHODS, APPROACH:** How will you conduct your research to answer your research question? For example: What is your experimental design? What are your methods? What is your theoretical approach?
- **TIMELINE:** What is your timeline for completing your research project? What are your milestones during the research period? Your timeline can range from 6 to 10 weeks, depending upon your & your faculty mentor’s preferences.
- **BROADER IMPLICATIONS:** Why is research in this area important? How does or will research in this area make a difference (now or in the future) and to whom?
- **PRIOR EXPERIENCE:** What are your prior experiences that prepare you to do this work? (For example, course work, other research experience, etc.)

¹ Wong, P.T.P. *How to write a research proposal*. International Network on Personal Meaning. Web. 8-31-16.