Research Proposal[1]

A research proposal is a rough **outline** of your writing project. It sets out the **scope** of your research (broad topic), the **rationale/reasons** for it, the **aims and objectives** you are seeking to achieve with it, the **methodology**, the **schedule** and how to meet it within the time available, the **expected/ preliminary results**. You can later use this research proposal to write the introduction of your paper.

Tips for writing a research proposal:

- Finding a topic:
  Consider these three levels when thinking about the **relevance** of a topic: The **individual** level (Why am I writing about this topic?), the **social** level (Why should there be research about this topic?) and the **academic** level (Where can I find a gap or an inconsistency in the field? To which dilemma/controversy/discussion do I want to contribute some new insights?
  Note: On BA-level these new insights do not necessarily have to be major new findings – it is often sufficient to draw conclusions from the literature and find insightful perspectives). These questions will help you establish your perspective and approach towards the topic.
- Specify your topic:
  A useful technique is to consider the questions from the *Inverted Pyramid* (what, where, when, who, what exactly?).
- Narrow-down/Finding a research question:
  The research question goes beyond the questions used for the topic. It should provoke analysis and argument, not just a descriptive answer or a summary. Questions with **why** and **how** generally require an analytical answer. The research question addresses a genuine dilemma (grey areas, ambiguity, uncertainty etc.) in the texts offered or the research you have done thus far, about which the scientific community might have different opinions or interpretations.
- Narrow-down your research question:
  A useful technique is the *Three-Step Process* to finding a research question, which helps you to discern between topic, research question, hypothesis, aims and objectives.

An **exemplary** guideline*:
- **Title**
- **Abstract**
- **Introduction:**
  - Background information – introduce the area of research
  - Brief summary of relevant existing literature: summarize current literature in your proposed area of research to determine the relevance and value of your research, identify any gap in the knowledge or questions which have to be answered
  - State your research question
  - State your hypothesis
  - Aims/Objectives
  - How is your research beneficial and to whom?
- **Methodology**:
  Given your aims/objectives, consider your research **approach** (theoretical framework) and the most appropriate research **methods** (tools) for achieving them
- **Summary and Conclusion**
- **References**

*Important note: Always clarify the exact guidelines with your course instructor.

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[1] Raich, Lola (2017): Syllabus: Course 210065-1 EU in Crisis? Institutions, Policies, and Politics. University of Vienna [adapted by M. Hubert]
Kreisky, Eva (2016): http://evakreisky.at/wissenschaftlich_arbeiten/schreiben_zitieren.php#expose [adapted by K. Dreo, last access 2016/10/11]