Guidelines on Writing Research Proposal

All research proposals must address the nature of your study, questions of what you plan to accomplish and why you want to and how you are going to do it. There are no specific rules governing the form and content of a research proposal. They will vary depending on the unique nature of the problem to be studied. Yet it is advisable to pay attention to the following step-wise outline for preparing a research proposal. A good research proposal should be clear, concise and coherent.

A proposal is likely to contain most of the elements listed in the table below:

Component	Characteristics
Research title	Contain keywords that describe your study. Should demonstrate the main focus/theme of the proposed project or a short statement of what you want to investigate. Must be concise and descriptive.
Objectives/Aims of research	Summarize the problem you intend to solve and your solution to that problem. State the contributions that you want to make with the intended study.
The problem statement	State the problems involved in the research and the problem(s) that you are exploring. Also present the rationale of the entire study.
Literature review	Statement of other research that have been done in this area. Also link your work to the work of others in the same or related fields. References to key texts and recently published articles should be made. You should be able to demonstrate that your proposed area is not a duplication of work done earlier and should contain an element of originality.
Research design/methodology	Describe the way that you intend to approach the research question(s) and the techniques and logic that you will use to address it. This should include the ways in which you will gather data and the research plan including the research design, experimental procedures and statistical analysis.
Work schedule/timetable	Indicate roughly how you would allocate the time for doing the research project over the duration of your studies. It is a guide so that you can monitor your own progress and manage your project effectively.
Significance/ Expected outcomes of the study	Outline the anticipated benefits of conducting the research.
References	Publication details of literature cited. Referencing system should be consistent which contain the names of authors, name of book/journal, year of publication, the volume, the issue and page number.

A research proposal is usually around 4500 to 6000 words (about 15-20 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font 12). It must be of adequate length to address the question of what you plan to accomplish and why you want to and how you are going to do it. For other basic technical requirements (i.e footnote styles, quotations, reference format, layout of tables and figures), students are advised to consult **The IIUM Thesis/Dissertation Manual**.