

## Tips for Writing Your Research Proposal

- Present research plans coherently and in a logical and connected order and describe tools, techniques, methods and timelines
- If you are critiquing existing models or approaches in the literature be objective, respectful and demonstrate clearly why your approach is better than other approaches in your discipline
- Provide enough background to place your research in context in your field of study
- State the significance of your research to your field and if applicable beyond to industry, policy development, development of new research models
- Include all relevant information in the research proposal; do not refer to URLs or other publications for supplemental information which will not be read by reviewers
- If the proposed research is a continuation of your master's thesis, clearly state the differences between work done for your thesis and the research activities outlined in this proposal
- If your research considers matters of biological sex, gender or details related to diversity, describe how it will be addressed in your research method
- Avoid the use of discipline specific jargon and highly technical terminology; if you use it you have to explain it and that will take up space and remember that your proposal is being read by intelligent people who may not necessarily be specialists in your area of study
- Avoid typos, run-on sentences, incomplete information, incorrect information, editorializing, unduly negative criticism
- Do not use acronyms, unless you must refer to something multiple times, then spell it out the first time and use acronym to save space, for example, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
- Think about creative use of headlines, en-dots, subsections, bold, underlines, and italics – these make a page look attractive and create white space
- Adhere to the presentation standards established by research council and described in the application instructions for the council you are applying to; NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR each have their own format
- Don't be afraid to convey your enthusiasm for your research topic in your proposal; it can help make it polished and engaging
- Ask a friend who is not familiar with your research to read your proposal at a time when they really don't want to, and put a red X beside any sentence they had to read more than once, this can quickly identify sentences that may need editing
- Read your proposal out loud to yourself; if it doesn't "flow" when you read it, it will probably be difficult for someone else to read

- Have a small number of people who care about you and your success read your proposal, this could be your supervisor, department graduate advisor, friend or family and the UVic coach for your research council, listen to their feedback, use what works and leave the rest – ultimately it is your proposal
- If your proposed research overlaps with areas funded by other granting agencies, justify your submission of this proposal to SSHRC rather than to NSERC or CIHR for example, this is particularly important with regard to health research
- If you changed disciplines, or if your research has changed since your MA thesis, explain that and indicate that you are familiar with the new area
- If doing ‘research-creation” be sure to clearly describe the research component part of your project, (applies primarily to Fine Arts PhD proposals)
- Remember this is your research, not a summary of your supervisor’s work, or those who came before you