

OSEA Guidelines on Structuring, Designing, and Writing a Research Proposal

Section 1: Statement of the Research Problem.

Paragraph 1. Statement of Topic & Issues of Project & Definition of the Objects of Study

- Identify in one sentence: define the research project as a (study, investigation, research) on your research topic; define the “broader” issues that constitute the research approach and concerns in 1-2 sentences.
- Define the objects of study of the research project; these are specific objects that fall within the broader (more general or more abstract) issues.
- Identify in a few sentences or a separate paragraph “who” are the subjects of research & “when” and “where” the project is to be undertaken, include a justification/explanation of these points

Paragraph 2. Significance and Contribution of Proposed Research Project.

- Significance (So What? why important and for whom? 4 criteria)
- Contribution (of the project, for whom and what; contribution of the results)
- What value does this research project have? What is the purpose/goal of the project?
- Four Criteria: a) Personal/Individual; b) Social, Real World; c) Disciplinary (theoretical and topical debates); d) Area of research (“lit review” of area studies; how does it fit into the history of work already done in the research conducted in/on your area of study?)

Paragraph 3. Theoretical Framework. (in long proposals this is can be up to 1-2 pages)

- Identify the philosophical and theoretical tradition/s on which the research is based.
- Define key assumptions of these traditions that come into play in the research
- Identify the theory that is used; define key aspects of how it will be used. What are some of the key concepts that are used and how are they used (methodologically? analytically? theoretically? descriptively?)?

Paragraph 4. Analytical Framework of Research Questions (If large project, maybe 2-3 paragraphs)

- Define the research questions -- a hierarchy of questions and issues (the issues expanded and posed as questions that specifically tied to the locations/people of project)
- Define the kinds (types) of data that need to be created/collected to address these issues

Section 2. Methodologies, Strategies and Tactics (3 paragraphs)

- Restate issues that the proposed project investigates as research questions.
- Define the research strategies and methodologies by which you will produce the data and information that addresses the research questions
- Define tactics and procedures by which the data can be produced to answer the questions
- Define a schedule of times, places, persons for the conduct of research and for the writing of fieldnotes, the re-writing of fieldnotes, transcription, coding, and analysis of materials

Section 3. Define the Products that are expected to Result from the Project:

- Define the products that will result from research.
- Type and Media of presentation of results. What kinds of ethnographies will result?
- Define the Audiences that are targeted; what is expected methods & type of distribution?

Section 4. Bibliography & Sources

- Provide a listing of sources that is available and which you used to design your project
- Provide a listing of relevant secondary sources that deal with related topics, issues, theoretical approaches, applications of same theory, “same” cultural locations and peoples, that can be used to provide greater foundation of knowledge or tools for analysis

Notes:

1st. In real proposals (written for real granting agencies) there is an additional section for “Budget,” which goes before the bibliography and right after the narrative this component includes BOTH a tabular itemization & a narrative justification of expenses. Budgets therefore explain how much, for what, and why is it necessary.

2nd. The OSEA project proposal is short; real proposals can vary in size and length for each section & unit depending upon the specific guidelines of the granting agency or review board. Each granting agency has its own instructions on the types of sections to include, as well as how long and in what order each component should be.