

Department of Economics
509 ECO Macroeconomic Theory
MSc, Level 4, 2007
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Writing a Research Proposal: Some Thoughts to Consider

- What is your research question?
- Why does it matter?
- How will you address this question? (i.e. what will be your methodology?)
- Is your research question clear?
- Are your research methods appropriate?
- How many subjects do you need? How will you choose them?
- What statistic will you use?

Writing Your Research Proposal

Typically a document of no more than 2,000 words is sufficient to outline the proposed research topic and programme of research. Quality rather than quantity is the key to a good proposal. The proposal might typically comprise:

- **Title**

This needs to be a clear and succinct description of your research.

- **Introduction**

This should briefly explain what you propose to research, why the research is of value and how you propose to go about it.

- **Literature Review**

This should justify why research is necessary in the area that you propose by a thorough examination of key, recent contributions in research periodicals.

Problems or gaps in the literature should be identified to lead on to the selected research question.

- **Research Question**

This should be a precise specification of the problem or the gap in existing knowledge that your research seeks to answer.

- **Research Method**

This should cover high-level decisions on choice of methodology including details of methods of data collection and analysis. A time schedule showing key activities is useful.

- **References**

The literature cited in the proposal should be listed at the end of the document. Use of the Harvard style of referencing is preferred.

For further information on writing your research proposal please see:
Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2000) Writing your research proposal *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson Education. pp 29-36.

Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (2002) *Management Research: An Introduction*. Sage Publications. pp 21-23.

Riley, M., Wood, R.C., Clark, M.A., Wilkie, E. and Szivas, E. (2000) *Researching and Writing Dissertations in Business and Management*. Thomson Learning. pp 44-45.

Harvard style bibliographies and references:

Book

Take the information from the title page and the reverse of the title page:

Family name, initial(s). Year. *Title*. City of publication: Publisher

ADAMS, A. D. 1906. *Electric transmission of water power*. New York: McGraw

Book (electronic)

Family name, initial(s). Year. *Title*. City: Publisher. [Date accessed]. Available from World Wide Web: <URL>

McROBBIE, A. 1998. *British fashion design : rag trade or image industry?* London: Routledge.

[Accessed 31 May 2006]. Available from World Wide Web:

<<http://leeds.etailer.dpsl.net/Home/html/moreinfo.asp?isbn=0203168011>>

Chapter in an edited book

Use the title page and reverse title page of the book and the chapter heading itself:

Family name, initial(s). Year. Chapter title. *In*: Initial(s) Family name of editor(s), (eds). *Title of book*. City of publication: Publisher. Page number of your quotation

COFFIN, J. M. 1999. Molecular Biology of HIV. *In*: K.A. CRANDELL, (ed). *The Evolution of HIV*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. pp. 3-4.

CD-ROM

Use the accompanying material:

Title. Year. [CD-ROM]. City of publication: Publisher.

Who's who 1897-1998 electronic resource. 1998. [CD-ROM] London : Oxford University Press.

Command paper

GREAT BRITAIN. Department/Committee. Year. *Title*. (Command no). HMSO: London

GREAT BRITAIN. Criminal Law Revision Committee. 1984. *Fifteenth Report: Sexual Offences*. (Cmnd 9213). HMSO: London

N.B. Check what abbreviation is required for Command, as this is different for different historical periods.

Conference paper

Use the title page and reverse title page of the full proceedings and the headings for the paper:

Family name, initial(s). Year. Title of paper. *In*: Editor(s) of conference proceedings if known. *Title of conference*, date of conference, location of conference. Place of publication: publisher. Page number(s)

ROBERTSON, J. 1986. The economics of local recovery. *In*: *The Other Economic Summit*, 17/18 April 1986, Tokyo. London: The Other Economic Summit.

Electronic discussion list

Family name, initial(s). Year. *Title*. Date added. Available from: *Discussion group title* [Date accessed]

CRANSHAW, L. 2001. *Nature license for 2001 and beyond: can your institution afford it?* 6 Feb 2001.

Available from: *lis e-journals* [Accessed 21 March 2002]

Email

Family name, initial(s). *Title*. [online]. Message to: Recipient. Date sent. [Date accessed]. Personal communication

PRITCHARD, S. *Your request for Information about ISO Standards*. [online]. Message to: Margaret MORRISON. 18 February 2005. [Accessed 3 March 2005]. Personal communication

Interview (taped)

Family name, initial(s). Year. Interview with the author on Date. City. [Cassette recording in possession of author]

SMUTS, D. 1987. Interview with the author on 4 August 1987. Cape Town. [Cassette recording in possession of author]

Journal article

Use the title page of the journal volume or issue and the article:

Family name, initial(s). Year. Title of article. *Journal title*. **Volume** (issue number), page number of your quotation

WALKER, J R. 1998. Citing serials: online serial publications and citation systems. *Serials-Librarian*, **33**(3/4), pp.343-356.

Journal article (electronic)

Use information from the web site and the article:

Family name, initial(s). Year. Title of article. *Journal title* [online]. **Volume** (issue number) [Date accessed], page number of your quotation. Available from World Wide Web: <url of site>
ROYALL, C.P., B.L.THIEL, and A.M. DONALD, 2001. Radiation damage of water in environmental scanning electron microscopy. *Journal of Microscopy* [online]. **204**(3), [Accessed 9th May 2002], p.185. Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/>

Lecture notes

Family name, initial(s). Year of presentation. Lecture title, lecture notes distributed in the topic module code (capitalised) title of module. Teaching organisation, the location on date. Do not use italics.
VOLTMER, K. 2006. 'Politicians and the press: Models of interaction', lecture notes distributed in the topic COMM5610 Politics and the Media. Leeds University, Man-Made Fibres Building on 17 April.

Newspaper article

Family name, initial(s). Title of article. Year. *Newspaper title*, date, page number of your quotation
WEBSTER, B. New speed camera puts more drivers in the frame. 2006. *Times*, 24 May, p.1

Organisation report

Organisation. (Unpublished, year). *Title*. Report dated date
NSPCC. (Unpublished, 1988) *NSPCC submission to the Home Office Advisory Group on the admissibility of video recorded interviews*. Report dated September 1988

Press release

Organisation. Year. *Title*. Press release, issued date
NSPCC. 1993. *NSPCC launches justice for children campaign*. Press release, issued 17 March 1993

Television broadcast

Series title and number and title of episode. Transmitting organisation and channel, full date and time of transmission.
Yes, Prime Minister: Episode 1, The Ministerial Broadcast. TV, BBC2, 1986 January 27. 20.30 hrs.

Thesis

Use the title page of the thesis:
Family name, initial(s). Year. *Title*. Type of qualification, academic institution
GILL, M.R. 1997. *The relationship between the physical properties of human articular cartilage and tissue biochemistry and ultrastructure*. Ph.D. thesis, University of Leeds.

Unpublished documents

Family name, initial(s). Year. *Title*. Unpublished.
FENDELL, R. 1985. *Training and management for primary healthcare*. Unpublished.

Website with author

Take the information from the webpage itself or the associated homepage - use the title bar and the credits at the bottom of the page, your own date of viewing the page and insert the words [online] and Available from World Wide Web:
Family name, initial(s) Year. *Title* [online]. [Date accessed]. Available from World Wide Web : <url of site>
HAWKING, S. 2000. *Professor Stephen Hawking's website* [online]. [Accessed 9th May 2002]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.hawking.org.uk/home/hindex.html>>

Website with no author

Take the information from the webpage itself or the associated homepage - use the title bar and the credits at the bottom of the page, your own date of viewing the page and insert the words [online] and Available from World Wide Web:
Title of website. Year as appearing on site [online]. [Date accessed]. Available from World Wide Web : <url of site>
Feminist Collections A Quarterly of Women's Studies Resources. 2002. [online]. [Accessed 9th May 2002]. Available from World Wide Web: <<http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/WomensStudies/fcmain.htm>>