

For further information about publishing research please contact the Research and Development Office.

## Final thoughts...

Does your research proposal clearly include the following:

A research question?

Why the research is important?

How your research will answer the question?

If you have answered yes to all of the above, your proposal is ready. It is often good practice to have your work proof read before finally submitting it.

Good Luck!

## References and recommended reading

Writing Your Research Proposal  
<http://www.rdfunding.org.uk/flowchart/Section4.htm>

Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care  
<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk>

## Further Information:

Please contact:  
NHSCT R&D  
Office Governance Department  
Bush House  
Bush Road  
Antrim  
BT41 2QB  
Frances Johnston  
Research Governance Manager  
Tel: 028 9442 4653  
Email: frances.johnston@northerntrust.hscni.net

Mary McDonald  
Research Governance Administrator  
Tel: 028 9442 4441  
Email: mary.mcdonald@northerntrust.hscni.net

Marian McConway  
Research Governance HCO  
Tel: 028 9442 4751  
Email: marian.mcconway@northerntrust.hscni.net

Katrina Gray  
Research Governance HCO  
Tel: 028 9442 4751  
Email: katrina.gray@northerntrust.hscni.net

Email: [info@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:info@northerntrust.hscni.net)

**This document is available, on request, in accessible formats, including Braille, cd, audio cassette and minority languages.**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



**Guidelines on how to write a research proposal**

## Why write a research proposal?

The aim of a research proposal is to help the researcher logically organise their thoughts and ideas regarding a potential research project. The majority of Research and Development Departments will not accept a research project for consideration without a well structured research proposal. Having a well structured research proposal will help to ease the peer reviewing process

## Before you start...

Before you begin to write your proposal it is good practice to have all the evidence / information you need, so you don't have to disrupt the creative flow when writing the proposal to begin searching.

By this stage you should have completed a comprehensive literature search, using high quality clinical databases such as Cochrane, Medline. The purpose of the literature review is to create a baseline for your research and help provide evidence as to why the research is important. It is good practice to include the literature review in the proposal.

For help on literature searching please contact the Library Administrator.

## Basic structure

There is a basic structure which should be followed when writing the proposal. The proposal should be approximately 1500 words (not including the literature review).

**Title** - this needs to clearly identify the study. For example the title 'A Study into Asthma' is too ambiguous, whereas 'A Study into the Rates of Asthma Amongst Preschool Children within Northern Trust' clearly states the purpose of the study. It is also good practice to have a full title and a short title of the study.

**Investigators** - who is going to be conducting the research?

**Aims and Objectives** - what are the aims and objectives for the study, and are they realistic? The number of aims and objectives should be restricted. Ideally no more than five.

**Background** - this forms part of the main body of the proposal, and should clearly state why the research should be carried out and if there is an identified gap in current knowledge (the literature review will help to support this). Research hypotheses should also be included in this section. From the background section the question the research will be addressing should be clear.

**Study Design** - this section again forms part of the main body of the proposal and should include details about the type of study. For example is it a randomised control trial or a qualitative study?

Within this section there should be a detailed plan of the investigation, including information on the following:

- Inclusion / exclusion criteria of participants.
- Recruitment procedures of participants.

- Study setting (name and descriptions of centres).
- How participants are invited to take part.
- Information and consent procedures.
- What research participants will be asked to do.
- How the research intervention will be administered.
- Details of any risks to participants and safeguards to be implemented.
- Cost implications (funding etc).
- Follow-up procedures and time points.
- How outcomes will be measured.
- How the size of the study was calculated.

**Statistical Analysis** - will there be any formal support available, and what methods of analysis will be used?

**Resource Requirements** - what are the resource implications to all organisations or departments involved in the research?

**Study Timetable** - what is the duration of the research project? Include contingency planning within the timetable by adding extra time in case there is a delay with questionnaire responses for instance.

**Supervision** - Name all of the people who will be supervising the research and also the arrangements for the supervision.

**Dissemination and Outcome** - it should clearly be stated as to the intended route for the results of the research.