Proposal Requirements

The proposal should be written under the guidance of your faculty mentor.

Introduction

The introduction is a statement of the topic you intend to study or the research you propose. It should include; context of the topic, statement of the problem, the objectives/questions of your study, assumptions, definitions, and answer why your study is significant or important. If your research project is a smaller piece of a larger project, describe the context of your project or the background research that led to your project. (For some projects it may make more sense to describe the significance after you have described the methodology and analysis).

Specific Aims or Goals

Describe simply and concisely what the specific research is intended to accomplish. Describe any hypothesis to be tested. What questions are you asking? Ask clear and specific questions (for example, “to study the effect of substance X on system Y” is not very specific). Rather, indicate the specific steps that need to be taken in order to do that.

Methods, Procedures, Experimental Design

Describe how you intend to accomplish your aims or test your hypothesis. Where, when, how, and who? Describe the experimental design or the specific methods, procedures, materials, subjects, questionnaires, etc. you intend to utilize. What data are you going to collect and how do you intend to collect it? Describe any control methodologies. A budget may need to be included, but is not required for McNair unless you plan to submit a separate proposal to your mentor for supplies. State where and how the funds will be obtained.

Literature Review

This section should include at least three examples of the literature you have reviewed. You should discuss how these articles or pieces of work have contributed to your hypotheses or hypothesis statement. Please review as many articles as necessary to present a clear picture of your work. Do not feel limited by the number three. These articles may also be dispersed throughout the proposal. If this is the case, a bibliography should be included.
Data Analysis

Describe how you intend to analyze the data. How will you describe the outcomes? What statistical tests do you intend to use and why? Discuss potential limitations or difficulties on the proposed project.

Timetable

Provide a tentative sequence or timetable for the project. Be realistic. This will help you organize your time and keep you on track. Please keep in mind that the typical timeframe for projects is 8-10 weeks.

Overall considerations

Is the proposal clearly written and typed?
How does the study contribute to the current working knowledge in your field?

*Note: the proposal should be two to three pages. Use scientific writing. Be thorough but concise. Never use I or We- it is “the study demonstrates…or the research provides…

These following questions can serve as a writing exercise for you when writing the proposal.

1) What problem or question does your research project address?

2) Why is this problem/question important to your field of study? And what will your theoretical framework be?

3) Briefly summarize your methods. If this is a study you have worked on in the past, state the results to date and their significance.

4) List supplies that will be needed as well as cost for each.

5) What will be the outcome of your project? (A poster, a Power Point, brochure, published paper, website, etc.)