

Checklist for research proposals

General

1. Be crystal clear about what you want to do.
2. Some projects are more an investigation of the modus operandi whereas some are more directly geared towards prevention. However, in all cases try to be specific about how you want to, or how you might prevent the crime or disorder that you have chosen to work on.

Theory

3. Make sure that you have one or more well motivated and explicit hypotheses. What do you expect to find and why? For this you will need theory from the literature:
 - a) Look again for related work here <http://www.scopus.com/> and study it closely to see how others have approached similar problems.
 - b) State explicitly which aspect of your work is new; again you will need the literature for this.

Method

4. Think your experiment through very carefully. What are the steps? What resources do you need? Who must be involved? How will you collect data? How will you be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of what you propose? In particular:
 - a) Describe your units of analysis
 - b) Describe the intervention and how you will form the control and experimental groups.
 - c) Provide a list with the variables that you are going to measure, first the dependent variables then the independent variables. Be sure that these variables can be used to test your hypothesis.
 - d) Describe cross tables that you plan to fill with the data from your experiment in order to clarify the use of the variables.
 - e) Be explicit about how you will select your subjects. Random sample? Convenience sample? From which population?
 - f) Be explicit about the type of subjects: adults? Children? If subjects are in any way disadvantaged then come to the clinic! Getting approval to work with disadvantaged subjects always takes a lot of extra time.
 - g) Explain your method in such manner that another researcher can replicate your study.
5. Plan a pilot study to see if what you want to do does not have obvious flaws. Think of reasons why the expected outcome does not or may not occur. Collect data that could explain this. Try to think one step ahead.

Ethics

6. Make sure that you understand and discuss the ethical implications of what you propose to do. What are the risks for you? What are the risks for the subjects? What are the risks for others?
7. If you must deceive subjects, plan a debriefing and describe it carefully.

Permissions

8. Ask the right permissions from the right authorities. I.e. if you want to flyer in a university building ask the person in charge of the building. If you want to use the email addresses of the university ask the ICT manager. If you want to use the logo of an organisation ask permission to do so.

Formatting

9. Proofread your work before you hand it in.
10. Use APA or IEEE style references, and do so consistently. Use two lists of references: the first list applies to the peer reviewed literature; the second list is for web stuff. The papers you cite must be referenced in the text also.