

**INDV 400: Research Proposal guidelines: Submitting for 460**

**Due Friday, 10 March 2017 at 5:00p on Blackboard 2017**

To qualify for INDV 460, Scholars must submit, in addition to other required documents, a **Research Proposal,** which outlines in general terms the major aspects of the research. Scholars should, therefore, start as soon as possible to work with their mentors to develop a proposal and assemble the necessary documents. However, the proposal for INDV 460 is the same as the required proposal for INDV 400.

***What do we mean by Research?***

Research is a scholarly investigation or inquiry involving a close and thorough study. Although different methodologies may be employed, research is always systematic and well-grounded in prior studies.

***What is a Research Proposal?***

A research proposal is a plan detailing an intended project or study that is written for an audience of experts in your field. Because the McNair Program consists of participants from a broad range of fields, you should also consider how to make your ideas accessible to an intelligent, interdisciplinary audience.As such your introduction should be targeted for this audience.Here’s a metaphor: the proposal is a blueprint that shows how a researcher will build a project. The more deductive the study is, the more detailed the plan can be. The more inductive it is, the more general the outline. However, it should be an appropriate level of specificity for your discipline but one which those outside of it can understand the major ideas of it.

***The INDV 400/460 Proposal:***The following elements are typically part of a McNair proposal; however, you should follow the standards of your academic discipline.

* **Title page.** Centered in the middle of the title page should be the following items (one per line): (1) your first and last name; (2) The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccaulareate Program; (3) Truman State University; (4) Research Supervisor’s name with prefix; and (5) Submitted for INDV 460: Summer Research Internship II.
* **Abstract**: This is a short summary of approximately 125 words that informs the reader of the general features of your research project. Place this on the bottom of your title page. We ask you to use these guidelines for the title page and abstract because of *McNair Scholarly Review*formatting.
* **Project Narrative**: This includes the following main components, which are often (but not always) organized as separate sections of the proposal document.
  + **Introduction:** A good introduction usually addresses the questions, “what is the topic of your project? What is the background/context for the topic?”
  + **Statement of the Research Problem (also sometimes called the Research Question)**: This answers the question “why is your topic worth studying?”
    1. Depending on your discipline, this may be placed at the end of the Introduction or the end of the Literature Review. [For **inductive** proposals (where the hypothesis or the likely findings are not clear yet), it usually comes here after the introduction; whereas for **deductive** proposals (where the hypothesis or likely finding are clearer at the beginning), it usually follows the Lit Review).] It is usually phrased as a statement or as a main research question and typically addresses the following questions:
       - How is your proposed work similar to or different from research on this topic that has been performed before now?
       - Does your work extend that of others, improve upon previous work, fill a gap in the literature, or address a theoretical debate?
  + **Literature review**: This section is your own argument in response to the question, “what are the important similarities and differences among the claims articulated by research sources on your topic?” It enables readers to understand where your study fits in a larger scholarly conversation. In particular, you should consider addressing
    1. what a (sub)field knows about your research topic;
    2. what things impact or cause the issue you are discussing;
    3. how the main arguments, methodology, conclusions, or other features from your research sources are similar to or different from one another;
    4. how the main arguments, methods, or other features of your research sources relate to your project; and
    5. what prior approaches have been used and how what you will do is an extension of this work/knowledge.
  + **(If a Deductive Proposal, it usually comes here after the literature review): Statement of Hypothesis**
    1. **What is your predicted relationship between the independent and dependent variables?**
       - **Is it a positively (or direct) relationship (as one increases the other increases?)**
       - **It is a negative (or inverse) relationship (as one increases, the other decreases)?**
       - **Is one a necessary (or sufficient) explanation of the other?**
       - **Describe the expected relationship.**
  + **Proposed methodology:** This may be called something else depending on your discipline (e.g. Research Design or Methods, or it may not have a name). It includes a description of the methods and techniques you intend to use in order to conduct your project (i.e. tools, materials, approaches to texts, etc.). It could also include a description of what or who you will study (e.g., states of being or types of texts) and how you will recruit or gather them. In particular, you should spell out as precisely as you can what procedures for gathering and analyzing data/ideas will be used to complete your project.
  + **Timeline for completion of project:** A week-by-week, detailed description of main steps from the start to the finish of INDV 460: Summer Research Internship II. See Blackboard under “Course Documents” / “Template for INDV 460 Timeline and Budget” for the table you should use. The project must be completed by the last day of INDV 460. Often, scholars divide time between data gathering, analysis, and writing; and they sometimes include steps (e.g. IRB process) that usually need to be completed before INDV 460 begins.
  + **Itemized Budget (if applicable):** A specific description of requested funds for items or travel that will be required in order to complete your project. The budget table is included with the Timeline table on Blackboard under “Course Documents” / “Template for INDV 460 Timeline and Budget.” [TIP: If you have a range in prices, put the highest number. It is easier to obtain less than what is budgeted than more than is budgeted.]
* **Bibliography:** These should be formatted according to the standards of your discipline (MLA, APA, Chicago, ASA, etc.) and should be accompanied by in-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes in the body of your proposal. [Please discuss with your mentor what the best/ most appropriate format should be for you.]

***Keep the following in mind as you write your proposal:***

* Avoid vagueness and jargon. You should write for an intelligent audience but may need to define some discipline-specific terms.
* Avoid “I believe,” “I think,” “I feel,” etc. unless the use of first-person voice is accepted in your field.
* Meet regularly with your research supervisor and ask for feedback on your drafts. Feel free to ask other faculty members in your field as well.
* Proofread carefully—your final version should be polished and free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Examples of successful proposals from past Scholars are located on our Blackboard course site in “Course Documents” / “Model Proposals.” If you have any questions concerning McNair’s guidelines on proposal format, please contact Dr. Quinn or Dr. Cianciola. If you have discipline-specific questions, contact your McNair Faculty Mentor.