

M 358K

PRELIMINARY PROJECT PROPOSAL

Due Date:

What to include in your project proposal:

Note: Different items may be more or less important, depending on your project question.

1. The names of all people in your project group.
2. The question you intend to study. Be sure it is clearly, precisely, and carefully stated.
3. The population or populations you will study. (Be precise.)
4. The variables you will study:

Identify each one clearly.

Identify each as categorical, continuous, or

5. How you will measure each variable.
6. The type of question (I - VII on the term project handout). Explain why your question is of that type.
7. Whether your study will be a sample survey, an observational study, or an experiment.
8. How large your sample will be, and why this size is appropriate. (See Term Project handout for guidelines. You will need to include an estimate of the size of your population.)
9. a. If your study is a sample survey or an observational study, provide details of how your sample(s) will be chosen (sampling frame, method of randomization, etc.), and why your sampling method is the best possible under the constraints of your question. Remember that ideally your samples should be random; your method of sample selection should come as close to this ideal as possible. Discuss measures you have taken to try to ensure that your sample is unbiased and that there are no confounding factors.

- b. If your study involves an experiment, give precise details of randomization into treatment groups, and any measures to avoid possible confounding.
10. Any other details of how you will gather your data. For example,
- a. If your study involves asking questions, give the exact wording you intend to use, and why this wording is best possible. Also give details about how the questions will be asked (Orally? By giving a form to fill out? By telephone? By email? In person? More than one way? By whom?), and why your choice is best possible (e.g., does it make a difference who asks the questions?). Discuss any other relevant details (e.g., measures to ensure confidentiality or anonymity if appropriate).
 - b. If your study involves an experiment, give precise details of the treatment(s), how subjects will be assigned to treatment or control groups, and any other details of the design of the experiment. (e.g., where and when it will be conducted.)
 - c. If your study involves human subjects, describe how the ethical guidelines (see Term Project Assignment) will be followed.
 - d. If your study overlaps two or more of the above categories, give all relevant information that applies.

11. Discussion of possible confounding variables or other sources of possible bias, and what measures you will take to try to minimize them.

Miscellaneous:

- Be sure to consult Chapters 11 - 13 as needed in preparing your project proposal.
- Your proposal should be written in good English, typed or clearly handwritten, and as long as necessary to include everything that is required. (Using a word processor and keeping an electronic copy would be wise, so you can minimize rewriting for the final proposal.)
- Your preliminary proposal will count as 10% of your project grade. (Your project grade will count as 20% of your course grade.)