

## **IBS, Research Programmes - Guide to Writing Your Research Proposal**

IBS International Business School offers a full range of research degrees. All prospective research degrees students, at both Masters and Doctoral level, are required to include a research proposal with their application to study at IBS. To assist you in this task, please read the guidelines below before preparing your proposal.

### **1) Research proposals are particularly invited from areas of:**

- General management
- Marketing
- Finance, corporate banking, monetary policy
- Development studies
- Regional development
- International Affairs, with particular regard to European and transatlantic affairs and CIS countries
- History of Arts and Visual Culture

### **2) Guide to Writing Your Research Proposal (IBS Research Programmes)**

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

A research proposal is an outline of your proposed project that is designed to

- define a clear research question and methodological approach to answering it;
- highlight its originality (Doctoral level only) and/or significance;
- explain how it adds to, develops (or challenges) existing literature in the particular academic field it belongs into;
- persuade potential supervisors of the importance of the work, and
- underpin why you are the right person to undertake it.

#### **Structuring your Research Proposal**

The following elements are crucial in a good research proposal. Each item aligns to a section in the research proposal template:

##### **1. Title**

This can change, but make sure to include important 'key words' that will relate your proposal to relevant potential supervisors, funding schemes and so on.

## 2. Project Summary

In this section you should provide a summary of your proposed research intelligible to a reader who is not a specialist in this field; summarize the aims, significance and expected outcomes of the research.

## 3. Project Details

Be sure to establish a solid and convincing framework for your research in this section. This should include the following sub-sections:

### 3.1 Research Questions

This section should explain the research question(s) (1-3 should suffice) and may include the hypothesis or problem to be addressed.

- The major approach(es) you will take (conceptual, theoretical, empirical and normative, as appropriate) and rationale
- Significance of the research (in academic and, if appropriate, other fields)

### 3.2 Aims/Objectives of the Project

What do you want to know, prove, demonstrate, analyse, test, investigate or examine? List your aims in a logical sequence, e.g.

The aim of this project is to:

- Provide an outline of a research proposal
- Enable a prospective student to prepare a research proposal

### 3.3 Significance/Contribution to the Discipline

In this section you should justify the project from a review of literature on the topic: discuss the texts which you believe are most important to the project, demonstrate your understanding of the research issues, and identify existing gaps in the literature that the research is intended to address. This section is intended to 'sign-post' and contextualise your research questions, not to provide a detailed analysis of existing debates.

## 4. Your research capabilities

Please argue why you are the right person to undertake the proposed research (previous studies in the academic field; experiences; research already conducted etc.,).

## 5. References Cited/Bibliography of Planned Reading (no word limit applies)

Your references should provide the reader with a good sense of your grasp on the literature and how you can contribute to it. Be sure to reference texts and resources that you think will play a large role in your analysis, in addition to your planned readings.

**Important note:** Research proposals may vary in length, but generally speaking, a proposal should be no longer than 1,500 words.