Fall 2012 -- Module 3: Written Research Proposal guidelines

The **Research Plan**, **Introduction**, and **Summary** are the most important sections of the written proposal.

Examples of elements that should be included in each section are given in the shaded boxes. These are the general guidelines that we will consider when calculating the overall score of your research proposal, but the work will be graded holistically.
Green = Excellent, Yellow = Good, Red = Unsatisfactory

Proposals will also be scored for 'Writing Style'; see that section of the evaluation form from the Mod2 written report. Remember that it is imperative to consider your audience and strive to format your proposal logically and make it easy to follow by the reviewer.

Proposal section *Examples of evaluation criteria:*

Overall Impact	
	Proposal is creative *and* innovative -- significant leap in field Impact on the field is clearly stated and emphasized throughout the proposal
	Proposal is creative or technically sound, but does not move field forward Impact on field is not emphasized throughout the proposal
	The proposed work is the same as what has already been published Proposal has no impact on the field

Title	
	Engaging
	Appropriate
	Bland with no context

Summary	
	Broad problem statement provided Gap in current knowledge explictly stated Novelty of approach is stated Captures any reader's interest 4-5 sentences
	Problem statement is too general Gap in current knowledge not well-defined Novelty of research idea is unclear to reader
	Problem statement is missing Some information is misrepresented Gap in current knowledge is omitted Novelty of research idea is not stated Too long or too short

Introduction	
	Relevant background information is presented in balanced, engaging way Project goal/hypothesis is a clear, logical extension of existing knowledge Writing is easy to read All background information is correctly referenced Boldface paragraph explicly stating the novelty of the approach and impact to the field is included
	Relevant background information is presented but is unorganized Context is missing to show extension from current knowledge Writing is understandable Background information is correctly referenced Boldface paragraph is included, but does not follow wiki guidelines
	Background information is too general, too specific, missing and/or misrepresented Project goal is incorrectly stated or not identified No connection to current state of the field is given

Writing style is not clear, correct, or concise
References are not given or properly formatted
Boldface paragraph is missing

Research Plan

Major milestones (specific aims) of research are emphasized with a clear plan to accomplish each goal
Experiments are outlined in enough detail to demonstrate mastery of field
Each experiment has a proper set of controls that are clearly stated
Custom figure demonstrates strong experimental plan
Expected outcomes and alternative plans are included
Progression of research plan is logical and writing style leads the reviewer easily through the text

Major milestones (specific aims) are included, but are too general
Vague outline of experiments demonstrates lack of knowledge in field
Missing or inappropriate controls
Custom figure is not relevant to overall experimental plan
Some expected outcomes and alternative plans are included
Progression of research plan is not clear and writing style is difficult for reviewer

Text omits major milestones
Aspects of experimental design are not technically feasible or conceptually sound
Experimental controls are missing
Custom figure is missing, is not custom, or does not add to overall research design
Expected outcomes and alternative plans are missing
Progression of research plan is confusing to the reviewer

Budget

Budget provides details about personnel and materials/supplies/instrumentation
Budget is broken down per year and coincides with research plan

Budget is missing some details (personnel, materials, supplies, etc)
Budget is broken down per year, but not correlated with research plan

No budget is given or a lump sum request is made with no detail
No information about timeline is given

Bibliography

Complete list of reliable sources, including peer-reviewed journal article(s)
Properly formatted in body of report and in reference section

Adequate list or reliable sources
With minor exceptions, properly formatted in body of report and in reference section

List is incomplete or includes sources not cited in body of report
List includes inappropriate sources
List not properly formatted
References not properly cited in body of report