***Structure, Formatting Requirements and Assessment Criteria for the Project Proposal***

**Structure and requirements**

The project proposal should include:

1. Cover page
2. Table of Contents
3. Abstract
4. Introduction
5. Main Part\*

a) Literature Review

b) Methodology

c) Anticipated/Achieved Results

1. Conclusion
2. References
3. Appendices

All the sections above (except for the Appendices) are mandatory. Appendices should be included as needed.

\* The research proposal may be written for one of the three project formats:

1. **Article format** (research article / manuscript) – the proposal should present an empirical research project that attempts to generate new knowledge in the research area.
2. **Consulting format** – proposing a project that will develop a solution to a practical problem based on a comprehensive analysis of an active company.
3. Within the consulting format, students may write their bachelor’s theses in the format of **“Start-up as a project”**.

More information about these formats may be found in the *Rules for Preparing a Bachelor’s Project* available on the program website.

**The structure of the main part of the proposal will depend on the format you choose.**

The following components should be included in the structure of the proposal, depending on your project format:

Proposal for a bachelor’s project in the article format.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Component** |
|  | Introduction |
| Main part | Literature review |
| Methodology |
| Anticipated Results |
|  | Conclusion |

Proposal for a project in a consulting format.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Component** |
|  | Introduction |
| Main part | Literature review |
| Analysis of the situation |
| Proposed solution and anticipated results |
|  | Conclusion |

Proposal for a project in a start-up format.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Component** |
|  | Introduction |
| Main part | Analytical part |
| Project part |
|  | Conclusion |

**For more details about these parts, please see** *Rules for Preparing a Bachelor’s Project* available on the program website. Your proposal is a plan for your project, so some parts will be different from your final thesis.

For example, in the ‘article’ format, instead of the ‘Results’ section, you should write about your ‘Anticipated results’, i.e. what you are planning to achieve once the project is completed.

For a ‘consulting project’, instead of the ‘Project’ part, you will write a ‘Possible Solution and Anticipated Results’ section, in which you will propose a solution to the problem justified in the Analytical part and will discuss the results that will be achieved if this solution is implemented.

**Below are the recommendations for each proposal part:**

**The Cover page** should be formatted according to the rules below. The cover page is the first page of the proposal, but it should not contain the page number. The cover page should include the following information in English:

* university, faculty and department (if applicable);
* author’s first and last name, and his/her group number;
* supervisor’s position, degree, last name and initials;
* language supervisor’s position, degree, last name and initials;
* place and year of completion (see “Sample cover page below”).

The **Table of Contents** should be placed on the second page (see “sample Table of Contents below”).

The **Abstract** is a short summary of your proposal and should include:

* the research goals;
* the research methods and the sampling procedure;
* the anticipated results of the study.

The **Abstract** should be written as one paragraph, and should be placed on the third page of the proposal. Recommended word count – 100-200 words.

The headings for the main proposal parts (**Table of Contents, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Anticipated Results, Conclusion**) should be written on a separate line and are not followed by a period. The subheadings of the Introduction section (**Background, Problem Statement, Delimitations of the Study, Professional Significance, Definitions of Key Terms**) should be written on the same line with the main text, and are bolded and separated from the main text by a period.

The subsections of the **Introduction** should explain the general context and underpinnings of your research topic (**Background**), should state the relevance of your topic (**Problem Statement**), may include the research question(s), research aim(s) and objectives as well as research hypotheses**.**  The professional significance of the study and/or the originality of the research should also be stated **(Professional Significance**). In the introduction, you should also determine the delimitations of the study (**Delimitations of the Study**) and, if relevant, include definitions of key terms (**Definitions of Key Terms**), with references. All the proposal parts should be listed at the end of the introduction. The content of the introduction may vary depending on the requirements of your programme. Recommended word count – 400-600 words.

Main Body[[1]](#footnote-1) is not written as a heading; you should use the following headings: **Literature Review, Methodology, Anticipated Results**, which should be written on a separate line and are not followed by a period. The main part should include the following:

* a review of literature on the topic,
* the rationale for the choice of research methods and data collection procedures,
* a description of anticipated results (or results achieved by the project proposal submission deadline).

**The Literature Review** should discuss the current state of the problem in the chosen research area and provide a rationale for the chosen research focus. The text of the review should be analytical; in-text citations should be formatted in APA style (Author, date). Recommended word count – 1000-1300 words.

The **Methodology** section should include a brief description of the chosen methodology and provide a rationale for its choice as well as the description of your data collection procedures. Recommended word count – 400-500 words.

**The (Anticipated) Results** section should contain a description of the (anticipated) results of the study; the stated results should align with the stated aims and the methods chosen. Recommended word count – 200 words.

**The Conclusion** sectionof the research proposal should be a coherent summary of the research results and how they align with the aim(s), objectives and professional significance stated in the introduction. Recommended word count – 200-300 words

**The References** sectionshould be a list of sources used during the study. They may include articles, monographs, books, reference literature, etc. and information from academic electronic resources[[2]](#footnote-2).

The reference list should be alphabetized by authors’ last names and should follow APA style; the literature should be selected based on the academic supervisor’s recommendations. At least 8 sources are recommended, and up to 50% can be Russian sources. Sources published in Russia in the English language are considered English sources. The reference list should include all the sources used in the proposal text.

**Appendices** are a part of the text which is supplementary, but necessary for a better presentation of the study. They often include reference materials that are not essential for understanding how the research problem was solved. Appendices may contain tables, graphs or formulae that support some parts of proposal. It is not appropriate to include information that is essential for understanding the main part of the proposal into the appendices, in order to reduce the word count.

**A Sample Cover Page**

NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

###### Saint Petersburg School of Economics and Management

###### Department of\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**project proposal:**

Proposal Title

Maria V. Ivanova

BMN-201

Academic Supervisor

Ivan I. Ivanov, title

Language Supervisor[[3]](#footnote-3):

Maria I. Petrova, title

Saint Petersburg

2022

**A Sample Table of Contents**

**Table of Contents**

Abstract ...................................................................................................................................... 3

Introduction ................................................................................................................................ 4

Literature Review........................................................................................................................ 6

Small Business and Economic Growth ................................................................................. 6

IT Adoption for Commerce: Technology Acceptance Model ............................................. 7

Measuring e-Commerce Success: DeLone & McLean ISS Model ...................................... 7

Using of Social Networking Sites for e-Commerce .............................................................. 9

Methodology .............................................................................................................................. 10

Data Collection and Description .......................................................................................... 10

Procedures and Design ......................................................................................................... 11

Anticipated Results .................................................................................................................... 12

Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 13

References ................................................................................................................................. 15

**Formatting Requirements**

**1. Project Proposal Length**

The project proposal should be between 2300 and 3000 words in length. Group proposals should be 4600-6000 words in length. The word limit, especially the top limit, is aimed at assessing the student’s ability to select the most relevant points as well as to express ideas in a concise way, which to a large degree depends on knowledge of authentic collocations, idiomatic phrases and terminology on your research topic.

**2. Formatting the Project Proposal**

The paper should be formatted in accordance with the requirements of APA style (6th or 7th edition). You may get more information about this style by following the link:

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html>

A sample APA paper can be found here (but use the title page example which is provided above):

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_sample_paper.html>

The main requirements are listed below.

**2.1 Formatting Headings and Subheadings**

You should use two levels of headings.

**2.1.1 1st level headings**

1st level headings are centered and bolded. All words except articles, conjunctions and prepositions are capitalized.

**2.1.2 2nd level headings**

2nd level headings are left-aligned, italicized. All words except articles, conjunctions and prepositions are capitalized.

**2.2 The main body should:**

* be typed in 12-point Times New Romanfont.
* be double-spaced, with paragraphs aligned left, and with an indent of 1.25 cm (1/2 inch).
* have 1-inch (2.5 cm) margins on all sides.
* include a page number on every page except the title page.

**3. Quoting requirements**

APA style uses in-text citations for referencing sources in your proposal text; footnotes are not allowed. An in-text citation should include the author’s last name and the year of publication; when using a direct quote, the page number should also be included, or in absence of page numbering in an electronic source, the paragraph number should be included (e.g., para. 1). Paraphrasing is preferred to quoting.

**3.1 Quotes of fewer than 40 words**

When citing a section of text fewer than 40 words, double quotation marks are used directly before and directly after the quote. The author’s last name, year of publication and page numbers should be given.

Recommended examples:

1) She stated, "…(quotation)…" (Miele, 1993, p. 276), but she did not clarify which behaviors were studied.  
2) Miele (1993) found that "…(quotation)…" (p. 276).   
3) According to Adams (1984), stakeholders include "…(quotation)…" (p. 24).  
4) Based on the stakeholder theory Adams originally proposed a definition "…(quotation)…" (1984, p.24).

**3.2 Quotes of 40 words or more**

Quoting long text parts is not recommended, but if necessary long quotes should be formatted as one block, with the whole block indented at 1.25 cm on the left. The standard first-line indentation is not used in this case, and quotation marks are not used either. The in-text reference (in brackets) should be inserted after the final period.

**4. References requirements**

* References list should include only the sources that are referenced in the proposal text and should be given on the last page of the paper. The word ‘References’ should be centered and bolded, on top of the page.
* References should be formatted as follows:
  + Author’s surname, followed by a comma, then the initial(s). (year of publication in brackets). *The title of source: Subheading (if there is any) also capitalized.* Place of publication: Publisher.
* The references **are sorted alphabetically** and formatted using a hanging indent of ½ inch.

Example:

Anderson, F. J. (1989). *Developments in second-language acquisition*. New York: Columbia University Press.

* Books and journals titles are italicized; only the first words of the heading, proper names and abbreviations are capitalized.
* For sources of the same author, the sources are listed based on the publication date of the source, listing the oldest source first.
* If there is no author, then the title of the source is used in place of the author, and when citing in-text, a shortened title is given.
* Russian sources are formatted in the same way as English sources; the Russian title is transliterated, and a translation is provided in square brackets (and it is not italicized). For more details, visit: <https://libguides.msvu.ca/apa/foreign>
* For sources with a doi (digital object identifier), it should be included.
* Students may use tools in Microsoft Word (e.g., automatic table of contents), reference managers (e.g., Mendeley, Zotero) and online reference generators, for example, EasyBib.

**Criteria for the written part of Project Proposal. Maximum band - 10**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **3** | **2** | **1** | **0** |
| **Task achievement (content)** | The Project Proposal meets all the requirements for a research paper. The topicality, research purpose, methodology (analysis of the situation), anticipated results are clearly expressed.  The literature review (or the analytical part) includes a critical analysis of literature, and the research gap has been clearly identified. | The Project Proposal generally meets the requirements for a research paper. The topicality, research purpose, methodology (analysis of the situation), anticipated results are generally clearly expressed. The literature review (or the analytical part) includes a critical analysis of literature, but the research gap is not clearly stated. | The Project Proposal partly meets the requirements for a research paper. Topicality, research purpose, methodology (analysis of the situation), anticipated results are not always clearly expressed. The literature review (or the analytical part) does not include a critical analysis, and the research gap is not clearly stated. | The Project Proposal does not meet the requirements for a research paper. Topicality, research purpose, methodology (analysis of the situation), anticipated results can hardly be understood. There is no literature review (or analytical part). |
| **Cohesion and coherence** |  | The Research proposal structure meets all the requirements. Cohesion and coherence is skillfully maintained. There is a clear and logical link between purpose, methods and results. Paragraphing is logical. | The Research proposal structure generally meets the requirements. There are some problems with cohesion and coherence. Links between purpose, methods and results is not always clear. Paragraphing is not always logical. | The Research proposal structure does not meet the requirements. The text is not logical, numerous mistakes in cohesion and coherence. Paragraphing is not logical or there are no paragraphs at all. |
| **Language (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation, style)** | A wide range of lexical and grammatical structures. No mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Some mistakes occur only as slips and do not impede communication. Terms are used correctly. The paper is written in the academic style. | A wide enough range of lexical and grammatical structures. There are rare mistakes that do not impede communication. There are rare mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Terms are generally used correctly.  The paper is generally written in the academic style. | A limited range of lexical and grammatical structures. There are numerous mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation that impede communication. Terms are used incorrectly. There are numerous mistakes in the academic style. | Numerous errors in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation that make it difficult for the reader to understand the text. The style of the proposal is not academic. |
| **Formatting** |  | Formatting meets all the requirements, or there are minor (no more than 1-2) formatting lapses. | There are some mistakes in formatting (no more than 5). | Formatting requirements are poorly met (more than 5 mistakes). |

1. These are recommendations for the article and the consulting formats. For the ‘start-up’ format, please see *Rules for Preparing a Bachelor’s Project* available on the program website for more details. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Please note that Wikipedia is not an acceptable source [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. If applicable [↑](#footnote-ref-3)