

## How to Write a Research Plan

A good research plan (roughly ten pages) should include the following information: topic, background, objectives, methods, data and execution. It should also demonstrate that the author is familiar with his/her topic and related research.

Please follow these instructions when writing your research plan.

1. Include two parts in your research plan: an abstract (150 words max) and the actual research plan (about ten pages).
2. In the introduction, introduce readers to the topic, state your reasons for selecting that topic and specify the objectives of the study. Present your topic and state clearly why it is important to study it. Good reasons include a lack of previous research, social significance, practical need, etc. Please bear in mind that an idea is not the same as a topic; to formulate your topic, you must define your subject area, select an approach, familiarise yourself with previous research and place your study in that context. What is already known about the topic?
3. Introduce the key theoretical premises and main concepts of your study.
4. Formulate your research problem and related research questions in as much detail as possible. What are you actually studying? Formulate your research questions in such a way that you can answer them.
5. Tell readers how you will answer your research questions. If your study is empirical, your research plan should specify your research data and methods. You can describe them in more detail later, but try to be as specific as possible. How will you access or produce your data? How will you acquire your research subjects? How will you analyse your data?
6. Consider possible ethical matters. If you are not sure whether your study has any ethical considerations, refer to the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity, available online at [http://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK\\_ohje\\_verkkoversio180113.pdf](http://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK_ohje_verkkoversio180113.pdf).
7. Outline what new information your study will produce. How and where can this information be used?
8. Draw up a schedule describing when and how you will conduct your study and when you plan to publish your findings. If you want, you can enclose a preliminary disposition with your research plan.
9. Enclose references and a cover sheet stating your name and the title of your study with your research plan. Please use page numbers.