

Writing a Research Proposal: School of Informatics

English Language Education



Organisation

Style & Language

Feedback and Feedforward

That KEY point again.



The example.

Return to the example proposal: page 3 Methodology on.
What tense forms do you see being used?

Present & Future verb forms [Active & Passive]

be + to + verb: The aim of X **is to do** Y. [infinitives]

X **can be used to do** Y. [modals]

[Conditional *would/could*]

e.g. This ensures the feasibility, of what could otherwise be a risky project.

The methodology / procedure is similar to the ones you cite.

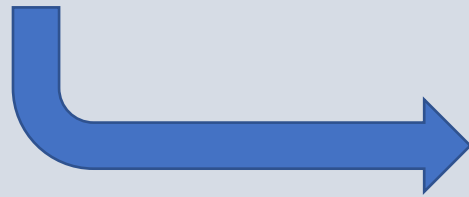
The methodology selected will be / is intended to be....

- a modified version of
- slightly modified
- adapted from
- based [in part] on/ partly on
- in line with
- in essence
- to modify/ to refine/ to revise [BE SPECIFIC].

And then explain how in detail!

The intended procedure is significantly different from those you cite.

- Although in essence similar,
- Although in many ways similar,
- Although partially based on,



one novel step will be to
adapt/ adjust / alter/ change...

THEN SAY what you are altering in detail and WHY!

Justify the choices you make.

- To validate the results from X, data will be analysed using Y.
- For the sake of simplicity, only X will be analysed
- The advantage of using three-dimensional analysis is that X.
- One advantage of using X is that Y.
- By partitioning the sample into three, I will be able to ensure X.
- The X will be Y, so allowing the Z.
- This should avoid issues with X or Y.

Significance of Research.

The proposal should demonstrate the originality/usefulness of your intended research.

You should therefore explain why your research is important, for example:

- by explaining how your research builds on and adds to the current state of knowledge in the field
- or
- by setting out reasons why it is timely to research your proposed topic).

Identifying the gap or problem.

- gap in our knowledge
 - little evidence is available for ...
 - restricted by ...
 - not sufficiently ...
 - need for ...
 - there is growing concern ...
 - remains unclear
 - does not ... [achieve / offer ...]
 - there is no ...
 - a key/major drawback
 - impractical
 - inaccurate
 - inadequate
 - incompatible
 - limited
 - redundant
 - unrealistic
 - weak
 - narrow
- However, ...
 - Despite ...
 - Although, ...
 - Currently, ...
 - To date, ...

Establishing impact and significance.

- A current / common / crucial issue / focus
- A powerful tool / method
- Of great concern is
- Of growing [commercial] interest is
- attracting / generating widespread interest
- play(s) a key role in ... / a major part in ...
- play(s)
- For a number of years, ... / the last decade, ...
- The importance of ...
- typical(ly)
- well-documented
- widely recognised
- worth / worthwhile
- benefit / beneficial
- importance
- vital
- potential / possible / probable

Image segmentation is the first stage of image processing in many practical computer vision systems. The development of static image segmentation algorithms **has attracted considerable research interest** and **is enabled** by a wide range of methodologies.

However, work that has been published in the video analysis domain is still quite **narrow and biased** towards the sole use of motion characteristics. **The recent proliferation** of digital video archives and the **advent** of video analysis techniques **has augmented** the interest in the identification and tracking of physical objects within videos. High level semantic annotation of physical objects **is the key to** applications ranging from security and surveillance to information retrieval to sports and entertainment.

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A proposal is about showing you understand the possibilities.

- By doing X , the intention is to Y .
- I expect to achieve ...
- This should mean that ...
- This could lead to X .
- Potentially, ... Presumably, ...
- It seems plausible that ...
- Manageable / feasible

How will you 'measure success'? The Language of Evaluation

X will be evaluated
measured

in terms of / for ...
on the basis of ...
against a set of ...
in a more qualitative way

X **will be used to evaluate** the ...

I will **evaluate and compare** the ...

The objective **is to evaluate** the feasibility of X as a Y

Useful verbs in a research proposal.

- To operationalise ...
- To determine ...
- This then enables ... This will ensure ...
- This is / may be dependent on...
- X typically occurs when...
- X is typically performed by ...
- I envisage + Verb-ing ... [NB: Do **NOT** use *IT IS ENVISAGED*. Etc!]
- I expect / anticipate ...
- A key component ...

Link sequences to make an overall narrative.

- Once ..., X
- On + Verb-ing ...,
- Having established the X, I then intend to Y.
- Methodologies tend to vary in that...

Writer responsibility

Topic sentences • information flow [theme & rheme]
cohesion • repetition • This/These • **bamboo sentences**

One last KEY point.



One last KEY point.

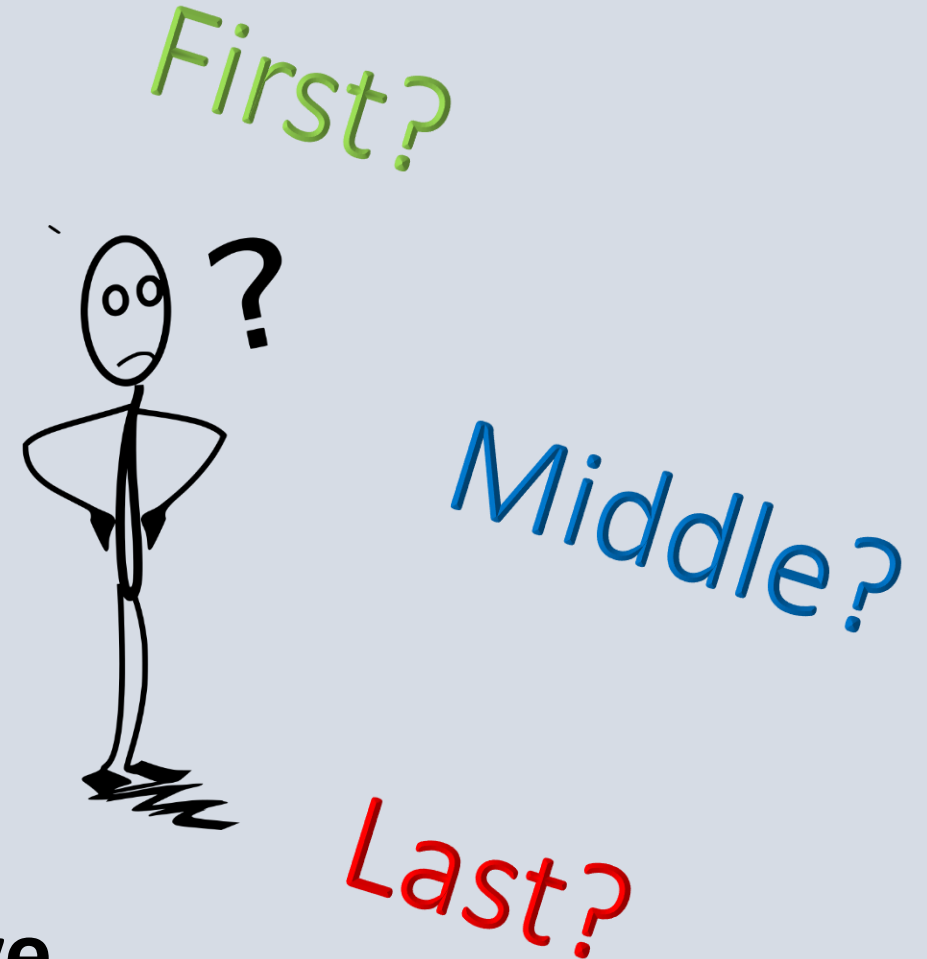
perhaps, admittedly, may,
possibly, likely, probably,
predominantly, presumably,
seems, appears, may, suggests,
to some extent, sometimes,
often, around, roughly, fairly,
usually

is, are, will be, believe,
know, prove, certainly,
indeed, always,
undoubtedly, in fact,
clearly, actually, firm,
obviously, conclusively,
definitely, evidently,
straightforward

Abstract.

Include:

- Background
- Unknown/ problem/need
- Overall objective
- General strategy
- Significance/ impact.
- **Include a statement of need**
- **Clearly identify the overall objective**



Avoid these common errors in postgraduate research proposals:

- Rationale is weak
- Writing is vague
- Uncertain outcomes
- Problem is not important
- Proposal is unfocused and lacks sufficient detail

(from MIT

https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/biology/7-16-experimental-molecular-biology-biotechnology-ii-spring-2005/scientific-comm/lec03_resch_prop.pdf)

Using feedback for feed forward


- Formative and summative
- Formal and informal
- Feedback vs feedforward

Using feedback for feed forward

- Understanding feedback / feedforward
- Things to **stop doing**
 - work on/develop
 - continue doing
- RAG: **Red**, **Amber**, **Green**


Using feedback for feed forward

SKILLS@LIBRARY
THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

ONLINE RESOURCES 

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS AND DATE:		OVERALL LEARNING POINTS:		
STRUCTURE AND COHERENCE	RESEARCH AND REFERENCING	CRITICALITY AND ARGUMENT	LANGUAGE AND STYLE	UNDERSTANDING AND CONTEXT

Feedback action plan. This template will help you to organise your feedback from each assignment so that you can find ways of feeding it forward


UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

https://library.leeds.ac.uk/info/1401/academic_skills/129/using_your_feedback

Using feedback for feed forward

Assignment			Key Learning points to feed forward		
Action	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4	Criterion 5
RED					
AMBER					
GREEN					

Bibliography and Further Reading

Aliotta, M. 2018 **Mastering Academic Writing in the Sciences: A Step-by-Step Guide** CRC Press

Glasman-Deal, H. (2013) **Science Research Writing for Non-native Speakers**, Singapore, Imperial College Press.

S.B. Heard 2016 **The Scientist's Guide to Writing: How to write more easily and effectively throughout your scientific career.** Princeton University Press.

<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

