



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

English Language Education

Academic Language & Literacy for Informatics

Writing your Project Proposal

Feedback from IRR

- Essential to have a good understanding of the assignment task and of how to demonstrate that you have fulfilled the assessment criteria
- No significant problems with language (but watch formality slips), though narrative flow was sometimes disrupted by loss of focus, cohesion and lack of precision
- Mostly clearly-structured, with effective use of Section and Sub-section headings but transitions from one section to another were sometimes too abrupt
- But, relationships between ideas were at times unclear
- In some cases there seemed to be a lack of a hypothesis or it wasn't clear at least
- At times, overly descriptive: lack of critical balance and largely summarising the literature with little or at best superficial levels of evaluation
- Referencing - some introductions and/or large sections of text had no sources where you would expect them. When discussing a number of sources organised around a theme, make sure you are clear which source you are referring to.
- You have high scoring IPP examples: Look at them and use them to help you.

Four **KEY** points

Academic writing is argument-based, focused, objective, clear, logically-organised and reader-friendly, concise and precise.

English is a **writer-responsible language**. This means

- it is **your** job to make your meaning clear to your reader
- you need to provide explicit transition **between ideas within paragraphs/chapters, and between each paragraph/section.**

When deciding what to write, ask yourself the **right** question

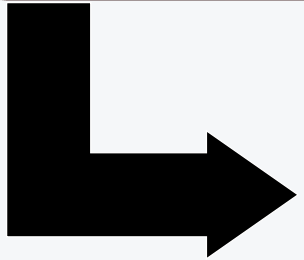
- Ask “What does my **reader** need to know?”

Remember **your voice**. That is what the **marker** is looking for.

Criticality

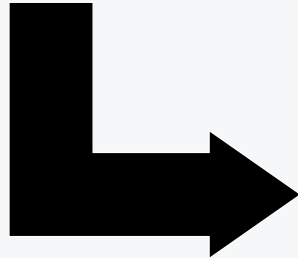
Describe

- What is the text about
- What is the author's aim?
- What evidence does it give?



Analyse

- How reliable is the evidence?
- How do the parts fit into the whole?
- What alternatives are there and how do they compare?



Evaluate

- What do I think about this?
- What are the implications?
- How is this relevant to my argument and why is it important?

IPP Learning Outcomes – a reminder

On successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. **critically evaluate** research literature or other prior work appropriate for your project subject
2. use existing research literature or other prior work to **justify** choices in experimental design, theoretical goals, and/or implementation
3. develop a **structured** project proposal
4. **outline** project/research management **issues** and potential legal, social, ethical or professional issues

Aim of THIS session

- to help you produce a clear, concise and stylistically appropriate *Project Proposal*.

The language and conventions covered here should also help you produce a well-written final *project*.

Preamble

Academic writing is about persuasion.

You need to convince your reader:

- That the question is important.
- That the question can be answered.
- That you can do the work to answer it.



Expressing confidence



Hedging

Boosting

Expressing confidence

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

Using verbs



Verbs

- Use of tenses
- Active vs Passive forms

Avoid

X Contracting verb forms
(formality)

1. Look at the exemplar project proposals.
2. Review your own use of language in your PP.

Useful verbs in a research proposal.

- To determine ...
- This then enables ... This will ensure ...
- This is / may be dependent on...
- X typically occurs when...
- X is typically performed by ...
- I/We expect that/to ... [NB: Do **NOT** use **It is expected that**]
- I/We expect / anticipate ... [similarly with **It is anticipated that ...**]

Use verbs to describe actions, rather than nouns, but ... **cohesion**:

- We **analysed** a sample of the dust that was obtained from the dark side of the moon. **This analysis** revealed that...

Organisational Principle.

1. Purpose
2. Hypothesis
3. Background
 - 3.1 Specific Title
 - 3.2 Specific Title
4. Methodology
 - 4.1 Specific Title
 - 4.2 Specific Title
5. Evaluation
6. Work Plan
- References

1. Motivation
 - 2.1 Specific Title
 - 2.2 Specific Title
2. Background
3. Programme and Methodology
 - 3.1 Specific Title
 - 3.2 Specific Title
4. Evaluation
5. Expected Outcomes
6. Work Plan, Milestones and Deliverables
- References

1. Motivation
2. Background
 - 2.1 Specific Title
 - 2.2 Specific Title
3. Methodology
 - 3.1 Specific Title
 - 3.2 Specific Title
4. Expected Outcomes
5. Ethics
6. Limitations, challenges and risks
7. Work Plan and deliverables
- References

REMEMBER: Titles and subtitles are not a substitute for good, clear transitioning between chapters, sections and paragraphs.

Useful language.

- Background known
 - Present tenses (simple & perfect) & Reference to literature
- Gap / unknown / problem/ need
 - **However**, ... **Although** ..., **Despite** ..., **Nevertheless**, ...
- Aim / Hypothesis
 - **This project aims to** ...
 - **We hypothesize that** ...
- Significance/ impact
 - **This proposal serves to not only build/create/develop ... but also ...**
 - **Further research that builds on this project would** ...

Identifying the gap or problem.

- However, ...
- Despite ...
- Although, ...
- Currently, ...
- To date, ...
- 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
- vulnerable (to)
- at risk of/risk(s)

Useful language.

(Thus) This project/study

aims to ...

(Therefore)

will build on ... ~~X is going to~~

will focus on ...

will set out to ...

The purpose of this study **is to ...**

The objective is **to evaluate** the feasibility of ...

There **are** two primary aims of this study: 1. **To ...**

This **motivates** a ...

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

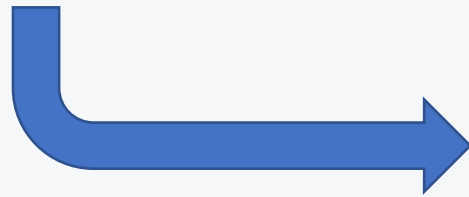
The methodology selected will be / is intended to be....

- a (slightly) modified version of ...
- 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.

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 ...
- 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

Modelling patient flow can reveal important features of the operational system of the hospital, as well as give ideas for new measures that can improve the inefficiencies of the system and reduce waiting times. Furthermore, the medical community agrees that the management of patient flow can improve both the quality of care and patient satisfaction [3].

Various techniques have been employed to model patient flow in recent years, most of them not being able to represent accurately the topology of a real-world hospital[4]. In this project, network analysis and process mining techniques will be used to analyse patient flow of two acute hospital sites of King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The capabilities of these techniques will help to create more representative models.

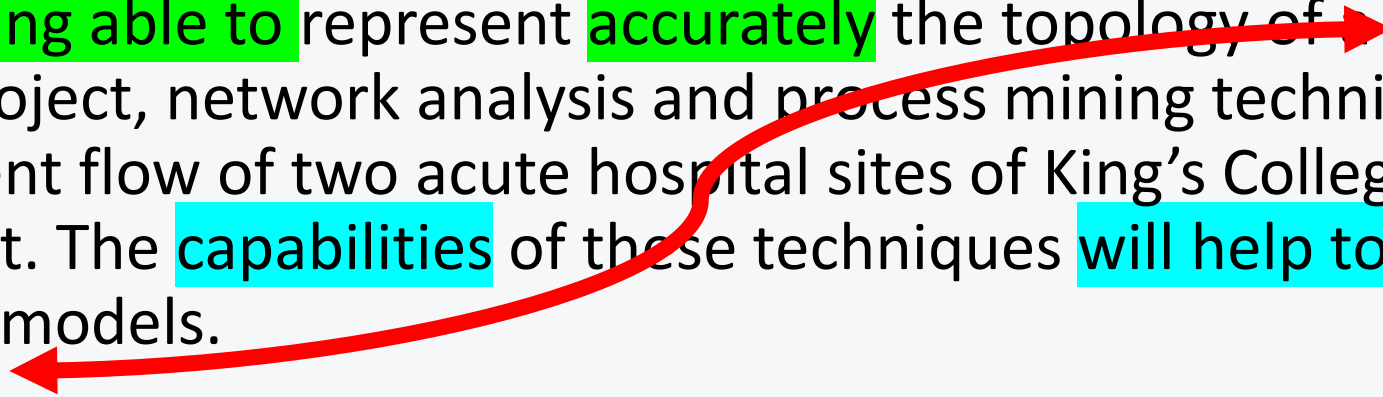
...

It is worth noting that this project is one of the first to include gender and age attributes to the modelling of patient flow. Using the two aforementioned techniques, we aim to ...

Source: Patient flow analysis using process mining techniques and network analysis.

Modelling patient flow can reveal **important** features of the operational system of the hospital, as well as give **ideas** for **new** measures that can **improve the inefficiencies** of the system and **reduce waiting times**. Furthermore, the medical community **agrees** that the management of patient flow can **improve** both the **quality** of care and patient **satisfaction** [3].

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...

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Source: Patient flow analysis using process mining techniques and network analysis.

A proposal is about showing you understand the possibilities.

- By doing X, the intention is to Y.
- I/We 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/We will **evaluate and compare** the ...

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

Writing to be read

- Writer responsibility – what does your reader need to know?
- Organisation & Clarity
- Paragraphing
 - Topic sentences & linking or transitioning to the next paragraph
- Information flow [theme & rheme]
 - cohesion
 - repetition
 - This/These + noun phrase
- Keeping the reader on board: explaining what you're doing
 - “Meta-language”

“Meta-language”

In the next section, we will discuss different techniques that the scientific community used to model patient flow and discuss the results of last year's work.

Below, the most common techniques are presented, namely Queueing models, Simulation models, Process mining, and network analysis.

We will further discuss the methodology for point selection and tracking in section 4.

As we will discuss in the next section, constraints such as proximity, maximum velocity, small velocity change, common motion, rigidity and proximal uniformity can help to not only overcome the correspondence problem but also detect physical objects [4].

Abstract.

Include:

- Background
- Unknown/ problem/need
- Overall objective
- General strategy/methodology/approach
- Significance/ impact.
- Clearly identify the overall objective

The abstract isn't like a movie trailer, so don't worry about "plot spoilers"!



Abstract.

British hospitals are constantly failing to meet the targets set by the UK government. Precisely, the last six years, goals regarding the accident and emergency department have not been achieved. Evidently, there is a need for change in the operational systems of British hospitals. This project aims at using network analysis and process mining techniques to analyse the patient flow of two acute hospital sites at Kings College hospital. The data set that will be used contains information about patient transfers between wards that occur between X&Y. This analysis can help professionals to improve the inefficiencies of the system and reduce waiting times. This work builds on a project done by a student last year in which only a small subset of the data set was used due to limitation of time. Furthermore, the results of a previous study, in which network analysis was used, will be used for comparison. Specifically, an investigation of how patient flow has changed since then will not be carried out, while at the same time the patient gender and age information that was not used in the previous study space dash space will be used to capture different aspects of patient flow.

Background

Problem/need

Overall objective

General approach

Impact

Abstract.

British hospitals are constantly failing to meet the targets set by the UK government. Precisely, the last six years, goals regarding the accident and emergency department have not been achieved. Evidently, there is a need for change in the operational systems of British hospitals. This project aims at using network analysis and process mining techniques to analyse the patient flow of two acute hospital sites at Kings College hospital. The data set that will be used contains information about patient transfers between wards that occur between X&Y. This analysis can help professionals to improve the inefficiencies of the system and reduce waiting times. This work builds on a project done by a student last year in which only a small subset of the data set was used due to limitation of time. Furthermore, the results of a previous study, in which network analysis was used, will be used for comparison. Specifically, an investigation of how patient flow has changed since then will not be carried out, while at the same time the patient gender and age information that was not used in the previous study space dash space will be used to capture different aspects of patient flow.

Background

Problem/need

Overall objective

General approach

Impact

Avoid these common errors in postgraduate research proposals:

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

(adapted 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
- Marking criteria
- RAG: Red, Amber, Green
- Things to stop doing
work on/develop
continue doing

Using feedback for feed forward

Assignment			Key Learning points to feed forward		
Action	Topic & Motivation	Academic Writing	Quality of argumentation	Quality & use of Referencing	Quality of conclusion
RED					
AMBER					
GREEN					

Your feedback on this session



<https://forms.office.com/e/KeD1EPg2fd>

Language Help available to you

Graduate Writing Centre

- Need help with your writing at any time of the semester?
- You can receive one-to-one consultations in an academic writing tutorial (40 minutes) for postgraduate (PGT & PGR) international students.
- Booking is via MyEd.

<https://ele.ed.ac.uk/in-session-courses/graduate-writing-centre>

The screenshot displays the 'English Language Education' website. The main header is 'ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION'. The left sidebar contains a menu with 'English Language Education home', 'In-session English language courses', 'Academic Language and Literacies for In-Sessional Study (ALLIS) (Formerly ELSIS)', and 'Graduate Writing Centre'. The breadcrumb trail reads 'Home > English Language Education > In-session English language courses > Graduate Writing Centre'. The page title is 'Graduate Writing Centre'. The main content area states: 'Information about online one-to-one academic writing tutorials (PGT and PGR). In addition to our other courses, English Language Education (ELE) offers one-to-one (PGT and PGR) and members of staff. Undergraduate students seeking academic writing development. Our online one-to-one sessions are approximately 45 minutes long and are designed for writing with an English for Academic Purposes expert. What can I discuss? You should prepare to upload a piece of your writing (around 350 words) that you want to discuss (with questions) for discussion. We can offer advice on all aspects of writing from the macro-level to the micro-level. • meet expectations in your discipline, considering the genre you are being asked to write • organise, link and develop your ideas'.

Graduate Writing Centre

- Available into June
- Provide 350 max word sample
- Provide a question for discussion
- NOT a proofreading service
- Booking is via MyEd.

<https://ele.ed.ac.uk/in-session-courses/graduate-writing-centre>

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

English Language Education home

In-session English language courses

Academic Language and Literacies for In-Sessional Study (ALLIS) (Formerly ELSIS)

Graduate Writing Centre

Home > English Language Education > In-session English language courses > Graduate Writing Centre

Graduate Writing Centre

Information about online one-to-one academic writing tutorials (PGT and PGR).

In addition to our other courses, English Language Education (ELE) offers one-to-one PGT and PGR and members of staff. Undergraduate students seeking academic writing development...

Our online one-to-one sessions are approximately 45 minutes long and are designed to help you develop your writing with an English for Academic Purposes expert.

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<https://institute-academic-development.ed.ac.uk/study-hub/learning-resources>



ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Study Hub learning resources

resources. Advice on specific study skills topics, plus downloadable re



Academic Phrasebank

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Home Page

GENERAL LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS

[Being Cautious](#)[Being Critical](#)[Classifying and Listing](#)[Compare and Contrast](#)[Defining Terms](#)[Describing Trends](#)[Describing Quantities](#)[Explaining Causality](#)[Giving Examples](#)[Handling Transition](#)[Talking about the Past](#)

The Academic Phrasebank is a general resource for academic writers. It aims to provide you with examples of some of the phraseological 'nuts and bolts' of writing organised according to the main sections of a research paper or dissertation (see the top menu). Other phrases are listed under the more general communicative functions of academic writing (see the menu on the left). The resource should be particularly useful for writers who need to report their research work. The phrases, and the headings under which they are listed, can be used simply to assist you in thinking about the content and organisation of your own writing, or the phrases can be incorporated into your writing where this is appropriate. In most cases, a certain amount of creativity and adaptation will be necessary when a phrase is used. The items in the Academic Phrasebank are mostly content neutral and generic in nature; in using them, therefore, you are not stealing other people's ideas and this does not constitute plagiarism. For some of the entries, specific content words have been included for illustrative purposes, and these should be substituted when the phrases are used. The resource was designed primarily for academic and scientific writers who are non-native speakers of English. However, native speaker writers may still find much of the material helpful. In fact, recent data suggest that the majority of users are native speakers of English. More about **Academic Phrasebank**.

This site was created by **John Morley**. If you could spare just two or three minutes of your time, I would be extremely grateful for any feedback on Academic Phrasebank: Please click **here** to access a very short questionnaire. Thank you.

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format:

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Phrasebank**
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Andy Gillett
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- <http://www.uefap.net/writing/writing-paragraphs/writing-paragraphs-cohesion>
- <https://www.noslanguages-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/hypergrammar-2/developing-unified-and-coherent-paragraphs>

Academic Writing in the Sciences

- <https://sites.duke.edu/scientificwriting/>

Writing clearly, concisely & precisely

- <https://www.monash.edu/rlo/research-writing-assignments/writing/clear-communication/writing-clearly-concisely-and-precisely>
- <https://www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/write-concisely/>

Bibliography and Further Reading

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

Glasman-Deal, H. (2021) *Science Research Writing for native and non-native speakers of English*. 2nd Edition. Singapore: Imperial College Press.

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

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