

How will term papers be evaluated?

Points will be assigned as follows:

Outline - 1 point

A paragraph introducing your topic and explaining why it is important.

Present your hypothesis

Enumerate 2-3 specific aims in the form of questions that test your hypothesis

Specific aims – 2 points (this should be about 3/4 to one page)

Write a paragraph introducing the topic, state why it is important and where the gaps in knowledge are that you will address.

State a hypothesis to be tested

Enumerate 2-3 specific aims in the form of questions that test your hypothesis. After each one, use a sentence or two to state what you will do to answer these questions

Finish with a paragraph stating what will be the significance of the research assuming that you successfully execute the proposed experiments. It is very important to state the human health relevance of your research (if you are doing something biomedical) or the broader impacts on advancing the frontiers of knowledge (for something that is not relevant to human health). .

Background and Significance – 3 points (about 1.5-2.5 pages)

Briefly summarize what is known about the problem. This is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the topic, rather just a summary of the important points.

Succinctly state what is not known and why it is important that this research be done

In about one paragraph, state what is important about your proposed research and why will accomplishing it benefit the research community and world at large.

Research plan – 4 points

In a short paragraph, state what you will do and why it is important. (I know it seems repetitive by now, but reviewers are busy and will be skimming your grant. You need to hit them over the head a few times before they will get your point).

Restate each specific aim from the Specific aims section (one by one) and then describe what you will do to address the aim. It is often convenient to break these down in to subaims. State the hypothesis to be tested in each, what is the rationale for doing the experiments, the experimental approach, how you will analyze the results obtained and what they might mean. Point out any possible problems and alternative approaches when they exist. I am mostly concerned with your hypothesis and rationale here. It is much more important to state why you want to do something than it is to go into great detail about what you will do. The two sample term papers are very good examples of how to write this section.

You are not supposed to be writing something all-encompassing here. Imagine that this is the plan for your PhD thesis work and propose something that you, or a very small team, could accomplish in 5 years or so.