

Guideline for Research Proposal and Presentation

1. Research Proposal for a Policy Intervention (20% of your grade)

The goal of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to apply foundations learned in class to design a policy intervention and to formulate rigorous research methodology to assess its effectiveness in resolving a development problem of your interest.

In this exercise, you will need to choose a development problem and a possible underlying cause that interests you from the course outline (for example, missing credit and insurance market for the poor due to high contract cost, underinvesting in health by the poor due to limited supply of health care, low adoption of technology by the poor due to low literacy, etc). You will then need to conduct literature review on the issue and write a research proposal to propose a specific, testable policy intervention that you think will have good promise to resolve the issue considered. As a researcher or policy maker, ability to write constructive policy research proposals is critical in order to secure the necessary funding and supports to push forward the implementation of good policies to really make a difference in the developing world!

The research proposal you need to write will consist of five components.

1. Motivations: describe the microeconomic foundations of the problem; provide literature review on the empirical evidence, the effectiveness of available policy interventions and the arguments why you think your proposed intervention could hold good promise in resolving the problem.
2. Description of policy intervention: explain your proposed intervention in some detail. What is the intervention? Where and how would you implement it? Who would be the targeted implementer and beneficiary? And what do you expect the effect to be? Your proposed intervention needs to be as specific as, for example, piloting rainfall insurance to insure poor farmer's income from drought in Bangladesh. Try your best to think through the key detailed aspects of how you might feasibly implement your proposed intervention. For example, when you want to pilot rainfall insurance, you also need to propose how the contract might be effectively delivered to the targeted populations, e.g., through existing financial intermediaries, cell phone, etc.
3. Research question and hypothesis: describe how you would design research to evaluate the proposed program. What are the hypotheses to be tested? What are the relevant outcome variables to be tested?
4. Research design and methodology: Would you use a randomized experiment or a non-experiment estimation with secondary data to assess the program, and why? What primary (or secondary) data might you need to collect? What empirical model and method might you use to estimate the program's effectiveness and so test the hypothesis? You may use any techniques learned in class and are not expected to go into detail analysis beyond what is covered in class (e.g., if you want to use randomised experiment, you do not need detail of how to choose appropriate sample size, etc.) Note that you do not

need to conduct the actual analysis but make sure that the sources of data you refer to exist!

5. Expected outcomes: describe the expected outcomes and the potential challenges you might face in implementing this research.

Some examples of policy research proposals are now posted on Wattle. They are actual proposals, which successfully won significant research grants. From these proposals, you are expected to learn (i) how they came up with their specific intervention given their motivating microeconomic foundation of problems, (ii) how they thought through various detailed aspects in implementing the proposed intervention and (iii) how they formed testable hypotheses and designed research to test their hypotheses. You are not expected to go beyond the techniques you have learned from class. And you are also not expected to provide detail on partnership, outreach, etc. These examples are thus longer than what you are expected to write.

If you want to seek for ideas on policy intervention in your chosen development problem, the best database of literatures related to the currently piloted policy interventions is <http://www.3ieimpact.org/en/evidence/impact-evaluations/>. You can plug in some key words, e.g., maternal health, rural credit, etc. in their search engine.

You are strongly encouraged to discuss your intervention with me before embarking on your research proposal. Feel free to also discuss with your classmates and academic staffs. However, make sure that the work you submit is your own.

A soft copy of your full proposal is then due on COB of April 26. Please email me your work. The write up should not exceed 2,500 words or an equivalent of five pages, in 12-point font with 2.5 cm margins.

2. Proposal Presentation (10% of your grade)

In addition to the write up, you are required to give 15-minute presentation of your policy research proposal to the class. This will follow by 5-10 minutes questions and discussions to allow the class to challenge your proposal! Be sure to clearly explain your proposed intervention, why and how you think it holds good promise for improvement in the lives of the poor. You should prepare to defend your idea from criticism and address questions from the class. Most importantly, you **MUST** make sure to keep your presentation within the allotted time.

The presentations will take place in class on April 30. The exact schedule will be randomised and distributed in class soon after I receive everyone's choice of intervention.

You will be assessed by all your classmates and myself. In specific, all proposals submitted on April 26 will be posted on Moodle for careful assessment. The following assessment sheet will be distributed for each submitted proposal. You will get to score each other's work both for proposal and presentation.

Assessment sheet

Proposed Intervention: _____

Assessment criteria	Total	Points
Research Proposal (20%)		
1. Demonstrated understanding of problem and policy relevance of the proposed intervention	4%	
Comments		
2. Clarity of the proposed intervention and feasibility of implementation	4%	
Comments		
3. Suitability/Testability of research questions and hypotheses	2%	
Comments		
4. Technical rigor of research design and methodology	6%	
Comments		
5. Originality of proposed intervention and contribution toward policy implications	4%	
Comments		
Presentation (10%)		
1. Clarity in presenting development problem and relevance of proposed intervention	2%	
Comments		
2. Clarity in explaining the proposed policy intervention	2%	
Comments		
3. Clarity in stating research design and methodology	2%	
Comments		
4. Ability in address critiques and questions	2%	
Comments		
5. Time	2%	
Comments		