Yale-NUS College Summer Research Programme
How to Write a Successful Research Project Proposal

General, yet field-specific. Write your project proposal in language that an educated non-specialist would understand, but use terms that are appropriate for your research field.

Project Abstract. State the central question that you will attempt to answer through your research, and the working hypothesis that you intend to test. Briefly describe the key aims, methods and outcomes of your project.

Background and Rationale. Explain why this project is important to the community of researchers or other practitioners in your area of interest – what knowledge gap(s) it fills, what uncharted territory it explores, and/ or how it builds on existing knowledge. Discuss existing research on this topic and how your proposed project fits within this research.

Materials and Methods. Describe in detail the research activities you will undertake in this project, including data gathering and analysis methods. List the materials you will use for research activities.

If your research involves handling hazardous materials, you must provide:
- A description of the research activities where you will use such materials.
- The amount of exposure you will have to the materials (dosage and frequency).
- Evidence of obtained research permits to work with these materials, and a confirmation that you are qualified to work with them or that you will be trained to do it. This information can also be included in your Supervisor Support Form.

Budget. Use the budget sheet to break down the total estimated cost of your project. Be specific, realistic and as modest as possible with quantities and prices. Since there are location-based funding caps for living expenses, you are encouraged to seek funding from additional sources, and to indicate those in your budget sheet. The funding caps do not apply to research-related expenses, which are considered separately and funded based on availability, feasibility and project merit. Program participants are expected to cover visa, overseas airfare and personal expenses on their own. Please do not include those items in your budget sheet. Note that the selection committee makes the final funding decision and that you may receive a different amount than what you originally applied for.
**Project Length and Timeline.** Here, provide the total project length and a weekly overview of research activities.

Projects must be **at least 4 weeks long.** Shorter projects are considered on a case-by-case basis and must be part of a larger project that you will continue after the summer. Only the summer portion of a larger project is eligible for SRP funding consideration, and it must be a single, focused research effort (e.g. data gathering for subsequent analysis).

Avoid planning non-research related activities during your research project (e.g. holidays). If those are necessary or were planned long ago, please share the dates and duration. This helps CIPE advise you on scheduling.

The project (or the summer portion of a longer project) must finish by the end of the summer vacation period, as stated in the [Yale-NUS Academic Calendar](https://www.yale-nus.edu.sg).

**Research Permits.** Certain kinds of research require you to apply for a research permit. Consult with your supervisor for guidance on necessary permits and list them in your project proposal. If your project is selected for funding, you must provide evidence that you have obtained all necessary permits before you begin.

Projects that commonly require a research permit include, but are not limited to:

- Projects that involve intervention or interaction with human subjects, or handling their identifiable private information. Such projects **must be** part of a larger, faculty-led research project in order to facilitate Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, or be structured in such a way that the project can be exempt from full IRB review. Consult your faculty supervisor for more details.

- Projects that involve handling live vertebrate animals or working in a protected natural area. In such cases, it helps for the project to be part of a larger supervised project, where the supervisor will be more familiar with necessary permits.

**Language Proficiency.** If your research project will be conducted partly or entirely in a language other than English, consult with a faculty member who teaches in that language, provide evidence of fluency – academic coursework, native speaker ability, language course certificates/ transcripts, etc. and ask the faculty to send a brief email endorsement to CIPE, confirming your ability to conduct research in this language.

**Connection with Student Interests and Goals.** Explain in specific detail how this project aligns with your interests thus far, how it will contribute to academic, professional and/or personal development, how it will enable you to pursue further research in the field, and what your plans are after the project ends.
A Strong Research Proposal:

- Shows that the applicant has done extensive preliminary research on the topic.
- Is focused and achievable within the proposed timeframe, whether it is a self-contained project or part of a larger research effort. Projects may continue beyond the vacation period, but the summer portion must be a **single, focused** part of the larger project and is the only one eligible for SRP funding consideration.
- Presents thoughtful and realistic project methodology, budget and timeline.
- Gives compelling reasons why this project will be beneficial for the applicant’s academic, professional and personal development.