

Develop and Defend a Research Proposal

GAC033-aligned proposal support; the study is proposed, not run for this task.

Defend a plan without inventing results

- Research proposal: a team develops, presents and defends a plan.
- Presentation and coursework follow your centre's current brief.
- This task proposes a study; it does not report a study that was run.
- Narrow the question until the method can answer it.

A driving question opens an investigation

- Driving question: specific, researchable and arguable.
- A search alone should not settle the answer.
- Start from something noticed, then test the scope of the question.

Narrow social media into a measurable question

- Topic: social media. Still too broad.
- Narrower: social media and study. Measurement is still unclear.
- Question: does a phone out of reach change time to first homework interruption?
- Specify students, conditions and what would count as an answer.

Choose the method after the question

- Experiment: change a condition and measure its effect.
- Survey: what people report. Observation: what they do.
- Research interview: explore participants' explanations.
- A method must produce evidence relevant to the question.

Ethics is part of the design

- Ethics: consent, privacy, right to withdraw and protection from harm.
- Plan anonymity where appropriate; do not promise it if identity is retained.
- Explain data handling and the school's required permissions.

Keep a search log and citations

- Use databases and library catalogues alongside appropriate searches.
- Search log: terms, location, date and what was found.
- Record citations while reading.
- Check relevance and evidence; search location alone proves no reliability.

Define variables, population and timeframe

- Research question: precise variables, population and timeframe.
- Define interruption before counting it.
- For a testable effect, null hypothesis: no specified difference or relationship.
- An exploratory question may need a different design; follow the brief.

Synthesize literature by idea

- Literature review: known findings, agreement, disagreement and a gap.
- Organise paragraphs by idea, citing sources that bear on it.
- Explain why the proposed study would add useful evidence.
- A gap in your reading is not automatically a gap in knowledge.

Put the proposal's parts in a feasible sequence

- Question, importance and what is known.
- Method, ethics and a realistic timeline.
- Limitations written before the study.
- Describe what the design could show and what it could not.

Peer review asks whether method answers question

- Peer review: read another proposal as a critical friend.
- Check method against question, measurement and feasible scope.
- Specific feedback: one class cannot support a whole-school claim.
- Record a reasoned change or a justified response.

Present the question before defending the method

- Question first, then importance, then method.
- Prepare the defence: sample, measurement and alternative explanations.
- Acknowledge a real limitation and explain remaining value.
- No findings are claimed for a study that was not run.

Check yourself

- Does the phone question define students, conditions and interruption?
- Would the method measure behaviour or only reported beliefs?
- What consent, privacy and withdrawal process would be required?
- Which conclusion would remain unjustified even if the study ran?