

Prospectus Rubric

The columns describe the product expected from four levels (beginning, developing, and intermediate, advanced) during Prospectus development. This rubric should be used to help you develop and assess your own writing. It can also be used by you and your advisor so that he/she can give you feedback about how your prospectus is developing.

	Beginning	Developing	Intermediate	Advanced
Significance and Background	Lacking in arguments for significance. Impact of work is not addressed or vague. Terms not defined. Information flow is disconnected. Paragraphs are not well organized. Only 1 or 2 papers discussed.	Research field is introduced but significance is not compelling. Lacking in rationale. Impact is too long-term or not directly tied to research. Terms not defined consistently. Information does not consistently flow from broad to narrow. Paragraphs lack strong topic sentences. Few papers cited or discussed with little depth.	Research field significance is evident. Research may have low impact or incremental knowledge gained. Lacking in compelling rationale. The flow of information has some gaps. Topic sentences lack clarity. "Knowns" are vague. Lacking depth of knowledge of either papers in field or work done in author's lab.	Research topic significance is introduced in a creative or striking way. Clear and compelling rationale. Impact of proposed research directly addressed. Innovative aspects of proposal are described clearly. The flow of information is from Broad to Specific. Terms are defined as they are introduced. Paragraphs link logically and are introduced with strong topic sentences. "Knowns" are concrete. A depth of knowledge of displayed with cited papers within field and by the author or authors lab.
Impact Statement	Impact statement is missing or not supported by background information.	The impact is weak or does not connect directly from background information.	Impact statement is mostly well substantiated by background. May be wordy or not directly relevant to studies.	The impact the work will have is clearly identified. It follows logically from background and ties closely to the results that will be obtained
Hypothesis and Aims	Hypothesis is stated as a question or as expected results. Hypothesis does not address problem. Aims do not directly address hypothesis.	Hypothesis only partially addresses problem. Difficult to tell how aims address hypothesis. Aims don't consistently relate to hypothesis.	Aims don't consistently relate to hypothesis. Aims relate to hypothesis but are not compelling or will only provide incremental advances in knowledge.	Hypothesis is clearly stated. All components in hypothesis are described in the background section. Hypothesis addresses problem. Aims listed are concrete. Aims address hypothesis.

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Research Design	Lacking in rationale for methodology chosen. The description either is too detailed (like a protocol) or lack description (not possible to tell what will be done). Controls are not discussed. Experimental outcomes are not well thought out or missing. May be missing strong conclusions.	Weak rationale for why methodology is appropriate. The description of methodology lacks concrete information to understand what will be done or is not presented in a step-wise sequence. Experimental outcomes are vague. Conclusions are not consistently provided.	Rationale for methods is not consistently strong. Methodology description has good level of detail but may be missing some information to make it clear what steps will be undertaken. Experimental outcomes may not be consistently presented. Conclusions are not directly related to results described.	Strong rationale for the methods chosen is given. A clear description of the steps the proposer will use to conduct the experiment. Controls conditions are discussed. Experimental outcomes are included. How results address the aim or questions posed are clear. A timeline is given and is appropriate.
Overall Conclusions	Potential findings are discussed in a cursory or vague fashion. No discussion of similar work in the field. Lacking citations. Lacking tie back to significance.	Potential findings are discussed but lack depth. Information doesn't flow from narrow to broad. Little works is cited.	Potential findings are discussed and relevant citations are included but may lack depth or miss important information. Flow of information may be inconsistent. Tie to significance may not be strong.	Potential findings are discussed in relation to other papers in the field (relevant citations are included). Information flows from narrow to broad. Significance of work is addressed.
Format and English Proficiency	Overly long or short. Instructions not followed. Numerous grammatical and writing issues. Paragraphs lack structure and do not flow logically.	Some grammar issues. Paragraphs may have some structure but issues with topic sentences or logical flow may be evident. Information flow is inconsistent.	Organization is good but not consistently evident. Paragraphs may still lack clear topic sentences or logical flow.	Proposal is visually appealing and well organized. Paragraphs have strong topic sentences that are supported by sentences within. Information flows logically between and within paragraphs.