



Proposal Alignment Worksheet

A guided worksheet for connecting your title, problem, objectives, questions, theory, methods and planned analysis.

DESIGNED FOR

Postgraduate researchers preparing or revising a proposal

How to use this resource

- 1 Complete the study snapshot before drafting or revising individual chapters.
- 2 Write one clear line for each part of the study. If two parts do not connect, revise before moving forward.
- 3 Use the final audit with your supervisor or research mentor and record the changes you must make.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Use this tool to organise, question and improve your own work. It does not replace your institution's guidance, your supervisor's advice or your responsibility as the author.



A

Study snapshot

Write the study in plain language before refining academic wording

Working title

State the main issue, the group or unit and the context.

Programme and institution

Study location or setting

Core research concern

In one sentence: what needs to be understood, explained, improved or evaluated?

B

Problem statement logic

Build the argument from evidence, not assumption

1. Expected situation

What should be happening according to policy, theory, standards or prior evidence?

2. Observed situation

What is actually happening? Record verifiable evidence and its source.

3. Consequences

Who is affected, and why does the problem matter?

4. Unresolved gap

What is not yet adequately known or addressed in this context?

5. Study response

Explain how this study will address the stated gap without claiming results in advance.



C Objective alignment: 1 and 2

Each objective must produce a clear question, data need and analysis decision

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1

Objective statement

Use one measurable verb and one clear focus.

Research question or hypothesis

It must ask for the same information named in the objective.

Key concept or variable

Indicators or dimensions

Participants or data source

Tool and relevant items

Planned analysis

Name the statistic or qualitative process.

Expected form of answer

Describe the evidence, not the result.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2

Objective statement

Use one measurable verb and one clear focus.

Research question or hypothesis

It must ask for the same information named in the objective.

Key concept or variable

Indicators or dimensions

Participants or data source

Tool and relevant items

Planned analysis

Name the statistic or qualitative process.

Expected form of answer

Describe the evidence, not the result.



C Objective alignment: 3 and 4

Each objective must produce a clear question, data need and analysis decision

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3

Objective statement

Use one measurable verb and one clear focus.

Research question or hypothesis

It must ask for the same information named in the objective.

Key concept or variable

Indicators or dimensions

Participants or data source

Tool and relevant items

Planned analysis

Name the statistic or qualitative process.

Expected form of answer

Describe the evidence, not the result.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4

Objective statement

Use one measurable verb and one clear focus.

Research question or hypothesis

It must ask for the same information named in the objective.

Key concept or variable

Indicators or dimensions

Participants or data source

Tool and relevant items

Planned analysis

Name the statistic or qualitative process.

Expected form of answer

Describe the evidence, not the result.



D Theory and method fit

Explain why each decision fits the research problem

Theory or conceptual lens

Name it, state its main idea and show what part of the study it helps explain.

Research approach and design

State what, why and how. Explain the connection to the objectives.

Population, sample and selection

Who can answer each objective, and why?

Quality and ethics

Validity, reliability or trustworthiness; consent; privacy; data protection.

E Final alignment audit

Tick only after checking the actual proposal

Study logic

- ☐ The title names the same central issue examined by the objectives.
- ☐ The problem statement contains current, verifiable evidence.
- ☐ The gap is specific to the study context and not merely a broad claim.
- ☐ The general objective matches the title and stated problem.
- ☐ Each specific objective addresses one clear part of the problem.
- ☐ Each question or hypothesis mirrors its objective.

Evidence and method

- ☐ The theory explains the relationship or process being studied.
- ☐ Participants and data sources can answer the questions assigned to them.
- ☐ Tools contain items that measure or explore every objective.
- ☐ The analysis plan can answer each question or test each hypothesis.
- ☐ Ethical safeguards match the sensitivity of the data and participants.
- ☐ No result, quotation, statistic or reference has been invented.

Priority revisions after this audit

List the three changes that will improve alignment most, who will act and the target date.
