**Research Proposal Structure**

Check your Blackboard site for guidance but a fairly typical structure is as follows:

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| **Overview and Background** | A general introduction to your chosen topic area that sets the scene for your research. You might provide some definitions of key terms or provide relevant statistics, for example. Don’t provide an overview that’s too broad – make the focus of the research clear. |
| **Rationale** | An explanation of why you have chosen this topic for your research project. It might be that your research will help address a gap in the literature or an area where knowledge is contested. Perhaps no one has studied the subject in a particular setting or context, or from your intended angle. Your rationale may also be practice-based, where you have identified an issue on placement or in your workplace. |
| **Aims** | Statement of what you intend to achieve through your research. These could be presented as research questions and/or sub questions or as a list of objectives. Your aims must be specific and feasible. Often, this section can be bullet-pointed for clarity. |
| **Literature Review** | A brief overview of key literature to provide a critical commentary on the current state of research on your topic. This contextualises and positions your planned research within the existing knowledge on the subject.  Ideally, you want to identify shortcomings in this existing research in order to help justify your own inquiry. |
| **Methodology** | This section outlines your plans for how your will carry out your research along with your justification for your choices. Explain your overarching approach, whether your research is quantitative or qualitative and the paradigm or philosophy underpinning your research.  Describe your methods in detail, from your intended sampling strategy or participant recruitment through to the data analysis stage. Demonstrate that you have evaluated various methodologies and tools to make the case that your proposed approach is the most appropriate to meet your research aims.  If your research will be a review, you need to detail how you will collect and select the relevant literature including; the keywords for your topic, the databases that will be used and any inclusion/exclusion criteria.  In this section you should also acknowledge any ethical considerations for your research and potential limitations that may affect your results and conclusions. |
| **Timescales** | Give an indication of the key milestones in your research. This shows you understand that a dissertation or research project is a longer piece of work that and you have planned how you will manage your time |
| **Reference list/ bibliography** | A list of the sources you had read so far in the preparation of your proposal, referenced according to Cite them Right. |