

Guidelines for a Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not a vague exploration of an idea. It is assumed that you already have a thought-through suggested research proposal, which is being presented as an abbreviated description. An LOI allows us to quickly assess a good match between the topic and the program.

Technique

The LOI must be brief yet engaging. Use words smartly. Avoid jargon, adjectives, and subjective statements not supported by facts. Write a logical, convincing argument highlighting how this study solves a critical problem or gap in the research knowledge. Review the basic components of a proposal as a LOI can be seen as an abbreviated 2-3 page proposal. Try not to exceed the page limit.

Components of an LOI

The contents can follow this format:

1. Introduction Paragraph: A summary statement.

The introduction should be able to exist on its own. If the reviewer reads nothing else, they should know the context of the proposal reading this paragraph. Answer the following: What is going to be done? Is this a portion of a larger project? Over what period will this occur? Keep this paragraph short! This description seems like a lot to address, but space will be provided in later paragraphs to explain the rationale, methodology, and your credibility.

2. Problem Statement: The "why" of the project. (1-2 paragraphs)

Explain what issue is being addressed in the proposed study. Explain why the research topic has been chosen. State concisely why this matters in the area where it will operate. Note who benefits.

3. Aims and Objectives (1-2 paragraphs)

State the aim and specific objectives to be attempted. Indicate how evaluation is part of the study to assess if the outcomes have been achieved.

4. Research Methodology: The "what" and "how" of the project. (The bulk of your letter)

Give a summary of the activities required. Give details to the extent space permits-highlight why the study and approach are novel and worthy of recognition. Indicate if there will be a collaboration with other units or individuals and their roles. Be specific about who does what.

5. Credentials (1-2 paragraphs)

Describe why you are best equipped to execute this research pursuit. Put any historical background here. Brag with substance. Indicate awards, rankings, and tangible measures that set you apart from your peers.

6. Closing (1 paragraph)