

UIUC NEURUS APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Use the following prompts to prepare your research proposal. Respond to each prompt concisely.

1. TOPIC TITLE

- Be as descriptive as possible.

2. MOTIVATION (250-400 words)

- Why is your research topic important to urban planning, cities, the world, people, the economy, ecology etc.?
- Why are *you* interested in this topic?
- What is the academic community saying about this topic? Conduct a preliminary literature review to answer this question.
- What do you hope to identify, establish or recommend through this research?
- Who is the potential audience for your recommendation or results?

3. RESEARCH QUESTION (200-300 words)

- A research question is a focused, concise and arguable question around which you center your research. You should ask a question about an issue that you are genuinely curious about. The research question defines the proposal and guides your arguments and inquiry. It provokes the interest of the reader. What were the gaps, contradictions, concerns that have arisen for you while conducting your preliminary literature review, in your conversations with colleagues, and from your observations through life experiences? This section poses innovative questions to the exploration of problems leading to unusual and surprising results.

Research questions:

- are **evocative**: they pique the reader's interest
- are **timely**: they deal with a contemporary concern.
- make **connections**: they fill the gaps in the dialogue on an issue.
- take a unique or **creative** approach.
- are **contextual**: they connect the research topic to the larger context. The context should be grounded in temporal and spatial specifics.
- **limit the variables** you are examining.
- **are researchable!** Keep in mind you will face time constraints, challenges with working in a new country and other similar practical concerns.

4. RESEARCH METHODS (150-300 words)

- Identify whether your methods will involve interviews, surveys, a literature review or any other method of data collection and analysis.

5. SOURCES

- List your preliminary references.