Australian Catholic University – Human Research Ethics Committee
Guidelines on Research Proposals

The research proposal should be written in plain language in a way that non-specialists, particularly lay members of HREC, can understand, without the use of technical or scientific language.

The HREC suggests that the research proposal format should follow the recommended format:

- The proposal should be a maximum of 4 pages.
- Not less than single line spacing on international size A4 paper (297 mm x 210 mm) or a standard size as close to this as possible.
- The inside (left) margin must be 3cm wide and the top, bottom and outside (right) margins at least 2cm wide.
- Font Times New Roman 12 or Calibri 12.

Suggested headings include:

Introduction/Background
- Briefly describe the background, include enough information so that the committee can understand the problem and the history of the research.
- What has been done before, what are the gaps?

Aims
- What is the purpose of the study or what is the study trying to achieve?
- What is the hypothesis (if relevant)?

Methods and Ethical Considerations
- Include all elements of the methods, including recruitment.
- Provide context and previous history of any methods that might be tricky (invasive, could be perceived as risky either physically, emotionally, or psychologically, deception, etc).
- Ethical considerations refer to the protection of the participants' rights including right to self-determination, right to privacy, right to autonomy and confidentiality, right to fair treatment and right to protection from discomfort and harm. These protections are met by the participant providing fully informed consent or not consenting.
- Include Risk management strategies.

Significance
- Explain why this project is important.
- What will be the impact short-term and longer-term on practice/policy/knowledge etc.
- How is your research innovative and add to the body of existing research?
- Is the research credible, achievable, and practicable?