# **Project #4: Proposal**

The purpose of this assignment is to understand how organizations and individuals use proposals as problem-solving documents. To do this, you will brainstorm with your group about a problem you’d like to solve. Then, each group member will research a different solution and write about it in a proposal. [For this reason, I **strongly recommend** group sizes no larger than 4.] You will create an [CHOOSE ONE: internal/external/internal or external] [CHOOSE ONE: solicited/unsolicited/solicited or unsolicited] proposal that uses research to introduce a problem and propose a solution. You should discuss your project’s budget, timeline, and the experience your organization brings to the project. **The revised draft of your proposal should be 5-7 pages double-spaced, or around 1200-1600 words.**

**To be considered complete, your final draft should include:**

* **Your revised proposal of 1200-1500 words (5-7 pages double-spaced)**
* **Your works cited or references page**
* **Your revision note, which includes a discussion of your revisions**

[NOTE TO INSTRUCTORS: To be successful on the proposal assignment, **students will need you to help them set parameters.** You can do this in a number of ways, but you must **be clear** with your students about what you expect.

In the first paragraph above, you will see two places where you should make a choice of wording. Below is an explanation of your choices.

* **Internal vs. External**: An internal proposal comes from within an organization and goes to other members of the same organization. An external proposal comes from outside an organization and goes to members of a separate organization.
* **Solicited vs. Unsolicited**: A solicited proposal is a document that an organization has asked for. Example: a university solicits bids for wholesale computer equipment. An unsolicited proposal is one an organization has not asked for (though they often have specifications for such documents on their websites). Example: Using federal guidelines, an organization writes about its proposition for clean consumer solar power.

You can **either**

1. Choose for your students. You would edit the assignment sheet to read “You will create an internal, solicited proposal.”
2. Help your students choose. You would edit the assignment sheet to read “You will create either an internal or external proposal that is either solicited or unsolicited.”

Whichever choice you make, **you must help your students understand what these terms mean and how those meanings affect their rhetorical choices for this project.** For help on this, refer to *Practical Strategies for Technical Communication*, Ch. 11, “The “Deliverables” of Proposals” and “Persuasion and Proposals”]

**To get started**, work with your group in class to brainstorm about problems you’re interested in writing about.

**Tip 1:** Think locally! What problems can you identify on campus? In Fayetteville or Northwest Arkansas? In your hometown?

**Tip 2:** Choose a problem with multiple possible solutions. Since each group member needs to write about a different solution, you should choose a problem that is complex and requires research to solve.

Next, you need to choose an audience. If you wanted to solve your problem, to whom should you address your proposal? This might be an organization or a person. For example, if you wanted to propose a solution to traffic problems during football games, your proposal might go to the head of Transit and Parking at the University. If you want to propose using University space for unhoused students, you might write to the Provost.

After you’ve chosen a problem and an audience, each group member will research and propose their own solution.

Remember: You should have as many solutions as there are members in your group. Talk to your group members to make sure no one is duplicating work!

**When you’re ready to begin** the writing process, think about the following:

* What types of research will be most convincing to your audience?
* How can you clearly and persuasively explain your problem? What types of research can you use to support your explanation?
* How can you clearly and persuasively explain your solution? What types of research can you use to support your explanation?
* How much will your project cost? How will you show the cost breakdown to your audience? What do you need to price for the project?
* How long will your project take? Can it start immediately, or will there be a research and development or design stage first? Do you have to account for factors like acquiring sponsorship, filing paperwork, getting permission, shipping delays, or weather delays?
* How experienced is your organization with similar projects? Who are the team members working on the project? What are their qualifications and expertise?
* How will your organization be accountable for your work? That is to say, how will you make sure the project is complete, ethical, on time, and within the client’s budget?
* How can you use graphics and document design to emphasize your points? Which parts of your report would be most effectively supported by document organization and visual choices?

## Format & Layout

Learn about how to design a proposal from the course textbooks:

* *Practical Strategies in Technical Communication*, Chapter 11: Writing Proposals, “The Structure of the Proposal,” “Sample Internal Proposal”
* *Handbook of Technical Writing*, Proposals, “Internal Proposals,” “External Proposals”

[Insert how you want students to format their paper. As the instructor, you can add more specificity to the prompt but do not change the scope or rigor of the assignment.]

Final submission should be **uploaded on Blackboard** as an Adobe PDF or Word file.

## Sample Assignment Outline

* Title Page
  + Should follow a formatting style of your choice (APA, IEEE, Chicago, etc.)
  + Should include (at least) an informative title, your name, and the date
* Introduction
  + Introduce a problem briefly. In one paragraph, tell us about the issue.
  + Propose a solution briefly. In one paragraph, tell us how you’ll fix the problem.
* Problem
  + Explain the problem: who or what does it affect? Where and when does the problem happen? Why does it happen?
  + Use your research to support your claims.
  + Persuade the reader: Why should we work to solve the problem?
* Solution
  + Explain the solution: what steps will your organization take to solve the problem?
  + Use your research to support your claims.
  + Persuade the reader: Why is this solution the best way to solve the problem?
* Budget
  + Give a clear account of project expenses, broken down into specific categories
  + State a plan for staying on budget, or compensating for going over
* Timeline
  + Give a clear timeline for the project, breaking it into phases or stages if necessary
  + Account for possible delays
  + State the frequency and timing of communication about project updates
* Experience
  + List (by name) the people who will be working on the project, along with their relevant qualifications
  + Detail prior projects your organization has completed, especially those similar to or related to the project you are proposing
* Works Cited/References
  + Match the style (APA, IEEE, Chicago, etc.) you’ve chosen for the document
  + List all sources you have quoted, paraphrased, or summarized

## Due Dates

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Stage** | **Due** |
| Topic Choice | [MM-DD] |
| First Draft | [MM-DD] |
| Peer Review | [MM-DD] |
| Final Draft | [MM-DD] |

## Revision Note

When you are ready to submit your final draft in Week 11, you must include a revision note at the beginning of this document, before your final draft begins. Your revision note must explain the revisions you made to your original draft and why.

## Final Submission Checklist

* I have included a revision note as the first page of my assignment where I explain what revisions I made to my draft and why.
* I have clearly defined a problem and the solution I propose in response, using research.
* I have created both a budget and timeline that are realistic and backed by my research on pricing and timing.
* I have included information about my organization’s experience, including the qualifications of each team member.
* I have included in-text citations and a Works Cited/Reference page.
* I have formatted my assignment [as my instructor has described.]
* I have saved the document as a .pdf or .docx file for submission.