

# Guidelines for Preparing a Research Prospectus Summer Intern Program

## General guidelines:

Your Written Research Prospectus is due on **June 24<sup>th</sup> by 5:00pm**. Please send electronic copies to the following: [bwpfirmann@vims.edu](mailto:bwpfirmann@vims.edu), [seitz@vims.edu](mailto:seitz@vims.edu), [jcdrey@vims.edu](mailto:jcdrey@vims.edu). You will also spend about five minutes presenting your ideas to the audience of interns and their mentors and there will be a few minutes for questions. The presentations will be on **June 24<sup>th</sup> from 10am-1pm**. You may use PowerPoint for the presentation, but please limit the number of slides to 5 or fewer.

Use the general guidelines given below to format the written prospectus. Your mentor should review your prospectus, and will make recommendations for improvement. Make these recommended changes and corrections before you submit copies to Rochelle, Jenny, and Bruce via e-mail. We will return editorial/scientific comments and retain a copy for the program files.

## Cover Page:

Please make a cover page that includes the following information: 1) title of the project, given as "Prospectus: *insert your title here*"; 2) your name and home institution; 3) name of your mentor; 4) date submitted.

## Abstract:

This section will not be included in the Prospectus, but will be included in the final paper.

## Introduction:

This section should provide a brief introduction to the research topic and outline the motivation for your study. You want to interest and engage the reader with respect to the research you are proposing. Why is the study going to be important or significant? What have you read that leads you to the question you are posing? Include appropriate references to materials that will provide a context for the planned research. This section might include references to classic papers, as well as more recent papers, which indicate why the research is needed, or of value.

## Objectives/Hypotheses:

Please clearly state your research objectives. What are your goals or hypotheses? What specific objectives do you hope to accomplish? This is more or less the "game plan" section of the prospectus.

## Methods:

This brief section should give a general overview of the methods you will use. Detailed protocols are not necessary. Provide enough information to give the non-specialist a sense of how you will accomplish your research.

## Expected Results:

This can be the most difficult section to write, but in some ways it is the most important. What kinds of results do you expect to get? It may help if you frame your expected results in reference to previously published papers (ex: Jones et al. (1992) found -----, and we expect to find -----). Why will they be important/relevant to your field of study?

**References: (on separate page, not counted in page limit)**

1. All publications cited in the text should be presented in a list of references following the text of the manuscript.
2. In the text refer to the author's name (without initial) and year of publication.
3. When reference is made to a work by two authors, both names should be given using "and". If reference is made in the text to a publication written by more than two authors, the name of the first author should be used followed by "et al."
4. References cited together in the text should be arranged chronologically. The list of references should be arranged alphabetically on author's names, and chronologically per author.

An example is:

Jones, H.D., Richards, O.G., Southern, T.A. 1992. Gill dimensions, water pumping and body size in the mussel *Mytilus edulis* I. J. Exp. Mar. Biol. Ecol. 155(2), 213-237.

The entire prospectus should be **no more than 3 pages long, including the cover page**. References should be added at the end and will not be counted in the 3-page limit. *Please single space the text and use Times New Roman, 12 point font.*

**Final paper:**

This prospectus will become a useful framework for your final report. The final report will include more detailed methods and results, as well as discussion based on your findings. The final paper will also include an abstract of the study, which will be no more than 200 words long.