

# Theological Research Methods II: *Defending the Research Proposal*

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## YouTube Video on Research Proposal

<https://youtu.be/3T9mZZ2Usew?si=WC4E2rAe-pD4oeea>

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## Learning Outcomes

1. The Purpose of the Defense
2. How to Prepare for Defense
3. How to Perform the Defense

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## Defense of Research Proposal

A formal presentation and discussion session where a researcher presents to a committee or panel of experts and defends the details of their planned research project, the rationale behind the choices and the main resources they intend to use to achieve the aims of the research.

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## Key Features of the Defense

- **Historical Development:**
  - Originated in the academic world, in graduate programs and research-intensive universities.
  - Developed from the concept of a "thesis defense" where graduate students present and defend their proposed research before a committee of experts.
  - Initially was regarded as informal gathering to discuss the research
  - Some institutions still approach it as informal process at which faculty gets to meet potential research students
  - Of late the format and requirements for a research proposal defense, such as the structure of the presentation, the composition of the committee, and the evaluation criteria, were gradually established and refined to be rigorous and formal
- **Expansion Beyond Academia:**
  - Has extended beyond the academia, with various organizations and industries adopting similar practices for R & D
  - Agencies, research institutions, and companies often require researchers or project teams to defend their proposals before approving funding or moving forward with the research.
- **Set Up:**
  - A group of faculty form committee
  - In some institutions, the Supervisor work with the student to prepare Proposal and this serves also as peer review
  - In DI, the supervisor is allocated after the defense of the proposal

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## Five Minutes Talk on Research Proposal Defense in Industry

[https://youtu.be/GVutUD\\_t9CY?si=-UKNzK8AtSmQLv9e](https://youtu.be/GVutUD_t9CY?si=-UKNzK8AtSmQLv9e)

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## The Purposes of the Defense

1. **Demonstrate the significance and relevance of the proposed research:**
  - Explain why the research topic is important and worth investigating.
  - Highlight the potential contributions and impact of the research.
2. **Outline the research plan and methodology:**
  - Describe the research questions or hypotheses.
  - Detail the proposed research methods, data collection, and analysis techniques.
  - Discuss the feasibility and appropriateness of the selected approaches.
3. **Showcase your knowledge and understanding of the research domain:**
  - Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the relevant literature and background information.
  - Identify gaps in the existing knowledge that the proposed research aims to address.
4. **Defend the viability and practicality of the research:**
  - Present a realistic timeline and budget for the research project.
  - Anticipate potential challenges or limitations and describe strategies to overcome them.
5. **Engage in a constructive dialogue with the committee:**
  - Be prepared to answer questions, clarify points, and address any concerns or critiques raised.
  - Demonstrate your ability to think critically and respond effectively to feedback.
6. **Quality Assurance Process:**
  - Ensure the quality, feasibility, and significance of the proposed study before the researcher invests time and resources into the research
  - Enables institution to maintain its high standards of research

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## The Benefits of the Defense to the Student

1. **Feedback and guidance:**
  - The committee or panel provides valuable feedback and suggestions to improve the research plan.
  - This input helps the researcher refine the research questions, methodology, and overall approach.
2. **Validation and approval:**
  - The successful defense of the proposal demonstrates that the research idea is sound and worth pursuing.
  - It grants the researcher the approval and support to move forward with the planned study.
3. **Enhancing research quality:**
  - Helps identify potential weaknesses or limitations in the proposal.
  - Incorporating the committee's recommendations can enhance the overall quality of the research
4. **Developing research skills:**
  - Provides opportunity to practice their presentation, communication, and critical thinking skills.
  - Prepares for future presentations, discussions, and defense of their work
5. **Building credibility and confidence:**
  - Success establishes the researcher's credibility and expertise in the field.
  - Boosts confidence in ability to conduct the proposed research effectively.
6. **Securing resources:**
  - Success may lead to institutional support for the research project.
  - May provide opportunity to access the necessary resources and tools to carry out the study.

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## Challenges to Anticipate in Defense

1. **Effective presentation and communication:**
  - Researchers must be able to clearly and concisely present their research plan, objectives, and methodology to the committee.
  - Effective communication skills are crucial to convey the significance and feasibility of the proposed research.
2. **Handling questions and critiques:**
  - Researchers must be prepared to respond to a wide range of questions, comments, and critiques from the committee members.
  - Researchers need to be able to think critically, defend their proposals, and demonstrate their understanding of the research topic.
3. **Addressing potential weaknesses or limitations:**
  - The committee may identify potential weaknesses, limitations, or gaps in the research proposal.
  - Researchers must be able to acknowledge these issues and propose appropriate strategies to address them.
4. **Demonstrating thorough knowledge:**
  - Researchers must have a comprehensive understanding of the relevant literature, theories, and methodologies related to their research topic.
  - They need to demonstrate their expertise and show that they are well-versed in the field.
5. **Managing time and logistics:**
  - Limited time frame, and researchers must be able to present their proposal and respond to questions within the allotted time.
  - Navigating logistical challenges, such as scheduling the defense, preparing materials, and ensuring a smooth presentation.
6. **Maintaining composure and confidence:**
  - Defense can be stressful event, and researchers must maintain their composure and confidence in the face of scrutiny and questioning.
  - Researchers need to be able to remain calm, focused, and adaptable during the defense.
7. **Addressing concerns and incorporating feedback:**
  - Being open to constructive feedback from the committee and be willing to incorporate their suggestions into the research proposal.
  - Effectively addressing the committee's concerns and revising the proposal accordingly can be a challenging task.

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## Preparing for the Defense

- **Understand the purpose and format:**
  - Familiarize yourself with the specific requirements and format of the proposal defense at your institution or organization.
  - Clarify the expected duration of the presentation, the composition of the defense committee, and any specific guidelines or policies.
- **Develop a clear and comprehensive proposal:**
  - Ensure proposal is well-structured, with a clear and articulate research question, literature review, methodology, expected outcomes, and potential contributions to the field.
  - Thoroughly review and understand all aspects of your proposed research, including the relevant literature, your research design, and the potential implications of your findings.
  - Be prepared to discuss the rationale behind your choices and to defend the validity and reliability of your research approach
  - Anticipate potential challenges or limitations in your proposal and be prepared to address them.
- **Practice your presentation:**
  - Rehearse your proposal presentation multiple times, focusing on clear and concise explanations of your research plan.
  - Time your presentation to ensure that you can deliver it within the allocated timeframe.
  - Consider practicing in front of colleagues or mentors who can provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.
  - Consult with your advisor, supervisors, or mentors to get their feedback on your proposal and your preparation for the defense.
  - Consider seeking input from peers or colleagues who can provide additional perspectives and suggestions for improvement
- **Anticipate questions and prepare responses:**
  - Anticipate the types of questions the defense committee might ask, such as those related to your methodology, data analysis, potential limitations, or expected impact.
  - Prepare thoughtful and well-reasoned responses to these potential questions, demonstrating your understanding of the research and your ability to engage in academic discourse.
- **Remain calm and composed:**
  - Recognize that the proposal defense is an opportunity to showcase your research and engage in a constructive academic dialogue.
  - Maintain a confident and composed demeanor, even if you encounter challenging questions or unexpected situations during the defense.

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## YouTube Video of Research Proposal Defense

<https://youtu.be/-3XIKcX7Cv0?si=0zkmM8irZv5HXX5c>

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### Categories of Questions Committees Ask

1. **Significance and Motivation:**
  - What is the importance and relevance of your proposed research?
  - What are the potential impacts and contributions of your study?
  - Why is this research question worth investigating?
2. **Theoretical Framework:**
  - What are the underlying theories or conceptual models guiding your research?
  - How does your proposed study fit into the existing literature and knowledge base?
  - Are there any gaps or limitations in the current understanding that your research aims to address?
3. **Methodology:**
  - What is your planned research design and approach?
  - How will you collect and analyze your data?
  - What are the strengths and potential limitations of your chosen methods?
  - How will you ensure the validity and reliability of your findings?
4. **Feasibility and Resources:**
  - Do you have the necessary resources, skills, and access to conduct the proposed research?
  - What are the potential challenges or risks you might encounter, and how will you mitigate them?
  - Is the timeline and budget for your research reasonable and achievable?
5. **Expected Outcomes and Implications:**
  - What are the anticipated results or findings of your study?
  - How will the outcomes of your research contribute to the field or advance the current understanding?
  - What are the potential practical or theoretical applications of your findings?
6. **Research Ethics and Considerations:**
  - Have you addressed any ethical concerns or obtained necessary approvals?
  - How will you ensure the protection of research participants or subjects?
  - Are there any potential conflicts of interest or biases that need to be addressed?
7. **Future Research Directions:**
  - What are the next steps or future research opportunities that could stem from your proposed study?
  - How might your findings be extended or lead to further investigations?
  - What are the limitations of your study that could be addressed in future research?

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## A Master's Student's Testimonial

<https://youtu.be/ZTknCLut4xl?si=8qt9JHfIP6g9VAjq>

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## Questions?

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