

Authors Note: This document was prepared by David Jackson for distribution to enrolled in an Explorations in Physics Course. This will have to be modified to conform to your own course management philosophy and local conditions. You are welcome to use/modify it as you wish.

Explorations in Physics Project Proposal Guidelines

Your project proposals are nothing to sweat. They are not graded and are only meant to make certain you have done some preliminary planning regarding your project. They actually offer your instructor an opportunity to assess the level of difficulty and to help you plan a project that can be completed in the appropriate time frame. Although these proposals are mostly for your benefit, you should adhere to the following guidelines:

Format:

Your proposal should be typed on standard 8 x 11 inch paper. In addition, you should avoid the use of tpestyles that make it difficult to read. Typically, a proposal should be one page in length with an equipment list on a separate page. Put your names and project title on all sheets.

Elements to be included in the Summary:

Basically, your proposal should give a reasonable idea of what you plan to accomplish and how. You will not be required to stick completely to the proposal once you begin your project. However, because of time constraints, totally changing the focus of your project is seldom a good idea.

- Brief statement of the purpose of the project.
- A rough plan for any data measurement techniques you will be using.
- What kinds of graphs you might be making.
- If the continuation of your project depends on preliminary results that you will be making, do your best to explain how you will continue once these results are obtained.

One final word of advice. Working on your projects is your responsibility. Due to the independent nature of the work, there is a tendency for students to put off the project until the deadline for completion nears. Because there are usually unforeseen problems when attempting any scientific experiment, you are urged to begin your projects early. One of the skills we hope you learn is how to deal effectively with unforeseen (and sometimes difficult) problems.

Furthermore, there will probably *not* be enough class time available for you to complete a substantial project. Thus, you will be expected to spend some time outside of class working on your projects (there is no homework assigned during the projects). In fact, you should use class time to discuss some of the problems you may be having with your instructor. Also keep in mind that you will need to plan a 10 minute group presentation of your project and write a summary as well. Putting things off till the last minute is a sure way to cause you a lot of problems and frustration.