

# Selecting a Research Topic

## Selecting a Research Topic – Quick?Reference Notes

---

### 1. Why the Choice Matters

| Benefit                          | What It Means for You                                                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Motivation</b>                | Working on a subject you care about sustains effort over months or years.              |
| <b>Feasibility</b>               | A well?scoped topic fits the time, resources, and expertise you have.                  |
| <b>Impact</b>                    | A relevant, original question increases the chance of publication and real ?world use. |
| <b>Funding &amp; Supervision</b> | Clear alignment with faculty interests or grant calls makes support easier.            |

---

### 2. Core Criteria for a Good Topic

1. **Interest & Passion** – you should be genuinely curious.
  2. **Relevance** – addresses a gap, controversy, or emerging trend in the field.
  3. **Originality** – offers a new angle, method, or population.
  4. **Scope** – neither too broad (unmanageable) nor too narrow (insignificant).
  5. **Data Availability** – access to datasets, archives, participants, or equipment.
  6. **Methodological Fit** – matches the methods you can realistically apply.
  7. **Ethical Viability** – can be studied within ethical guidelines and approvals.
  8. **Career Alignment** – supports your academic or professional goals.
- 

### 3. Step?by?Step Process

| Step                         | Action                                             | Tips & Tools                                                        |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Brainstorm</b>         | List all subjects that intrigue you (no judgment). | Use mind?mapping software (e.g., XMind, Coggle).                    |
| <b>2. Scan the Landscape</b> | Conduct a rapid literature scan (last 5?years).    | Google Scholar alerts, Scopus, Web of Science; note recurring gaps. |

# Selecting a Research Topic

| Step                                    | Action                                                              | Tips & Tools                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3. Identify Gaps &amp; Questions</b> | Turn observed gaps into <i>research questions</i> (RQ).             | Use the “What?Why?How” template: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is unknown?</li> <li>• Why does it matter?</li> <li>• How could it be investigated?</li> </ul> |
| <b>4. Preliminary Feasibility Check</b> | Ask: data, time, skills, ethics, cost.                              | Create a simple checklist; talk to a librarian for data sources.                                                                                                              |
| <b>5. Narrow &amp; Refine</b>           | Convert broad ideas into a focused statement (1?2 sentences).       | Apply the <b>SMART</b> test (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time?bound).                                                                                         |
| <b>6. Seek Feedback</b>                 | Discuss with supervisor, peers, or subject?matter experts.          | Prepare a 2?minute “elevator pitch” to get concise reactions.                                                                                                                 |
| <b>7. Draft a Working Title</b>         | Title should reflect variables, population, and design.             | Example: “The Effect of Mobile?Based Micro?Learning on Undergraduate Chemistry Performance.”                                                                                  |
| <b>8. Validate Against Criteria</b>     | Re?run the core?criteria table; adjust as needed.                   | If any criterion scores low, revisit earlier steps.                                                                                                                           |
| <b>9. Formalize</b>                     | Write a short proposal (background, RQ, significance, methods).     | Use institutional templates; include a timeline (Gantt chart).                                                                                                                |
| <b>10. Obtain Approvals</b>             | Submit ethics application, funding request, or department sign?off. | Keep a log of all correspondence for future reference.                                                                                                                        |

## 4. Common Pitfalls & How to Avoid Them

| Pitfall                               | Symptoms                                        | Prevention                                  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Over?broad scope</b>               | “Study all factors influencing climate change.” | Limit to one factor, region, or population. |
| **Data?driven rather than question?dr |                                                 |                                             |