

Preventing Plagiarism in Research Proposals

Academic Year 2025 – 2026

Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2025

To: All KFUPM Faculty, Researchers, Postdocs, and Graduate Students

cc: KFUPM President, Vice President for Research and Innovation, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans, Department Chairmen, Center Directors

Overview

In a research proposal, you're asked to present an original plan that includes your questions, aims, and methods, while situating that plan within prior scholarship. The tricky part is drawing a bright line between **what's already known** and **what you will do**. How do you integrate sources? When must you cite if you've paraphrased? Use this proposal-focused guide and checklist to keep your writing original and well-credited.

Planning Your Proposal

Consult Your Advisor (and the Grant's Guidelines)

If anything about citation or reuse is unclear, ask your advisor or research office. Also review the grant's formatting and citation rules (some ban quotes, require specific styles, or have data-management and prior support sections with their own norms).

Plan the Intellectual Boundary

Before writing, map the boundary between **background/prior work** and **your contribution**:

- **Problem & gap:** What's unresolved? Whose findings establish that gap?
- **Aims & hypotheses:** What will you test or build that is new?
- **Innovation/novelty:** How does your approach differ from cited methods?
- **Feasibility:** What preliminary data or pilot results are yours (cite your own work when relevant)?

Write an outline with explicit labels like: *Background (cited)*, *Significance (cited + your framing)*, *Innovation (yours)*, *Approach (yours)*, *Timeline/Budget (yours)*. Clear labels help prevent accidental borrowing.

Take Effective, Attribution-Safe Notes

- Keep separate sections (or colors) for verbatim quotes, paraphrases, your ideas, and proposed methods.
 - Record full bibliographic details and page numbers/DOIs immediately.
 - Maintain a literature-to-design matrix: each cited finding → how it informs your aims or methods.
 - Mark any figure/table ideas that adapt others' visuals so you can request permissions or redraw and cite.
-

Writing Your Proposal

When in Doubt, Cite

You must cite background, significance, and rationale lean on others' ideas, even when paraphrasing. This doesn't weaken your proposal; it shows command of the field and clarifies what's original. Cite your own prior publications too to avoid self-plagiarism.

Know How to Paraphrase (and Still Cite)

Paraphrasing means substantially rephrasing and restructuring while preserving meaning, not swapping a few words. Paraphrases require citations because the ideas are not yours. Reserve direct quotations (often discouraged in proposals) for definitions or language that truly must be quoted.

Analyze and Evaluate Your Sources

Favor credible, current, and field-standard sources. For each key citation, ask:

- Is the evidence robust and reproducible?
 - Does it directly motivate an aim, method, or expected outcome?
 - Are there competing findings you should acknowledge?
-

Extra Proposal-Specific Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Text recycling:** Don't paste large blocks from old proposals or papers even your own work without reworking and/or citing as prior work.
- **Method borrowing without attribution:** If your approach is adapted from a published protocol or codebase, say so and cite it.
- **Figure/table reuse:** Redraw with your own analysis/visualization or obtain permission and credit the source.
- **Grey literature & websites:** Use with caution; archive URLs, include access dates, and prefer peer-reviewed sources when possible.

Remember to Generate Similarity Report

KFUPM is offering tools to check your plagiarism and to generate Similarity Report, you can apply for a free user in the following links:

Turnitin: <https://library-web.kfupm.edu.sa/online-services/turnitin/>

iThenticate: <https://library-web.kfupm.edu.sa/online-services/ithenticate/>

The University values your commitment to responsible research practices and appreciates your cooperation in submitting research grants without plagiarism.

Thank you.

Deanship of Research

Deanship of Research

☎ Telephone: +966 (13) 860 3200 | ✉ Email: DR@kfupm.edu.sa | 🌐 Website: <https://ri.kfupm.edu.sa/dr>

📞 [Join DR WhatsApp Broadcast](#)

Copyright © 2025 King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals