

Statics Writing Assignment: Letter of Intent, Proposal, and Final Report to the GFE

For engineers and scientists, the ability to write persuasive proposals and reports ranks high as a measure of professional success. In general, a proposal offers to accomplish something in a manner that convinces a targeted audience that the plan or course of action is sound and that the writer (or team) is qualified to accomplish it. The purpose of this assignment is to—

- Write a 1-page letter of intent in response to a Request for Proposal (RFP) from a funding organization.
- Write a 4- to 6-page proposal (what you intend to do, how you intend to do it, what you hope to learn).
- Write a 4- to 6-page final report (what you did, how it was done, what you discovered).
- Practice writing as a team.



An organization called Grants for Furthering Education (GFE), has issued an RFP for engineering students who wish to conduct an experiment-based study of basic Statics principles. **Applicants must demonstrate that their team is capable of conducting the experiments in question—and explain how the proposed work will enhance their knowledge of statics and contribute to their growth as engineers.** The decision-makers at GFE include professors and business people. Many of them are unfamiliar with statics or engineering principles, so you need to make your case with plausible and persuasive arguments, precise descriptions, and clearly defined terms. You will prepare the material in the following three stages:

Letter of Intent	Proposal	Final Report
<p>This one-page letter, written in a professional tone, should—</p> <p>Confirm that your team plans to submit a proposal in response to the GFE’s call for an experiment-based study of Statics principles.</p> <p>Also, Provide a brief answer to these questions—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should the GFE choose your team to conduct these experiments? • What sources do you plan to consult to gain context and background for conducting these experiments? Cite at least two sources in the text, such as an appropriate web site (<u>do not use Wikipedia</u>) or your statics text. Use APA style for in-text citation. <p>Your Letter of Intent should include—date, names, college, major, academic status, formal salutation (“To the Grants for Furthering Education Funding Committee”), formal closing (“Sincerely”), and signatures of team members.</p>	<p>The following sections are mandatory:</p> <p>Title page—Center and double-space. Include a line for each of the following: Proposal title, your names, course name and section number, professor’s name, and due date.</p> <p>Introduction—Introduce yourselves and state your objectives. <u>Why</u> should the GFE choose your team to conduct these experiments?</p> <p>Specific Aims—<u>What</u> do you intend to do? <u>What</u> knowledge do you hope to gain?</p> <p>Background and Significance—<u>Why</u> is the work important? <u>What</u> has already been done?</p> <p>Research Design and Methods—<u>How</u> are you going to do the work, <u>what</u> tests do you intend to conduct, <u>where</u> will you conduct them, and <u>when</u> will the tests take place?</p> <p>Conclusion—Summarize the merits of your proposed experiments; ask the GFE to grant your request for funding.</p> <p>Reference List—Use APA formatting for Reference List and for parenthetical citations in the proposal where needed.</p>	<p>The following sections are mandatory:</p> <p>Title page—(same format as in proposal).</p> <p>Executive Summary—a one-paragraph synopsis of the report.</p> <p>Introduction and Background—Explain the purpose of the report, provide context and background for your experiments, and define essential terms.</p> <p>Experimental Methods—Describe the experiments you performed in a clear and concise narrative voice—<u>do not use</u> bulleted items. Professional engineers should be able to recreate your experiments by following your Experimental Methods section.</p> <p>Results and Discussion—Tell your audience what the results were and explain their significance. <u>Remember</u>: your task was to conduct experiments that would deepen your understanding of Statics principles.</p> <p>Conclusion—this section offers you an opportunity to provide new perspectives on your experiments. Do not simply repeat information from your introduction. Include a brief (two to three sentences) summary of the report.</p> <p>References—(same format as in proposal).</p> <p>Appendices—attach if necessary.</p> <p><u>Note: You may use figures and illustrations but they do not count towards the page total. Use a caption below each figure and cite your source.</u></p>

APA Formatting. (APA guidelines can be accessed via the Hanson CTC home page at <http://www.engineering.uiowa.edu/~ctc>.)

- Parenthetical citations within the body of the proposal
- Reference list at the back of the proposal.

General Formatting Instructions for the Proposal and the Report

- **Title page:** Center and double-space. Include a line for each of the following: Full title of the proposal, your name, course name and section number, professor’s name, and due date.
- **Body of paper:** Double-space, 1” margins all around. Times-Roman, 12-point font.
- Laser print and staple in top left corner.
- **Please keep all drafts in file folder provided by the Hanson CTC (your Letter of Intent will be returned to you in the folder).**

Grading Criteria: Hanson Center Writing Consultants will evaluate the Letter of Intent, the Proposal, and the Final Report. Bring each document directly to the CTC by 4:00 p.m. on the days they are due. See the Evaluation Form for a breakdown of the 100 possible points for this assignment. Fifteen out of the 100 are non-writing points. Earn or lose points by—

- Turning in the letter of intent on time (5 points out of 100)
- Turning in the proposal on time (5 points out of 100)

Hanson CTC Appointment: Your team will receive 5 points for visiting the CTC (and lose 5 points if you do not), but you must come in as a team. **Keep the CTC Contact Report in your folder as proof of your visit.**

Schedule early! That will give you adequate time to rewrite.
Schedule often! You can visit the CTC as many times as your wish.

Schedule and Deadlines

Sept. 10 (Wed)	In-class visit by Hanson Center to introduce assignment
Sept. 24 (Wed)	Letter of Intent due to Hanson CTC, Rm. 2224, by 4:00 p.m.
Week of Sept. 29	Letter of Intent returned during discussion sections
Sept. 15 to Dec. 2	Schedule an appointment with the Hanson CTC. Note: You receive 5 points if you schedule an appt. as a team no later than Dec. 2, 2008.
Oct. 22 (Wed)	Proposal due to Hanson CTC by 4:00 p.m. in your folder.
Week of Oct. 27	Proposal returned during discussion sections
Dec. 3 (Wed)	The Final Report must be submitted in two forms: (1) A hard copy, with folder, directly to the Hanson CTC by 4:00 p.m. (2) An electronic copy mailed to: askctc@engineering.uiowa.edu
Week of Dec. 8	Final Report and folders returned during discussion sections



Questions?

Visit the Hanson Center for Technical Communication

The assignment and evaluation sheet can be found on the Center’s Web site at <http://www.engineering.uiowa.edu/~ctc>.

Hours: 1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, Sunday 3:00-5:00 p.m., 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Location: 2224 SC (in the Student Commons area)

Scheduling: Appointment sign-up sheet posted on window outside door of 2224 SC