Draft Research Proposal Guidelines and Template

2020 UChicago Yenching Academy Scholars Program Campus Nomination Application

Format: maximum of 750 words, single spaced, 12-point font, and standard margins

While we understand that this is a draft research proposal and that it will develop and change, please demonstrate your preparation for graduate school by clearly articulating in paragraph form a possible MA thesis research project that you would like to undertake as a Yenching Academy Scholar.

Please use the following section headings and prompts to craft a well-articulated research proposal draft for the Yenching Academy Scholars program. You may remove the five section headings, if you wish. Regardless, please preserve the order of information as suggested below and respond fully to the prompts. Please limit your use of footnotes, endnotes, or illustrations.

Section 1: Research Project Overview: introduction and aims/objectives
Please provide a cohesive, descriptive paragraph that outlines the “what, where, and with whom” information relevant to your research proposal. This section should lay the groundwork for your research topic by:

- explicitly introducing your research question(s),
- explaining the importance or relevance of the research, and
- specifying the goal of your proposed research project

Tip: Use clear, jargon-free language in this section and throughout your proposal. Abstract, overly theoretical language will not serve you well.

Section 2: Research Context: background and significance
In this section, please address the following: what do we already know about this research topic? Your response to this question is often referred to as a “literature review” and affirms that you are aware of/have done research on previous scholarship on the topic. You should also address:

- what we don’t know,
- why knowing the answers to your research question(s) would contribute to the broader understanding of the subject or topic.

Tip: Academic research is not about your own edification. Graduate research should contribute in some way to the body of knowledge.

Section 3: Research Plan
Please detail the following:

- A proposed timeline and major phases for your research. This will alert the reader to the feasibility of your work.
  - Lay out in clear, lucid text the tasks you propose to undertake and justify those activities.
  - Justify this research project is best undertaken in China and as part of the Yenching Academy Scholars program.
- Explain how you will analyze/interpret your data and/or sources.
- Clearly indicate the hoped-for outcomes of your project (e.g., publication, thesis chapter, etc.)

Tip: While there is no required timeframe for your research proposal, we encourage you describe a project that would likely span an academic year, including research and writing (approximately 8-9 months).
Section 4: Preparation for research

Use this section to explain in detail how you are prepared to undertake this research project.

- Explain how your academic background, research training and/or experience, language skills, and any other relevant experiences have prepared you to carry out your proposed project successfully.
- Explain how the Yenching Academy Scholars program would additionally equip you to complete this project.

*Tip: Your reader will quickly lose confidence in your ability to successfully pursue a research experience if you don’t have the requisite skills to do so. Explain clearly and with specific detail how you are well suited to carry out your research project.*

Section 5: Motivation for research project

Use this concluding section to underscore your personal motivations for pursuing this research project at the Yenching Academy in China.

- Why do you care about these research questions or this research topic?
- How might this research project relate to your plans for the future?

*Tip: This is a reflective statement that indicates to the reader not only that you understand the broader impacts of the research itself, but that you can also articulate its value to you as a scholar and professional. However, do not default to generalities and non-specific statements. This section should be detailed and specific to you and what you hope to gain from the experience in light of your future ambitions.*