

## **GUIDELINES: PROPOSAL FOR APPLIED INQUIRY PROJECT**

**Please follow these guidelines in preparing the Proposal for your Applied Inquiry Project. The sections of these guidelines correspond to the sections in the Proposal Template (see I8-9). You may download/save/type into the Template. Please address all of the components.**

**There is no registration for the Proposal. You should take LL5450b prior to or in conjunction with proposal development.**

### **APPLIED INQUIRY PROJECT (AIP)**

The Applied Inquiry Project (AIP) provides an opportunity for you to draw on and apply the knowledge and skills you have developed and mastered in the MAEA program to make a difference in your area of practice. The term ‘applied’ refers to the utility of your project— it is practical, useful to others, and may influence change/improvement for persons, groups, and/or organizations. The term ‘inquiry’ refers to the processes involved in conceptualizing and carrying out your project, e.g., thinking strategically about problems and situations, engaging in critical reflection on your experience, checking out your working hunches, and adapting your approach based on new data and information.

For your project, choose something that matters to you, connects to your particular interests and commitments, and will be relevant and useful to a user audience. It is likely you will have laid the foundation/building blocks for your AIP in some of your core courses and/or electives, so be sure to draw on this prior work as it supports your AIP.

Examples of Applied Inquiry Projects can be found here:

See: <https://snl.depaul.edu/student-resources/graduate-resources/Pages/graduate-writing-samples.aspx>

### **Proposal for the AIP**

The AIP Proposal will serve as the roadmap for your project. See the MAEA Guidebook for details on the role of your academic committee in supporting your proposal development, as well as the proposal review, assessment, and approval processes.

The following guidelines are the outline for your Proposal [reminder: use the Proposal Template). As you develop your proposal, consult with your faculty mentor and project guide on a regular basis. Locate resources that can help you with writing mechanics, organization, and correct use of APA. Keep in mind that the AIP is not a conventional master’s thesis or academic research paper. Use these guidelines, not those from another program or website.

## **Section I - Basic Shape of the Project**

- 1. Title: *What is the Working Title of Your Project?*:** Imagine someone is searching for information about your topic. The key words you use in the title should lead them to your project. (See Samples on website)

**2. Description: What Will This Project Be About? (2-3 concise paragraphs).**

- a. What type of project is this? Does it mainly involve designing, assessing, evaluating, or facilitating learning, or, some combination of these?
- b. Establish the boundaries and scope of your project. Be clear about the starting and ending points. For example, perhaps your project—
  - Is the start of something new so you want to pilot or field test the new venture, or
  - Revolves around something that is already underway, and you want to take it to the next level or build in another component, or
  - Is an important slice of a more complex endeavor or project, or
  - Has already been implemented and now you want to find out how well things have worked and what might be changed or improved.
- c. Include an explanation of your specific connection with this project and why it matters to you.

**3. Audience: Who will be the primary user(s) of your final product? (One paragraph).**

In keeping with the applied nature of your project, think of the primary audience as ‘the user’ —the person, group, and/or body who will make use of your work. In the case of reflective practice projects, the primary audience could be yourself (e.g., reflections on your journey as a trainer or as a facilitator of learning).

Note: Your academic audience is a given, i.e., your academic committee and the Graduate Student Program Review Committee (GSPRC). These guidelines include the expectations of your academic audience.

**4. Deliverables: What will You Produce for Your Primary Audience? Briefly describe (one paragraph) what you have in mind as the final product for this project. (See also Section 4 where you will add more details about the final product, as a whole).**

Some things to consider: focus and scope of your project; style and tone that will be appropriate for your primary audience; content and format that will be most useful to your audience.

**5. Elements of Reflective Practice: (See Section E) How Will You Apply the Elements of Reflective Practice in Carrying Out Your Project?** Throughout the MAEA program, you have been examining ways in which you are developing and applying the three Elements of Reflective Practice — agency, collaboration, flexibility, and inquiry. See the MAEA Guidebook for the facets for each element. Discuss how this project will draw on your capacity to apply these elements. (One paragraph for each element).

## **Section II –Reviews of the Literature**

You will prepare two literature reviews: the first will be a thematic review on the subject of your project; the second will be an annotated bibliography on the type of project you are doing.

6. **Thematic Review:** Given the subject of your project, identify 3-4 sub-topics (themes) that are most relevant to this piece of work. For each theme, identify relevant literature sources and explain what

perspectives these sources represent. Aim for at least 3 sources for each theme, to show that you have begun your investigation of the literature. You will continue to update your literature review as you carry out your project. Use APA style.

Note: you learned how to do thematic literature reviews in LLS 450 Finding & Assessing Information and EA 518 Enhancing Practice with Theory in Adult Learning.

7. **Annotated Bibliography:** You also will draw on literature sources that relate to the type of project you are doing (e.g., design, facilitation, assessment, evaluation, reflective practice). Select at least three sources that inform and support the type of project that you will be). Use APA style.

### Section III — Inquiry Design

Practice-based inquiry can take various forms and often does not fit neatly with just one methodology. Depending on the specific nature of your inquiry, it may be connected to some elements within one or more methodologies. Further, it will involve some form of collecting data/information. Finally, it will require careful analysis and interpretation of the data collected to substantiate your work.

**8. Methodology: What inquiry approach is most relevant to your project?**

(Examples of methodologies include action research, case study, ethnography, field work, narrative, phenomenology, quasi-experimental, reflective inquiry). Note that your project may require the integration of more than one methodology.

- a. Describe your methodology or methodologies and provide a rationale for your choice.
- b. Support your choice with at least three citations from the literature on research methods.

**9. Data Gathering Methods: What Techniques or Procedures for Collecting Data Will You Use?**

Consider what you are trying to find out and accomplish with this project. You are encouraged to seek data from multiple sources, e.g., document review, interviews, focus groups, observation, surveys, critical reflection on your own experience (prior and current). You might have been accumulating data from some of these sources before your project took shape—most likely, these ‘prior data’ (what you already know and the basis for knowing) are influencing the nature of your project.

- a. Identify what ‘prior data’ are influencing the shape of your project. Be sure to include the sources of those prior data.
- b. Identify the new data that you will be collecting, and how.
- c. Consider how reflections on your own experience could be a useful source of data.
- d. Consider how you will get access to participants from whom you will be collecting the data.
- e. Support your selection of data gathering methods (techniques) with at least 3 citations from the research methods literature.
- f. Consult with your Faculty Mentor about IRB regarding use of human subjects.

**10. Data Analysis: What Approaches and Tools Will You Use to Help You Interpret and Make Sense of the Data?** Data from different sources are likely to require different kinds of analysis. For each data source, how will you figure out what these data are telling you?

## **Section IV - Deliverables for the (Whole) Final Product**

Refer back to Section I in which you identified your final product. Your final product is likely to consist of several parts or sections: the main section(s) should be geared to your primary user audience, while other sections will address the academic audience. It may be helpful to think of your final product as a portfolio with tabs. While your final product will come into sharper focus as you carry it out, anticipate now what it might look like at the end.

Keep in mind: what is “the story” that you want to share, with whom, and in what forms? What will be your specific deliverables?

### **11. How Might You Present Your Work That is Geared to Your *Primary Audience*?**

- Consider what the primary audience needs to know about the relevant literature, inquiry process, what you have found out/have to offer, what you recommend for the future (and the like). Keep in mind that products need not be limited only to written pieces. (For example, you might include a video or other kind of artifact created for the primary audience).

### **12. How Might You Present Your Work That is Geared to Your *Academic Audience*?**

- Consider how you will show that you have made good use of the literature and carried out systematic inquiry.
- Appendices might be the place for the more comprehensive work (e.g., literature reviews, data analysis) that is not necessary for your primary audience.