

CE 341 Template for Proposal Package: Common Elements of Proposals Written in Response to an Request for Proposal (RFP)

Proposal Component	Description
Letter of transmittal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A letter of transmittal is simply a brief, formal business letter that accompanies your proposal and announces that the proposal is enclosed. You may use this letter to identify the problem or RFP to which you are responding. You might also highlight any features of the proposal that you think your readers should recognize.
Title page	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List the title of your proposal, the project # or RFP # (whichever is appropriate), prepared by (that's you), submitted to (name of organization or individual), and the date.
Table of contents (TOC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You generally only need this if your proposal runs to ~10 pages or more. Some RFP's may require a TOC.
Executive summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include summary of your proposal that highlights the major features, particularly how well your proposal fits the RFP.• These summaries are strategic. That means your order the ideas in the way that most strikes your reader, not necessarily the same order they appear in the proposal.• Most decision-makers read the executive summary to decide whether the proposal is worth reading.• These summaries are generally no longer than 5% of the length of the whole proposal. Even though this section appears first, you normally write it last.
Project description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide any background that readers might need. Most RFP's define the need for you. You can rephrase that language here and add a summary of what must be done to solve the problem and what are the consequences of failing to solve the problem.

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Project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the project design you explain the methods you will use to carry out your proposal. Your readers will need to be convinced that these methods are sound and likely to produce the required outcome. You might also include a tentative outline of the final product of your work (in this case a report).
Work plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You should break the overall project into stages and display these mapped against a project calendar. This step is commonly done in a Gantt chart. Readers use this information to judge whether you have a grasp of the work involved and a realistic schedule for completing that work.
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortunately, you are not required to tackle this one in CE 341.
Key participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normally, this section would include the résumés of key personnel. In this case, however, you should provide some information that suggests your group is likely to carry out the project successfully. List each group member separately and describe the strengths he or she brings to the project.
Appendices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appendices are usually aimed at those who may be asked to review the technical soundness of your proposal. Include material that you think might support your proposal but is too complex or detailed to include in the text of the proposal (for example: detailed calculations, preliminary design sketches or schematics, etc.). If you don't need such things, then don't bother. Label all appendices clearly and consistently.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a list of references that you consulted in constructing your proposal.

General Advice: Remember that a proposal is essentially an offer to do work and, if successful, will eventually evolve into a contract. Remember that all proposals are competitive documents. Yours will compete either with the proposals of others or with the *status quo*. The recipient can simply say no, or can ask you to revise you proposal.