The Research Plan/Project Summary is a succinct detailing of the rationale, research question(s), methodology, and risk assessment of your research project and should be completed before the start of your experimentation. Any changes you make to your study should be added to the final document.

The research plan for ALL projects is to include the following:

a. What is the RATIONALE for your project? Include a brief synopsis of the background that supports your research problem and explain why this research is important scientifically and if applicable, explain any societal impact of your research.

b. State your HYPOTHESIS(ES), RESEARCH QUESTION(S), ENGINEERING GOAL(S), EXPECTED OUTCOMES. How is this based on the rationale described above?

c. Describe in detail your RESEARCH METHODS AND CONCLUSIONS.
   - Procedures: Detail all procedures and experimental design including methods for data collection. Describe only your project. Do not include work done by mentor or others.
   - Risk and Safety: Identify any potential risks and safety precautions needed.
   - Data Analysis: Describe the procedures you will use to analyze the data/results that answer research questions or hypotheses.

d. Bibliography: List at least five (5) major references (e.g. science journal articles, books, internet sites) from your literature review. If you plan to use vertebrate animals, one of these references must be an animal care reference.

Items 1-4 below are subject-specific guidelines for additional items to be included in your research plan/project summary as applicable:

1. **Human subjects research:**
   - **Participants.** Describe who will participate in your study (age range, gender, racial/ethnic composition). Identify any vulnerable populations (minors, pregnant women, prisoners, mentally disabled or economically disadvantaged).
   - **Recruitment.** Where will you find your participants? How will they be invited to participate?
   - **Methods.** What will participants be asked to do? Will you use any surveys, questionnaires or tests? What is the frequency and length of time involved for each subject?
   - **Risks Assessment**
     - **Risks.** What are the risks or potential discomforts (physical, psychological, time involved, social, legal, etc.) to participants? How will you minimize the risks?
     - **Benefits.** List any benefits to society or each participant?
   - **Protection of Privacy.** Will any identifiable information (e.g., names, telephone numbers, birthdates, email addresses) be collected? Will data be confidential or anonymous? If anonymous, describe how the data will be collected anonymously. If not anonymous, what procedures are in place for safeguarding confidentiality? Where will the data be stored? Who will have access to the data? What will you do with the data at the end of the study?
   - **Informed Consent Process.** Describe how you will inform participants about the purpose of the study, what they will be asked to do, that their participation is voluntary and they have the right to stop at any time.

2. **Vertebrate animal research:**
   - Briefly discuss POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES to vertebrate animal use and present a detailed justification for use of vertebrate animals.
   - Explain potential impact or contribution this research may have (see rules)
   - Detail all procedures to be used
     - Include methods used to minimize potential discomfort, distress, pain and injury to the animals during the course of experimentation. Under Massachusetts Law, an animal cannot be put under duress/stress. This greatly limits what can be done in a vertebrate animal project.
   - Detailed chemical concentrations and drug dosages. Very strict rules apply. No animal’s normal diet can be interrupted, etc. See rules.
   - Animal numbers, species, strain, sex, age, source, etc.
     - Include justification of the numbers planned for the research
   - Describe housing and oversight of daily care
   - Discuss disposition of the animals at the termination of the study

3. **Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents (see rules):**
   - Describe Biosafety Level Assessment process and resultant BSL determination
   - Give source of agent, source of specific cell line, etc.
   - Detail safety precautions
   - Discuss methods of disposal

4. **Hazardous Chemicals, Activities & Devices:**
   - Describe Risk Assessment process and results
   - Detail chemical concentrations and drug dosages
   - Describe safety precautions and procedures to minimize risk
   - Discuss methods of disposal