

The Research Proposal (K.Engebretson. 6/5/2010)

Your aim is to draft a research proposal which outlines the research that you would like to undertake for your thesis. The proposal is a plan detailing the area of research interest, identifying the hypothesis or research question(s) and describing the ways in which these will be investigated.

The format of the thesis proposal should include:

1. **A front cover**
Including title, candidate's name and student number, the name of the degree and the title of the research proposal.
2. **A contents page**
3. **An abstract of less than one page.**
This should summarise all of the details of the proposal so they can be read succinctly.
4. **The introduction and context.**
All research questions or hypotheses come from a particular context, therefore the introduction gives the context and background of the study. It includes relevant aspects of the candidate's background that may have led to the choice of this research, and an indication of why the problem is relevant for the discipline at this time. The purpose of the study is indicated against this background, and the significance of the research at this time should be explained. Clear definitions of relevant terms are given and there should be a precise presentation of the hypothesis or research questions.
5. **A review of the literature.**
The literature review brings together the work of key authors in the field or fields related to the study, and proposes a further background for the research. You do not need to provide a full literature review, but rather need to indicate the areas in which you will have to read for this thesis, and why these areas of reading are essential. You will need to indicate the key authors and ideas in each of the fields in which you will be reading, and show the connections between the fields. Finally you will need to show where your research fits into this bigger picture, what gaps it fills or how it will extend this literature.
6. **Theoretical framework.**
Define and justify the epistemology (eg positivist, constructivist, subjectivist, feminist) or the view of knowledge from which you will be working. This will lead you to your theoretical perspective (positivism, hermeneutics, phenomenology) to your general methodology (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) to specific methods (eg surveys, field work, interviews, focus groups) that you will use to collect the data. It will also suggest a framework for data analysis.
7. **Methodology and methods**
Describe:
 - From whom or what you will be collecting data (be specific).
 - The data collection techniques or instruments you will use.
 - The stages of your data collection.
 - Interview schedules, focus group questions, survey forms or any other instruments you will be using.
 - How you will analyse the data you collect.
8. **Limitations and delimitations (boundaries)**
What is the scope of this project, what are its limitations and on the other hand what do you think it will contribute to the discipline?
9. **Timeline.**
There should be a clear timeline for the completion of the thesis.
10. **References.**
The proposal needs to be written with attention to the appropriate academic standards and to provide a comprehensive reference list.
11. **The proposal should be no more than 25 pages.**