

NWU Business School
Research Proposal Submission Template (M&D Studies)

Registered Qualification (E.g., MBA: Master of Business Administration)	
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Surname		
First Names		
Student number		
Physical/Postal Address		
Tel (W)	Cell	E-Mail
Research title	Should be concise summary of the proposed study; maximum 12 to 15 words; reflect important variables (independent, dependent and locational variables; avoid us of words like analysis, investigation, exploration, study of, etc.	

Supervisor	
Co-Supervisor	

Introduction (Preferably 1 page or less)
The introduction lays the groundwork by citing origin of the idea/problem, why topic is important to discipline, country (SA), region and globe. Have others studied this area and is there gap worth exploring?

Problem statement (preferably 1 page)
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Reflect what the problem is? The context where the problem exist (affected society, theoretical problem, etc), what is the **extent and magnitude of the problem** (can it be quantified? any statistics associated with the problem or qualified)?; why is the problem important for researching?; have other authors identified or addressed this problem before?; If already researched then what is the research gap to be addressed by this research?

Rationale and significance of the study (Preferably not more than half page)

In what way will the study make a contribution to existing knowledge, existing practices and/or policies? State the anticipated outcomes of the study in relation to theory, practice, policy, and personal learning. Identify social groups and academic disciplines that might benefit from the study. Whom or what industry will if benefit?

Aim and objectives of the study (Preferably not more than half a page)

Reflect the main purpose of conducting the research. Broadly, what is the study meant to accomplish? It is a broad statement of what the research intends to achieve or contribute towards.

Objectives are achievable and outcome-based research intentions. They are concise statements that describe what the study will accomplish. Reflect on specifics, and provide a statement or statements on what the study achieves at completion. Words such as discover, explain, evaluate, determine are useful in stating objectives. Where objectives are numerous, they should be numbered (restrict objectives to preferably 4 or fewer. All objectives should help achieve research aim (alignment).

Research Questions/Hypotheses

Research Questions:

These are the questions that will be addressed by the study. Research questions **MUST** be unambiguous. Research questions guide the study because addressing the research questions addresses the research objectives. Each question should be aligned/ linked to the research objective.

Hypotheses:

Hypotheses are relevant for quantitative studies. A hypothesis statement predicts the relationship between variables. It is an assumption that is made up front. An example from an experimental study could be: The application of fertiliser to maize increases yields. Hypotheses need to be very clear and testable.

Literature review (Preferably three pages for proposal purposes. Could be longer in different departments. The more sources consulted/stated/cited the better)

Reflect information from studies that have been carried out addressing the stated problem or similar? What are the conclusions reached by these studies? What are the gaps in the existing literature related to the problem? This also partly clarifies why it is important to conduct the study and whether the problem is researchable. Examples of sources of literature include peer reviewed journal articles (very important), working papers and reports (government, NGOs, private sector etc.). Please use the Harvard referencing method in the text and

reference list. Consult mainly sources younger than 10 years except classical sources where applicable. Important to cite both general literature and theory that foregrounds/informs this research.

Definition of KEY concepts

Clearly define the key concepts in your study (check key variables in the research title and key variables in the problem statement). Please make sure that operational definitions are reflected where appropriate (contextualize general definitions to your study, e.g., the universal definition of youth might differ from South African legislated definition or universal definition of SME might vary from South African. Specify what is most applicable in this research and why?). Reference.

Research Paradigm, Methods and Methodologies

Paradigm

Clearly state the paradigm (the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed) that foregrounds your research project (e.g., positivist, constructivist/interpretive or critical). Why is any of these paradigms most relevant in studying this research and not the other? Reference.

Research method

Flowing from the paradigm stated above, state whether the research will be qualitative, quantitative or combines the two (mixed methods) and why? Or with the study be qualitative sequential quantitative? Reference.

Research Design

What research design follows the chosen method/s (e.g., case study, cross-section, descriptive, experimental, exploratory, historical, longitudinal, observational, philosophical, sequential, grounded theory, ethnographic, etc. or a mix of different designs). Clearly state the rationale for choosing the research design. Why is this / these research designs the most appropriate for the study? Reference.

Demarcation/delimitation of study

Usually a study covers a geographic area which can be clearly defined. If the area cannot be defined geographically, then the demarcation context needs to be specified. Is it a theoretical demarcation? Reference and use empirical sources to clarify the area, e.g. Statistics SA Census, Demarcation Board maps, etc.

Research Methodologies/Processes

Population

Who is the population of a study, i.e., from who sample is to be drawn. Check the title of the study once more for clear reference to who is to be studied. Inclusion and exclusion of units from the study population must be unambiguous as this affects the ability to generalise from the study because generalisations can only be made to the population or similar groups. The units of the population are the units of analysis that are used for sampling. Collectively, the study units make the population of the study.

Sample method/technique and sample size

Who from the population defined above will be selected for participation in the study? (E.g., the population can be females admitted at a particular hospital but the sample be only mother who gave birth in the past two weeks).

Remember quantitative sampling require probabilistic/representative sampling methods like random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified random. Define the chosen methods and justify why they are the most appropriate. Note the concept of saturation for qualitative study and generalizable sample sizes in quantitative studies. Referencing is very important.

Data collection instruments

What data collection instrument are to be used in this research and why? E.g., structured questionnaire, standardized questionnaire, interview guide. Where is information for the development of these instruments to be found? How credible/ reliable are the instruments going to be (e.g., piloting of the questionnaire. Check application of other validation processes)?

Data collection/fieldwork

How will the field be accessed? The role of informants? Are there assisting fieldworkers to be recruited and trained? Will data be collected with telephonic interviews or face to face? Define processes to be used and explain why it is the most relevant. Reference.

Data coding and analysis

How will data be captured? How will coding be done? What is the instrument/programme to be used for data analysis methods (E.g., NVIVO, ATLAS TI, SPSS)? What data analysis techniques are to be performed (Descriptive or measures of central tendencies? [e.g., mean, median, SD, etc] and why? Or will it be inferential statistical analysis for drawing inferences and federalisations like hypothesis testing [Chi-Squared tests, ANOVA?] factor analysis, correlations or regression)? Why are these the most relevant techniques and how will the help respond to the research questions and objectives? Reference.

Ethical consideration

State the ethical implications of this research and how you will address those (E.g., will minors be interviewed and how will you make sure that their rights are protected? Will you seek informed consent, guarantee anonymity, etc?, What do all these mean and imply? Define each and Reference.

Outline of the dissertation

Show the reader how the entire dissertation will be broken down in various chapters. Briefly explain the purpose and focus of each chapter.

Research plan

It is useful to put together a research plan that reflects the major project activities and anticipated dates for carrying out these activates. Check how Gantt charts are composed. It is equally very important to observe this plan so try and apply your mind to make it realistic and operational.

Limitations of the research

What are things that can compromise the realization of your research plans? Possible limitations to achieving the research agenda? Look at methodological, coverage and generalizability limitations as well as risks to credibility of your research.

References

List all the references that have been used in the text through this proposal. Use the Harvard referencing method. Do not include sources that have been read but not cited in the text.

HDC Digital Submission

Please summarise your proposal in the following categories in no more than **250 words**. This will be information that you post on the HDC Digital summary online.

Problem statement**Aims and objectives****Research methods****Research Ethics****Significance of the study**

APPROVAL PROCESSES

1. SUPERVISOR

(Tick & sign appropriate boxes)

I certify that I am fully satisfied with the originality and science of this proposed study. I have the necessary expertise to supervise the study and hereby present it to the department of at the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences (FBMS) at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signature Supervisor		Date	
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