Research Proposal: Master’s and Doctoral Study

The proposal should be a **maximum of 10 pages** excluding the cover page, references and appendices.

NB: All applicants must complete this cover page (typed)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Full names and surname** |  |
| **Student number** |  |
| **Telephone number** |  |
| **Email address** |  |
| **Supervisor** |  |
| **Co-Supervisor if applicable** |  |
| **Degree**  (double-click the tick box and fill to mark your choice) | ⬜ MA Clinical Psychology  ⬜ MA Counselling Psychology  ⬜ MA Research Psychology  ⬜ MA Psychology  ⬜ PhD/DPhil Psychology |
| **Status of proposal** | ⬜ Initial Proposal (when submitted to supervisor and readers)  ⬜ Final Proposal (when submitted to Rescom)  ⬜ Approved Proposal (when submitted to RIMS) |

# PROPOSED TITLE (The title should accurately and briefly reflect the contents of the study):

Please consult the American Psychological Association’s (APA) (2010, p.23) guidelines on formulating a title: “A title should summarize the main idea of the manuscript simply and, if possible, with style. It should be a concise statement of the main topic and should identify the variables or theoretical issues under investigation and the relationship between them”

# Brief description and statement of the research question:

X

1. **Please stipulate three to five keywords describing your research:**

X

# Introduction and rationale

Include the following (headings are not required):

* Brief introduction and contextualisation of the study
* Rationale/motivation
* Which leads to the problem statement – what bothers you or are you curious about that warrant a research response? What is the gap/niche for this study?
* Which leads to the study goal/aim, then the objectives (not action steps).

# Summary of Preliminary Literature Review

Provide a synthesis of the relevant literature in a manner, which demonstrates that you are familiar with the key authors, texts and, central concepts relevant to your study. You need to show how your study will contribute to what we already know, to fill the niche/gap identified in the introduction.

Focus on situating your research within the academic domain and substantiating the research question.

# Proposed Research Methodology and Method

Provide a detailed, practical explanation of your research plan – why (methodology – logic of the method) and how (method) you intend to do the study. Avoid lengthy theoretical explanations (e.g. definitions of what a sample is), except where you are using less familiar methods. Avoid direct quotations from literature, but do substantiate statements with citations, using *specialised* relevant methodology literature (particularly at PhD level).

Methodology is important and may warrant considerable space to adequately describe. As a general guide, provide:

* A brief introduction to the methodology (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, or mixed).
* Explicate the specific research design/approach (e.g., exploratory, descriptive, case study, narrative, phenomenology)
* Define the population, sample, sampling method and recruitment activities. Be as specific as possible, e.g. give intended sample size and motivation for sampling method.
* Describe the methods of data collection (tools, recording, etc). For quantitative tools, provide evidence of reliability and validity of the tools. For qualitative approaches, provide examples of the questions you intend to ask participants. Fully describe any other type of information (e.g., blogs, photographs, drawings) as well as the way you intend to collect these. Indicate how these types of information will assist in answering the research questions.
* Describe how you will analyse your data.
* For qualitative studies, briefly explain how you will enhance quality of your study.
* The method you will use will be pre-determined by the research question. Make sure that the method you choose be well suited to address the research question.

# Ethical Considerations

For all research involving human participants (and any other research with ethical considerations, such as research on animals, human remains, etc) careful consideration must be given to the ethical risks and the methods to reduce such risk. As a norm for research involving human participants, we require written informed consent, voluntary participation, and participant anonymity and/or confidentiality. Also specify how you will store data in a secure manner to ensure the protection of participant anonymity/confidentiality. Ethics should comply with the guidelines provided by the Faculty Ethics Committee

# Original Contribution to Scientific Knowledge (For PhD proposals only)

Provide a rigorous motivation regarding how the study will make an original contribution to the **knowledge base** of the discipline/topic. Be sure to emphasise the intended theoretical and/or epistemological contribution/s of the study, rather than its value to issues of practice, policy, and so forth.

# Brief structure of study

In a bulleted list, provide envisaged chapter titles.

# List of references (Please begin “References” on a new page)

List ALL references in alphabetical order. Follow the most recent APA (2010) guidelines (<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html> or <https://library.westernsydney.edu.au/main/sites/default/files/cite_APA.pdf> or <http://blog.apastyle.org/>).

List only works that are cited in the body of the proposal.

**REFERENCES**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association