

Department of Psychology Thesis Proposal Guidelines

Objectives:

1. To provide standardized guidelines deriving from current grant applications for the Masters and Doctoral theses proposals.
2. To identify a format that will ensure a more standardized assessment of the scientific quality of the proposed research by the supervisory committee.
3. To provide an opportunity to students to gain experience in grant writing and have a formalized review process to evaluate the quality of the proposed research similar to that of a granting agency. The students will learn to design an investigation(s) which starts from a wide and analytical knowledge base, proposed imaginative and testable hypotheses, relies upon exemplary investigative procedures, and aims to provide data critical to an identified area in psychology.
4. To develop skills in communicating scientific ideas in an oral and in a written format.

Format

1. General Presentation

The proposal should be considered as a finished document that has both scientific merit as well as feasibility. The proposal should be typed and doubled spaced. The desirable length is 10 pages and must not exceed 20 pages. Grammatical conventions of standard edited English should be followed, with correct spelling and punctuation. As well, the proposal should be formatted according to APA Fourth Edition requirements. Append (in addition to the 10-20 pages of description) a list of references cited and instruments. The required ethical approval forms will be signed following committee approval. Use the following headings to describe the research in enough detail to allow informed assessment by your committee.

Summary

Provide a 1 page summary of your proposal. Include concise explanations of the general objectives of the proposed research, the work undertaken to achieve these objectives, and the scientific contribution of the research.

Objectives

Briefly state the explicit objectives of your proposed research such that the overall purpose of the research can be evaluated.

Theoretical Context

Identify the theoretical perspectives from which your research derives in the context of relevant scholarly literature. Identify and explain the importance, originality, and the anticipated contribution to knowledge of the proposed research.

Method

Describe the methodological approach of the proposed research, including subjects, measures, and procedures for data collection that will be used to achieve the stated objectives. In this section, you need to justify the choice of method and explain the specific instruments to be used. The method should flow logically from the stated objectives and the theory.

Data Analysis

Describe your proposed data analysis and explain how these analyses will be used to assess the stated objective.

Time Line

Provide a proposed schedule for data collection, data analysis, and data write up.

Evaluation Criteria

1. Is the overall purpose of the investigation worthwhile and clearly stated?
2. Is the analysis of the background data and theory succinct, complete, and logical? Is the research literature that is relevant to the topic adequately covered?
3. Is there a clear statement of a problem to be addressed and do the hypotheses follow from the existing knowledge base?
4. Are the research strategy, experimental design, the techniques, the participants and methods of data analysis clearly described? Can the research questions be answered with this methodology? Are the sampling and sample size explained?
5. In what way is the proposal original? What advances in knowledge, theory, research or practise will this research result in?
6. Are there any ethical concerns associated with this proposal?
7. Is the proposal written according to grammatical conventions of standard edited English, with correct spelling and punctuation and does it maintain a consistent and appropriate level of formality? Is the paper clearly written, effectively organized, and logically developed?
8. What are the costs associated with the research? Does the student have the funding resources that are needed to complete the thesis?