



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

**GUIDELINES FOR WRITING ACADEMIC
RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS IN THE SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS**

SEPTEMBER, 2012

Part I: Structure of Research Proposal

A) Title page to include:

i. Title

- A concise statement of the main topic and should identify the variables.
- Should be a reflection of the contents of the document.
- Fully explanatory when standing alone.
- Should not contain redundancies such as ‘a study of.....or ‘an investigation of.....
- Abbreviations should not appear in the title.
- Scientific names should be in italics.
- Should contain 12 to 15 words.
- Avoid a topic calling for a background of knowledge that you do not have.
- The topic must be one that addresses a felt need and one that you are able to get enough material on to ensure thorough coverage.
- The selection of the topic should be justified on social, scientific or policy grounds.

ii. Author’s name and affiliation

- Avoid use of words like ‘By’ ‘from’.....
- Preferred order of names- start with 1st, middle followed by last name.
- Full names should be used, initials should be avoided.
- Titles like Dr. should not appear in the names.

Affiliation should be well illustrated i.e. ‘*A research proposal/thesis submitted to the Department ofin the School of..... in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of of ... (Put the University).*’

The month and year should follow at the bottom of the caption.

Note:

The cover page should include the title, author and affiliation (all on one page) and centered.

B) Declaration

Should include space for both the candidate’s and the supervisor’s declaration and duly signed.

This proposal/thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or any other award.

Name (Put qualifications)
Signature Date

This proposal/thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors

Name..... Signature.....Date.....

Name..... Signature.....Date.....

Note: Paginate using roman numbers starting with the declaration page.

C) Abstract

- This is a brief statement of the problem, objectives of the study, target population, sampling technique and sample size, instruments, data collection, data processing and analysis, key findings and recommendations.
- Should not exceed 500 words and should be one paragraph and single line spacing.

D) Table of contents

- The rubric should be in title case and single spaced.
- The chapter titles should be in caps and bold.
- The subheadings should follow each chapter title and should be in title case.
- Subheading of rows should be – Chapters & Pages indicated once at the top of each column e.g.,

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	Page
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	2

Reference

Appendices

E) List of Tables

F) List of Figures

G) Abbreviations and Acronyms

H) Operational Definition of terms

- Define terms in the text that are not common.

**CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION**

This chapter should include the following;

1.1 Background

- Provide a clear description of the background information/situation to the problem.
- Describe the situation as it is currently highlighting important issues to be addressed.
- Include information such as the problem area and major research gaps in terms of policy and development issues related to the research.
- Should show understanding and genesis of the problem.
- Talk about the global perspective followed by the local scenario.
- Talk about the target group in the study.
- Should be approximately 4-6 pages

1.2 Statement of the problem

- Provide a clear description of the problem that is to be investigated i.e indicate exactly what the problem is. Exactly what is the curiosity or the interest which you are trying to satisfy?
- Indicate why and how it is a problem.
- Give information to support this e.g. by use of statistics or evidence. This should be derived from background information to illustrate connectivity.

- Clearly show the knowledge gap that the research intends to close.
- Ideas from the theoretical foundation are conscripted and used to ‘paint the problem red.’ Present and analyse, with a high level of clarity, the problem of the study and then specifically focus it by narrowing it down to the aspect your study will contribute solution.
- **Relevant questions to be answered here are:**
 - What exactly is the problem to which you are trying to contribute a solution? Present the problem explicitly and elaborately, clarify and delineate it. Specify the nature of the problem and, if necessary limit, the scope of the investigation.
 - Specifically, what problem in economics, or in any area, or in the society/community, or in your job, etc, are you intending to, or interested in, contributing a solution through your research?
 - How and why is this problem? What are the current adverse consequences of the problem? What are the impacts of the problem? What are likely to be the consequences of this problem if a solution for it is not sort for now? In other words, why is it important to address the problem?
 - Information from literature should help you delineate, clarify and enrich your problem statement; it should **rarely** be the source of your problem since you should aim at contributing solution to a real life problem
- **Note:**
 - The process calls for critical reading and inquiry into the problem area.
 - Reading relevant literature, talking to those who might use the study and brainstorming with those who have research and training experiences, or specialized knowledge of the research area, helps to clarify the problem and focus on a few questions.
- Length- Maximum 1 – 1.5 pages.

1.3 Objectives of the study

- One general objective which should be in line with the title.
- Specific objectives- have to be in line with the variables the candidates hypothesize to influence the phenomenon being investigated.
- Should be related to the general objective.
- Should not be questions in the questionnaire.

1.4 Research Questions

- They should be in line with the specific objectives and equal in number.
- Have to be numbered (i, ii, iii.....).
- Should be questions and not statements.

1.5 Significance of the study

- Should illustrate why the researcher is conducting the research and whom it shall benefit.

1.6 Scope of the study

- This is a kind of a disclaimer. It should cite the focus of the study: geographical area or target group/ population.

1.7 Limitations of the study

- Not a must for a proposal.
- Has to be there in the final thesis/project report.

- Indicate the challenges encountered in the study that may have limited the study.

Note:

- Paragraphing should be consistent. Either leave space or indent between paragraphs.
- Spacing and indenting should not be used together.
- One sentence paragraphs are unacceptable.
- A paragraph should have a minimum of five (5) sentences.

Table of contents should be followed by:

- List of tables labeled as per chapter in which they appear e.g Table 1.1 for first table in chapter one
- List of figures - Should be labeled as per the chapters in which they are found e.g. the first figure in chapter one should be labeled as Figure 1.1

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter should include:

2.1 Introduction

- Talk about what the chapter contains.

2.2 Theoretical literature

- Review the theoretical literature relevant to the problem being investigated showing clearly the linkage of literature review to the research questions/objectives.
- Theoretical literature should be reviewed chronologically i.e from the earliest to the latest.

2.3 Empirical Literature

- Review the empirical literature relevant to the problem being investigated showing clearly the linkage of literature review to the research questions/objectives.
- Indicate what has been done by other researchers including the methodologies used and identify gaps.
- The hypothesized variables may be subheadings of the literature review to form a framework that would help in analysis.
- Empirical literature should be reviewed chronologically i.e from the earliest to the latest.
- Cite 3-5 references per key section in the text.
- Use either APA or Harvard style of citation.
- Consistency is important in citation.
- Each key variable should be 2-3 pages long if the style of review is as per each variable.

2.4 Critique of the existing literature relevant to the study.

2.5 Research gaps/A critic of literature

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter should indicate;

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research design- Indicate type of research, justify the choice of type of research by citing authority.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

- **Analyze the research problem using theory.** use economics' theoretical tools. ***In microeconomics, examples:*** Demand and supply, production and cost, theories of market structure, customer behavior (under certainty and uncertainty). For example *if you want to determine the effect of a change in price on demand for a commodity, the theory of consumer behavior leads to a demand function.* Similarly, if you want to determine the effect of infrastructure on agricultural production, the theory of producer behavior helps in modeling. ***In macroeconomics,*** examples include: Aggregate demand and supply, consumption expenditure, investment demand, money demand, balance of payment, growth models, and models of unemployment. *If you want to investigate the influence of financial depth on economic growth, you could employ growth*
- Provide a theoretical link between the objectives and the methods and procedures.
- Identify relationships, or types of relationships, that are needed to achieve the objectives.
- Identify relevant variables within relationships.

Note: *If the theory relevant to the problem is well developed in its general form, it will invariably require some adaptation to "fit" the individual research problem. When you conceptualize, we select general ideal types from the body of theory and create our own ideal types within the specific research activity.*

3.4 Estimating Model/Model Specification

- Specify the econometric model: static/dynamic, linear/non-linear, structural/reduced form
- Discuss why the specification is suited to address your research question. For example, how is the model related to the theoretical model (or conceptual framework) and previous studies
- Present the equation to be estimated-dependent variable and independent variables. Why are some variables included and others not?
- Discuss the econometric method to be employed (e.g. OLS, GLS, NLLS, MoM, GMM or MLE) and why it is appropriate. *The appropriate estimator will depend on the nature of variable and relationships being studied. For example, if the dependent variable is a binary outcome, a logit or probit estimator maybe appropriate.* And if the objective is to establish whether there is a long run relationship between fiscal deficits and current account deficits, a time series model maybe appropriate.
- Discuss the potential econometric problems that might be encountered and indicate how they might be resolved. For example, in a study of the impact of health on productivity (earnings), simultaneity and measurement errors are likely to be major concern.
- Present any tests to be conducted and why. For example, time series property test, diagnostic tests, stability tests etc.

- 3.5 Definition and measurement of variable: Define variables and how you are going to measure them i.e unit of measurement.
- 3.6 Study area: A profile of study area required
- 3.7 Target Population; clearly identify the population and the target population. Justify the target population.
- 3.8 Sampling frame; Justify the choice.
Sampling technique and sample size- illustrate understanding of the technique and the reasons for the choice.
- 3.9 Research Instruments: interview schedules, questionnaire etc
- 3.10 Pilot study: Reliability, validity, practicability
Pilot study: depends on the instrument being used.
- 3.11 Data collection procedure. Face to face interviews, focused group discussions, administer questionnaires among others
- 3.12 Data processing and analysis.
-Talk about how data will be analyzed to achieve each specific objectives
-Estimations, interpretations, hypothesis testing

Note: Some of the sections in this chapter three might not be in the proposal depending on whether the study is going to use primary or secondary data.

REFERENCES

- Should be well done using either APA style or Harvard style

APPENDICES

- i) Research Instruments
- ii) Tables
- iii) Figures
- iv) Letters of introduction
- v) Budget **
- vi) Work plan**

Note:

- i) Unit of analysis should be based on the research questions or objectives and should capture the independent variables.
- ii) Tables should have no vertical lines (use simple formatting)
- iii) Table titles should be at the top of the tables.
- iv) Tables copied from elsewhere should have source below them.
- v) Any table generated by the researcher should not have the source quoted.
- vi) Figure titles should be at the bottom of the figures.
- vii) Figures can have different shadings.
- viii) Discussion should follow the tables or figures.

EVALUATION GUIDELINE

- (i) Shall be guided by the guidelines on the structure of the proposal.
- (ii) The researcher must come up with original work. The School maintains a compendium of all research work done for reference. Check in the library
- (iii) Candidates shall be required to submit a concept paper of their proposals to the Departments' lecturers/professors for review and guidance.
- (iv) The concept paper should be a maximum of 20 page double line spacing.
- (v) .

PRESENTATION STYLE

- i) Proposal length shall not exceed 30 pages (from chapter 1) double spaced excluding references.
- ii) Referencing system should either be Harvard or APA but consistently used.
- iii) Font – Times New Roman 12 should be used. Fancy fonts should be avoided.
- iv) There should be a margin of 50mm on the left hand and a 25mm margin on the right hand side of the A4 paper
- v) A 25mm margin should be on the top and bottom sides of the proposal

MODE OF PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

- i) The presentations must be in PowerPoint.
- ii) Quality slides (legible from a distance of 20 feet) giving a summary of the whole proposal/thesis should be presented.
- iii) Slides should not exceed 15.
- iv) Masters proposal presentations shall be limited to 15 minutes.
- v) PhD proposal presentations shall be limited to 20 minutes.

PART II: STRUCTURE OF PROJECT REPORT/THESIS

The Thesis/Report will include the above three chapters plus:

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

- Style of presentation – presentation of raw data followed by discussion
- Should be guided by the methodology. Unit of analysis should be based on the research questions or objectives and should capture the independent variables.
- Tables should have no vertical lines (use simple formatting)
- Table titles should be at the top of the tables.
- Tables copied from elsewhere should have source below them.
- Any table generated by the researcher should not have the source.
- Figure titles should be at the bottom of the figures.
- Figures can have different shadings.
- Discussion should follow the results.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 INTRODUCTION: A brief on the chapter
- 5.2 SUMMARY: This is an extended abstract
- 5.3 CONCLUSIONS: Must be derived from the summary
- 5.4 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE
- 5.5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS: Should be derived from the conclusions
- 5.6 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

REFERENCES

Thesis should have reference

APPENDICES

- vii) Instruments
- viii) Tables
- ix) Figures
- x) Letters of introduction
- xi) Budget **
- xii) Work plan**

** Not required for thesis

3. EVALUATION GUIDELINE

- Shall be guided by the guidelines on the structure of the thesis.

A) Pre-requisites

- i) The Researcher must come up with original work. The Department shall maintain a compendium of all research work done for reference.
- ii) Candidates shall be required to submit synopsis (for Masters) and a concept paper (for PhD) of their proposals to the relevant departments for review by the Chairpersons of the departments.
- iii) The synopsis should be 1 page and the concept paper should be 2-5 pages.
- iv) Candidates shall be required to discuss their concept paper with prospective supervisor before submitting to the department.
- v) For PhD candidates, evidence of research work at Masters Level shall be required otherwise they shall be required to carry out independent studies.

- vi) In cases where there is no evidence of research, candidates shall be deemed not admissible into the program.

B) Graduate School grading guidelines shall be followed

- Thesis/projects shall be graded in accordance with the applicable clause of the University and the Graduate School Regulations for PhD and Masters Degrees.
- Scores for thesis shall be on the basis of pass/fail taking into consideration objective oriented evaluation.
- Awarding of marks/scoring shall be based on the Graduate School project/thesis assessment sheet that already exists.
- Assessment of PhD proposals shall be conducted by the School postgraduate committee panel members.
- Submission and evaluation of the PhD thesis shall be guided by the University Statutes and the Graduate School Guidelines.

4 PRESENTATION STYLE

- i. Proposal length shall not exceed 20 pages (from chapter 1) double spaced excluding bibliography and references. Under special circumstances a candidate may be allowed to exceed the limit.
- ii. Referencing system should either be APA.
- iii. Font – Times New Roman 12 should be used. Fancy fonts should be avoided.
- iv. There should be a margin of 50mm on the left hand and a 25mm margin on the right hand side of the A4 paper
- v. A 25mm margin should be on the top and bottom sides of the paper
- vi. Every copy of the thesis should be bound in black. The spine of the thesis should be embossed in gold with the names of the candidate, the degree and the year. The writing should read from the bottom to the top of the spine.

5. MODE OF THESIS PRESENTATION

- The presentations must be in PowerPoint.
- Quality slides (legible from a distance of 20 feet) giving a summary of the whole thesis should be presented.
- Slides should not exceed 15.
- PhD thesis presentations shall be limited to 20 minutes.
- **Note:** PhD candidates may submit their research proposals once they are ready but within three months after their coursework unless under special circumstances.