



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

**GUIDELINES FOR WRITING RESEARCH
PROPOSAL AND THESIS**

SEPTEMBER 2012 EDITION

PREAMBLE

This working document is a general guide for students to write research proposals, projects and theses.

This document also will help supervisors in guiding postgraduate students in matters related to research preparation, thesis production and project work.

In addition, the document explains ways of maintaining quality supervision among postgraduate students and their supervisors (see section 9 – 12). It also hints on how students registered for Graduate Courses in this school can complete their courses within the stipulated two years. This is only possible if the students and supervisors work hard and in an enabling environment. How this environment can be obtained has been described and explained in the document (see 9 and 9.1, a & b).

In order to produce an agreeable guide, it is proposed that SHS, BPS and the Dean of the School exhaustively discuss this document.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION AND UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES ON ACADEMIC RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND THESES OF HEALTH SCIENCE TYPE

1.1 Supervision

Every department shall formulate and execute its own policy on the identification and allocation of supervisors. In principle, every student will have a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 supervisors, depending on need. The lead supervisor shall be from the department where the student is registered. In exceptional cases more than 3 supervisors may be allowed, provided there is proper justification.

A supervisor may be drawn from outside the department, School or even University, in which case the Board of Postgraduate Studies (BPS) must certify that he or she is competent in the candidate's area of study.

1.2 Responsibilities of Supervisors

As principle resource persons to the students, supervisors shall:

- Be available for consultation at least once per month
- Respond to any written materials from their students within at most 2 weeks
- Guide students to relevant literature and their sources
- Link students to researchers working in related fields
- Discuss and critically evaluate the candidate's findings and ideas
- Advise candidates on the form and structure of theses
- Train candidates in the conventions of scholarly presentations
- Advise students on rules governing their specific degrees
- Enhance the quality of a student's work
- Ensure that written reports progress of a student's studies are submitted as required by University regulations
- Ensure that a student presents seminars at appropriate levels as required by the University regulations.

In the absence of a supervisor for a substantially long time, arrangements must be made by the Chairman of Department to ensure continuity in Supervision.

By placing his/her signature on the title page of the thesis, a supervisor is certifying that the thesis represents the work of the candidate that was carried out under his/her supervision and is ready for official examination.

1.3 Role of SPH – BPS

With the decentralisation of proposal development and review at departments, SPH – BPS will be concerned with:-

Clearing and forwarding of proposals to University Graduate School (GS), strictly adhering to the school's format.

Receive and forward progress reports.

Receive notices of submission endorse external examiners and appoint examination board members.

Attend to other matters that have bearing on postgraduate studies and that are within its mandate e.g. scrutinising new or revised academic programmes.

2. PROPOSAL FORMAT

2.1 Introduction

This guide is written with the awareness that some students have hitherto experienced difficulties in writing proposals and theses. The main weaknesses are:-

- i. Unfocussed proposal titles leading to internal/inconsistence and therefore rejected by School of Graduate Studies (SGS).
- ii. Unclear statement of the problem
- iii. Incoherent literature review
- iv. Unclear study design and choice of methods of data analysis.

2.2 Content

(a) Cover Page

The page should not be paginated
All wording should be singled-spaced
Items will be arranged on the following sequence:

- Title should be focused, informative and not more than 20 words
- Full names of student followed by highest qualification in standard abbreviation in brackets.
- Registration number of student below the name
- Signature and date Name of Department below the signature line

Then follows the writing:-

“A research proposal submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of (specify, eg. Master of Science) in the School of public Health of Kenyatta University.”

(b) Student Declaration Page

To have the following writings:

“This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.” Then the student signs above his/her name and registration number, followed by the date.

e.g.

Signature	Signature	Date
	Name Kinyoi, Daniel Mumo	
	E55/9307/2004	

Each major section e.g. INTRODUCTION should start on a separate page. All sub and sub-sub sections should be in lower case (not capital letters)

3.1 CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

- (a) **Background to the study**
Gives specific gaps that are considered to be the root of the problem. This should be maximum one and half pages
 - (b) **Problem statement**
To be precise and focused
 - (c) **Justification (Precise and focused)**
 - (d) **Research Questions**
 - (e) **Hypotheses**
 - (f) **Objectives**
Should be clearly stated and achievable
 - (g) **Significance and Anticipated Output**
To explain the benefits and the beneficiaries of the findings of the study
 - (h) **Delimitation and limitation**
Gives the extent to which the study will be carried out
 - (i) **Conceptual/Theoretical Framework (where applicable)**
Some studies especially laboratory oriented may not fit into Conceptual/Theoretical frames). Where applicable it gives conceptualized view of the study problem. If a certain theory fits into the study, it should be indicated and discussed.
- } To relate to objectives and testable

3.2 CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

The student should demonstrate evidence of understanding of current research on the subject under investigation and show clear gaps in knowledge that will be discussed. Appropriate themes for this chapter can be developed using conceptual framework content. Thus, relevant themes to the study and derived review should be consistent with the requirements of the title (internal consistency) and aspects of the introduction e.g. background to the study.

3.3 CHAPTER III - MATERIALS AND METHODS

This Chapter highlights methodological details appropriate to the study. Thus:

- (a) **Research Design**
State and justify the chosen design

- (b) Variables**
Explain the independent and dependent variables
- (c) Location of the Study**
State where the study will be done (locate) and why it was chosen
- (d) Study Population**
Describe the study population; describing specifically who will be part of the study. (Occasionally “target population” may be mentioned)
- (e) Sampling Techniques**
Explain the sampling techniques for each respondent (subject) to be selected
- (f) Sample Size Determination**
Describe how the sample size will be computed.
- (g) Construction and Research Instruments (Optional)**
Explain the instruments that will be used in the study and how they will be constructed
- (h) Pilot Study or Pre-Testing**
Describe how data will be collected and how pilot centres will be selected). It is here that the following issues will be discussed:
- (i) Validity**
Explain how validity of the instruments will be established
- (j) Reliability**
Show and explain how reliability of the instruments will be established
N.B. IF using standardized test, quote test and existing validity and reliability levels
- (k) Data Collection Techniques**
Explain how field data collection will be done
- (l) Data Analysis**
Explain the methods that will be applied in analyzing the data after field work
- (l) Logistical and Ethical Considerations**
If any

3.4 REFERENCES

References should be single spaced and listed alphabetically in the reference list. For citation within the text the format of author and year of publication is recommended. Whichever style a department adopts, it must be internationally recognized and consistently upheld through out the document.

3.5 APPENDICES

Will include such items as work plan, budget, maps, questionnaires, etc. numbered sequentially as 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, etc.

4. PROPOSAL PRESENTATION DETAILS

(a) Typing

- 4.1** All proposals in the school should be typed in font 12(Times New Roman) on A4 size paper, double spaced, and on one side of the page.
- 4.2** Page margins will be as follows: left 40 mm (1.5 inches) all other sizes 25 mm (1 inch)
- 4.3** Page numbering e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc should be top center and start on the **INTRODUCTION** page. All preceding pages except cover page should have Roman Numbering system (i.e. i, ii, iii, etc)
- 4.4** The proposal should not exceed 20 pages for a masters thesis and 30 pages for Ph.D. thesis, excluding references and appendices
- 4.5** Pagation: From title page to abbreviations/acronyms page, the numbering will be in Roman lower case numbers (I, ii etc) in a consecutive manner.

(a) Note that the text (from Chapter 1 to Appendices) should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numbers,, the page number should appear in the centre of the upper margin of the page.

(b) Tense

Future tense should be used in writing proposals

5. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL TO SPH – BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Three spiral bound copies, duly signed by the student and all supervisors and accompanied by departmental minutes certifying that appropriate seminars were held, will be handed to SHS –BPS by the departmental representative to the board. No proposal will be handled if not accompanied by the respective departmental representative.

6. PROGRESS REPORTS AND NOTICES OF THESIS SUBMISSION

All supervisors are expected to sign and endorse the progress and notice of submission forms. If however a supervisor is not available, the main supervisor's signature shall suffice, but names of the other supervisors must be written in their specified positions. A note on why any of them cannot sign must be attached.

However it is preferred that supervisors who are out of the country should write to confirm their approval. A copy of duly signed forms should also be left at the respective department for filing.

Abstracts attached to the notices of thesis submission should not exceed one page, must be single-spaced, and should bear the student's name, registration number and the title of the thesis.

7. THESIS FORMAT

The standard format shall comprise:-

7.1 Title Page

Same as in proposal

7.2 Author

Full name of student should appear as it is in the registration form, while the registration number should be written below the name, together with the name of the Department, then follows the writing "A research thesis submitted for the degree of(specify e.g. Master of Science) in the School of Health Sciences of Kenyatta University". Then the date e.g. April 2006.

7.3 Declaration Page

Should be similar to that in the proposal except that the word "Proposal" is replaced with "thesis", followed by the declaration words "This is my original work" (as in the proposal).

7.4 Dedication Statement

Not exceeding 25 words for Masters Thesis and 30 words for Ph.D Thesis. This follows declaration, beginning on a separate page.

7.5 Acknowledgement

This, begins on a separate page, should follow dedication and not exceeding 200 words.

7.6 Table of Contents

This begins on a new page. It should assist the reader to know quickly and clearly, how the thesis is organized. There must be consistency in the use of headings and sub-headings.

7.7 List of Tables

This follows the table of contents, beginning on a separate page. Numbering should be: Table 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc for tables on Chapter 1. Similarly Table 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 Table 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 Table 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 Table 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 for those in other respective chapters.

7.8 List of figures

This immediately follows the list of tables and on a separate page. Numbering should be figure 1.1., 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2 ... etc, according to the chapters.

7.9 Use of Tables, Figures and Plates

Tables, Figures and Plates may be included within the text or appear on separate pages. If on separate pages, however, they should be placed near the text, which refers to them.

N.B.

- No table, figure or plate should occupy more than one page. They should also fit within the margins prescribed earlier.
- Each table or figure should have a full caption.
- Tables, figures and plates should be numbered in sequence and be cited by a number in the text (numbering sequence is as shown in the previous section on proposals).
- A table that is oversized may be divided so that a portion appears on two pages, which face each other. If this method is used, the entire title and footnotes, if any, appear on the left hand side of a table.
- Photographs should be scanned and printed on A4 paper and on appropriate page.

7.10 Abbreviation and Acronyms

As it is in proposal

7.12. Definition of Terms

7.13. Abstract

As it is in proposal except the tense changes to past.

7.14 Chapters

Chapters I to III have content and form as those described in the section for proposal. The future tense must change to past tense.

7.14.1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

(a) Background to the study

This gives specific gaps that were considered to be the root of the problem.

(b) Statement of the problem

Should be precise and focused.

(c) Justification

Should be clearly stated.

(d) Research Questions and Hypothesis(es)

Should related to the objectives and testable.

- (e) **Objectives (Main and Specific)**
Should be clearly stated and should be achievable.
- (f) **Delimitation and limitation (optional)**
Specifies the extent to which the study was carried out.
- (g) **Assumptions (optional)**
Takes care of extraneous factors that may have affected the results of the study.
- (h) **Conceptual framework and theoretical framework.(optional)**
Gives a conceptualized view of the study. If a certain theory fitted into a study, this should include indication and discussion of the same.

7.14.2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The student should demonstrate evidence of understanding of current research on the subject under investigation and show clear gaps in knowledge that were addressed. Appropriate themes for this chapter can be developed using conceptual framework content. Thus:-

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Relevant themes to the study and derived from related literature should be developed and discussed here. The literature review should be consistent with the requirements of the title (internal consistency) and aspects of the “introduction” e.g. Background to the study”.

7.14.3 CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter highlights methodology details appropriate to the study. **Thus:-**

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Research Design

(to be stated)

3.3 Variables

(as in proposal)

3.4 Location of study

(state where the study was due and why it was chosen)

3.5 Study Population

(should describe the population who are subjects in the study)

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.6.1 Sampling Techniques

Explanation of the sampling technique for each respondent (subject) to be selected

3.6.2 Sample Size

Explanation of the sample size and how it was determined

3.7 Pilot Study or Pre-Testing

3.8.1 Description of sharpening of the data collection instrument.

3.8.2 Validity

How the validity of the instruments were established.

3.8.3 Reliability

How the reliability of the instruments were established.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

How data collection was done.

3.9 Logistical and ethical considerations

Statement of this to be here

3.11: Data Analysis,

7.14.4 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter should present the interpretation and explanation of the findings of the study with regard to the stated hypotheses and research questions. The results should be reduced.

7.14.5. CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion:

Discuss the results and compare with other similar studies

5.2 Conclusion

Emphatic, strong conclusion based on the study findings should be stated here and should be base on the specific objectives

5.3 Recommendations

To be based on the conclusions

5.4 Further Research

What is considered to be gaps left out by the study, which would need further investigation through research, should be given. The references and then appendices should follow this chapter.

REFERENCES:

As stated ealier

APPENDICES:

Attach all appendices referred to in the thesis.