In this session:

- What is a research proposal?

- Organising a research proposal

- Writing the research proposal

Research Proposal:

- A Statement of Intent

- A written document for selling your idea

  Written for thesis & dissertation

Why a proposal?
To convince your audience that:

- Your research idea is worth studying

- The problem it is addressing is of significance

- You have chosen the best approach for studying the problem (methodology and design)

- You are the right person (knowledgeable and confident)

Length:

- Will vary depending on:
    - The purpose and details provided
    - University requirements, discipline and topic

        Read department guidelines

        Discuss it with your lecturer

Deciding your Research Topic:

- Passion and interest

- Contribution

- Challenge and Change

- Relevance and importance

Basic Sections:

- Title
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Ethical statement
- Timeframe/Plan & Budget
- Primary references

Title:

- Reflects what your study is about

- Not too general

- Clearly indicates your topic and the key issues/concepts you are exploring

- Encapsulates what you intend to do

- No more than 15 words

- Make time to think about it

- Catchy and attention grabbing (if possible)

- Simple

May change as you progress ☺

Introduction:

- Acquaints your reader with the topic
  - Historical Background
  - Your topic within the larger context…
  - Statement of the Problem
  - Rationale or Significance
  - Hypothesis (if relevant)
  - Delimitations

Statement of the Problem:

- Introduces the issue/gap/problem
- Sets the context for the study
- Justifies the need for your study
- Concise and clear

Significance, Rational:

- Refer back to the problem

- State your purpose/aim

- What objectives do you expect to achieve?

- What specific research question/s will be addressed?

- Why is it important to do this research?

- Contribution?

- Wider implications and uses?

Hypothesis:

- Prediction
- Assumption

Delimitations:

- Your choices

- Boundaries

- Sets the parameters and tells reader what will and will not be included, and why

Literature Review:

- Review the written work around your topic

- Show the relationship of your research to other local and international researches in the field

  - Discuss improvements in the field and what is already known

  - Clarify your study's contribution to the field of knowledge

Research Methodology:

- Answers the 'How' of Your study

- Answers the 'Why' for your choice of methodology and design' (Justification)

- Demonstrates the reasons behind your choice of :

  – Methodological standpoints

  – Methodological approaches

  – Techniques for data collection and analysis

Justify your choice of one approach over another and its relevance and importance to your research

(Hart, 2005)

Research Design:

The **_overall plan_** for collecting, handling, and analysing data in order to provide sufficient and suitable evidence to answer your research questions, accept/reject your hypotheses, or fulfil your aims and objectives

(Manalo & Trafford, 2004, p. 82)

Methods (techniques) for data collection and analysis

Questionnaires   Interviews   Life history   Content analysis

Case study   Semiology   Observational   Conversation analysis

Discourse analysis   Document analysis   Concept mapping

Nominal group technique   Comparative analysis   Etc.

Methodological approaches and cultures

Experimental   Quasi-experimental   Non-experimental

Phenomenological   Grounded theory   Action research

Ethnographic   Ethno-methodological   Hermeneutic   Structuralist

Symbolic interactionist   Critical inquiry   Feminism   Historical

Quantitative   Qualitative   Etc.

Methodological traditions (epistemology)

Positivism   Post-positivism   Interpretivism   Phenomenology

Critical inquiry   Post-modernism   Etc.

(Hart, 2005, p. 314)

Data Analysis:

- Break down of data for understanding

- Indicates how you will present results

- Statistical tests you will use

- Methods you use to prove your hypotheses

- Tools used to move from exploration to discovery

Ethics section:

- Protect confidentiality, anonymity, and the physical and mental well-being of participants

- Specific ethical issues of your research and how you intend to conform to the relevant ethical codes

- "Code of Ethical Conduct for Research and Teaching Involving Human Subjects"

- Other codes of conduct (e.g., relevant governmental/committee codes) also need to be mentioned

Timeframe & Budget:

- Timeline for the study

    - Times and dates of each step of your research process

    - Be as specific as possible

- Budget estimate of costs involved in your study (need not be too detailed)

    - Costs that will be incurred

    - Indicate source of funds

- Highlight appropriate texts cited in your proposal

- Supervisor guidance for other essential texts

- Never underestimate the value of a good reference list

Writing Tips:

Paragraphs:

- Clear, concise, and to the point
- Consider:
  - Paragraph organization
    - ✓ Follow T – Topic sentence/controlling idea
    - ✓ E – Explain, elaborate, or define
    - ✓ E – Evidence, examples, or illustrations
    - ✓ Between 100-150 words
    - ✓ Avoid long paragraphs of 250+ words
    - ✓ One main idea = one paragraph

Paragraphs:

- Is there one main idea per paragraph?

- Is your paragraph relevant to the topic?

- Have you used topic sentences?

- Have you avoided short or overly long paragraphs?

- Is there a progression of ideas from one paragraph to another?

- Have you linked paragraphs together?

- Have you read it out loud to pick up errors?

Sections:

- Is there a logical progression of ideas?

- Are sub-sections clearly labelled or sign-posted?

- Does it relate to an understanding of the thesis topic?

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Style:

- Is correct referencing style used?

- Is there appropriate use of evidence?

- Have you avoided clichés?

- Have you excluded emotive language?

- Is it the appropriate tone and level?

- Have you avoided slang or jargon?

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- Save frequently and print copies
- Save multiple copies

What we covered?

- What is a research proposal?

- Organizing a research proposal

- Writing a research proposal

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References

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