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I. The Makerere Research Proposal Format

1.0 Definition of Proposal

This is a written presentation of an intended research specifying the problem, the purpose, scope/objectives, methodology, references and the financial plan/budget. A synopsis is an outline of the research proposal of 3-5 pages length (including references) which is currently required for provisional admission to Ph.D and other doctoral degree studies at Makerere University.

2.0 Components of a Research Proposal

2.1 Title / Topic

The title should accurately reflect the scope and content of the study. In addition, it should be concise, simple and catchy in not more than 20 words. The title should be informative/descriptive yet discrete and contain the key words of the proposal. Do not use terms like "Research into...", "A Study of..." etc

2.2 Background / Introduction

This section provides evidence and conditions of the existing situations highlighting the gap(s) to make the reader feel the urgency of the problem, the need to study it in order to solve the problem or contribute to its solution. (About 600 words, Font type: Times New Roman, Font size 12; 1.5 line spacing)

2.3 Research Problem / Statement of the Problem

- i. Presents the reason behind the proposal i.e. what will change when this research is done or what would happen if the research is not done
- ii. Problem is an existing negative state not absence of a solution
- iii. Refers to what has been detected and needs a solution in the practical or theoretical world.
- iv. Should clearly state the nature of the problem and its known or estimated magnitude / extent.
- v. Link the problem to the national development priorities/framework (NDP), the regional (e.g. AU) and the Global Development Agenda (MDGs)
- vi. Should be concise and brief (not more than 1 page)

2.4 General Objective / Aim / Purpose

Refers to the general intention of the research. Should spell put what the research is supposed to accomplish.

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2.5 Specific Objectives

These are specific aims / objectives arising directly from the general objective / purpose / aim of the study. For each specific objective you must have a method to attempt to achieve it.

2.6 Significance/Importance/Contribution

This refers to the relevance of study in terms of academic contributions and practical use that might be made of the findings. It should reflect on knowledge creation, technological or socio-economic value to the community.

2.7 Justification/Rationale (Answers the question – Why?)

Would the world collapse if this work is not done?

2.8 Theoretical / Conceptual Framework

a. Theoretical Framework

This is an examination of existing or self-formulated theories in relation to the researchers' objectives.

Or

b. Conceptual Framework

This is a scheme of concepts (variables) which a researcher will operationalise in the study in order to achieve the set objectives. The framework is normally presented graphically (diagrammatically)

N.B. These are normally requirements for Masters and Ph.D Proposals where applicable.

2.9 Scope (*where applicable*)

The scope provides for the boundary of the research in terms of depth of investigation, content, and sample size, geographical, Time frame and theoretical coverage.

2.10 Literature Review

- i) This section deals with the analysis of existing literature on the subject with the objective of revealing contributions, weaknesses and gaps.
- ii. The Literature Review should be according to the themes of the study and should reflect the objectives, Hypotheses, methods and research questions.
- iii. Citation should be in accordance with approved format. (*See Guidelines for writing manuscripts - Appendix I*)

2.11 Hypotheses / Postulates / Research Questions (where applicable)

These are investigative assumptions, which guide the study. In case of hypotheses, they should be testable. (Hypothesis is usually null or alternate, whichever poses the investigative question).

N.B. Hypotheses can come immediately after Literature Review or Specific Objectives.

2.12 Methodology

This is a detailed description of selected methodology and should be presented in unambiguous terms.

The section comprises:

- (i) Research design - which describes the nature and pattern the research intends to follow e.g. whether it is historical, descriptive survey, experimental or quasi experimental and location (optional), etc.
- (ii) Research approaches – Qualitative/quantitative
- (iii) Description of the geographical area and where population of the study exists
- (iv) Description of the population from which samples will be selected.
- (v) Sampling strategies, by which the researcher will select representative elements / subjects from the population.
- (vi) Data collection methods; including instruments and procedures to be used in the research described.
- (vii) Data quality control, which refers to reliability and validity of instruments.
- (viii) Measurements, which refer to the formulae or scales in the study.
- (ix) Data analysis, which involves organisation and interpretation of the data generated.

Note: Both raw data and the analysed form be kept both electronically and hardcopy for further reference later.

Follow the following steps in preparing data for analysis:

- (i) Receive the raw data sources
- (ii) Create electronic data base from the raw data sources
- (iii) Clean/Edit the database
- (iv) Correct and clarify the raw data sources
- (v) Finalise database
- (vi) Create data files from the data bases

2.13 Ethical Consideration

Ethics of the research here refers to the morals of the investigation or intervention as regards the minimal abuse, disregard, safety, social and psychological well being of the person, community and /or animals i.e. how the principles of consent, beneficence and justice are handled in the study. Include a statement of where ethical clearance has been or will be obtained.

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2.14 Environmental Considerations

Where applicable, include a statement on environmental concerns

2.15 Gender Consideration

The section presents the gender issues addressed by the study and how they will be handled in the analysis.

2.16 Limitations / Anticipated Problems (Optional)

This refers to anticipated constraints imposed by methods/location/situation of research. Potential sources of bias in the proposed study are presented here. Show how the limitations/bias will be addressed. However, these must not be seen to prevent the study from being carried out, otherwise it will not start. The limitations are major considerations before embarking on a study to ascertain the feasibility of accomplishment.

2.17 References

This is a list of all works cited in the proposal and should be written according to the approved format. The approved format is APA Sixth Edition (*Appendix I*).

2.18 Appendices

Comprises of the budget, work plan/time framework, explanatory notes and instruments.

(i) Budget

This is the financial plan for implementation of the research. It should be clear, realistic and reasonable (affordable)

It should be itemised according to the following:

- Equipment
- Stationery
- Materials e.g. nails, wood, chemicals etc.
- Travel
- Subsistence
- Research Assistance
- Services (*Secretarial, Photocopying, Printing, Binding*)
- Dissemination (*Publishing, Conferences etc*)
- Others (*Specify*)

e.g. 10% Research honorarium (not for those doing higher degrees)

-15% Institutional Administrative fee/Overhead costs (5% to the SGS, 3% to the Department (now the **School**), 3% to the Faculty (now the **College**) and 4% retained at the center as provided for on the University Research & Innovations Policy, 2008 – available on the University Intranet at:

http://policies.mak.ac.ug/downloads/MAKERERE_UNIVERSITY_RESEARCH_POLICY.pdf.

(ii) Time Framework/Work Plan

This is the schedule / time-table of activities covering the period over which the research is to be implemented with due regard to budgetary consideration

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as well. It could be presented in tabular form or in a Gantt chart. It is a valuable guide for evaluation of a research progress.

(iii) Explanatory Notes

These include research approval letters, maps, and lists of areas to be visited.

(iv) Instruments/Tools

These are details of tools used in the research e.g. Equipment, questionnaire, interview schedule, scales and tests etc.

3.0 Length of Proposals and submission

A proposal for Masters Degree research should be up to 15 pages excluding appendices. While the Ph.D and postdoc proposal should not exceed 25 pages excluding appendices.

Brief submission procedure (see Graduate Student Handbook for details):

The proposal is submitted to your Department/School Higher Degrees and Research Committee for evaluation and approved before it is forwarded to the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training for final approval and recording.

A Ph.D degree research proposal must be vetted by the candidates' doctoral committee and their views along with College/School/Institute Higher Degrees and Research Committee minutes must be forwarded to the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training. A letter from the designated/approved supervisor certifying that:

'..All recommended amendments in the proposal have been addressed'

Must accompany the College/School/Institute Higher Degrees and Research Committee approved minutes

II Research Report, Thesis/Dissertation Format

4.0 Definition of Report

Is a detailed account of the study