Developing a Research Proposal

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Why am I writing a research proposal?

From scholarly colleagues
What does CSU want?


Research Proposal

Research Proposal

As part of the probationary conditions for your Higher Degree by Research, candidates need to complete a research proposal.

In a general sense, a proposal is a plan for your research. The research proposal requests fundamental information relating to the title, various approvals gained for ethics, radiation safety, and questions about intellectual property and commercial in confidence. For the specific description of the proposed research each Faculty has its own requirements relating to the type and amount of information which needs to be presented. The proposal will provide a justification for the proposed research. The justification should demonstrate that you are familiar with the key literature in the area and can critically evaluate it and use it to build an argument to justify the research question. In addition, the proposal should demonstrate that you have the methodological knowledge and skills to carry out the research.
Components of a Research Proposal

What are you aiming to do & how did you get to this point?

How are you going to do it?

Why is it important?
To whom is it important?
Who says it’s important?

KEEP CALM and formulate your RESEARCH QUESTION
Section 1: Introduction

- Abstract
- Background to the study
- Statement of the issue/problem
- Aims/Purpose of the study
- Definitions of key terms
- Research questions and/or hypotheses

What am I aiming to do & how did I get to this point?

Significance

Why is it important & to whom?
Example of an Abstract

Abstract
Click for abstract.

Activity: In regard to the abstract example see if you can identify who, what, when, how, why & so what?
How did I become interested in this topic?

So what's your story?

YOUR
VERY
GOOD
IDEA

problem
analysis
solution
So what’s YOUR story?

Activity:

In break out rooms or in the chat box write a few sentences that summarise how you came to investigate your thesis topic.
What is the issue/problem?

Activity:
You are at a cocktail party and a friend asks you “what is your thesis about?” Given that you have already told your story, respond to the question in one sentence that clearly & concisely states your research problem (use the chat box)
Aims/Purpose of the Study

This section of the introduction is to CLEARLY & SUCCINTLY identify what you are trying to do & achieve

For example,

The aim of the research is to investigate New South Wales Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teachers' understandings of the concept of health literacy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aims</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore the presence of health literacy in the Australian Health &amp; PE curriculum document</td>
<td>How is health literacy represented in the Australian Health &amp; PE curriculum document?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teachers' understandings of the concept of health literacy</td>
<td>What does a sample of NSW PDHPE teachers understand by the concept of health literacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critique methods of assessing young people’s health literacy</td>
<td>What measures are currently used to assess young people’s health literacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe NSW young people’s understandings of the concept of health literacy</td>
<td>What does a sample of NSW young people understand by the concept of health literacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examine how NSW PDHPE teachers currently teach health literacy</td>
<td>How does a sample of NSW PDHPE teachers teach health literacy?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Activity:** in the chat box, write ONE research aim & try to craft a resultant question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aim/s</th>
<th>Research Question/s</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

**What** questions are most often associated with quantitative research

**How** and **why** questions are most often associated with qualitative research
Defining key terms

- **Activity:** Identify the key terms that relate to your research – young people, health literacy, health status

  https://www.edrawsoft.com/ mind map software

- Define these terms – create a glossary and/or literature review

  Identifying & defining terms assists to:
  i) “position” your study in a particular way – biomedical, psychological, educational;
  ii) searching for literature.
Significance

The significance tells others:

- why your study is important; and
- to whom it is important.

Consider educational, social, financial, health, historical, intellectual or academic importance.
Section 2: Literature Review – Functions

- Don’t reinvent the wheel – what’s already been done
- Gives credit to those who have laid the groundwork for YOUR study – “intellectual positioning”
- Demonstrates your knowledge of the research problem & methods
- Demonstrates your ability to critique & synthesis existing literature
- Convinces your reader that your study will make a significant & substantial contribution – fill the gap
Literature Review

Seven steps to producing a literature review

1. Identify your question
2. Review discipline styles
3. Search the literature
4. Manage your references
5. Critically analyse and evaluate
6. Synthesise
7. Write the review
Identify **boundaries** of literature search:
These are what we call **inclusion & exclusion** criteria
- Temporal – 1990– current (consider seminal)
- Geographical – Australian or international/both
- Positional – feminist, post structuralist, queer theory
- Discipline – medicine, education, psychology
- Methodical – narrative inquiry, conceptual analysis, ethnography, quasi-experimental
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who?</td>
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<td>What?</td>
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<td>When?</td>
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<td>How?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>So what? – big picture</td>
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<tr>
<td>So what? – my project</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Preparing a Literature Review

Template

Use EndNote or similar – get organised NOW!
Section 3: Methodology

- Tells your research committee **how** you plan to tackle the study

- **Positioning** – theoretical & methodological view of the world
- **Sample** – participants, recruitment, sampling technique
- **Data collection** methods – survey, interviews, artefacts, observations, videos, experiment
- **Data analysis** methods – NVIVO, thematic, conceptual, Chi Square, ANOVA
## Lining it all up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Aim</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore the presence of health literacy in the Australian Health &amp; PE curriculum document</td>
<td>How is health literacy represented in the Australian Health &amp; PE curriculum document?</td>
<td>Document – Australian Health &amp; PE curriculum</td>
<td>Textual analysis Discourse analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate NSW Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) teachers' understandings of the concept of health literacy</td>
<td>What does a sample of NSW PDHPE teachers understand by the concept of health literacy?</td>
<td>Semi structured telephone interviews with 30 NSW PDHPE teachers from 3 education sectors</td>
<td>Yin’s five phase thematic analysis</td>
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# Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>J</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lit review</td>
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<td>Ethics</td>
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<td>Endorsement</td>
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**Note:** The red cells indicate the months when specific activities are scheduled.
Resources

Phrase book
http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

Giving Examples

Writers may give specific examples as evidence to support their general claims or arguments. Examples can also be used to help the reader or listener understand unfamiliar or difficult concepts, and they tend to be easier to remember. For this reason, they are often used in teaching. Finally, students may be required to give examples in their work to demonstrate that they have understood a complex problem or concept. It is important to note that when statements are supported with examples, the explicit language signalling this may not always be used.

Examples as the main information in a sentence

| A/An | well-known notable classic useful important | example of X is .....
|
|------|--------------------------------------------|

For example, the word ‘doctor’ used to mean a ‘learned man’.
For example, Smith and Jones (2004) conducted a series of semi-structured interviews in ...
Young people begin smoking for a variety of reasons. They may, for example, be influenced by ....

This is exemplified in the work undertaken by ...
Another example of what is meant by X is ...
This distinction is further exemplified in studies using ...
An example of this is the study carried out by Smith (2004) in which ...
The effectiveness of the X technique has been exemplified in a report by Smith et al (2010)

This is evident in the case of ...
This is certainly true in the case of ...
The evidence of X can be clearly seen in the case of ...
In a similar case in America, Smith (1992) identified ...
This can be seen in the case of the two London physics laboratories which ...

X is a good illustration of ...
X illustrates this point clearly.
This can be illustrated briefly by ...
By way of illustration, Smith (2003) shows how the data for ...
These experiments illustrate that X and Y have distinct functions in ...
Resources

Taylor and Francis online
www.tandfonline.com/
Resources

Springer exemplar
http://www.springerexemplar.com/
The university students who can explain 80,000 words in three minutes

- The Three-Minute Thesis is an exquisite challenge.

- PhD students who take part must deliver a compelling, punchy presentation about their research without using jargon or props, and with an intelligent general audience in mind.

- It helps academics condense their thinking, get to the point quickly, and bring their work to the attention of the public.

- And it helps arm them with communication skills and brevity an employer or grants committee is likely to appreciate.
Rosa Praed wrote about Australian politics, exploring political betrayal, intrigue, backstabbing and the position of women in a chauvinistic parliamentary culture. An internationally famous author, Praed's novels are as relevant today as they were in the 1880s, says Susan Laverick.

Her 3MT presentation took place online from Switzerland, and she won the People's Choice award category in the CSU's online competition heats.

"CSU staff organised an online training session before the competition, so all the remote participants could log into a conference call, discuss the competition and how it might work," Laverick says.

Her thesis argues that Praed's work showcased a lost genre of writing for the Australian canon, buried by the masculine-focused literature promoted by the Bulletin school.
Questions!