Faculty of Education
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WRITING A PROPOSAL

1. Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance for a student as he/she develops their research proposal in consultation with their supervisor. Proposals are written to clearly formulate your ideas and situate your proposed research within the research literature. Their intent is to communicate effectively with others as to the intents and scope of your proposed research, convincing others that your research proposal is worthwhile and that you have the necessary preparation, skills, and strategies to complete it.

Your supervisor is the first point of contact concerning questions related to your research. All aspects of your proposal should be discussed with your supervisor and then with members of your committee.

2. Purpose

Focusing and defining your research plans are the primary aims of your proposal. These plans are not binding but indicate to faculty your direction, discipline, and preparedness as a researcher. The proposal also helps you articulate your ideas in regards to seeking ethics approval for your research.

Expectations include:

A) Demonstrate that you are undertaking genuine inquiry
B) Connect your inquiry to the work of others, evidencing a thorough mapping of the particular field and focus of study
C) Situate your inquiry within a theoretical orientation
D) Articulate your methodological approach
E) Acknowledge the ethical issues and how you are thinking about these considerations.

3. Components of a Proposal*

Attend to the components listed in the table below, although your supervisor may require the inclusion or omission of certain parts. Always confer with your supervisor.

Component	Function	Characteristics
Cover Page	Identifies Topic, Author, Faculty, Institution, and Degree	Proposed Thesis Title, Name, Faculty, University, and Degree
Table of Contents	Lists Sections of Proposal and Page References	Use a hierarchy for titles and subtitles, adhering to APA formatting guidelines
Context	Provides background information relating to the social/political/cultural/historical/ educational context of the inquiry	May include social, political, cultural, historical, or organizational information about the context for the research

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	Answers the WHAT question	May include a theoretical starting point or policy

May include personal motivation

May problematize the current discourses/practices. |
| Rationale (Can be combined with the previous component) | Follows from context to persuade the reader that the inquiry is needed and will be worthwhile

Answers the WHY question | May include reference to a "gap" in the research literature, to the need to apply certain ideas in a new context, or to the significance of your particular topic.

May discuss the ways in which the inquiry will be significant for the educational field/community |
| Purpose | States clearly and succinctly the purpose of the study

Outlines the key research questions and aims | Purpose is expressed in terms of the broader context of the study

Key research question(s) (usually What, How, Why, or What if) should be noted. |
| Literature Review | Demonstrates awareness of significant writers/researchers in the field, and indicates which issues/topics you will focus on in your review (this may change later)

Demonstrates that you can be judicious in your selection of issues to focus on and take an approach of critical inquiry | Initial survey of the main theorists, alongside the primary issues and concepts represented in the literature

Establishing your proposed directions and demonstrating critical analysis

Establishing your theoretical orientation shaped by your argument |
| Research Methodology or Design | Outlines and describes the research approach and why the approach selected is fitting for the inquiry

Addresses the how question: the ways in which the inquiry will be conducted | Includes your understandings of knowledge and how this affects your selection of research approach

Includes description of participants, methods of data collection and analysis, procedures you will use to ensure ethical processes and practices

Includes a statement concerning the scope of |

Timeline	Depicts the tasks proposed and the stages/times for their completion	Timeline or flow chart or other indications of the conduct of the inquiry
Proposed Thesis Structure	Describes the sequences and focus of each proposed chapter	Each chapter's proposed contents are described in a few lines or a brief paragraph, or a proposed table of contents is presented
Significance	Predicts the significances of the study and expected outcomes. Answers the SO WHAT question.	This is only a prediction and may be excluded if the rationale for the inquiry has been well developed earlier in the proposal
Glossary of Terms (usually optional)	Lists specialized terms or words and their meanings (e.g., from another culture, acronyms, key concepts in a field)	Placed in a position which is easy to locate (e.g., before or after the main text parts)
Appendices (usually optional)	Displays documents which are relevant to main text, but whose presence in the text would disturb rather than enhance the flow of the argument or writing	May include documents, pilot study material, questions for interviews, survey instruments, explanatory statement to participants, etc.
References	Lists works that have been consulted thus far and appear to be useful	Use APA Style Guide: http://www.ubc.ca/okanagan/library/citations.html

*Much of the information and guidance for these components comes with permission from the Faculty of Education, Monash University. (2014). *Writing a Proposal in Education*. Retrieved from http://www.monash.edu.au/education/research/degrees/proposal-writing/