Template for Research Proposal

A research proposal for a PhD application should help you to discover your research potential. Hence the research proposal that you submit should be well thought-out and achievable. It shall also give you a sense of the extent of self-study required, which is an essential component of doctoral research.

A good research proposal should ideally include the following:

1. Working title:
   The title should reflect the main idea of a research in a simple or non-complicated way. It may contain a main title and a sub-title.

2. Introduction (200 words)
   Elucidate what excites you about this research, what is the problem that needs study, why this research is important, and what is the existing state of knowledge on this topic. Identify the historical and contemporary backdrop of the problem you are interested in.

3. Background/ Context and Literature Review (500 words)
   Briefly outline the academic context within which your proposed research is located. This can include both theoretical and empirical context. This involves a critical review and understanding of the existing theoretical and/or empirical literature.

   This section should show the extent to which your proposed Ph.D. research makes a contribution to a particular field; what is the addition to knowledge and understanding that can be achieved by your research. Introduce the issues that the research will address, research gaps, and explain why your area of interest is important and worth researching. This is the rationale or motivation for your thesis. You should clearly demonstrate a problem that needs explanation or understanding through research.

   If relevant, identify the geographical, socio-cultural, political, economic, or spatio-temporal context of your work? Where do you plan to undertake this study? What is interesting about the location and the people/ community you are interested in? What is the uniqueness of your field site and location?

   Define any terms and concepts you propose to use.

4. Research Questions or Aims (200 words)
   Specify your research questions and objectives. If possible, provide a central or over-arching question and objectives and a few sub-questions and objectives. The research objectives should draw from and relate to your research questions.

   The research questions can be in the form of hypotheses or exploratory in nature. However, they should not be too general, broad or vague. They need to be focused,

specific and narrow in scope. Please frame these *in academic terms* and not as a social work, action research, social change, revolutionary, or policy recommendation terms.

5. Research Methods (300 words)

   In this section, briefly outline the empirical, analytical, or theoretical work you plan to undertake. You may refer to other studies from which you have drawn your methodological tools and techniques. Explain your overall research design.

   Identify the methods or tools you wish to use, and justify the choice of these techniques. Why are they appropriate for your research, your objectives, and field site? How are the chosen methods more appropriate compared to other tools and methods? If relevant, mention sampling strategy and size, sources of information and data (primary and secondary). Identify any potential problems in accessing data and the field, and in conducting research, and how you propose to address them. Briefly explain issues related to how your own social background and individual personality are likely to affect the research, and in what way do you propose to address issues of objectivity and subjectivity.

6. Expected Deliverables / Outcomes (100 words)

   Summarize the key points of your research, identify the likely contributions, and the expected output from your research.

7. Suitability for the PhD programme (100 words)

   Describe why you think that you are suitable for a career as a researcher.

8. References

   List all the works referred to in this proposal. Choose quality over quantity while citing and referring to most relevant literature and material. Ensure that you refer to theoretical, empirical, and methodological works relevant for your research.