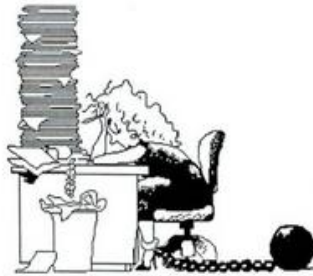


Proposal writing



Writing the Research Proposal

Postgraduate School

Newsletter 05/August 2013

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From Office of the Director

Completing a postgraduate qualification is a major academic, professional and personal achievement. It is very helpful to be able to visualise your postgraduate journey from beginning to end, to try and assess your progress along the route. The end of the postgraduate journey often seems far away and difficult to fathom. T.S. Eliot wrote:

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.
(Eliot, 1974:208)*

Practical advice for any postgraduate student is to constantly be aware of the criteria that will be used at the end of your journey to evaluate your thesis or dissertation. The proposal serves to make the research destination explicit and guides the subsequent planning and execution of your research. In this newsletter we want to focus on the research proposal, because proposals pave the way for the research journey.

We also want to use this newsletter to recognize the valuable contribution of our research supervisors. On 4 September the postgraduate school will honour sixty supervisors who have made a significant contribution to postgraduate education at UFS. The outstanding scholarship and academic leadership of these colleagues are commendable. The postgraduate school thank them for their contribution to the academic excellence, professional and personal development of hundreds of students during the last two decades.

Congratulations are also in order for the achievements of three of our postgraduate students: Ms Hannerie Hay, one of our postgraduate student council members has won two prestigious bursaries this year – the Abe Bailey Trust award and a bursary from Campus France. The Campus France bursary entails that she will spend a year at a French university to further her studies in law. Another postgraduate student Carmi Viljoen also received the Campus France bursary and will further her studies in Music(Violin) at a French university.

Wishing you the best for the rest of the year.

Warm regards

Henriette

THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL (Remenyi)

A research proposal is a central part of any research project and a considerable amount of attention needs to be given to this before any student is finally given the go ahead with his or her project. Some faculties/ universities will not formally register a research degree candidate until a research proposal has been finalised. In these cases a provisional registration is sometimes offered to cover the six months a research proposal will typically take to develop.

Issues addressed by the research proposal

An acceptable research proposal will require the following questions to be specifically addressed:

1. What will be the research aim to achieve and exactly what has to be done by the researcher to make this happen? This is the research question and how it will be answered.
2. Why should the research be done? To whom is the research important? This answers the question *so what?* And outlines who the stakeholders might be.
3. What other work has been done in this area and what theories have been applied to it?
4. What is the chosen methodology and why is this methodology considered most appropriate?
5. What are the potential outcomes of the research and in what way will the answering of the research question improve management practice?

Also the research proposal should provide:

1. Some details of the proposed research protocol
2. A high-level outline of each chapter for the dissertation is helpful. It is not intended that the researcher actually adhere to this, but it is useful to have a rough idea in mind as to the issues which will need to be covered.
3. A suggestion s to how it will be established when enough work has been done.

Using the research proposal to manage the project

The research proposal is a useful tool with which to manage the research project. It provides a framework to guide the research candidate's efforts.

Reasons why proposals fail (Mouton 2007)

- Sloppy proposal (Not enough time spent preparing the proposal)
- Not in required format. Sloppy technical, formatting, grammar and spelling errors
- Inappropriate topic
- Non-compliance – not according to technical and formal requirements
- Unclear statement of problem – ambiguous – confused with real life problems
- Project not feasible – scope too broad, time constraints
- Inappropriate research design – mismatch between problem statement and choice of design
- Lack of clarity / information about methodology – how will the project be conducted

- Incorrect / inappropriate methods – sampling, techniques and data collection methods are inappropriate for design
- Work plan deficient or unrealistic
- Inadequate understanding of body of knowledge – unaware of key developments/latest scholarship in the field

Useful books and/or websites

- How to Write a Research Proposal http://www.eastchance.com/howto/res_prop.asp
- How to write a losing proposal – <http://people.eku.edu/ritchisong/RITCHISO/osingproposal.htm>
- Writing A Research Proposal – <http://www.warnborough.ie/?learning-resources/writing-a-research-proposal.html>



"My project is simply this. I want to find out once and for all whether there's any truth in the belief that money can't buy happiness."

AVAILABLE VIDEO CLIPS ON WRITING THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

"Academic tips: how to write a research proposal" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bq7o_9ZiRQQ - 1min40, 4. Areas include: thesis/title, 3 different topics to cover, primary/secondary sources, tentative conclusion

"Writing tips: how to write a research proposal" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPajRnK5vjl> - 1min23. What will you research, how will you research, how long will it take, desired outcome

"What makes a good research proposal" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyTn34tD1s8> - 1min15. Proposal should demonstrate knowledge + knowledge of the literature and should fill a gap in current research

"Writing a research proposal" (Massey Univ, NZ) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ8Vfx4721M> - 13min51, 4 areas covered:

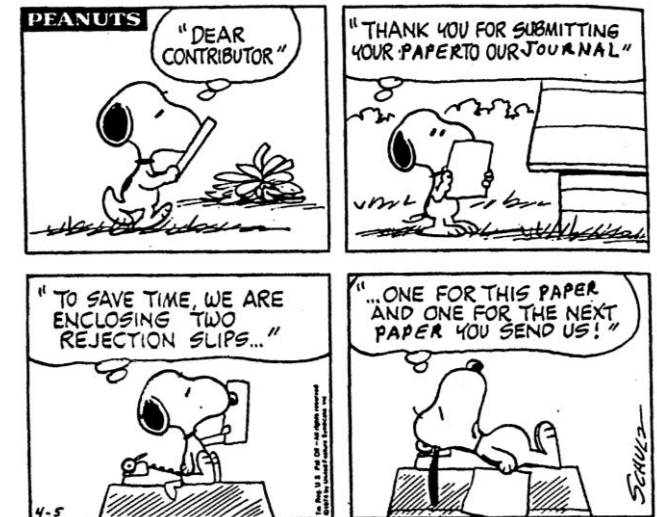
1. What is a research proposal (defines thesis as for Masters, dissertation for PhD - assume this is different to South African system?)
2. Defining research topic
3. Organising a research proposal - Title of study (explain topic, not too general, catchy)

- Introduction (historical overview of topic, why you are interested in topic)
- Significance (purpose, objectives, implications)
- Literature review (often separate chapter, earlier research, instruments, necessity)

- Methodology (how you will collect data with research question, presentation of results, statistical tests, methods used)
 - Expected results
 - Ethical statements (if using human/animal participants, confidentiality/anonymity)
 - Time/budget
 - References
4. Writing the proposal (clear, concise, organise paragraphs - 1 idea per paragraph, 1 idea per sentence)

"Writing a research proposal", <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyoU4BwTHmo> - 12min25.

1. Basics:
 - Why write a proposal? (Approval, funding, refine ideas/methods)
 - Who is the audience?
 - How different from a research paper (don't use past tense, no analysed data)
2. Components:
 - Introduction (research question - importance, current knowledge; hypothesis - robust rationale)
 - Method (design, sample, materials, procedure)
 - Data analysis (what data will be used, what tests will be used for analysis, expected pattern of results)
 - Discussion (restate expected outcome/hypothesis, what would limit the conclusions that could be drawn, potential implications of results).



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Who are we?

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- Website: <http://postgraduate.ufs.ac.za/>
Email: postgrad@ufs.ac.za

UPCOMING SCHOLARSHIP CALLS:

1. Poliomyelitis Research Foundation Travel grants **Closing dates: 15 October** http://www.prf.ac.za/pages/rules/travel_rules_01.htm
2. Poliomyelitis Research Foundation Study bursaries **Closing dates 15 October** http://www.prf.ac.za/pages/rules/bursary_rules_01.htm
3. NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Masters and Doctoral Scholarships **Internal Closing date 17 September** <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>
4. Doug Banks Renewable Energy Vision Scholarship for a Masters in renewable energy studies in 2014 **Closing date Friday 20 September 2013**
www.dougbanks.co.za
5. HSRC/NRF Labour Market Research Scholarships for Honours and Masters for 2014 **Internal Closing date 10th September 2013** <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>
6. Call for SKILL Master coursework bursaries at for a maximum period of three months at International Institute of Social Studies (The Hague), Part of Erasmus University Rotterdam **Closing date for applications for courses (Master level) in academic term 2 (13 January – 28 March 2014): 29 September 2013**
<http://www.fsw.vu.nl/en/privacy/index.asp?Referer=/en/international-relations/savusa/skill-programme/index.asp>
7. The Carl Fuchs and Emily Fuchs Doctoral Scholarships **Closing date for submissions, Friday – 04 October 2013**
8. FoodBev SETA Bursary Grant - Research and Innovation **No closing date** www.foodbev.co.za
9. The South African Square Kilometre Array Project (SKA SA) - Undergraduate and Honours Scholarship Programme **Internal closing date:17 September 2013**
<https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>

Introducing Ms Rene du Plessis - our resident sources specialist



Rene obtained her M.Bibl. from Unisa as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Archival Science from Technikon RSA. She is responsible for book orders and indexing of new acquisitions on an in-house database and also compiles booklists on various topics for postgraduate students. She also presents training sessions for postgraduate students on the evaluation of Internet sources.

SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION: During your postgraduate study years you will continuously search for relevant information on academic databases to make your own research more complete and up to date. Apart from using databases such as Ebscohost (which include Academic Search), you have access to various other databases that can assist you in your studies. The National Research Foundation's database is a very useful source if you want to determine what research has already been done in South Africa on your research topic. By using this database you make sure that your research will not duplicate any previous research done on the topic. Looking at completed research done in your subject field will assist you in identifying gaps and you might be able to cover some of those gaps with your own research on the subject. Students completing their thesis make suggestions for further research (usually in the chapter on conclusions/recommendations). The questionnaire used in a completed thesis can be of use when you start thinking of possible questions to include in your own questionnaire. Consult the bibliography of the thesis. You might identify articles and books there that you can also use. The bibliographies of applicable articles/books can be used in the same way to identify more information. If you want to find out which overseas theses/dissertations have been done on your research topic, consult the Proquest database available on the library's webpage.

News from the Postgraduate Student Council

2013 Mandela Day Project

The Postgraduate Student Council executed the 2013 Mandela Day Project on Friday 23rd August. Items like stationeries, desks, chairs, tables and toiletries were donated to three schools in Motheo area. These schools are: Mothusi Primary School, Nzame Primary School and Tumelo crèche.

At Mothusi Primary School, stationery were distributed among grade 6 & 7 pupils. While at Nzame Primary school, 5 long desks and 10 chairs were donated. The last school visited was Tumelo crèche, where we donated 5 tables, 20 plastic chairs, stationery, disposable nappies and toiletries.

The Postgraduate Student Council is very grateful for the generous donation from the School of Nursing, University of the Free State towards the Mandela Day Project. We would also like to thank the SRC for their generous support.



Postgraduate Student Council members with Tumelo Crèche kids and their teachers.

Programme for September 2013

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter
5 – 6 Sept	5 th 09h00 – 16h00 6 th 08h30 – 14h30	Research Supervision	Prof Gina Wisker Brighton University
6 Sept	10h30 – 12h30	Evaluation of internet sources Tips for effective information searching	Rene du Plessis Annamarie du Preez
9 – 10 Sept	08h30 – 16h30	Action Research	Dr Ruth Albertyn
9 – 10 Sept	09h00 – 16h30	Scientific Writing Skills for Theses & Dissertations	Selene Delport, US
10 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generic Academic Writing course for Honours students Session 1	Alet Olivier
11 – 13 Sept	09h00 – 16h30	Project Management	Dr Francois Minnaar
12 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generiese skryfkursus vir Honneursstudente Sessie 1 (Afrikaans presentation)	Alet Olivier
17 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generic Academic Writing course for Honours students Session 2	Alet Olivier
18 – 20 Sept	08h30 – 16h30	Overview of Research Design	Prof Rene Pelisier
19 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generiese Skryfkursus vir Honneursstudente Sessie 2 (Afrikaans presentation)	Alet Olivier

As space is limited, it is compulsory to register for all courses. Enquiries can be sent to postgraduatersvp@ufs.ac.za