

Formal Proposal Guidelines

November 3, 2017

What is the Formal Proposal?

- ▶ It is roughly a third of your thesis
- ▶ Generally it contains:
 - ▶ Introduction and Motivation
 - ▶ Literature review
 - ▶ Methodology
 - ▶ A plan, including alternatives



Components of the Formal Proposal

- ▶ Background to the Problem
- ▶ Statement of the Problem
- ▶ Research Objectives
- ▶ Research Questions/Hypothesis
- ▶ Motivation/Significance
- ▶ Literature Review
- ▶ Proposed Solution
- ▶ Methodology
- ▶ Project Schedule (best/expected and worst cases)
- ▶ References



How will it be marked?

- ▶ The proposal will be marked based on structure, argument, references, clarity of description etc.
- ▶ We are looking for evidence that you have:
 - ▶ Thought about the analysis, structure and scope of your project
 - ▶ Communicated effectively with your supervisor
 - ▶ Did thorough background research



Mark Scheme of the Formal Proposal

**Worth 70% of your final
grade for this course**



Background (10)

- ▶ Description of historical developments that set the stage for the study
- ▶ Provides the reader with the essential context needed to understand the research problem and its significance
- ▶ Provides supporting evidence that the issue exists



Statement of the Problem (5)

- ▶ Description of the problem situation and the specific research problem; along with supporting evidence that the problem does exist
- ▶ Description of the ideal situation; that is, what would be the desired state of affairs when the problem is addressed and the appropriate measures taken to correct the same
- ▶ Description of how you choose to address the problem; whether it be by means of providing a solution or providing more in depth insights into the causal relationship associated with the problem.



Research Objectives/Research Questions/Hypothesis (5)

- ▶ Research question is defined clearly
- ▶ They describe things that the researcher wants to find out, prove or attain
- ▶ Conclusions from Literature should guide these



Motivation/Significance (5)

- ▶ Articulate clearly how the research will add to the body of literature, solve an industry problem or make lives better for society members
- ▶ Explain or justify claims



Literature Review (25)

- ▶ It must provide theoretical evidence that the problem exists
- ▶ Theoretical framework should be clearly articulated. Provides a rationale for hypothesis of the research. Gives reason why the research is worthwhile conducting, must be relevant, meaningful and significant.
- ▶ It helps in narrowing down the options for the selection of an appropriate research design. Provides verification that an appropriate research has been selected. Important, is that the specific research has not been previously done.



Literature Review (25)

- ▶ Literature review is thorough (at least 15 references) and accurate; articles cited are appropriate for topic
- ▶ Evaluation of research demonstrates critical thinking
- ▶ Summary of conclusions drawn from past research
- ▶ Outlines remaining questions



Proposed Methodology (10)

- ▶ Proposed research design appropriate for research question
- ▶ All methods described in enough detail so that they could be replicated
- ▶ Proposed sample briefly described
- ▶ Proposed statistical analyses are appropriate
- ▶ Methodological issues clearly articulated

NB: We are aware that this may change during the research



Project Plan (5)

- ▶ Identify the relevant activities needed to complete the work done
- ▶ Suggest appropriate and realistic time frames for each
- ▶ Show that much thought was put into the construction of the plan



Other Relevant Sections (5)

▶ **Proposed Solution**

- ▶ A detailed description of your intended solution
- ▶ A description of deliverables

▶ **References**

- ▶ The reference list at the end of the proposal should include all works cited in the proposal; conversely, all items listed as references must have been cited in the text of the proposal
- ▶ The APA Manual can provide guidance for accurately compiling a reference list



Miscellaneous

- ▶ Additional sections that will complement your research include
 - ▶ Table of Contents
 - ▶ List of Figures
 - ▶ List of Tables
 - ▶ Glossary
 - ▶ Appendix (with survey or interview questions you may have conducted in a preliminary study to determine whether the problem exists in a local context)

