**Stages in a thesis introduction**

1. state the general topic and give some background
2. provide a review of the literature related to the topic
3. define the terms and scope of the topic
4. outline the current situation
5. evaluate the current situation (advantages/ disadvantages) and identify the gap
6. identify the importance of the proposed research
7. state the research problem/ questions
8. state the research aims and/or research objectives
9. state the hypotheses
10. outline the order of information in the thesis
11. outline the methodology

Note: this introduction includes the literature review.

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| **Stage** | **Sample sentence extracts (complete introduction is 11 pages)** |
| 1. State the general topic | ...The hepatitis C virus (HCV) is a significant human pathogen given that 3% of the world’s population are infected with the virus… |
| 1.2 Give some background about the topic | …The HCV genome is a positive sense, single stranded RNA molecule with an approximate length of 9.5kb… |
| 2. provide a review of the literature related to the topic |  |
| 3.2 Define the terms and scope of the topic | …Quasispecies are defined as a population of closely related minor genetic variants and are a noted phenomenon of plant and RNA viruses…It has been widely recognised that treatment outcome is highly dependent on the complexity… |
| 4. Outline the current situation |  |
| 5.1 Evaluate current situation | …Cloning and sequencing is considered a time-consuming and laborious method and as such there exists a need for the development of simple alternative methods… |
| 5.2 Identify the gap in current research | …At present there is no suitable method that has produced results comparable to that of cloning and sequencing which also has the additional properties of simplicity and rapidity… |
| 6. Identify importance of proposed research | …There is mounting evidence, however, that immediate treatment will result in successful eradication of HCV. Therefore studies of acute phase quasispecies will enhance the understanding of the early virological events of newly acquired HCV infection and ultimately the disease process itself. |
| 7. State the research problem/ questions |  |
| 8. State the research aims and/or research objectives | 1.Define a set of parameters to analyse quasispecies complexity. 2.Develop a simpler and rapid alternative to cloning and sequencing that would accurately assess complexity of quasispecies populations |
| 9. State the hypothesis | The hypotheses for this study are that there exist suitable parameters to assess quasispecies complexity. Furthermore, a rapid and simpler alternative method to cloning and sequencing can be developed to accurately describe the complexity of a given quasispecies population… |
| 10. Outline order of information in the thesis | …This thesis is divided into five chapters: Chapter 2 discusses in more detail about diffusions in general and the case of boron diffusion…Chapter 3 outlines the experimental work carried out in the project… |
| 11. Outline the methodology | …This thesis is divided into five chapters: Chapter 2 discusses in more detail about diffusions in general and the case of boron diffusion…Chapter 3 outlines the experimental work carried out in the project… |