



**INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES (IGS)**

**Guidelines for Writing a Research Proposal**

**For**

**Admission into Postgraduate Programmes**

## **Application for Postgraduate Studies at SEGI University**

### **A Guide to Writing a Research Proposal**

Thank you for your interest in pursuing your doctoral degree at SEGi University, Malaysia!

A carefully prepared research proposal is the first step on the road to a postgraduate degree! It is a vital part of the application and will be studied in detail by the selection panel. It is not just a personal statement about what you aspire to achieve. It should assist the panel in considering your application and in determining whether we can offer supervision in the area you wish to study.

We have prepared a step-by-step guide on the writing of your research proposal. It is to be used as a general guide with suggested points for the proposal. Please note that this guide does not guarantee acceptance onto a postgraduate programme. The acceptance of a master or PhD student onto a research programme depends on many factors, including the nature of your proposed research, the quality of your ideas, the level of your critical thinking and analytical skills, the effectiveness of your communication skill, as well as the “match” between the proposed research area and the potential supervisor and the resources available at the Faculty.

A research proposal is about what you want to study. It reflects your initial understanding and commitment to postgraduate study. It should outline your areas of interest and demonstrate your general insight into the research topic. You are not expected to be an expert but you need to show a good level of knowledge about the subject, and where you might make a valuable contribution to scholarly research. So, it is important to give a positive and impactful first impression about your potential to become a good researcher! Since you are going to be investing a few years of your life working hard on your master or PhD, spending a good number of days on researching and writing a thorough research proposal is a wise initial investment.

## **How do I write a research proposal?**

### **1. Research Topic:**

Give a clear working title for your research project:

- What is the title of your project?
- What are the key words informing readers on your research ideas?
- Are readers informed about the context of your study?

Example: Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Academic Texts among EFL Tertiary Students in a Provincial University in Shandong.

### **2. Context of the Research**

Give a clear statement about the background of your study:

- Why is the topic important, interesting, relevant and realistic?
- Do you know the background knowledge such as key literature, key people, key policies and research findings? (you may give a brief outline of the main conceptual areas, and the theoretical positions and lines of research within each which are relevant to your study)
- What are the issues around the research area?

### **3. Statement of the problem**

Give a clear statement of the problem using the answers to the following questions.

- What is the topic of your study?
- What is the rationale of your chosen topic? (The rationale refers to the reason or justification of your study. It states the need for conducting the said research).
- Why is research on this topic important to you and to the field? (A general statement of a problem or issue which has arisen in your professional work and/or in your reading of academic research) Tell us the current gap in research and how your study can contribute to filling the gap.
- Who are the people who will benefit with the findings of the research?

#### 4. Purpose of Research and Research Objectives

State the purpose of your research and the objectives clearly.

Examples:

**Purpose of Research** : The purpose of this study is to determine if different types of teacher feedback affect secondary students' motivation and achievement.

**Research Objectives** : (1) To identify the type of teacher feedback given to secondary students,  
(2) To identify the type of teacher feedback that enhances the motivation of secondary students  
(3) To identify the type of teacher feedback that enhances the achievement of secondary students

The research objectives should not be TOO general!

An objective such as *'to study how to improve students' learning skills?'* would be too general. Instead, an objective such as: *"to investigate the significant difference in learning gains between primary learners who have received instruction in growth mindset and those who received direct instructions"* would be better. The latter would give the panel more specific ideas on what you intend to do in your research.

#### 5. Research Methods

The research method refers to the systematic plan as to how you will conduct the study and it includes aspects such research design, setting, population sample and research instruments. You also need to think about the following aspects:

- How will you conduct your research?
- How will you design your project to get the best results/findings?
- What is your research strategy? (you may include a timetable for your research project)

## **6. Significance of Research**

- What difference do you think your research will make?
- What research ‘gaps’ will you be filling by undertaking your project?
- How might your research ‘add value’ to the subject?

If possible, inform us the significance of results: general indications of what the outcome of the research might be, and how the results might affect theory and practice in the field.

## **7. References**

List the key references which relevantly support your research proposal (in the appropriate convention for your subject area (e.g. APA style))

The appropriate length of a master research proposal is 500-1000 words, and a PhD research proposal is around 1000-1500 words. You need to provide enough details for the reader to understand it. Our general advice is, it should not be a generic or vague proposal but should actively seek to show why your research is noteworthy and its relevance to your previous studies, readings and experience at your work place. It is advisable to submit your resume so that the panel so they could get a glimpse of what your work experiences are.

Before you submit your application, read it again, or get your peers to have a read to make sure your proposal clearly indicates the purpose and direction of your research project. The panel should not have to read it twice to understand it. It should be coherent and well organised. It should link together well to tell a short story about what you want to do, why you want to do it and how you will do it. You need to give confidence to the panel that you have done some preliminary research about your subject and that you are knowledgeable and ready to tackle the challenges of the postgraduate study.

A copy of the research proposal template is attached of your reference. For further questions on the admission procedures, kindly contact our International Marketing Office for assistance.

All the best in your application!

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