

PROPOSAL: MASTER'S DEGREE

The main purpose of a master's degree is to demonstrate a mastery of a specific field of study. This includes components such as independent research and analysis, critical evaluation and application, the ability to solve complex problems as well as working independently.

A proposal is brief and presents a preliminary topic and general description of how the topic is going to be discussed, defended, and explored by the student. A masters dissertation requires thoughtful consideration, several phases of revision, and extensive research.

Please take note of the following ten golden rules:

1. The purpose of a proposal is to give the university details of the exact nature of the proposed study.
2. The proposal should contain all the elements as indicated in the example below.
3. The topic is the subject the paper will explore and has to be clearly defined as to demonstrate the problem and research required.
4. Treat the proposal as a survey of the literature that pertains to the topic.
5. Create a mind map to the thesis in the proposal as it is easy to read and it could demonstrate the preparedness for the research and thesis writing process.
6. Do not write a conclusion in the proposal, as the conclusion will likely not be determined until the process of research has been completed.
7. Although there are no specific limitations on the length of the proposal, it should not exceed 5000 to 5500 words.
8. The proposal should be in typed format, Arial 12 and 1.5 line spacing.
9. Please ensure that all references are done according to the Harvard referencing technique.



10. Please feel free to contact your supervisor from time to time, preferably once a month.

The masters dissertation may only commence once an acceptable research proposal has been submitted.

Please note that your progress is monitored and students who do not show adequate progress may be refused re-registration.

The minimum period in order to complete a masters dissertation is two (2) years. A student should not take longer than 4 years to complete a masters dissertation.



Title

Your initials and surname B.Com (Hons)

Proposal to submit a xxxxx in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree xxxxxxxx in
xxxxxxx at the University of South Africa

Supervisor:: xxxxxxxx

xxxx 2011



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1. Abstract

The abstract is a brief summary of the thesis proposal which should not exceed 300 words. It should present a brief introduction to the issue and provide a summary of how the issue will be addressed.

2. Introduction

The introduction is a short summary of the major questions behind the research and provides the context of the study. The introduction sets the scene for the rest of the proposal by detailing what the student is attempting to achieve through the research and writing.

3. Problem statement

The problem statement describes the research issue in depth, and provides the background and context of the problem under scrutiny. This statement can take the form of a hypothesis, research question, project statement, or goal statement. The thesis statement should however capture the essence of the intended project and also help to put boundaries around it.

4. Literature review

The literature review addresses the scope of the research and provides the background to the study. This section thus includes a brief but exact description of the sources for the research and outlines their significance for the study.

5. Objective of the study

Clearly state what the study wants to achieve, thus the deliverable. State the primary objective and if applicable the secondary objectives.



6. Method of research

This section describes the research in terms of what is planned, why it is planned, and how it will be done.

7. Structure

This section will include the physical structure of the study detailing amongst other the different chapters of the dissertation as well as a brief description of the contents of these chapters.

8. Summary

The summary is a restatement and specification of the goals.

9. Bibliography

The bibliography is a list of all the sources presented in the required academic format.

