

Guidelines for Research Outline Form for prospective Master's & Doctoral students

A research outline is a brief outline of the research project that you have in mind.

It is usually between 5 and 25 pages in length

Items	Information
1. Proposed title a. <i>Should have less than 40 words</i> b. <i>Should not be ambiguous and should convey the focus of the study</i>	
2. Name	
3. Student number	
4. Proposed qualification	
5. College	
6. Department	
7. Research focus area	
8. Email address	
9. Problem statement a. <i>The problem statement should define the extent of the problem including its distribution, quantity</i> b. <i>What is the current problem or opportunity which indicates the necessity for the research?</i> c. <i>What is the gap in knowledge?</i> d. <i>For PhD add novelty or innovation of the study/concepts from relevant theory or conceptual framework or originality</i>	
10. Significance of the study a. <i>Why it is important to conduct this research?</i> b. <i>Why does this research need to be conducted?</i> c. <i>What are the consequences of not conducting this research?</i>	
11. Aim and objectives a. <i>There should be one general aim starting with the word "To"</i> b. <i>An aim explains should clearly what you want to do research on</i> c. <i>Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound</i> d. <i>The objectives should be based on and clearly relate to the research problem or title</i>	

e. <i>The identified variables/constructs deduced from relevant theory or conceptual framework</i>	
12. Research questions a. <i>What are the main questions that flow from your problem statement?</i> b. <i>State the unknown in terms of questions or in terms of solutions</i>	
13. Literature review (this depends on the discipline) a. <i>Write reasons for choosing the topic</i> b. <i>How is your study aligned to the chosen focus area?</i> c. <i>What literature do you intend to review and why?</i> d. <i>It should substantiate the identified gap of the study</i> e. <i>It should be informed by the research: problem/questions/objectives/hypothesis methods/models employed by other researchers under similar circumstances may be covered</i>	
14. Research design or Research methodology or Theoretical framework or Materials and methods or Procedures including the study area a. <i>Methodologies are discipline specific – ensure you use a relevant methodology</i> b. <i>Describe the methods that will be used to achieve the research objectives</i> c. <i>How will the study be conducted?</i> d. <i>How will the data be analysed?</i> e. <i>Include the time frame of all research planned activities</i>	
15. References or Bibliography a. <i>Research is built on existing knowledge. It implies that all research must have references.</i> b. <i>Use only one of the prescribed referencing styles (for example APA, Harvard, Mendeley Oxford, IEEE, MLA)</i> c. <i>Use original sources from accredited publications (reviewed journal, reviewed book etc.)</i>	

<p>16. Your outline must include the following declaration:</p> <p>I declare that (insert proposed research title) is my own work and that all sources used, including AI tools, have been acknowledged and declared. I also understand that failure to disclose AI use, plagiarism and/or lack of academic integrity may constitute academic misconduct under Unisa policies and can result in not being accepted into the qualification I am applying for.</p> <p>Signed and date</p>	
<p>Proposed Budget for the project and how the study will be funded</p>	