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**    1. *Should have less than 40 words*    2. *Should not be ambiguous and should convey the focus of the study* |  |
| **2. Name** |  |
| **3. Student number** |  |
| **4. Proposed qualification** |  |
| **5. College** |  |
| **6. Department** |  |
| **7. Research focus area** |  |
| **8. Email address** |  |
| 1. **Problem statement**    1. *The problem statement should define the extent of the problem including its distribution, quantity*    2. *What is the current problem or opportunity which indicates the necessity for the research?*    3. *What is the gap in knowledge?*    4. *For PhD add novelty or innovation of the study/concepts from relevant*   *theory or conceptual framework or originality* |  |
| 1. **Significance of the study**    1. *Why it is important to conduct this research?*    2. *Why does this research need to be conducted?*    3. *What are the consequences of not conducting this research*? |  |
| 1. **Aim and objectives**    1. *There should be one general aim starting with the word “To”*    2. *An aim explains should clearly what you want to do research on*    3. *Objectives should be* ***s****pecific,* ***m****easurable,* ***a****chievable,* ***r****elevant and* ***t****ime-bound*    4. *The objectives should b e b as e d on and clearly relate to the research problem or t i t l e* |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *e. The identified variables/constructs*  *deduced from relevant theory or conceptual framework* |  |
| 1. **Research questions**    1. *What are the main questions that flow from your problem statement?*    2. *State the unknown in terms of*   *questions or in terms of solutions* |  |
| 1. **Literature review** (this depends on the discipline)    1. *Write reasons for choosing the topic*    2. *How is your study aligned to the chosen focus area?*    3. *What literature do you intend to review and why?*    4. *It should substantiate the identified gap of the study*    5. *It should be informed by the research: problem/questions/objectives/hypothesis methods/models employed by other*   *researchers under similar circumstances may be covered* |  |
| 1. **Research design or Research o r m ethodology or Theoretical**   **framework or Materials and methods o r Procedures including the study**  **area**   * 1. *Methodologies are discipline specific – ensure you use a relevant methodology*   2. *Describe the methods that will be used to achieve the research objectives*   3. *How w i l l the study be conducted?*   4. *How will the data be analysed?*   5. *Include the time f r a m e of all research planned activities* |  |
| 1. **References or Bibliography**    1. *Research is built on existing knowledge. It implies that all research must have references.*    2. *Use only one of the prescribed referencing styles (for example APA, Harvard, Mendeley Oxford, IEEE, MLA)*    3. *Use original sources from accredited publications (reviewed journal, reviewed*   *book etc.)* |  |
| 1. **Your outline must include the following declaration:**   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.  Signed and date |  |
| **Proposed Budget for the project and how the study will be funded** |  |