

Guidelines / Format for MS/M.Phil and PhD Thesis

SARHAD UNIVERSITY of Science & Information Technology, Peshawar

Thesis and Dissertation

The terms Thesis and dissertation are used interchangeably to mean a research study carried out by a candidate for a University degree. But, in fact, the term thesis has a broader connotation. Thesis usually means a research conducted for any university degree whereas dissertation refers exclusively to a research study carried out for a doctoral degree. It is therefore, customary to call a research study a thesis if it is submitted for a Master's degree or a Master of Philosophy degree, whereas a research study carried out for a doctoral degree is called a dissertation.

A research study may be carried out for obtaining a university degree or for any other purpose. Its goal is not achieved until the researcher shares it with the scientific community – the teachers, the research scholars and scholars, and the users of the research findings. It is therefore, important for the researcher to always bear in mind that as research involves scientific methods of study of facts, the researcher must use the language of a science appropriate to what his research is about, and present the results of research in the form which best suits the purpose of research.

Language of Research

A research report or a research article differs, besides other things, from literary and other writings in its language. In research writing there is no room for verbosity, subjective statements and words and terms, which are bizarre, vague and ambiguous. Objectivity, precision, simplicity, clarity and straightforwardness form criteria of good research language.

In writing research reports, therefore, the writer should adhere to the following guidelines:

- a. The researcher should be impartial and free from all personal prejudices. Use of words such as “I think” “I believe” “I understand” “I infer”, etc must be avoided. The researcher should always consider himself as a “third person” who in no way is personally INVOLVED in the research except as a neutral observer.
- b. Precision is an important requirement of research writing. While precision, literally means, the quality of being precise, it necessarily implies choice and use of words and terms, which very accurately and exactly state the facts. To ensure this quality of research writing the researcher

must frequently refer to a good dictionary. He should take utmost care to see that no unwanted, vague and ambiguous word or term creeps into the research report. Similarly, no statement should find place in research writing, which is unnecessary, repetitive and authoritative.

- c. As a research report is meant to be read and understood by others, exactly as things occurred in the process of research, the language used for writing research report must be as simple and clear as possible. Small and simple sentences should be preferred. Words commonly understood and having standard meanings should be used. Where use of a foreign, usual, or a coined word, or phrase, and abbreviation or a construct are inevitable their meanings or explanations should be given in footnote or at an appropriate place in the research report.
- d. Most importantly, the research should be honest and frank in reporting research. A researcher under no condition should use evasive or exaggerated statements to hide or highlight facts or findings of the research. A research report should be so written as to allow its examination, re-examination, replication or authentication by others in the way it exactly happened.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING THE REPORT

- Do not make the report longer than necessary. Be concise in writing research report. Quality counts more than quantity of pages.
- You should write in your best expository style. Grammar, punctuation, and diction are important and should be correct. Have someone edit your paper if you are weak in writing. Your verb tense should remain fairly consistent throughout your paper. In general, mostly research is written in the past tense. Since any report on research must necessarily follow the data collection process and describe what was observed. At times this may seem awkward, but usually it makes good sense.
- Mechanical style, i.e. the style in which the report is typed – the appearance of the title page, table of contents, chapter headings, format for tables and figures, manner of footnoting, form of bibliographical references, and so on is important. Your Supervisor will probably specify the style manual, he wants you to follow, and he will expect you to adhere to it carefully.
- You may find these few criteria useful for judging your own paper before you turn it in:
 - Is the presentation such that what you did and what you observed stand out clearly?
 - Do you show an awareness of the weaknesses, underlying, assumption and so forth, in your study?
 - Are your conclusions valid and in keeping with your findings?
 - Were the data handled and presented accurately and effectively?
 - Was the research designed adequately within the practical limitations you faced?

SPECIMEN OF THE TITLE PAGE

Format of title page must be the same as below

**SARHAD UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,
PESHAWAR – PAKISTAN**

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A RESEARCH PROPOSAL
Submitted

By

(Full name of the Scholar)

(-----)



Research Supervisor

(-----)

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

(Name of degree)

in the

Faculty of -----
Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology
PESHAWAR – PAKISTAN

Month – Year

APPROVAL SHEET

This Research entitled "Title of Research Proposal" prepared and submitted by (Name of Scholar) in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of (Name of the Degree) has been examined and hereby recommended for approval.

(Name of Research Supervisor) _____
(Designation)
(Department/Faculty)

Signed by Members of the Graduate Studies Committee

Signature with Name and Designation (Member 1)

Signature with Name and Designation (Member 2)

Signature with Name and Designation (Member 3)

Signature with Name and Designation (Member 4)

Signed by Concerned HoD/Dean,

ORDER OF CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

VARIOUS SECTIONS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Order of items of the proposal is given as under:

PRELIMINARY SECTION

TITLE PAGE
APPROVAL SHEET
PLAGIARISM CERTIFICATE ISSUED BY DIRECTOR, QEC, SUIT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Optional

LIST OF TABLES

The research proposal typically includes the following sections:

1. INTRODUCTION (Introduction to the research problem or issue)
2. A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW (covering what others have already done in the area, including an identification of the gap in the current research and Justification for the proposed research)
3. RESEARCH PROBLEM (Questions arising from the gaps that can be the focus of data collection or analysis)
4. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH
5. METHODOLOGY
6. Limitations of the Research
7. SUMMARY (including EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS, outlining how your research will make a change to an area of study)

APPENDICES (DEPENDING ON THE SCHOLAR'S PROGRAM)
REFERENCE LIST/BIBLIOGRAPHY

The title must be in CAPITAL letters, centered, with a maximum font of 13.

The Research Proposal should be maximum of 15 pages in length for MS/MPhil and 30 pages for PhD, using font Times New Roman, size 12 and 1.5 line spacing.

The size of the pages in the research proposal should be 21.5 cm x 28 cm (A4 size). Page margins should be at least 25.4 mm (One inch) to the main text.

All pages must be numbered consecutively, centered at the bottom of the page.

Guidelines for Research Proposal

A research proposal is basic to research that a scholar or any other person would like to undertake. The more thought and effort the scholar puts into his proposal, the more likely he will be able to

successfully execute the research itself. The proposal is somewhat like a roadmap that is studied carefully in advance of the trip so that one should know “how to get there from here.”

What should a good research proposal contain? **There is no absolute answer to this question because any answer must depend on the setting in which the research is to be carried out.**

Borg and Gall (1989) stated that the tentative research plan should contain the following sections: introduction and problem description, statement of the objectives or hypotheses, listing of possible tests or measures to be used in the study, description of the proposed sample, research design, a chronological description of procedures to be used in carrying out the project, and plans for carrying out analysis of data to be collected. We would try to discuss the main features of research proposal in what follows:

Tentative Title

Your proposal should have a tentative title that is stated in fairly precise terms, “Television and Achievement” is too vague and general. “The Effect of Home Television Viewing on High School Achievement” is much better and suggests rather clearly what is to be studied. The experts suggest that the title is subject to modification when the research is completed.

Introductory Section

In preparing the introductory section of the research proposal, you should bear in mind that the impression of this section makes upon members of the thesis committee would do much towards shaping their attitudes about you and the remainder of your plan. Briefly, the introduction and problem statement should have the following characteristics:

1. It should be written in clear, non-technical language, avoiding jargon. Try to stimulate the reader’s interest.
2. The problem should be sufficiently limited in scope to be a manageable thesis or dissertation problem.
3. The problem should be carefully fitted into the broader context of current theory and relevant research. Avoid making assumptions or unsupported claims or statements.
4. The significance of the problem should be addressed, that is, does it explore an important question, meet a recognized need, or make a useful contribution to knowledge?
5. The problem should be clearly and logically related to the hypotheses that follow.

Problem Statement

You should now give the clearest statement of your actual problem, which must be enshrined in theory from which it is derived. This is necessary because if you are not clear about your problem, your statement or definition of the problem is likely to put you in trouble at the time of collection of data. The objective of this statement is to clarify the corner of the universe that you want to study.

Literature Review

The review of literature is an important part of scientific research in physical, natural, or social sciences. Such reviews are also the basis of most researches in the Humanities.

Your research proposal must contain review of relevant literature that has a bearing on your problem. The review of the literature in educational research provides you with the means of getting to the frontier in your particular field of knowledge. Until you have learned what others have done and what remains still to be done in your area. You cannot develop a research project that will contribute to furthering knowledge in your field. The review of literature can help in both limiting and more clearly defining your research problem.

Knowledge and understanding should be demonstrated through a brief review of the most important research and theoretical work related to your problem. Quotations from experts in the field that emphasize the importance of your problem area or the need for further research can also be used to help build a justification for your proposed research. Usually a discussion of 10 to 20 key references is sufficient to help the members of the thesis committee fit your problem into the context of other work in this area. If this brief review appears to be a disjointed recitation of the studies cited, as is often the case, the reader may well question your understanding of the problem you propose to study.

Procedure of Research

Describe briefly the research procedures or methods to be used in addressing the different elements of the problem. This is your research design. Here you explain the techniques you plan to use, the population, the samples, the controls, the statistical techniques, the instruments of your research and so on. The guiding criterion here is that your methods fit the requirements of both your problem and your practical situation. You must have time, subjects, and equipment to meet the demands of your methods. Plan your study as best as you can with your limited knowledge now and refine it in the light of your reading and thinking and follow the instructions of your supervisor.

Data collection

You should explain how and where each item or set of data is to be obtained. It is important that you determine in advance where and how will you be able to collect the data that your problem and methods require. What primary and secondary sources would be available to you for collection of the relevant data?

Summary

The scholar should clearly mention here that how he or she would be going to work in this section, which would be important being the crux of the entire report and a reflection of the research skills of the scholars. The demonstration should lead to specific conclusions based on what has been done during the course of research, a brief summary of the report and recommendations that would help

improve the current status in education and the efforts that should further be directed for strengthening the current research effort.

List of References/Bibliography

List all references and Bibliography in alphabetical order or in chronological order starting from the most recent. The tables or raw data should be included in the appendix.

References should be given according to one of the following two formats:

McLeay, F. J. and Zwart, A.C. (1993), Agricultural marketing and Farm marketing Strategies Australian Agribusiness Review Volume No, 1, Issue No 1, Pg----- **(From Journal)**

Perry, C. (2003). Research Proposal Structure Keyed into the Thesis Structure, Accessed 24/6/03 from, http://www.usq.edu.au/library/PG_Toolbox/PhD%20proposal.htm **(From Website)**

Phillips, E. M. and Pugh, D. S. (1987). How to get a PhD. Milton Keynes, U.K: Open University Press **(From Other Sources)**

Sekaran, U. (1992). Research Methods for Business: A Skills Building Approach. New York: Wiley.

(From Book)

OR

[1] Red A., Blue B.M. Title of the paper. Name of the Journal, Volume number, pp. xx-yy (year).

[2] Big M., Small M. Title of the Book. Publisher, City (year).

[3] Smart M.Z. Title of the Chapter in “Title of the Book”, edited by Big M.Q. and Small M.S. Publisher, City, Volume number, pp. xx-yy (year).

[4] Bad P.A., Good A. Title of the paper in “Proceeding of Name of the Conference or Symposium, Place of the conference, Country, (year).
