Part One: The research proposal

The research proposal focuses your ideas. It forms the contract between you and your supervisor, sponsor and research associates. In a modified format the proposal later becomes Chapter One.

Getting started

A good way of starting a research proposal is to write a one-page statement of intent, in which you answer the following questions:

● What do I want to know?
● Why do I want to know this?
● How will I find out?
● What will I not do?

Exhibit 1 is an example of such a proposal
Exhibit 1: Example of a one-page proposal

The role of online facilitators in organisational learning

One-page initial research proposal submitted by
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To
Prof. Johannes Cronje (Supervisor) and Dr Irma Eloff (Co-Supervisor)

1. What I want to know
   ● What do online facilitators do?
   ● How does that differ from good contact facilitators?
   ● What is needed to bridge good contact facilitators to help them become
good online facilitators?

2. Why do we need to know this?
   ● People make the mistake of trying to do online what they would do in a
classroom.
   ● People think online instruction is putting your textbook on the web.
   ● We have no clear job/task description for online facilitators of learning for
   adults in a banking environment.
   ● Absa is a leader in the field of online learning and needs this information
to keep its competitive edge.

3. How will I find it out?
   ● Analyze current best practices in contact facilitation by Comparing
     literature to a case study of an actual contact facilitator at Absa.
   ● Analyze future best practices by comparing literature to a case study of an
     actual online facilitator, Linda van Ryneveld.
   ● Determine the gap by comparing the activities of the two facilitators.
   ● Verify the results by a Delphi study.

4. What will I not do
   ● I will not analyze more than one online course and no more than twelve
     learners and one facilitator.
   ● I will not use computer-illiterate, unmotivated students.
   ● I will not work in an unstable technological environment.
   ● I will not claim that my results can be generalized.

The full proposal
Vithal & Jansen (2001) identify the following ten steps in writing a research proposal:

1. Selecting a focus
2. Identifying critical questions
3. Stating a rationale
4. Conducting a literature survey
5. Locating a theoretical framework
6. Preparing a data collection plan
7. Planning for data analysis strategy
8. Anticipating the report outcome
9. Dealing with validity and reliability concerns
10. Acknowledging the limitations of the research
Vithal & Jansen (2001, p.3)
Writing a full proposal is beyond the scope of this workshop. However, there are a number of general writing issues to consider at the proposal stage, such as the vocabulary of proposals, simple sentences and research questions.