Writing the Research Proposal

Writing the research proposal is crucial, as it helps with the organisation of thoughts and the planning of the proposed research. A solid proposal is like a detailed road map of the necessary steps you will take to complete the project. A research proposal should state the research questions and explain how you will answer them. A well-written proposal is a strong basis from which to complete your dissertation or thesis and it is obviously worth the while to spend some time creating a strong proposal.

Your supervisor or promoter will render assistance to you while you are working on your research proposal and will discuss the aims of the presentation with you.

You should work closely with your supervisor or promoter and ensure that you get pre-approvals at every stage of your proposal from your supervisor or promoter otherwise you will find yourself rewriting your proposal.

It is essential that the proposed thesis or dissertation topic is narrowly focused, and that the proposal gives full details of the research.

Note 9:

Your research proposals may be rejected because the research topic is;

- too broad or too simplistic, and
- the description of the research is too general or too vague.

The aims and the methods of the research as well as the structure and content should be clearly worked out between yourself and your supervisor or promoter before you start. Ideas should be presented in a clear and readable manner.

The following should guide you when preparing your final research proposal.

- Have the outcomes of the research been realistically considered?
- Has the usefulness of the research been established?
- Do you have some understanding of existing research in the field?
- Can you show how the proposed research fits in with existing knowledge?
- Is the literature relevant to the problem?
- What are the proposed methods?
- Are the proposed methods appropriate?
- Do you have the necessary research skills, and if not, how will those skills be acquired?
• Does the University have the necessary resources, and if not, do you know where they can be found?
• Is the project manageable within the time allowed for the degree?
• Did you have the research cleared with regard to ethical considerations where necessary and have you identified likely costs?
• Is ethical clearance required to conduct this research?