

Far Western University

A Manual on Formatting and Organizing Research Proposal and Thesis for Master of Arts



Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Far Western University,

Mahendranagar, Nepal

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M.A Thesis Proposal Guidelines

(I) Developing a Research Proposal

A research proposal serves as a detailed blueprint for the entire research journey. It clearly defines the planned study by identifying the research problem, outlining the objectives, establishing the scope, describing the methodology, citing references, and providing a preliminary chapter outline. A carefully crafted research proposal is considered the cornerstone of a successful thesis and is often regarded as the most crucial phase of the entire research process.

Following Key Components are supposed to have in a Research Proposal:

- a. **Introduction** -
- b. **Research Problem** – The issue or question the study aims to address.
- c. **Purpose & Objectives** – The goals and specific aims of the research.
- d. **Scope/Significance** – The boundaries and focus of the study.
- e. **De/Limitation of the Study**-
- f. **Methodology** – The research methods and designs, tools and techniques of the data collection, and analysis techniques.
- g. **References** – The sources that support the study (APA/MLA).

Tentative Outline:

The organization of the elements within the research proposal may vary based on the research's nature and subject matter; a general arrangement is provided below.

1. **Title:** The title should be precise, focused, and free of ambiguity. It should concisely convey the central topic while emphasizing key variables or issues. When employing a two-part title, use a colon to clearly distinguish between the parts (within 12 words)-Upper case
2. **Introduction: Context/ Background of the Study:** The introduction should position the topic within its appropriate context, highlighting its significance. It lays the foundation by demonstrating the value of the research and the reasons it merits further investigation.

3. **Statement of the Problem:** The research problem serves as the cornerstone of the study, shaping its focus and objectives. It identifies a current issue or gap in existing knowledge that the research intends to address. Through investigating the "unknown," the researcher aims to transform it into "known" knowledge, offering new insights and understanding. Including the research questions
4. **Research Questions:** Research problems are typically formulated as questions to direct the study. These research questions form the foundation of the entire investigation. However, not every question qualifies as a research problem—only those that contribute new knowledge to the existing body of research are considered valid.
5. **Objectives:** Objectives outline the purpose and direction of a study. They assist researchers in identifying key variables and their interrelationships, effectively guiding the research process. Objectives also communicate to readers what the study intends to accomplish.

Generally, objectives are classified into two types:

- a. General Objective – Represents the primary aim of the study, centered around the main research question.
- b. Specific Objectives – Targeted components of the research problem that contribute to achieving the general objective.

This framework ensures clarity and helps maintain an organized approach to the research.

6. **Hypotheses** (If needed): should present the anticipated research outcomes in the form of a hypothesis. This hypothesis acts as a predictive and testable statement, serving as an assumption that the research will seek to confirm or refute.
7. **Scope/Significance of the study** (Academic, social, or policy relevance.)
8. **Limitations/Delimitations** (conditional to the subject): A research proposal must clearly outline the study's scope, limitations, and boundaries. It should detail:
 - The texts and data to be analyzed
 - The specific area or focus of the study
 - The key variables being investigated
 - The sample size of the population involved

This clarity helps ensure a structured, focused, and manageable research process.

9. **Organization of the study:** Chapters design or number of Units/Chapters

10. **Review of Literature:** A literature review in a research proposal offers background on prior studies, helping to contextualize the proposed research. It should:

- Detail relevant past research and its findings
- Illustrate how the current study contributes to existing knowledge
- Provide a critical and thorough analysis, rather than just summarizing past work
- Direct the research in a focused direction
- Include the researcher's own insights and evaluation

The literature review can be presented as a separate chapter or incorporated into the introduction. It serves as a bridge between established knowledge and unexplored areas, guiding the researcher toward new discoveries.

11. **Conceptual/Theoretical Framework:** A conceptual framework presents the researcher's assumptions about knowledge (epistemology), reality (ontology), and the methods of inquiry (methodology). It guides the study by:

- Identifying the key variables
- Establishing the study's boundaries within the relevant field
- Offering precise operational definitions to eliminate ambiguity
- This framework promotes clarity and consistency throughout the research process.

12. **Research Methodology:** The methodology explains why and how specific research methods were chosen. It should:

- Restate the research aims and questions
- Show how the selected methods help answer these questions
- Justify the choice of methods with support from existing literature
- Provide a detailed description of research processes and procedures

Methods refer to the actual tools, instruments, and techniques used for data collection and analysis. The researcher should also explain why certain methods were chosen over others, ensuring clarity and validity in the research approach.

13. **Conclusion and expected result (If)**

14. **Work Schedule and Budget**

- **Gantt Chart** or timeline of key research activities
- Estimated costs and resources required

15. References / Bibliography: (Follow a consistent academic style: APA or MLA)

16. Appendices

- Questionnaire / Interview Checklist
- Consent Form
- Maps / Photos
- Other relevant documents

- A. **Organization of the Study or Chapter Division for Thesis:** Typically, a Thesis includes the following sections as separate chapters or in a merged way.

Chapter 1: Introduction

- 1.1 Background of the Study
- 1.2 Problem Statement/Statement of Problem
- 1.3 Objective/Purpose of the Study
- 1.4 Hypothesis (If needed)
- 1.5 Scope/Significance/Rationale for the Study
- 1.6 De/Limitation of the Study
- 1.7 Key Terminologies/Glossaries (If needed)
- 1.8 Organization of the Study

Note: Sub titles should manage as per guideline given in APA/MLA (updated version)

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Conceptual/Theoretical framework should be included within literature review section

- 2.1 Review of Empirical Literature :(Thematic review of past studies.)
- 2.2 Review of Theoretical Literature: (Relevant theories in humanities/social science.)
- 2.3 Conceptual / Theoretical Framework: (The lens through which the problem will be examined.)
- 2.4 Policy Review (If any)

Chapter 3: Research Methodology/Theory discussion

- 3.1 Research Design: (Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods.)
- 3.2 Study Area / Site Description
- 3.3 Universe and Sampling Procedure
- 3.4 Methods of Data Collection
 - 3.4.1 Interviews
 - 3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

- 3.4.3 Surveys
- 3.4.4 Observations
- 3.4.5 Document Review
- 3.5 Data Analysis Techniques
- 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation/ Results/Textual Analysis

Chapter 5: Major Findings/Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Implication or Policy Recommendation

(Body chapters can be arranged as per the requirement of the subject/Stream)

Work Cited/References (APA/MLA)

Appendixes (if needed)

Working Bibliography with Annotations (if needed)

(II) Structure of the Thesis (Preliminary Section)

A thesis typically follows a structured format to ensure clarity and coherence. Here's a common structure:

1. *TITLE PAGE*
2. *DECLARATION*
3. *RECOMMENDATION PAGE*
4. *APPROVAL LETTER*
5. *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*
6. *ABSTRACT*
7. *CONTENTS*
8. *LIST OF TABLES*
9. *LIST OF FIGURES*
10. *LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS AND SYMBOLS*

Note: All the preliminary sections title should be on *UPPER CASE (With Italic)*

Other Important Instructions for the Body Chapters

General Style:

- a. Font:** Times New Roman, 12 Points, left align and main title, 12 in bold.
- b. Page layout:** A4, 1 inch space from all sides.
- c. Page number:** Place the page number in the top right. Begin the body or first chapter on page 1 but hide the page number on the page where the chapter begins. Use Roman numbers (i, ii, iii...) in the initial section.
- d. Spacing:** 1.5 spacing (Line by line), Indentation: 0.5-inch paragraph space.
- e. Format:** Use APA/MLA (As per the need of subject/stream)
- f.** Do not use full justification.

M.A. Thesis Cover Page Sample:

TITLE OF THE THESIS



A Thesis Submitted to

Central Department of Humanities and Social Sciences/Campus

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Far Western University

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

SUBJECT

Submitted By:

CANDIDATE'S name

Campus/Department Name:

Exam Roll No.:

FWU Regd. No.:

Month, Year

M.A. Thesis Cover Page Example (Sample)

CROSS BORDER LABOUR MIGRATION BETWEEN NEPAL AND INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY



A Thesis Submitted to

Central Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Far Western University
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
In
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Submitted By:

DEEPAK CHANDRA BHATT

Central Department of Humanities and Social Science
University Central Campus, Far Western University

Exam Roll No.: 33034

FWU Regd. No.:28792-95

December, 2025

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind and any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Signature:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

#Use Letter Head

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

I certify that this thesis entitled "Title of the Thesis" was prepared by Candidate's (*Full Name*) under my guidance. I hereby recommend this thesis for final examinations by the Research Committee of the Department/Campus, Far Western University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in SUBJECT.

Full Name.....

Supervisor

Date:.....B.S (A.D)

#Use Letter Head

Approval Letter

We have examined the thesis entitled
..... presented by
for the degree of Master of Arts in..... We hereby certify that the
thesis is acceptable for the award of a degree.

.....

Name

Head of Department/ RMC/Campus chief/Research Committee

.....

Name

Supervisor

.....

Name

External Examiner

Date of approval (in B.S and AD):