Research Proposal Format & Style Guide

Dr. Saima Batool
Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC)

Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology
Peshawar, KPK
Research Proposal Format & Style Guide

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Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC)

Year 2015

Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology

Peshawar, KPK
Preface

As a rule, the main components of a research study are nearly the same in all disciplines throughout the world. Though, various styles of referencing and citation are used by the researchers in their research work i.e. APA, MLA, Harvard, Chicago, Turabian etc. Nonetheless, every established university develops its own customized format for its students’ facilitation in presentation of research proposals and theses. This handbook is compiled to facilitate the M.S/M.Phil and PhD students of Qurtuba University in developing their research proposals and to bring an overall uniformity in their research proposals. The format suggested in this handbook is MANDATORY for all M. S / M. Phil and PhD Students to develop and submit their proposal for approval of Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BOASAR). Further, the students are required to prepare their research proposal under the supervision of their respective supervisors. The purpose of the research proposal / synopsis is to help the scholars to focus and define their research plans. A well developed research proposal needs to include certain basic components, in which a number of questions are to be addressed. Why research on the proposed topic should be undertaken and what gains are likely to be achieved? What has been done previously in this or related areas? What are the objectives of the study and how these will be achieved? What methodology is to be used to carry out the study? An extensive initial exercise should help in designing a sound research project, which is likely to make a significant contribution in successful completion of M. S / M. Phil and Ph. D. research.
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1. General Format of Research Proposal

1.1 Page Size and Quality:

AA4 (A4-Fine paper) should be used for submission of proposal / synopsis. Minimum paper weight should be 80 grams.

1.2 Page Setup / Margins:

1 inch margins on all sides

1.3 Page Numbering:

The best position for the page number is at top right. Pages containing figures and illustration should be suitably paginated.

1.4 Font guide:

New Times Roman font should be used throughout the proposal / synopsis.

1.4.1 Font guide Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>Font Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>16pt BOLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author’s name</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student ID</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Institutional affiliation</td>
<td>14 pt NORMAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course title</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of paper submission</td>
<td></td>
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<td>University</td>
<td>16pt BOLD</td>
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<td>Chapter Titles</td>
<td>16pt BOLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headings</td>
<td>14pt BOLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Headings</td>
<td>12pt BOLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table/Figure Headings</td>
<td>12pt BOLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>12pt NORMAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footnotes / End notes</td>
<td>10pt NORMAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.5 Paragraph Setting:

Line spacing should be double spaced and all paragraphs should be justified. Indentation of each paragraph should be First Line Indentation.
1.6 Number of Copies:

The students are required to submit several copies of Research Proposal as per coordinator’s directive, to be presented to Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BOASAR).

1.7 Binding:

Only one master copy should be in tape binding with plastic cover and no need of binding for the rest of copies.

1.8 Submission of Soft Copy of Proposal:

The students are required to send a PDF copy of their research proposal to the program coordinator on his e-mail address.

1.9 Cover Page

The following are included on the cover page:

- Title
- University Logo
- Author’s name: First name, middle initial, last name
- Student ID
- Course title
- Department
1.9.1 Cover Page Sample

- **Cover Page Title**: Times New Roman Bold 16pt, centered
- **University Logo**
- **Author’s Details**: Times New Roman Normal 14 pt
  - Author’s name
  - Student ID
  - Course title
- **University Address**: Times New Roman Bold 16pt

**Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology**

**Peshawar, KPK**

1 Inch Margins on all sides
1.10 Title Page

A title should summarize the main idea of the manuscript simply and, if possible, with style. It should be a concise statement of the main topic and should identify the variables or theoretical issues under investigation and the relationship between them.

- Avoid using abbreviations in a title
- The recommended length for a title is no more than 12 words.
- The title should be typed in uppercase and lowercase letters,
- Centered between the left and right margins,
- Positioned in the upper half of the page
- Title Font 16pt, Bold

The following are included on the title page:

- Running head
- Page number
- Title
- University Logo
- Author’s name
- Student ID
- Course title
- Department
- Date of paper submission
- Supervisor Name
- University
1.10.1 Title Page Sample

- **Title Page 1 Title**: Times New Roman Bold 16pt, Centered
- **Running Head (Header)**: Times New Roman Normal 10 pt
- **University Logo**
- **Author’s Details**: Times New Roman Normal 14 pt
  - Author’s name
  - Student ID
  - Course title
  - Department
  - Date of paper submission
  - Supervisor Name
- **University Address**: Times New Roman Bold 16pt

Qurtuba University of Science & Information Technology
1.11 Supervisor Certificate for Research Proposal Submission to ORIC

1.11 Sample

COVER PAGE TITLE

CERTIFICATE BY SUPERVISOR FOR RP-I SUBMISSION

To be completed by the Supervisor

__________________________________________

(Title of Research Proposal)

written by

(Students Name) (Student ID)

has been thoroughly checked by myself on the following grounds as per the comments issued by ORIC:

I have checked the General Format
I have checked the Literature Review
I have checked the Methodology
I have checked the References
I have checked the Appendix
I have checked the Plagiarism

(R Kindly tick, which is applicable)
CHECKED 
N/A

I certify and fully endorse the final submission of this Research Proposal-I.

Supervisor: __________________________
(Signature)

Co-Supervisor: _________________________
(Signature)

Note: The Research Proposal would not be accepted at ORIC for Submission if it's not duly signed by supervisor or incomplete.
1.12 ORIC approval Sheet

1.12 ORIC approval Sheet Sample

---

**Evaluation (Research Proposal) RP-EVA-1**

**Topic of Research:**

---

**Name of Scholar:**

**Student ID:**

The Research Proposal has been recommended for the Evaluation & Viva Voce for the degree of master of Philosophy in

---

**Please select the most appropriate choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format of thesis in APA</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Revise Improve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover and Title Page</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate from Supervisor</td>
<td>Signed</td>
<td>Not signed</td>
<td>Not according to ORIC format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables/Figures</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Font/Spacing</td>
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<td>Margins/Pagination</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tables and Illustrations</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language &amp; Grammar</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Problem</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Objective of the Study</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical framework</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions/Hypothesis</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
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<td>Revise Improve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delimitations and/or Limitations</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of Teams</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of the Literature</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sampling</td>
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<td>Revise Improve</td>
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<td>Methods of Data Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Impression</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Revise Improve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Please tick the appropriate box**

- [ ] I recommend that Research Proposal be revised.
- [ ] I recommend that Research Proposal be accepted & forwarded to BOASAR.
- [ ] I recommend that Research Proposal be accepted & forwarded to BOASAR with minor amendments

---

**Supervisor:** ____________________________

**Manager Research Operations:** ____________________________

**Director ORIC:** ____________________________

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**Office of Research, Innovation & Commercialization (ORIC)**

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1.13 Abstract

- The abstract needs to be dense with information.
- Embed key words in your abstract
- Ensure that the abstract correctly reflects the purpose and content of the manuscript.
- Do not include information that does not appear in the body of the manuscript.
- Write in clear and concise language.
- Begin the abstract with the most important points.
- Do not waste space by repeating the title.
- Include in the abstract only the four or five most important concepts, findings, or implications.
- Do not exceed the abstract word limit range from 150 to 250 words.
- Begin the abstract on a new page
- The label Abstract should appear in Title case letters,
- Centered, at the top of the page
- Type the abstract itself as a single paragraph without paragraph indentation.

1.13.1 Abstract Sample

Running Head (Header)
Times New Roman Normal 10 pt

Times New Roman Bold 16pt
Title Case, centered

Abstract

Type the abstract itself as a single paragraph without paragraph indentation

Page Number

Times New Roman Normal 12 pt
Single Paragraph, No Indentation
1.4 Table of Contents

1.4.1 Table of Contents Sample

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover Page</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables / Graphs</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. General Format of Research Proposal</td>
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<td>1.1 Page Size and Quality:</td>
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<td>1.3 Page Numbering:</td>
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<td>1.4 Font guide:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Paragraph Setting:</td>
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<td>1.6 Number of Copies:</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1.9 Cover Page</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1.10 Title Page</td>
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<td>1.11 Supervisor Certificate for Research Proposal Submission to ORIC:</td>
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<td>1.13 Abstract</td>
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</table>
1.15 List of Table/Figures

1.15.1 List of Table/Figures Sample

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<tr>
<td>1.10.1 Title Page Sample ..................................................................................................... 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.12 ORIC approval Sheet Sample .......................................................................................... 7</td>
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<td>1.14.1 Table of Contents/Figures Sample ............................................................................. 9</td>
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<td>1.15.1 List of Tables/Figures Sample ................................................................................... 10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Reference List Samples ............................................................................................... 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Introduction

2.1 Introduce the Problem

The body of a manuscript opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy. State why the problem deserves new research: For basic research, the statement about importance might involve the need to resolve any inconsistency in results of past work and/or extend the reach of a theoretical formulation. For applied research, this might involve the need to solve a social problem or treat a psychological disorder. When research is driven by the desire to resolve controversial issues, all sides in the debate should be represented in balanced measure in the introduction.

Before writing the introduction, consider the following questions:

- Why is this problem important?
- How does the study relate to previous work in the area?
- If other aspects of this study have been reported previously, how does this report differ from, and build on, the earlier report?
- What are the theoretical and practical implications of the study?

A good introduction answers these questions in just a few pages and, by summarizing the relevant arguments and the past evidence, gives the reader a firm sense of what was done and why. Conclude the statement of the problem in the introduction with a brief but formal statement of the purpose of the research that summarizes the material preceding it. Also clearly state the reasons that the reported content is important and how the article fits into the cumulative understanding of the field.
3. Literature Review

Discuss the relevant related literature, but do not feel compelled to include an exhaustive historical account.

Assume that the reader is knowledgeable about the basic problem and does not require a complete accounting of its history.

A scholarly description of earlier work in the introduction provides a summary of the most recent directly related work and recognizes the priority of the work of others.

Citation of and specific credit to relevant earlier works are signs of scientific and scholarly responsibility and are essential for the growth of a cumulative science.

In the description of relevant scholarship, also inform readers whether other aspects of this study have been reported on previously and how the current use of the evidence differs from earlier uses.

At the same time, cite and reference only works pertinent to the specific issue and not those that are of only tangential or general significance. When summarizing earlier works, avoid nonessential details; instead, emphasize pertinent findings, relevant methodological issues, and major conclusions.

- Refer the reader to general surveys or research syntheses of the topic if they are available.
- Demonstrate the logical continuity between previous and present work.
- Develop the problem with enough breadth and clarity to make it generally understood by as wide a professional audience as possible.
- Do not let the goal of conciseness lead you to write a statement understandable only by the specialist.
- State hypotheses and their correspondence to research design.
- Explain your approach to solving the problem.
- In empirical studies, this usually involves stating your hypotheses or specific question and describing how these were derived from theory or are logically connected to previous data and argumentation.
- Clearly develop the rationale for each. Also, if you have some hypotheses or questions that are central to your purpose and others that are secondary or exploratory, state this prioritization. Explain how the research design permits the inferences needed to examine the hypothesis or provide estimates in answer to the question.
- What are the primary and secondary hypotheses and objectives of the study, and what, if any, are the links to theory?
- How do the hypotheses and research design relate to one another?
4. Research Methodology

The Method section describes in detail how the study was conducted, including conceptual and operational definitions of the variables used in the study. Different types of studies will rely on different methodologies; however, a complete description of the methods used enables the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods and the reliability and the validity of your results. It also permits experienced investigators to replicate the study. If your manuscript is an update of an ongoing or earlier study and the method has been published in detail elsewhere, you may refer the reader to that source and simply give a brief synopsis of the method in this section.

It is both conventional and expedient to divide the Method section into labeled subsections. These usually include a section with descriptions of the participants or subjects and a section describing the procedures used in the study. The latter section often includes description of (a) any experimental manipulations or interventions used and how they were delivered—for example, any mechanical apparatus used to deliver them; (b) sampling procedures and sample size and precision; (c) measurement approaches (including the psychometric properties of the instruments used); and (d) the research design.

Insufficient detail leaves the reader with questions; too much detail burdens the reader with irrelevant information. Consider using appendices and/or a supplemental website for more detailed information.
5. References

References acknowledge the work of previous scholars and provide a reliable way to locate it. References are used to document statements made about the literature, just as data in the manuscript support interpretations and conclusions.

The references cited in the manuscript do not need to be exhaustive but should be sufficient to support the need for your research and to ensure that readers can place it in the context of previous research and theorizing.

The standard procedures for citation ensure that references are accurate, complete, and useful to investigators and readers.

Start the reference list on a new page.

The word References should appear in uppercase and lowercase letters, centered. Double-space all reference entries.

APA publishes references in a hanging indent format, meaning that the first line of each reference is set flush left and subsequent lines are indented.

Footnotes are used to provide additional content or to acknowledge copyright permission status.
5.1 In-Text Citation

5.1.1 In-Text Citation Samples

Paraphrased Content
Use the Author-Date method of citation. The author and date will never be separated in APA style. Notice that you can use any sentence structure you choose.

Example 1. Lange (2009) found that cats instinctively kill snakes.
Example 2. Felines often recover from a bite when they are struck by a pit viper (Jones, 2008).
Example 3. In 2006, Smith’s study showed that cats instinctively avoid being bitten by snakes.

Direct Quotes (under 40 words)
Use page numbers and quotation marks for direct phrases that you do not put into your own words. Many electronic sources do not have page numbers. Use the paragraph number (if available) and precede it with “para.” If neither paragraph numbers nor page numbers are available, cite the heading and the number of the paragraph that follows it.

Example 2. Becker (2004) stated that the “social model of disability needed to be revised” (p. 34).
Example 3. Sims (2010) coined the term "frankenreferencing" (p. 22) to refer to scarily citations.
Example 4. The study showed that research in “library databases can both satisfy and create more interest and curiosity” (Jones & Killen, 2010, para. 6).
Example 5. Lee (2007) stated that “the data was unreliable” (Methods section, para. 4).

Block Quotes (direct quotes over 40 words)
Use block quote for quotes over 40 words. Indent the block quote five spaces or half an inch and do not use quotation marks. As in the rest of your paper, use double spacing. Notice that in block quotes, the period goes before the parentheses. This is different than with short quotes.

Rossett (1995) points out the importance of examining records and outcomes:

The examination of extant data is a wonderful needs assessment tool because it is inexpensive. This tool takes the instructional technologist across the organization in search of the natural outcomes of effective and ineffective performance. It involves asking colleagues for the data that automatically flow from their work. The only challenge is to convince colleagues that they ought to release that information to you. (p. 192)

Thus, using existing data could...
5.2 Reference List

5.2.1 Reference List Samples

Reference List Tips
- Start a new page. Use alphabetical order, and double spacing.
- Use hanging indentation: Highlight the text. Go to: Format → Paragraph → Indentation → Hanging
- Italicize major titles like journals, books, movies, DVDs, and so forth.
- Do not italicize the title of journal articles, book chapters, and web pages.
- Break a long URL before the punctuation.
- Page numbers: Use "pp." to indicate page numbers when citing newspaper articles (if the article has page numbers) and book chapters. Omit "pp." when citing journal and magazine articles. In cases where a newspaper article/book chapter occupies a single page, the page is preceded by "p."

References


Online Periodicals (Journal, Newspaper & Magazine Articles)


Newspaper


Books


Book


Book Chapter


***These labels are for example only. Do NOT use labels like Journal Articles, Newspaper, and so forth in your References.***
Other Electronic Resources and Websites

- When there is no author for a web page, the title moves to the first position of the reference entry.
- If no date is given, put “n.d.” in the parentheses rather than a year: (n.d.)
- Do not include retrieval date unless the entry changes frequently (like on a Wiki)

**Online Dictionary**

**Specific Page within a Web Site**


**Weblog/Blog**

**Podcast**

**Government Websites**

6. Appendices

In general, an appendix is appropriate for materials that are relatively brief and that are easily presented in print format. If your manuscript has only one appendix, label it Appendix;

If your manuscript has more than one appendix, label each one with a capital letter (Appendix A, Appendix B, etc.) in the order in which it is mentioned in the main text. Each appendix must have a title.

- In the text, refer to appendices by their labels.
- Center the word Appendix and the identifying capital letters (A, B, etc., in the order in which they are mentioned in text)
- At the top of the page
- Center the title of the appendix, and
- Use uppercase and lowercase letters.
- Begin the text of the appendix flush left, followed by indented paragraphs.
7. Major Components of a Qualitative/Quantitative Research Proposal

Many fields of study use differing Qualitative/Quantitative model formats. Be sure to work closely with your advisor to select the relevant components for your proposal.

1. Cover Page – (see sample page)
2. Title Page – (see sample page)
3. Supervisor approval Form (CERTIFICATE BY SUPERVISOR FOR RP-I or II) (see sample page)
4. ORIC approval Sheet (EVALUATION (Research Proposal) RP-EVA-I) (see sample page)
5. Abstract (see sample page)
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables/Graphs/Figures (where relevant)
8. Chapter One (see sample page)

- Introduction – brief overview explaining the background and importance of the study
- Statement of Problem – specifically what the researcher wants to know; format to be determined by the department
- Purpose of the Study – explanation of the problem and what the researcher hopes to achieve by conducting the study
- Theoretical framework, research questions, or objectives – used to guide the direction of the research; format to be determined by the department.
- Definition of Terms – clarification of any terminology in the study that may not be commonly known; provides a similar interpretation for all readers of the study.
9. Chapter Two (see sample page)
   - Review of the Literature – sufficient review of the relevant research to demonstrate an understanding of the subject and major components

10. Chapter Three (see sample page)
   - Research Design – describes the methods that will be used to collect data or organize creative products. May include the following depending on the department:
     - Description of the design.
     - Criteria for judging credibility and trustworthiness of results (where relevant).
     - Sampling – describe the aspects of the cases on which data collection and analysis will focus (where relevant).
     - Indicate how access to the study population will be achieved.
     - Variables – describe aspects of the cases on which data collection and analysis will focus (where relevant)
     - Methods of Data Collection – explain how each variable will be measured (where relevant).
     - Limitation /Delimitations of the research study.