SGS 045A

THE MASTER'S RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The Master's Research Proposal is an important component of the Master's Degree completion requirements. The proposal allows the respective School offering the Degree Program, an opportunity to assess the strength of the candidate's preparedness to complete a Master's thesis towards the award of the Master's Degree. To be clear, the proposal should give the respective School offering the Degree Program an opportunity to:

1. assess the candidate's knowledge of the subject,
2. match the proposed research with the appropriate experts/supervisors,
3. assess whether we have the expertise needed to supervise the work
4. develop appropriately tailored support to help the student succeed.

The proposal should contain a 3,000 - 5,000-word explanation of the proposed research, stating why the research is of value. The content of a master's proposal may vary considerably by program type, but must generally contain the following elements:

1. **A working title:** The title of the research will expectedly change over the course of the research, but it is a good start to have a title that encapsulates the intention of the project.
2. **Aims of the research:** The research aims should show the overall purpose of the study and should generally be well focused and concise.
3. **Research questions or hypotheses**: The proposal should show what research questions or hypotheses can help achieve the aims listed. The committee can judge whether they are achievable.
4. **Context and literature:** The proposal should demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of the research area and the current debates in the field. So, the proposal should contain a review of current literature related to the intended project, highlight the gaps, and show how original research can help fill them. A competent literature review will show how the proposed research builds on current knowledge and what new understanding the research could bring. The literature cited should be relevant and up to date.
5. **Candidate's Interest:** The candidate should demonstrate their interest and knowledge gained either from previous study, employment, or lived experience.
6. **Methodology:** The proposal should contain a clear description of the research methodology, including basic details of methods of data collection and analysis. It should show the type of data required and how they intend to collect and analyze them. Most importantly, it should say how the methods chosen will address the research aims previously described.
7. **Timeline:** A schedule showing key activities, milestones, and potential outcomes would be useful. A realistic timescale for completing the project will demonstrate that the candidate has thought through the process. It will also allow departmental reviewers to assess whether the project is achievable within prescribed timeline.
8. **References:** Literature cited in the proposal should be listed using a consistent referencing style.

The proposal must always be reviewed by a committee of assessors (COA) appointed by the School Dean and Graduate Programs Coordinator. The committee members should use the School-specific rubrics to grade and score each candidate along the lines of items #1-8 above.. Upon completion, the School should submit the overall assessment docs along with final PASS/FAIL recommendation to the Graduate School Dean.