

PROP-SUBMISSION



**GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**A GUIDE TO PREPARE RESEARCH PROPOSALS FOR MPhil AND
PhD DEGREE PROGRAMS**

January 2018

**GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
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PREFACE

This document provides the guidelines to prepare the research proposal for the MPhil and PhD degree candidates registered at the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS), Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU).

According to the By-laws (already distributed to candidates) of the Faculty, initially all candidates (MPhil or PhD) have to register as **Provisional candidates**. Based on their research fields, supervisors will be nominated to guide them and they have to prepare a Research Proposal within the time period stipulated in the By-Laws, during their **Provisional Registration period** with the guidance of their supervisors. It is a prerequisite to get the research proposal approved by the relevant committees (Proposal Evaluation Committee) to get the full registration to continue the relevant research work for MPhil and PhD degrees.

To facilitate the proposal writing process, the FGS has organized a lecture series on Proposal Writing Techniques (2 credits, 30 lecture hours). This course unit is compulsory for window 1 candidates and window 2 candidates also can follow the lectures if they wish or based on the recommendation of their supervisors. This will provide the required support for the candidates to prepare the proposal according to the FGS guidelines described in this document.

Part 1 of this document provides the description of the major components of the research proposal and Part 2 provides the formatting guidelines to prepare the research proposal.

PART 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

MAIN BODY OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Following items of this section will summarize the headings under which the research proposal should be formulated according to the guidelines of Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS), Kotelawala Defence University (KDU). Part 1 of this document is confined to a brief description on major items in the body of the text.

The **main body** of the research proposal shall consist of an Abstract, Introduction, Problem statement, Literature Review, Methodology, Discussion Gantt chart, References and Appendices. Main body text of the proposal is divided in to different sections as indicated below.

The guidelines for format of cover pages, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, list of plates, & maps, abbreviations and appendices etc. are described in Part 2 of this document.

ABSTRACT

Abstract should start with a brief background of the proposed research. The abstract shall indicate why the research work is important and its significance. Then include the statement of the research followed by objectives, research design and methodology. Conclude the abstract with expected outcome of the research.

The abstract of the document has to be written in a way that the reader gets an idea of the overall work of the researcher. Generally the citations and tables are not included in abstracts. Information in the title shall not be repeated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This section shall incorporate the intellectual co-operation received from others, such as supervisors, resource persons and colleagues etc. and financial and technical co-operation if any received from any organization or institution.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This section of the proposal could be written properly once the candidate completes the literature survey on the research area and after selecting the research topic. This section shall start with the background of the study. Based on the background information from literature review, the introduction could be structured in the following manner.

The introduction of the proposal should be structured with the following subtopics:

- a. Background of the problem
- b. The purpose and significance of the study;
- c. Brief description of the research design indicating whether it is quantitative, qualitative or mixed method approach.

- d. The research questions,
- e. Objectives; General and specific
- f. The expected outcomes.

All cited work has to be relevant to the goals of the research. Give sufficient background for the reader to understand such as the context and significance of the question. There should be a proper acknowledgement of the relevant previous work being addressed in the area of research with the sources of information.

2.0 - LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review means locating and summarizing the research about a topic. The literature review shall focus on the existing information on the research problem and how other researchers have already tried to solve similar problems. However there is no single way to conduct a literature review, but many scholars proceed in a systematic fashion to capture, evaluate, and summarize the literature. The candidate can follow the steps given below in preparation of the literature review.

1. Begin the literature survey by identifying key words of the interested research area, which is useful in locating materials.
2. Initially focus on journals and books related to the topic and then begin to search the computerized databases reviewed by other researchers in the focused research area.
3. When sufficient relevant and useful literature is collected, draft summaries of the most relevant articles.
4. Then design a literature map which will be a visual picture (or figure) of groupings of the literature on the topic. This will help to organize the literature review and helps to position the study within the larger body of research.
5. After summarizing the literature, the summaries should be combined with the final literature review to assemble the literature review.
6. End the literature review with a summary of the major themes and illustrate how the research addresses the gaps in the themes.

The number of research papers that have been referred during the literature review will indicate the strength of the background knowledge about the proposed research problem. Therefore it is worthwhile to screen the work of the others relevant to proposed research work and cite them correctly. One has to be extremely careful to give the source of information of the work referred in the proposal by incorporating them in to the reference list to avoid plagiarism. The citation and referencing procedure is given in the dissertation guidelines already provided to the candidates.

3.0 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This section is important for describing the purpose of the study and for developing the research question.

The problem statement is the focal point of any research. The statement of the problem should clearly indicate what is to be investigated.

Based on the literature review, identify a problem area. This is a two way process. Develop a general perspective of the broad problem area and focus on the part of the problem area to be studied. The problem has to be justified through the available literature.

This section should indicate the variables of interest and the specific relationship between the variables that are to be studied and their validity.

In some qualitative methodologies, a statement of variables will not be available. However, an explanation of the qualitative methodology and the parameters of the research methodology should be explained.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

This section depends on the research design (qualitative, quantitative or mixed method) selected by the candidate for their proposed research. It may be absent in a theoretical research. Therefore exceptions are allowed in the disciplines of Law, Social Sciences and Management etc.

In the studies where methodology is available, the data collection methods, setting analytical methods, and interpretation that researchers propose for their studies has to be indicated clearly in the proposed methodology section.

The candidates shall focus on methodological foundation and theoretical foundation as required based on the discipline.

5.0 DISCUSSION

This is the section where you discuss the summary of your research proposal and it will be a sort of an analysis of the proposed work. Discuss about the proposed research design, the hypothesis if any (the null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis), whether the research design is quantitative, qualitative or mixed. Discuss about the variables, the independent and dependent variables etc. How you plan to proceed with your research work.

6.0 RESEARCH PROJECT TIME LINE (GANTT CHART) PROPOSED FOR 2017 INTAKE

Table 1 illustrates the tentative time lines (Gantt Chart) prepared by FGS for the 2017 intake of candidates illustrating their important deadlines for proposal submission, progress reviews & submission of thesis etc.

Candidates have to prepare similar Gantt chart illustrating different tasks of their research projects to submit with their project proposal indicating how they intend to complete different tasks of their research work during different time frames.

Table 1: Proposed Tentative Research project time lines (Gantt Chart) for the 2017 intake

Tas k	DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020-2026	
1.0	PREPARATION OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL					
1.1	Proposal writing techniques lectures	█				
1.2	Proposal preparation	█				
1.3	Proposal submission	█				
1.4	Proposal presentation to PEC	█				
	Full registration	█	█			
2.0	COMMENCEMENT OF RESEARCH WORK					
2.1	Discussion with supervisors	█	█	█	█	
2.2	Literature review	█	█	█	█	
	Progress review 1	█	█	█	█	
2.3	Field or experimental work	█	█	█	█	
	Progress review 2- presentation of preliminary results	█	█	█	█	
	Upgrading process	█	█	█	█	
2.4	Data analysis		█	█	█	

Table 1: Proposed Tentative Research project time lines (Gantt Chart) for the 2017 intake

Tas k	DESCRIPTION	2017	2018	2019	2020-2026
3.0	Progress review 3- presentation of results Writing- up of thesis				
3.4	Progress review 4- presentation of results Progress of writing up				
3.5	Progress review 5- presentation of results Submission of draft final thesis in spiral bound. (Minimum time duration)				
3.6	For M Phil candidates- Maximum period upto 5 years for full time and 7 years for part time.				
3.7	For Ph D candidates Maximum period up to 7 years for full time & 9 yrs for part time candidates				
	Viva voce and completion of thesis work for Full time MPhil & Ph D (minimum time duration).				

The Gantt chart illustrates the proposed tentative research project time lines for the 2017 intake. The timeline is divided into four main periods: 2017 (orange), 2018 (yellow), 2019 (light blue), and 2020-2026 (pink). The chart shows the duration of various activities for MPhil and Ph D candidates. Key activities include progress reviews (3.0, 3.4, 3.5), submission of draft final theses (3.6), and completion of thesis work (3.7). MPhil candidates have a shorter timeline (up to 5 years) compared to Ph D candidates (up to 7 years). The chart also indicates the minimum time duration for each activity.

Table 1: Proposed Tentative Research project time lines (Gantt Chart) for the 2017 intake

Task	DESCRIPTION	2017												2018												2019												2020-2026											
k	Time duration for Part time candidates and rest of the fulltime candidates depends on their time availability according to the By[laws for viva voce & completion of the degree																																																

7.0 REFERENCES

After the Discussion section, the references that are cited have to be listed in an alphabetical order as described in dissertation guidelines following the Harvard style referencing adopted by FGS of KDU.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

The literature used for your work but not cited could be listed under bibliography if available.

9.0 APPENDICES

The materials to be included in appendices are, questionnaire formats, survey data, supplementary tables, any additional data, information, etc. These appendices have to be incorporated at the end of the document after the reference list. Refer Part 2 of this document for details. Appendices should be numbered in order that they are cited in the text.

OTHER IMPORTANT ASPECTS TO FOLLOW

PLAGIARISM

One has to be very careful to incorporate the sources of the original information taken from other researchers when writing research proposal by citing the references. It is very important to incorporate such citations to prepare the reference list to avoid plagiarism.

Plagiarism is not just copying someone else's work or original ideas but using someone's ideas and derive information from existing source without giving the due credit to the original researcher. The material used could be plates, pictures, figures, piece of music or art etc. in addition to copying something from a document. As plagiarism falls under the intellectual property rights and copyright laws, it is illegal.

Therefore it is always important to give the source of information in your document as a citation followed by the reference list.

To avoid plagiarism, students themselves can check the document with the Turnitin software available at the KDU library. Also there are many software packages available free and can be downloaded from Internet to screen for plagiarism. Students are advised to check the entire document through the Turnitin software before getting the final printout for submission. Also refer chapter 2 of dissertation guidelines for further information.

(Source- dissertation guidelines publication of FGS, KDU)

PART 2 - GUIDELINES TO FORMAT THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

2.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The main body of text of the proposal shall be clear, written in British English throughout the document without any grammar mistakes and spelling mistakes (use spell checker). The margins should be 1.25” for the left margin in order to have space for binding and 1” for all the other margins. The entire text of the main body shall be justified.

2.1.1 HEADINGS AND SUB HEADINGS

Main headings of the chapter shall have Times New Roman **bold** with the font size of 14. The other entire sub headings shall have Times New Roman (font size – 13) **bold**.

2.1.2 ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations for specific terms used in the dissertation have to be included after the list of Figures and should be in alphabetical order

2.1.3 WORD COUNTS, PAGE NUMBERING AND PAPER TYPE AND SIZES

2.1.3.1 WORD COUNT

The **minimum word count** for the proposal shall be **1,500 words**. The word count shall not include words in the declaration formats, acknowledgement, list of references, bibliography (if available) and appendices.

2.1.3.2 PAGE NUMBERING

The page numbers shall appear at the top middle/centre part of the proposal. The preliminary pages shall be numbered in **Roman letters (e.g. i, ii, iii ...)** from the title page to the end page of the list of abbreviations. Page numbering shall be done using **Arabic numerals (e.g. 1, 2, 3 ...)** from **introduction** to the end of the list of Appendices.

2.1.3.3 PAPER TYPE AND SIZES

To print the proposal, good quality **A4 size (210 X 297 mm)** white paper (**80 GSM**) shall be used for the entire document. A good quality printer (laser or inkjet printer) has to be used to maintain the quality of the document.

2.2 FRONT COVER FORMAT AND OTHER PRELIMINARY PAGES

2.2.1 FRONT COVER

Appendix 1 illustrates the format for the **cover page**. The title of the proposal will be a tentative one until it is accepted by the evaluators and approved by the Senate. Cover page should be formatted according to the **Appendix 1** with Times New Roman font with font size of 14 **Bold**.

2.2.2 TITLE PAGE

Appendix 2 illustrates the format for the **title page** which includes the Full title, full name of the candidate, the provisional registration number and the name/s of the supervisor has to be inserted on this page. Follow the Font sizes given in the **Appendix 2**.

2.2.3 SIGNED DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

Appendix 3 illustrates the format for the **signed declaration of the candidate** stating that “The work described in this proposal was carried out by me under the supervision of

2.2.4 SIGNED DECLARATION OF THE SUPERVISOR/S

Appendix 4 illustrates the **signed declaration of the supervisor/s** with the date certifying the work of the candidate stating “I/ we certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that this research proposal is suitable for submission to the FGS for the purpose of evaluation”

Student shall get the approval from the supervisor/s before the submission of the proposal for evaluation by getting his or her signature/s on this page.

2.3 TABLE OF CONTENTS (TOC), LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES, PLATES, APPENDICES AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Next page is the **Table of Contents**. Each item of the text in ToC has to be numbered using Arabic numerals up to 3 decimals. The list of Tables, figures and plates and list of appendices should follow the ToC. The list of abbreviations also has to be clearly stated on a fresh page.

Appendix 5 illustrates the order of items. Other items such as the styles to prepare Table of Contents (**Appendix 6**), List of Tables (**Appendix 7**), and list of Figures (**Appendix 8**), List of Appendices (**Appendix 9**) and Abbreviations (**Appendix 10**) will follow after Appendix 5. Abstract should follow the abbreviations page.

2.4 ABSTRACT

On this page, title of the research has to be given with the name and address of the author below it. The summary shall not exceed **300** words. **Appendix 11** illustrates the specimen format for the abstract. Single spacing shall be used in the abstract. The font should be Times New Roman 12.

2.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Acknowledgements should follow abstract and should appear in a fresh page and be written in Times New Roman (font size- 12).

2.6 MAIN BODY TEXT

The text should be computer printed with 1.5 spaced typing (**font size- 12, Times New Roman**) for the entire body of the main text.

Sub headings shall be written with correct scientific and language norms and shall use **Times New Roman bold italics, font size 13**.

Margins of the body text shall follow the following format:

- Top, bottom and right – 1 inch
- Left side - 1.25 inches leaving space for binding

Main body of the text shall include the following sections;

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Background of the problem
- 1.2 The purpose and significance of the study;
- 1.3 Brief description of the research design indicating whether it is quantitative, qualitative or mixed method approach.
- 1.4 The research questions,
- 1.5 Objectives; General and specific

2.0 Problem statement

3.0 Literature Review

4.0 Methodology

5.0 Discussion

6.0 Time line for the research project (Gantt Chart)

7.0 References

8.0 Bibliography (if available)

9.0 List of Appendices

2.7. TABLES, FIGURES, MAPS AND PLATES

If these items are available in the research proposal, the formats for tables, maps, figures and plates should follow the same guidelines given in dissertation guidelines publication of FGS, guidelines.

2.8 CITATIONS, FORMULAE, AND SCIENTIFIC NAMES

Citations should be written as Author, year and the page number (p223) or if range of pages (pp 223-224); E.g. (Gamma, E., et al., 1995 p 223) following Harvard style.

Equations should be serially numbered on the right hand side and formulae should be clearly printed and all symbols in the equations should be clearly mentioned. For legal research legal terms shall be written in Latin. Scientific names of species should be written in italics (e.g. *Microcystis aeruginosa*).

2.9 LIST OF REFERENCES

References shall be written using Harvard system and written in alphabetical order and refer the dissertation guidelines publication of FGS to prepare the reference list.

2.10 APPENDICES

The order of listing of appendices shall be in accordance with the order in which they are referred in the text. All the appendices have to be numbered properly as Appendix 1, Appendix 2 etc, with the relevant headings (Times New Roman – font size 14 **bold**) and titles of the appendices have to be clearly mentioned. All the appendices should be numbered titled and should give explanatory notes.

2.11 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Proposal evaluation procedure is given in the By-law document under section 5.2.2. It is the responsibility of the candidate to incorporate any comments made by the evaluators into their research proposal and submit it to Dean, FGS after the evaluation process.

3.0 PART 3- THE GUIDELINES FOR THE PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

3.1 THE CONTENTS TO BE INCLUDED

The candidate shall include the following sections in the proposal presentation:

- a. Back ground of the study,
- b. Brief Introduction,
- c. Justification of the study,
- d. General and specific objectives of the study,
- e. Theoretical background
- f. Methodology
- g. Results Shall include a plan for data analysis
- h. The list of References at the end.

The maximum time duration given for the presentation is 30 minutes. Therefore student shall prepare the presentation by including the major findings of the study.

**APPENDIX 1- SPECIMEN COVER PAGE FOR SUBMISSION OF RESEARCH
PROPOSAL FOR EVALUATION**

**GENERAL SIR JOHN KOTELAWALA DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL (TIMES NEW ROMAN 14 BOLD)

By

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE

(Times new roman bold 14)

The Research Proposal for MPhil/ PhD submitted for evaluation

Date of submission:

APPENDIX 2: TITLE PAGE

TITLE OF THE PROPOSAL (TIMES NEW ROMAN 14 BOLD)

By

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE

(Times new roman bold 14)

The Research Proposal Submitted for MPhil/ PhD

to

Faculty of Graduate Studies

**General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University,
Sri Lanka**

Provisional registration Number of the candidate:

Name/s of the Supervisor/s:

1.

2.

Date of submission:

APPENDIX 3 - SPECIMEN FOR THE SIGNED DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

DECLARATION

(Times New Roman 16, Bold)

I hereby declare that the proposal was exclusively written by me under the guidance of supervisor/s given below. (Times New Roman 12)

Date

Name of the candidate

(Times New Roman 12)

I/ we certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true.

Certified by

1. Supervisor (Name)

(Signature) Date

2. Supervisor (Name)

(Signature) Date

3. Supervisor (Name)

(Signature) Date

APPENDIX 4 - SPECIMEN FOR THE SIGNED DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISOR/S

CERTIFICATION OF THE SUPERVISOR/S

(Times New Roman Bold font size 16)

(At the submission of the research proposal for the purpose of evaluation)

I/ we certify that this research proposal is suitable for submission to the University for the purpose of evaluation

1. Supervisor (Name)
- (Signature) Date

2. Supervisor (Name)
- (Signature) Date

3. Supervisor (Name)
- (Signature) Date

APPENDIX 5: ORDER OF THE ITEMS IN THE PROPOSAL AND NUMBERING STYLE AS AN EXAMPLE.

Order of the items in the proposal and numbering style

Chapter	Item	Page No.
	Cover page	
	Title page	i
	Declaration by the Candidate	ii
	Declaration by the Supervisor/s	iii
	Certification of the Supervisor/s on incorporation of examiner's comments	iv
	Abstract	v
	Acknowledgement	vi
	Table of Contents	vii
	List of Tables	viii
	List of Figures	ix
	List of Appendices	xi
	List of Abbreviations	xii
1	Introduction	1
2	Problem statement	2
3	Literature Review	4
4	Methodology	15
5	Discussion	21
6	Gnat chart	55
7	References	70
8	Bibliography (if available)	75
9	Appendices	95

APPENDIX 6: FORMAT FOR TOC AS AN EXAMPLE**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

(Times New Roman 16 Bold)

Item	Page
Title Page.....	i
Declaration by the Candidate.....	ii
Declaration by the Supervisor/s	iii
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgement	vii
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xi
List of Figures.....	xiii
List of Appendices.....	xix
Abbreviations.....	xxii
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	
Chapter 1-Introduction	5
1.1 Background of the problem	
1.2 Problem Identification	
1.3 The purpose and significance of the study	
1.4 Brief description of the research design	
1.5 The research questions	
1.6 Objectives; General and specific.....	
1.7 The expected outcomes	
Chapter 2- Literature Review	
Chapter 3- Problem statement	
Chapter 4- Methodology	
Chapter 5- Discussion	
Chapter 6- Gnat Chart	
Chapter 7- References	
Chapter 8- Bibliography (if available)	
List of Appendices	
Appendix 1:	103
Appendix 2:	104
Appendix 3:	

USING INSERT TABLE OF CONTENT FUNCTION IN THE WORD, IT COULD BE EASILY INSERTED INTO YOUR DOCUMENT.

APPENDIX: 7- LIST OF TABLES - STYLE AS AN EXAMPLE

LIST OF TABLES
(Times New Roman- Font 16- Bold)

Table.	Title	Page
1.1	Required labor during construction and operational phase (Approximate numbers)	32
1.2.	Water Requirements for the proposed project	33
1.3	Available Water Resources for the Water Supply of the proposed project	33
2.1.	Proposed expansions for communication	34
2.2.	Quality and quantity of waste water Generated per day	35
3.1	Main climatological and hydrological characteristics of Negombo lagoon including study area (Source Anon 1991)	39
3.2	Mean rainfall	41
4.1	Extent of Landuse types in the study area	45
4.2	List of flora in the study area according to Observations and Literature Review.	44
5.1	List of bird species found in the study area according to Literature Review	47
5.2	List of Fish species found in the lagoon (according to Literature Review)	47
6.1	Reptiles recorded from the study area	48
6.2	The mammals recorded from the study area (D)	48
6.3	Number of households within katana North, East and west. Liyanegemulla GN division	49

All text- Times New Roman- 12

APPENDIX: 8 LIST OF FIGURES -STYLE AS AN EXAMPLE

LIST OF FIGURES
(Times New Roman- Font 16- Bold)

Figure	Title	Page
1.1	Study area indicating project components	15
2.1	Location of the project site and the study area on 1: 10000 recent available map from Survey department	16
2.3	Study Area	19
3.1	Location of Study Area closer to Negambo lagoon	36
4.1	Dependable rainfall in the study area based on 30 years of data back from 2003	39
5.1	Soils of the study area	40
5.2	Locations of the bore holes in the study area used for the Geotechnical Assessment	40
5.3	Depth of soil types along vertical profiles of the bore holes of the project site. Dotted line indicates the water table (WT) at 1m depth.	41
5.4	Landuse types of the Study Area (within 500 m radius).	42

All text- Times New Roman- 12

APPENDIX: 9 LIST OF APPENDICES -STYLE AS AN EXAMPLE

LIST OF APPENDICES
(Times New Roman- Font 16- Bold)

Appendix No.	Title	Page
1	Geo-Technical survey/soil investigation	101
2	Hazard analysis and critical control points	102
3	Location of the borer holes and the contour details	103
4	Preliminary cost estimate for extension	105 106
5	The analysis report of treated effluent from the waste water treatment plant	
6	Technical specifications of the waste water treatment plant	107
7	Technical Specifications of the water treatment plant	
8	Water Quality reports of water samples of the hotel And NWSDB report on capacity of the Pearltea water source	
9	Benefit to the society	
10	Data collection instrument, formats and protocol questionnaire	

All text- Times New Roman- 12

APPENDIX: 10- LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS -STYLE AS AN EXAMPLE

ABBREVIATIONS

(Times New Roman- Font 16- Bold)

CBO	Central Business Organization
CEA	Central Environmental Authority
CMC	Colombo Municipal Council
EPL	Environmental Protection License
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
PAA	Project Approving Agency
PP	Project Proponent
SLTDA	Sri Lanka Tourist Development Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

All text- Times New Roman- 12

Appendix 11: Abstract page

Title of the manuscript
(Times New Roman 14)

By

Name of the Candidate

ABSTRACT

Please use this section for your abstract (Maximum 300 words).