

Human Nutrition and Dietetics

Preliminary Proposal Outline

1. Proposal Format Requirements

- Length: maximum 2 pages (or approx. 750 words) excluding the reference list
- Font type: Arial
- Font size: 11 / 12pt
- Spacing: 1.5 lines
- Margins: 2.54 cm (top, bottom, left and right)
- Referencing style: Harvard

2. Proposal Outline

2.1 Cover Page

- Specify the suggested dissertation title (10-15 words).
- Please specify the departmental research focus area that relates to your topic.

Refer to Section 3 for details on departmental research focus areas.



2.2 Background / Literature Review

What is the background or context of this study? Review studies from the past 10 years that have investigated your research problem. While reading, identify the research that has already been conducted in this area and mention it in this section. You should also identify any research that is still needed (these are gaps in the existing body of knowledge, and you would have selected your research topic from one of these). Include references to illustrate the points made.

2.3 Statement of the Problem

- Briefly describe the ideal situation.
- Describe the problem to be investigated.
- Contextualise the problem to your area of work (if possible).
- One or two anecdotal examples of the problem are useful (if this is possible - refer to informal conversations or personal communications).
- Provide statistics that speak directly to the problem.
- Refer to existing studies to underpin and justify the problem.

2.4 Aim of the Study

- Based on the above sections, what will be the aim of your study?

2.5 Significance of the Study

- Why is this worthy of study (how does the proposed study address the identified problem)?
- Why is it important and who benefits from it?
- What will be your new, original contribution to practical and theoretical knowledge in the field?

2.6 Research Design and Methods

- Specify whether you plan to conduct qualitative or quantitative research (or any other relevant categorisation).
- Outline the research design.
- Identify the target population, including their location and the reasoning for selecting this group.
- Specify the sampling method.
- Detail the data collection instrument(s) and procedures.
- Mention potential funding sources for the project.

2.7 Reference List

- You need to include a maximum of 15 sources.
- Include sources in this list only if you have referred to them in your text.
- Make sure that you have included all the sources you have cited in your text.
- Use Harvard referencing style.

3. Departmental Thematic Areas of Research

3.1 Infant and Young Child Feeding

- Breastfeeding (and complementary feeding practices)
- Stunting
- Food insecurity

3.2 Clinical Nutrition

- Hospital malnutrition

3.3 Food Service

- Food service management

3.4 Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice (IPECP)

3.5 Public Health and Wellness

- School Nutrition
- Marketing of unhealthy foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- Nutrition for children with special needs
- Child under and over nutrition
- Nutrition in the elderly
- Diabetes mellitus
- Participatory action research and community-based research

3.6 Indigenisation

- Traditional African diets
- Indigenous vegetables

4. Proposal Checklist

Did you:

- ☐ Keep the proposal within the prescribed length?
- ☐ Check the proposal thoroughly for language / technical errors?
- ☐ Adhere to the layout guidelines (1.5 spacing, 11 / 12pt font, Arial)?
- ☐ Reference ALL the sources you used?



The Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics recognises that the research topic may be subject to change. Please contact the department if you have any questions regarding the above.