**2023 Proposal Checklist for Department or School HDCs:**

The checklist below may help you ensure that requirements for proposals are in place and in line with the UJ Higher Degrees Policy.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date of Meeting: |  | |
| Student name: |  | |
| Degree | **Masters** | **Doctorate** |
|  | **Tick or indicate YES** | **Tick or indicate YES** |
| Do not amend the front page of the proposal template |  |  |
| 1. All items are correctly and accurately filled out on the front page |  |  |
| 1. Student number is inserted, and the student is currently formally registered (not registered for the Proposal Phase: Pre-Registration phase)   Proof of registration must be submitted to department coordinators/administrators for record keeping |  |  |
| 1. Title is in Title Case |  |  |
| 1. Supervisor/s names and staff numbers are present |  |  |
| 1. The correct block is ticked if ethics is required |  |  |
| 1. The body of the proposal (from the introduction to the end of the methodology) falls within the following page limits unless there are department specific guidelines:  * MA minor dissertation: 3-4 pages * MA dissertation: 4-5 pages * Doctorate: 5-6 pages |  |  |
| 1. Master’s proposals are submitted within six months of registration. Doctoral students have nine months to complete their proposals  * Proposals that do not serve in the required time period, need to submit a motivation explaining the delay and requires the support of the supervisor * Students registered for pre-proposal cannot submit a proposal until fully registered |  |  |
| 1. Proposal submitted through Turnitin with an acceptable similarity report |  |  |
| 1. Student - Supervisor Agreement is signed and completed and submitted when proposal is presented at DHDCs |  |  |
| 1. Dept reps to ensure that there is consensus approval by DHDC |  |  |
| 1. If disputed, please comment |  |  |
| 1. 4IR topic (Y/N) |  |  |
| 1. UJ-Related SDGs (Y/N) |  |  |

[Submit this cover page together with the proposal and SSA when submitting to FHDC]

[PROPOSALS TO FHDC MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA DEPT REP]

Supervisor’s signature/Insert name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| UJ_Colorlogo_4cm | **FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**  **HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE**  **MASTERS OR DOCTORAL PROPOSAL**  Proposal Template 2023.03.02 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **DEPARTMENT** | Complete the grey-shaded blocks on the cover page |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **FIRST SUBMISSION** | Mark with an X | **RESUBMISSION** |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CANDIDATE’S DETAILS** | **TITLE** | **FIRST NAMES** | **SURNAME** |
|  |  |  |
| **STUDENT NUMBER** | Must have a student number and be registered prior to submission | | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **PREVIOUS UNIVERSITY** | **PREVIOUS DEGREE** | **DISCIPLINE** | **TITLE** |
|  |  |  | Provide title of previous dissertation/research report |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DEGREE** | **MA MINOR DISSERTATION** | Mark appropriate degree with an X and state the title of the degree | | | |
| **MA DISSERTATION** |  | | | |
| **D LITT ET PHIL** |  | | | |
| **PhD** |  | | | |
| **PROPOSED TITLE** | | Use Initial Caps (Title Case) | | | |
| **PROPOSED SUPERVISOR** | | Title, Initials, Surname (staff number) | | | |
| **PROPOSED CO-SUPERVISOR** | | Title, Initials, Surname (staff number) | | | |
| **FIRST REGISTRATION DATE** | | The month & year you first registered for this degree | | | |
| **FULL TIME OR PART TIME** | | Full time |  | Part time |  |
| **ETHICS REVIEW REQUIRED**  Does your research involve collecting data from humans? | | No |  | Yes |  |

Use Arial, 12 font, single spacing and 2cm margins throughout the proposal.

The body of the proposal (*from the introduction to the end of the methodology*) should fall within the following page limits unless there are department specific guidelines:

* MA minor dissertation: 3-4 pages
* MA dissertation: 4-5 pages
* Doctorate: 5-6 pages

Delete all yellow highlighted text, which serves as guidelines for completion of the proposal

Signed copies of the proposal should be submitted to Faculty HDC after the proposal is approved at department level.

|  |
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| **Introduction** |

Follow departmental-specific guidelines

Include the following (headings are not required):

* Brief introduction to the study
* Contextualisation
* Rationale/motivation
* Which leads to the problem statement – what bothers you or are you curious about that warrants a research response? What is the gap/niche for this study?
* Which leads to the study goal/aim, then the objectives (not action steps) (preferably numbered)

As a general guide, keep the introduction to one page for M and up to two pages for D proposals.

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| **Summary of Preliminary Literature Review** |

Follow departmental-specific guidelines

Provide a synthesis of the relevant literature that demonstrates that you are familiar with the key authors and texts and with the central concepts relevant to your study. You need to show how your study will contribute to what we already know, to fill the niche/gap identified in the introduction.

As a general guide, avoid lengthy quotations – keep direct quotes to an absolute minimum and rather paraphrase fully with citations (refer to the [Faculty Policy on Plagiarism](https://www.uj.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/uj-plagiarism-policy-approved-june-2021.pdf)). Use primary sources as much as possible. Consider using about ten texts (for MA proposals, more for D) that are related to your topic (in addition to texts on research methodology). This should be up to a page in total for minor MA proposals, two pages for D proposals.

**Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

Follow departmental-specific guidelines

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| **Research Methodology** |

Follow departmental-specific guidelines

Provide a detailed, practical explanation of your research plan = what you actually intend to do. Avoid lengthy theoretical explanations (e.g. definitions of what a sample is), except where you are using less familiar methods. Avoid quotations from the literature, but do back up your statements with citations, using specialised relevant methodological literature (particularly at D level).

Methodology is important and may warrant considerable space to adequately describe, such as a page or even more. Text-based studies should provide a methodology appropriate to the study.

As a general guide, provide:

* A brief introduction to the study approach and design (e.g. qualitative or quantitative, exploratory or descriptive, case study, phenomenology, etc).
* Define the population, sample, sampling method and recruitment activities. Be as specific as possible, e.g. give intended sample size and motivation for sampling method.
* Describe the methods of data collection (tools, recording, etc). For quantitative tools, provide evidence of reliability and validity of the tools. For qualitative tools, provide the scope of the kinds of questions that will be asked, showing how these will help to answer the research questions.
* Describe how you will analyse your data.
* For qualitative studies, briefly explain how you will enhance the trustworthiness and rigour of your study.

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| **Proposed Structure of Study** |

Follow departmental-specific guidelines

In a bulleted list, provide envisaged chapter titles and a brief (one or two sentences) description of the focus of each chapter. In the case of a thesis by articles, provide article titles and a synopsis of the content.

|  |
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| **Ethical Considerations** |

For all research involving human participants (and any other research with ethical considerations, such as research on animals, human remains, etc) careful consideration must be given to the ethical risks and the methods to reduce such risk. This should be done in consultation with the university document called *Code of Academic and Research Ethics,* which can be obtained via the intranet. Avoid quotations or excessive theory but do use citations to refer to relevant aspects of the ethics literature. Should your research include vulnerable participants or activities specified in Section 2 of the template, you must discuss here how you will address ethical concerns related to these matters. Further, indicate how basic principles of ethics in research will be adhered to, such as informed consent, voluntary participation and confidentiality. This may be specific to each discipline. Also specify how you will store data in a secure manner to ensure the protection of participant anonymity/confidentiality.

In addition, complete the sections of this template after the reference list (Section B) which must be signed. Include an Information Sheet/Letter which will be provided to the participants as well as a separate Informed Consent Form. It would be helpful to include sample questions/instruments as an appendix if your study involves a sensitive population.

|  |
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| **Original Contribution to Scientific Knowledge** |

For doctoral proposals only, provide a rigorous motivation regarding how this study will make an original contribution to the **knowledge base** of the discipline/topic. Be sure to emphasise the theoretical contribution of the study, more than its value to practice, policy, etc.

|  |
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| **Reference List** |

Follow one referencing style closely, according to Departmental guidelines. List only works that are cited in the body of the proposal.

|  |
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| **Student Signature** |

Student: …………………………………… Date: …………………………….

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| **Supervisor(s) & HOD Declaration** |

The proposed supervisor(s) and Head of Department declare:

* That they endorse this proposal and regard the project it describes as feasible for the level of study and appropriate to the requirements of the discipline.
* That the proposal has been screened for plagiarism and that no plagiarism was detected.
* That the proposal has been reviewed for scientific rigour and ethics by the Departmental HDC in light of the requirements of the Faculty HDC and Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Supervisor(s): …………………………….. Date: …………………………….

Head of Department: …………………….. Date: …………………………….

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| **Section 2: Application to Research Ethics Committee** |

All research involving human participants must be approved by Research Ethics Committee, even if the answers to the following questions are ‘No’. If you responded ‘Yes’ to any question below, you must elaborate on it in the ‘Ethical Considerations’ section of the template.

**Does your research include the direct involvement of any of the groups of participants indicated in the table below?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, indicate which group(s) with an X in the table below.**

**Your research proposal must address ethical aspects related to this specific group.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Children/youth under 18 |
|  | Persons with a cognitive disability/mental impairment |
|  | Prisoners or persons on parole |
|  | Persons highly dependent on medical care |
|  | Communities that may be considered as vulnerable |
|  | Persons unable to give consent |
|  | UJ employees or students |
|  | Persons not usually considered to be vulnerable, but could be considered vulnerable in the context of this research project |
|  | Individuals who may be considered vulnerable (e.g. pregnant women; abused persons; victimised persons) |
|  | Persons living in poverty or with little education |

**Does your research involve any of the following types of activity?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_\_

**If yes, indicate which activity(ies) with an X in the table below.**

**Your proposal must explain how you will address the associated ethical aspects.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Covert observation of participants |
|  | Deception of participants or concealment of the purpose of the study |
|  | Examining potentially sensitive or contentious issues |
|  | Study of illegal activities that could place participants or the researcher at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their employability, professional or personal relationships |
|  | An intervention |
|  | Invasive medical / physiological procedures |

**Declaration by researcher/principal investigator**

I, the undersigned, declare that the standard practices of ethical professionalism will be upheld in the proposed research project. I undertake to bring to the attention of the Research Ethics Committee any changes to this project which may affect ethical matters pertaining to this project. Furthermore, I understand, acknowledge and undertake to adhere to the stipulations in the University document called *Code of Academic and Research Ethics,* which can be obtained on the intranet.

Signature of Researcher/Principal Investigator Date

Signature of Supervisor(s)/Promoter(s) Date

|  |
| --- |
| **Information Sheet /Letter** |

**PROJECT TITLE:**

**RESEARCHER NAME:**

|  |
| --- |
| This invitation letter and informed consent form may contain some words that are unfamiliar to you. Please ask questions about anything you do not understand or anything you want to learn more about.  You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making a decision.  Once you understand, and if you agree to take part, you will be asked to sign your name or make your mark on this form. You will be offered a copy to keep. |

**INTRODUCTION**

Hello, my name is [name]. I am a [student / staff] at the University of Johannesburg. I would like to invite you to take part in this study. I am conducting this research for my [degree or non-degree]. I have selected you to participate in this study [give a reason why they were selected].

**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY**

Before you decide whether to be in this study, I would like to explain the purpose, the risks and benefits, what is expected of you and what you can expect from me.

It is up to you whether or not you join the study

You may choose to leave this study at any time

**AIM OF THE STUDY**

[brief and simple explanation of the aim]

**RESEARCH**

[Explain the procedures – focus groups, in depth interviews, questionnaire interviews etc.].

[Specify very briefly the topics to be covered; scope of inquiry]

[Sample text: During the interview I will write down what you say. I will also record the interview using a voice recorder. We will use a voice recorder to make sure we record your words exactly how you said them. The notes and the recording will not contain your name or other identifying information and will be stored on a computer that is password protected.

**What are my rights as a participant?**

Your participation is voluntary. You are free to decide if you want to take part in the research. You can refuse to participate or stop at any time without giving any reason.

**Are there any risks or discomforts involved in the study?**

[Explain if there are risks. Explain if there is the possibility of discomfort or distress with sensitive issues, or of other possible harms or negative consequences of participating in the study].

**Are there any benefits?**

[Usually, the benefits are the production of knowledge of a particular area of research. Need to state that there are no immediate material benefits].

**Is there any cost to me taking part in the interview?**

[State if there are any material costs].

**Will I be paid?**

[No payment but in some cases, participants may be reimbursed for travel costs if relevant].

**Will what I tell you remain confidential?**

[Explain how confidentiality will be maintained].

[Explain their right to privacy].

**ETHICAL APPROVAL**

[Standard text: ‘This study proposal has been approved by the University of Johannesburg Faculty of Humanities Research Ethics Committee’].

**PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS**

If you ever have any questions about this study, you can contact:

Researcher contact details

Supervisor contact details

Ethics Committee contact details

|  |
| --- |
| **Informed Consent Form** |

I hereby confirm that I have been informed about my involvement in this research.

I have also received, read (or had it read to me) and understood the above-written information regarding the study.

I understand that what I say will be written down and / or audio or video recorded.

I also agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a protected computerized system.

I may at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation. I am not required to give a reason for withdrawal.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate.

**SIGNATURES:**

[Note: that there are some instances where signed consent may be substituted with verbal consent; the researcher will sign the form on behalf of the participant after having received verbal consent]

I have read this consent form (or had it read and explained to me), and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. My signature below confirms that:

□ I agree to participate in the study

**Signature of participant:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Permission to Audio or Video Record**

My signature below confirms that:

□ I DO NOT give the research staff permission to audio/video-record my interview

□ I give the research staff permission to audio/video-record my interview

**Participant Signature:**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_