Guidelines to prospective Master’s & Doctoral students to

prepare a Research Outline

A research outline is a brief outline of the research project that you have in mind. These guidelines must be read in conjunction with the [research focus areas documents](https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Apply-for-admission/Master%27s-&-doctoral-degrees/Research-focus-areas) where colleges may specify additional information to be added to the research outline. It is usually between 5 and 12 pages in length.

Technical requirements for the research outlines:

* Arial font size 12
* 1.5 line spacing
* Justified lines
* Page numbers
* Normal margins

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| **Items** |
| 1. **Proposed title**    1. *Should have less than 40 words*    2. *Should be a clear, concise and straightforward articulation of the focus of the proposed study.*    3. *Provide the title in sentence case and avoid the use of abbreviations and/or acronyms.*    4. *Unisa has identified 10 catalytic Niche areas. Students should strive to incorporate at least one of the 10 niche areas into their studies.* |
| 1. **Does your topic relate to any of the 10 catalytic niche area(s)?**     1. *Marine studies*    2. *Aviation and aeronautical studies*    3. *Automotive*    4. *Energy*    5. *Space Study and Square Kilometer Area*    6. *Fourth Industrial Revolution and Digitalisation*    7. *Natural Sciences (Biotechnological Studies)*    8. *Health Studies/Medicine*    9. *Feminist, Womanist, Bosadi Theorizations*    10. *Student Support and Co-Curricular Activities* |
| **3. Full Names and Surname** |
| **4. Student number** |
| **5. Proposed qualification** |
| **6. Qualification code** |
| **7. Specialisation/Stream** |
| **8. College** |
| **9. Department** |
| **10. Research focus area** |
| **11. Email address** |
| 1. **Problem statement**   *The problem statement should describe the issue that you will address in your research. It should explain why this topic matters and it should note what the research project hopes to achieve. For a PhD project outline, the problem statement should indicate how the proposed project will make an original contribution to knowledge.* |
| 1. **Significance of the study**   *Why it is important to conduct this research?* |
| 1. **Aim and objectives**    1. *There should be one general aim starting with the word “To”*    2. *An aim should clearly explain what you will focus on in the research project.*    3. *Objectives should be* ***s****pecific,* ***m****easurable,* ***a****chievable,* ***r****elevant and* ***t****ime-bound*    4. *The objectives should b e b as e d on and clearly relate to the research problem or t i t l e* |

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| 1. **Research questions**   *What are the main questions that flow from your problem statement?* |
| 1. **Literature review** (this depends on the discipline) 2. *Describe any scholarly sources that informed your decision to select your topic.* 3. *What other sources do you intend to consult and why?* 4. *Explain how you think your project will fit in with and contribute to existing bodies of scholarship in the field.* |
| 1. **Research design, Research methodology, Theoretical**   **Framework, Materials and methods, Procedures and the study**  **area**   1. *What conceptual and theoretical frameworks will you be using?* 2. *Methodologies are discipline specific – ensure you use a relevant methodology* 3. *Describe the methods that will be used to achieve the research objectives* 4. *How will the study be conducted?* 5. *How will the data be analysed?* 6. *Include the timeframe of all research planned activities* |
| 1. **References or Bibliography**    1. *Research is built on existing knowledge. It implies that all research must have references.*    2. *Use only one of the prescribed referencing styles (for example APA, Harvard, Mendeley Oxford, IEEE, MLA)*    3. *Use original sources from accredited publications (peer reviewed journals and books by reputable publishers)* |
| **19. Proposed Budget for the project and how the study will be funded** |

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