**Azusa Pacific University**

**TUL670 Thesis or Project Proposal**

**Rev 4; VG April 18, 2012**



A thesis is independent research. So a professor cannot give you exact details as to how to go about it. You have been given resources in the class to enable you to work that out. If you think as an undergraduate does that each detail will be defined in a legal format by the professor, think again. That would be in violation of the generic concept of independent research. This document represents a summary of what we have been discussing and what you have been developing step by step. Don’t just fill in the blanks on this page as you did for your project plan, but write this as a complete formal academic paper. This becomes the basis for the first three chapters of your thesis, so use it as a vehicle for getting those significantly complete. In the proposal you are looking forward. In the thesis you will look back at work done, so it will be modified, but you will have broken the back of that part of your thesis.

The difference between a thesis and a project is largely in focus. A project seeks to resolve a practical issue. A thesis seeks to develop or (usually in an MA) extend a theoretical framework related to an issue. In action-reflection contexts a thesis also involves practical solutions but eh theoretical basis behind the solutions have a higher priority.

**Proposal title**. Formulate a title that creatively encapsulates the research project. Ideally five words, not more than eight. It will be searched for, so include a couple of keywords at least. A subtitle may help but again five word or maximum is eight.

Title Page

Index, formatted in Word that can be expanded with your thesis

**Chapter 1**

**Introduction to topic or issue**. What community problem or issue are you interested in? How did you decide to investigate it? What do you *already know* about it? How does this relate to the MATUL? You may begin with a gripping story to lay out the scenario or a question to capture interest. Write to make the reader enjoy.

**Variables**. What are some of the key elements, factors, or variables that affect the phenomenon to be investigated? How do they relate to one another to explain what’s going on? Diagram these, with a correct label on the diagram Fig x: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Research question.** What *more* do you want to know or understand about the topic or issue? Formulate a single research question clearly and concisely in one sentence. [Remember: it must be do-able—not too broad or too narrow. Could you actually answer the question given constraints of time, access to settings/informants, and language ability?] Refine your question to two variables and the relationship between them. Explain it to some friends a few times until you get it to a point where they stop laughing at you because they understand. Try writing it as a hypothesis, then convert it back to a question. Exclude all irrelevant details and sidetracks. No methodology. You may include the target group, but consider if your question is about a bigger issue for which they are an exploratory sample. Describe why you selected these variables. Are they indicators of wider variables/issues? If so, how good an indicator?

**Community relevance:** Explain *why* this research is timely and relevant. How does it address a concern voiced by your church, community groups or organizations?

**Action-reflection theological framework:** How does this fit with a *Transformational Conversation* approach? Or the *Pastoral Cycle*? How will you analyze the urban conversation in relationship to the Biblical conversation on this issue? Will you simply give a sense of Biblical perspectives on this issue? Or develop a full Transformational Conversation between the Biblical/theological data and the urban issue? The end result of a Transformational Conversation is new action. What are the projected actions as the result of this study?

**Assumptions or Presuppositions:** the above theological perspectives may simply be part of your assumptions or biases. There may be a number of others. Identify them and how they affect your research.

**Population and locations:** What *population* (group of people) do you hope to gather information from in order to answer your research question? At what *locations* or *study locations* do you intend to make contact with group members? How do you hope to gain access to this population and research setting?

**Chapter 2**

**Literature Review:** Next develop this. It is not part of the first chapter but is the second, but it needs to be done before some of the other issues can be worked out for your first chapter. This is a not an annotated bibliography. That can go at the end of your paper, but is reflections on literature in a narrative form, reviewing the contribution of each piece to the overall themes. Developing those themes, paragraph by paragraph, and identifying the gaps and where your proposal could fill one of the gaps. This will be 5-7 pages, your second chapter.

**Textual resources.** At the end of the paper, list the relevant literature (e.g. websites, scholarly articles, book chapters, texts) that you have reviewed to date that will help frame your field study. (Provide full citations, including author(s), title, publisher, publication date, and/or URL, along with the number of relevant pages.). This will be an APA style –best done in Endnote. It may be an annotated bibliography, preferable, though it is not necessary in a Masters project. (a final index is not common in a masters thesis but is required in most doctorates).

**Chapter 3**

**Methods.** This will be your third chapter in the project or thesis.What methods will you use to gather information, and in what order? (Consider materials collection and reading, a community internship, local event participation, observations, informant interviewing, etc.). If interviews are to be used, explain whether they will be “structured,” “semi-structured,” or “unstructured.” Then attach your pre-set list of questions or an interview schedule with suggested themes as an appendix. Describe the types of data to be collected (e.g. fieldnotes from observations, audio recordings or transcripts of interviews, video tapes). Estimate the time needed to set up, do and then analyze each one and put this into your Gantt Chart below. Then go back and simplify this down.

**Validity:** Do an initial analysis of the viability of this process and representativeness of your sample. Will it give you a valid data set? How can you describe that to others?

**Research guide and assistants.** Do you hope to gather information from people whose language you don’t speak? If so, what persons have agreed to assist you, either as a project guide or as bilingual research assistant(s)?

**Ethical considerations.** Describe the kind of relationship you intend to have with participants? How will you protect the rights of informants? Will they risk any stress or harm by participating in the research? If so, what safeguards will minimize that risk? How will you obtain consent from the agency that controls access to vulnerable populations (like street children, orphans, and sex workers)? How will you then safeguard the confidentiality and voluntary participation of informants (see Addendum A)? Attach your sign-off sheets from the ethics committee.

**Permissions:** Have you obtained the appropriate governmental or local University permissions. If you are dealing with children, APU has guidelines for permissions that need to be followed also.

**Outcomes and Outputs**

**Research products (outputs).** What tangible products will result from your research? (Possibilities include a thesis, professional report, scholarly manuscript, magazine article, documentary video, book of sketches, or handbook of some kind.). You will need to make a presentation back to the leadership of your partner organization. Will that be by Powerpoint, Prezzi, Youtube or a written report or more than one? What magazines would you aim to publish for? What time frame is needed to write, edit and then proof-read? What outside help can you get for the last two tasks? If it is an APU thesis you will need to follow through the process of binding with the library. If it is a project this is not necessary. What will be the timeframes and costing of all of these?

**Action Outcomes:** Action research is inadequate if it simply ends up with a document. Given possible results of your study what are possible projections for utilizing this process for mobilizing to action? Who are the decision-makers? How will you motivate them to utilize youir research results?

**Community benefits (outcomes):** In what ways might the study benefit either the research participants or the community organization working on their behalf? How will this be communicated back to them? What kind of press release from your study might both include them and help them publicize elements you research. What will be the costing of this? What action steps are likely to come from this study? How will you mesh the data and analysis into generating a community or church lead action plan?

**Use as a Vehicle for Fundraising:** Multiplication of your work is largely dependent on two things (1) ownership by local decision-makers (2) capacity of the partnering organization to resource the proposed outcomes. Your proposal needs to demonstrate that you have thought deeply about how best to expand expected outcomes, how your work can be converted into a funding proposal, whether upfront you should send a proposal to some potential funders so money is available by the end of the semester, how well the organization is committed to funding possible outcomes.

**Timetable:** List the specific tasks for carrying out the project, with estimated ‘begin’ and completion dates. It is simplest to do this in a GANNT chart so you can juggle the various interconnections.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **RESEARCH TASK** | **BEGIN** | **COMPLETE** |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |

**Budget:** List potential items needed to complete the project, along with cost estimates for each item (Hint: If you do this in Excel and link it, you don't have to redo it each time you update it, nor do the arithmetic). How will, you, the community, your supporters, the local church fund this into a viable action process? If you are able to raise funding from US foundations or business groups, then this needs to be expanded into a one page letter of inquiry. This is different to thinking about funding project outcomes.

**Project Budge**t

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ITEM** | **COST** |
| Professional services: e.g. language coach, transcriber $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Research: e.g. cybercafé charges, text purchase, duplicating $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Research assistants (translator-interpreter) $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Payments to informants $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Supplies $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Equipment: e.g. digital recorder, camera, laptop, $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  sketchbook | |
| Transportation $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Housing $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Thesis Presentation to Community Organization/Church $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Thesis Publication (formal) How many copies to whom? $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Photography Maps $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Mobilization $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| Other $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | |
| **TOTAL $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** | |

**Bibliography**

**Appendices of your research tools:** Whatever approach you have designed, whether questionnaires, case studies, focus groups, participation-observation attach your tools to the proposal and your planned processes for analysis of these.

**Formatting Quality:** Once this is together, go back and review it with:

* A grammar check. Among other things this will help you reduce your sentence length.
* Spelling check.
* If the bibliography is not done properly within the APA framework, it will be sent straight back to you, as I will not edit bibliography details, you have endnote to do so. The APA quotations in the text generally need page numbers, unless you are quoting a whole book.
* Page numbers are always the first thing you turn on when opening word.
* Have you used Level 1,2,3 heading styles consistently? Are your headings interesting or simply boring descriptions?
* Is each paragraph a separate idea, with the idea clearly stated in the first sentence and the last sentence links it to the next? Paragraphs generally should not more than six lines long.
* Does your introduction interest people to engage the project?
* A picture, graphics or style sheet all help turn a boring proposal into an interest-generating document.
* Now you have completed the document, go back through and aim to reduce it down 10-20% in size, by shortening sentences, eliminating extra phrases.

The diagram in Appendix A might help envisage the hierarchy of excellence needed:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign the attached and scan in as a separate page with your submission

This is an educational agreement between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (learner) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Academic supervisor)

It is agreed that the learner will undertake the above thesis research to fulfill the goals related to TUL670 *MATUL Thesis or Project*. The research program consists of two courses of 3 credits each.

Signed: Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Field address:**

**Country/City \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Terms: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Dates: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

## Appendix A

By Shane Smith • Posted in [Image Works](http://phdthesisproposal.wordpress.com/category/image-works/) http://phdthesisproposal.wordpress.com/category/image-works/

