



KGG-1a

RESEARCH UNIT: LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

GUIDELINES FOR A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The Research Proposal

Format: 4-6 pages (brief but well considered)
Language edited
Approved by subcommittee and signed by chairperson

A. Items in proposal

- Proposed title
- Databases consulted
- Key words

• Contextualisation and problem statement

Please note: “Contextualisation and problem statement” are dealt with together. Contextualisation serves as a background, and the problem statement must logically follow from it.

Indicate the theme of the research and put it in perspective with information from literature in the relevant research area. The specific gap (problem) in existing knowledge about the topic or area in which a contribution may be made, must be indicated. This is confirmed by evaluative (not summary) reference to recent research (problems, contradictions, unanswered questions or niches for creative development). It must be clear that the problem is still unresolved or that there is a need for or a possibility of new meaningful development. Motivate why it is necessary to investigate the particular problem or to answer the specific research question – in other words, indicate the topicality of the investigation. It is important to explicitly formulate the research question(s) to which the proposed investigation intends to find answers. Also give an indication of the extent to which or the manner in which the intended research will assist in answering the research question and in the development and expanding of knowledge in the specific field. The possible application or value of the expected results may be highlighted. In large multidisciplinary projects, the own contribution of the candidate must be clearly indicated.

• Research objectives

Here it is indicated what is being intended with the proposed research. In the case of empirical investigations, the general objectives usually relate to what is intended with the literature research and empirical research, while the specific objectives are formulated especially with regard to empirical research. General objectives may also be those of the overall or multidisciplinary project, while specific objectives refer to the student’s own contribution. A distinction between general and special objectives is optional.

Ensure that objectives are logically linked with the problem questions. New issues may not be introduced unexpectedly under objectives. Each objective must be traced back to an issue that has already been announced.

In some cases, the objectives cannot be formulated until the hypothesis (see 1.6.4) has been developed. The overall objective will then be to test the hypothesis.

- **Basic hypothesis / central theoretical statement (where applicable)**

Formulate the basic hypothesis or expectation or the central theorem (orientating argument).

When writing a research report, the problem statement, objectives and basic hypothesis as well as a description of the further development of the research are usually combined in an introductory orientation chapter.

- **Methodology**

- **Literature or source analysis**

For the purposes of the presentation, here it is only indicated how and which aspects of literature will be used. In the research report – not in the presentation – aspects of literature which were merely mentioned in the problem statement, are analysed in depth, evaluated, integrated and used in an argumentation line. It is essential that the chapter(s) which report on this, be presented as a well-integrated literature review. Guard against an undesirable “summary” of existing literature. In qualitative research, it is not always possible to conduct a literature analysis at this stage. The results will then be followed up later with a literature control.

- **Empirical investigation (where applicable)**

Here it is indicated how the candidate intends to achieve the formulated goals, with specific reference to, and exposition of

- the **design** (in a narrower sense, for example, an in-group design or two-group design with pre- and in-measurements; a double-blind, placebo-controlled cross-examination design; a qualitative or quantitative design);
- **study population/subjects/research group/participants** (attributes, manner, selection and size);
- **measuring instruments** and/or **equipment** (tests, questionnaires, interviews, preliminary studies, validation procedures and quality control);
- **procedures that will be followed to obtain data**;
- intended manner and method of (statistical) **data processing**;
- **ethical aspects** with an indication of how ethical consent for a particular investigation has been or will be obtained;
- **expected outcomes** of the research;

OR

- Hermeneutical and literature-theoretical frameworks and constructs

- **Preliminary chapter division**

- **How does the proposed study fit into the subprogramme/bigger project?** (1 short paragraph)

- **References**

(only cite the sources referred to in the presentation)