BANGLADESH UNIVERSITY OF PROFESSIONALS (BUP)

GUIDELINES FOR FIRST SEMINAR (RESEARCH PROPOSAL) MASTER OF PHYLOSOPHY (MPhil) PROGRAM

Introduction

1.   All the fellows enrolled in MPhil program under the Centre for Higher Studies and Research (CHSR), Bangladesh University of Professions (BUP) are required to undergo course works for one (01) year. After successful completion of course works, they are required to present first seminar (Research Proposal) in the beginning of second year. Guidelines for presenting first seminar have been mentioned in the subsequent paragraphs.

Outline

2.   Research proposal is to assess the quality and originality of researcher's ideas, skills in critical thinking and the feasibility of the research project. Researcher has to bear in mind that MPhil program is of **Two (02)** years. So, researcher has to think very carefully about the scope of his/her research and be prepared to explain how he/she will complete it within the relevant timeframe. Research proposal is also used to assess researcher's expertise in the area in which he/she wants to conduct research and knowledge of the existing literature.

3.   Crucially, it is also an opportunity for the researcher to communicate his/her passion in the subject area and to make a persuasive argument about what his/her project can accomplish. Although the proposal should include an outline, it is also an opportunity to establish the attention of readers and convince them of the importance of the study.

4.   This paper is a reference and guide to help researchers in ensuring that they conform to formats which fulfill the requirements of the university. The guideline contains both specific and general guidelines in preparing of the research proposal,

including clear instructions on matters relating to format, length, footnotes, tables, appendices, references, citation and referencing styles, the words required for abstract, permissible languages, publications, plagiarism, submission and presentation.

Research Proposal

5.   Research proposals may vary in length, but generally the written paper should be 10-15 pages. The presentation of the paper should take maximum 20-30 minutes. There will be at least 10 minutes scheduled for questions and answers, and 20 minutes for feedback and discussion by research experts. Researcher should submit the Research Proposal along with a short biography of him/her two (02) weeks prior to the scheduled presentation date to the CHSR office.

6.   A research proposal is an outline of proposed project that is designed to:

    a. Define a clear question and approach to answering it.

    b. Highlight its originality and/or significance.

    c. Explain how it adds to, develops (or challenges) existing literature in the field.

Publication

7.   MPhil researchers need to publish at least two (02) articles related to their field of study in recognized peer reviewed journals having ISSN. One (01) such article needs to be submitted to CHSR before second seminar and one (01) before submitting thesis for defence.

Plagiarism

8.   Plagiarizing is failing to indicate the source in scholarly writing. It is a form of academic misconduct. It is to be made sure that researcher acknowledges the authors of ALL publications he/she uses to write the proposal. Failure to do so will be considered as plagiarism. Researcher should not copy word for word what an author has said. If the researcher wants to copy at all, then he/she should make sure that he/she uses quotation marks and italics to indicate it. **Plagiarism is Completely Forbidden.**

Contents of Research Proposal

9.   The contents of Research Proposal are as under:

A

a. Title

b. Abstract and Keywords

c. Introduction

d. Problem Statement

e. Rationale of the Study

f. Research Question and/or Hypothesis

g. Research Objectives

h. Literature Review

i. Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

j. <u>Research Methodology</u>

    (1) Design

    (2) Sample

    (3) Instruments

    (4) Procedure

k. Expected Results and Significance of the Study

l. Limitations of the Study

m. Timetable

n. Concluding Remarks

o. References

Title

10. The title summarizes the main idea or ideas of the study. A good title contains the fewest possible words needed to adequately describe the content and/or purpose of the research paper. It is the first part of a research proposal that is seen by the relevant research committees, and it is essential to give a good impression from the very beginning. Obviously, at this stage it will not be the final title of finished research - that will often depend upon the results. However, a working title is needed, and this working title will summarize the proposed research. Important 'key words' to be included which will relate the proposal.

Effective titles in academic research papers have several characteristics as follows:

    a. Indicate accurately the subject and scope of the study.

b. Rarely use of abbreviations unless they are commonly known.

c. Use words that create a positive impression and stimulate readers' interest.

d. Is limited to 10-15 words.

e. All letters of the words should be capitalized.

f. Bracket should not be used.

11. It should be noted that if researcher needs/wants to change/modify the titled that has already been approved by the academic council, he/she is advised to fill up the prescribed form with recommendation of the supervisor to change/modify the title and submit to CHSR at least one month prior to the presentation.

Abstract and Keywords

12. An abstract is a summary of the proposal. To capture the essence of the proposal, the abstract should summarize all the elements of the proposal, except the references and work plan. It starts by describing the background of the study. It then presents briefly the research statement and proposed research objectives and approach. It concludes with the expected outcome. **The number of words should not exceed 100.**

13. **Keywords** are important words/concepts found in your **research** and these should be mentioned at the end of the Abstract under heading Keywords.

Introduction

14. The introduction leads the reader from a general subject area to a particular field of research. The introduction provides a brief rationale for why the proposed study is worth pursuing. It explains why other peoples should care about it (establishes its importance). It explains the significance of the research. The introduction serves to familiarize the reader with the topic of the proposal.

15. It also provides a brief summary of the literature on research related to the problem being investigated. It should briefly outline the objectives of the project and provide enough background to enable the reader to place this particular research problem in the context of common knowledge.

Problem Statement

16.   The statement of the problem provides the focus and direction of the study. A good statement of the problem clearly defines the problem, states the concepts to be related in the study and identifies a feasible solution to the problem. A well-written problem statement helps identify the variables to be investigated in the study.

Rationale of the Study

17.   The rationale of the study explains the potential value of the research and findings to science or society. It also identifies the target audience of the study and how the results will benefit them. It explains the ways the study will add to the scholarly knowledge in the field, how it improves the practice or policy.

Research Question and/or Hypothesis

18.   A research question is a clear, focused and arguable question around which researcher plan to carry out his/her research. A research question can be answered directly through the analysis of data. Example Topic: The role of diet on student performance. Research Question: Is there any relationship between the diet and student performance in class? A research question is associated with the problem statement and can be answered directly through the analysis of data, but a hypothesis is the researcher's best guess to the answer of the research question. Hypotheses are generated from specific theories, but research questions often attempt to refute/validate various theories through the testing of their associated hypotheses.

Research Objectives

19.   Research objectives outline the specific goals the study plans to achieve when completed. The research objectives are usually divided into: i. General objective/broad objective ii. Specific objectives. The general (broad) objective or goal and specific objectives are not the same and should be dealt with separately. The general objective defines the contribution of the project in a bigger context thereby defining the purpose of the project. Specific objectives are statements of precise outcomes that can be measured in support of the project's general objective. The research objective/s must have relations with the research question/s and/or hypothesis.

Literature Review

20.   The purpose of the literature review is to summarize, evaluate and compare the main developments and current debates in the field, which are specifically relevant to the subject of research embodied in the thesis. The key objective of the literature

review is to demonstrate that the research will fill **an important gap** in the current research on the subject. Literature review serves to answer the following questions:

a. What research has already been done in your field and what is your understanding of the findings?

b. What do you think is missing?

c. How has previous research not explained the questions that your study seeks to address?

21. By evaluating the research idea against the larger context of what has been explored, the literature review allows to demonstrate that the work is original and innovative. The literature review should be accompanied by comprehensive references, which are listed at the end of the proposal. The appropriate referencing conventions should be followed strictly and it should ensure that the documents referred to in the body of the proposal are not missing in the final list of references.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework (if required)

22. A Conceptual/Theoretical Framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts. It is used to make conceptual/theoretical distinctions and organize ideas. Strong conceptual frameworks capture something real and do this in a way that is easy to remember and apply. Conceptual/theoretical frameworks are abstract representations, connected to the research project's goals that direct the collection and analysis of data.

Research Methodology

23. Research method provides a description of the exact (specific) actions, plan, or strategy to be used to answer the research questions. Methodology of a project spells out in specific steps and procedures how the research will be undertaken. It is necessary to link each of the specific objectives to the methods so as to account for all activities of the project. This also outlines the apparatus, instruments and procedures to be used to answer the research questions. The method section is really the heart of the research proposal. It has to be indicated whether Qualitative or Quantitative or Mixed Method to be used. The method section typically consists of the following sections:

a. Design -Is it a questionnaire study or a laboratory experiment? What kind of design to be chosen?

b. Sample- Who will take part in the study? What kind of sampling procedure to be used?

6

c. Instruments - What kind of measuring instruments or questionnaires to be used? Why does the researcher choose them? Are they valid and reliable?

d. Procedure - How do the researcher plan to carry out his/her study? What activities are involved? How long does it take?

Expected Results and Significance of the Study

24.   Obviously, a researcher does not have results at the proposal stage. However, in this section a researcher should give a good indication of what he/she expects to get out of the research. It should join the data analysis and possible outcomes to the theory and questions that have been raised. It will be a good place to summarize the significance of the work. It is important to convince the reader of the potential impact of the proposed research. A sense of enthusiasm and confidence is needed to communicate the merits of the proposal without exaggeration.

Limitations of the Study

25.   Here a researcher should mention his/her limitations what difficulties he/she is expecting to face in carrying out the study.

Timetable

26.   Estimated time table (in table form) of the research to be framed, indicating the sequence of research phases and the time that is needed for each phase.

27.   The work plan presents the timelines of various activities the researcher plans to do and the specific milestones of the project. The plan should also anticipate the conferences and journals, to which the work in progress is expected to be submitted along the way, and schedule it in a goal for publication section of the work plan.

Concluding Remarks

28.   This will summarize the whole proposal briefly.

References

29.   Researchers need to understand the difference between **Reference** and **Bibliography**. A reference list includes the details of all the resources you have quoted or paraphrased in your assignment. However, a bibliography includes details of all the resources you used to produce your assignment, including those you did not quote or paraphrase. In this stage, researchers are advised to prepare the reference list, therefore, all publications only cited in the Research Proposal should be presented in a

list of references following the text. Sources of Wikipedia should not be used as reference.

30. Reference lists are created to allow readers to locate original sources of the work/s. The following general requirements to be observed:

a. Reference list must include all works cited in the text (including those included in figures, legends and tables).

b. All references should be relevant and up-to-date.

c. All references listed must be cited in the text.

d. Start the references on a separate page, and references list in alphabetical order by the first author's name; do not number the references.

31. References should follow the Harvard-like format. In this format, each citation in a reference list includes various pieces of information including the:

a. Name of the author(s)
b. Year published
c. Title
d. City published
e. Publisher
f. Pages used

32. Citation of references in the text should be given by author's last name (no initials) followed by the year. When two or more citations of the same author are given, list them in chronological order (year wise). When there are two authors, include both names, separate them by putting "**&**" in between. When there are three or more names, give only the first author followed by "**et al**". If there are two or more papers by the same author/s in the same year, place them in alphabetical order by the title.

33. List all the authors (do not use "et al.) in the reference list. When there are two or more references of the same author/s, list them in chronological order (year wise). In the reference list, the name of authors (last name and initials) should be followed by the year within parentheses, title of the article, journal name (in **italics**) volume number to be followed by a colon and pages to be numbered first-last page numbers. Reference to electronic material should include author's name/s, date, article title, and journal (as above); where volume and /or page numbers are not available, substitute Digital Object Identifier (DOI) number.

34. Generally, Harvard Reference List citations follow this format:

- Last name, First Initial. (Year published). *Title*. City: Publisher, Page(s).
- Citations are listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name.
- If there are multiple sources by the same author, then citations are listed in order by the date of publication.

35. Harvard Reference List Citations for Books with One Author:

The structure for a Harvard Reference List citation for books with one author includes the following:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). *Title*. Edition. (Only include the edition if it is not the first edition) City published: Publisher, Page(s).

If the edition isn't listed, it is safe to assume that it is the first addition, and does not need to be included in the citation.

Example: One author AND first edition:

- Patterson, J. (2005). *Maximum ride*. New York: Little, Brown, pp. 31-32.

  Example: One author AND NOT the first edition

- Dahl, R. (2004). *Charlie and the chocolate factory*. 6th ed. New York: Knopf.

36. Harvard Reference List Citations for Books with Two or More Authors:
When creating a citation that has more than one author, place the names in the order in which they appear on the source. Use the word "and" to separate the names.

- Last name, First initial. and Last name, First initial. (Year published). Title. City: Publisher, Page(s).

Example:

- Desikan, S. and Ramesh, G. (2006). *Software testing*. Bangalore, India: Dorling Kindersley, p.156.
- Vermaat, M., Sebok, S., Freund, S., Campbell, J. and Frydenberg, M. (2014). *Discovering computers*. Boston: Cengage Learning, pp.446-448.
- Daniels, K., Patterson, G. and Dunston, Y. (2014). *The ultimate student teaching guide*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, pp.145-151.

37. Harvard Reference List Citations for Chapters in Edited Books: When citing a chapter in an edited book, use the following format:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Chapter title. In: First initial. Last name, ed., *Book Title*, 1st ed.* City: Publisher, Page(s).
- Bressler, L. (2010). My girl, Kylie. In: L. Matheson, ed., *The Dogs That We Love*, 1st ed. Boston: Jacobson Ltd., pp. 78-92.

38. Harvard Reference List Citations for Multiple Works By The Same Author

When there are multiple works by the same author, place the citations in order by year. When sources are published in the same year, place them in alphabetical order by the title.

Example:

- Brown, D. (1998). *Digital fortress*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Brown, D. (2003). *Deception point*. New York: Atria Books.
- Brown, D. (2003). *The Da Vinci code*. New York: Doubleday.

39. Harvard Reference List Citations for Print Journal Articles

The standard structure of a print journal citation includes the following components:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. *Journal*, Volume (Issue), Page(s).

Examples:

- Ross, N. (2015). On Truth Content and False Consciousness in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory. *Philosophy Today*, 59(2), pp. 269-290.
- Dismuke, C. and Egede, L. (2015). The Impact of Cognitive, Social and Physical Limitations on Income in Community Dwelling Adults With Chronic Medical and Mental Disorders. *Global Journal of Health Science*, 7(5), pp. 183-195.

40. Harvard Reference List Citations for Journal Articles Found on a Database or on a Website

When citing journal articles found on a database or through a website, include all of the components found in a citation of a print journal, but also include the medium ([online]), the website URL, and the date that the article was accessed.

Structure:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article Title. *Journal,* [online] Volume(Issue), pages. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

Example:

- Raina, S. (2015). Establishing Correlation Between Genetics and Nonresponse. *Journal of Postgraduate Medicine,* [online] Volume 61(2), p. 148. Available at: http://www.proquest.com/products-services/ProQuest-Research-Library.html [Accessed 8 Apr. 2015].

41. Harvard Reference List Citations for Print Newspaper Articles

When citing a newspaper, use the following structure:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. *Newspaper,* Page(s).

Example:

- Weisman, J. (2015). Deal Reached on Fast-Track Authority for Obama on Trade Accord. *The New York Times,* p. A1.

42. Harvard Reference List Citations for Newspaper Articles Found on a Database or a Website

To cite a newspaper found either on a database or a website, use the following structure:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. *Newspaper,* [online] pages. Available at: url [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

Example:

- Harris, E. (2015). For Special-Needs Students, Custom Furniture Out of Schoolhouse Scraps. *New York Times,* [online] p. A20. Available at: http://go.galegroup.com [Accessed 17 Apr. 2015].

43. Harvard Reference List Citations for Print Magazines

When citing magazines, use the following structure:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Article title. *Magazine,* (Volume), Page(s).

Example:

- Davidson, J. (2008). Speak her language. *Men's Health*, (23), pp.104-106.

44. Harvard Reference List Citations for Websites

When citing a website, use the following structure:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). Page title. [online] Website name. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

When no author is listed, use the following structure:

- Website name, (Year published). *Page title*. [online] Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

Example:

- Messer, L. (2015). *'Fancy Nancy' Optioned by Disney Junior*. [online] ABC News. Available at: http://abcnews.go.com/Entertainment/fancy-nancy-optioned-disney-junior-2017/story?id=29942496#.VRWbWJwmbs0.twitter [Accessed 31 Mar. 2015].
- Mms.com, (2015). *M&M'S Official Website*. [online] Available at: http://www.mms.com/ [Accessed 20 Apr. 2015].

45. Harvard Reference List Citations for eBooks and PDFs

When citing eBooks and PDFs, include the edition, even if it's the first edition, and follow it with the type of resource in brackets (either [ebook] or [pdf]). Include the url at the end of the citation with the date it was accessed in brackets.

Use the following structure:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). *Title*. Edition. [format] City: Publisher, page(s). Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

- Zusack, M. (2015). *The Book Thief*. 1st ed. [ebook] New York: Knopf. Available at: http://ebooks.nypl.org/ [Accessed 20 Apr. 2015].
- Robin, J. (2014). *A handbook for professional learning: research, resources, and strategies for implementation*. 1st ed. [pdf] New York: NYC Department of Education. Available at http://schools.nyc.gov/ [Accessed 14 Apr. 2015].

46.   Harvard Reference List Citations for Archive Material

Archival materials are information sources that are used to provide evidence of past events. Archival materials are generally collected and housed by organizations, such as universities, libraries, repositories, or historical societies. Examples can include manuscripts, letters, diaries, or any other artifact that the organization decides to collect and house.

The structure for archival materials includes:

- Last name, First initial. (Year published). *Title of the material.* [format] Name of the university, library, organization, Collection name, code, or number. City.

Examples:

- Pearson, J. (1962). *Letter to James Martin.* [letter] The Jackson Historical Society, Civil Rights Collection. Jackson.
- Marshall, S. and Peete, L. (1882). *Events Along the Canal.* [program] Afton Library, Yardley History. Yardley.

47.   Harvard Reference List Citations for Conference Proceedings

Conference proceedings are academic papers or presentations that are created or used for the purpose of a meeting or conference.

Use the following structure to cite a conference proceeding:

If published online:

- Last name, First initial. (Conference Year). Title of Paper or Proceedings. In: *Name or Title of Conference.* [online] City: Publisher of the Proceedings, pages. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

If not published online:

- Last name, First initial. (Conference Year). Title of Paper or Proceedings. In: *Name or Title of Conference.* City: Publisher of the Proceedings, pages.

Examples:

- Palmer, L., Gover, E. and Doublet, K. (2013). Advocating for Your Tech Program. In: *National Conference for Technology Teachers.* [online] New York: NCTT,   pp.   33-34.   Available   at:

http://www.nctt.com/2013conference/advocatingforyourtechprogram/ [Accessed 11 Jan. 2014].

- Fox, R. (2014). Technological Advances in Banking. In: *American Finance Association Northeast Regional Conference*. Hartford: AFA, p. 24.

48. Harvard Reference List Citations for Government Publications

Government publications consist of documents that are issued by local, state, or federal governments, offices, or subdivisions.

Use the following format to cite the government publications:

- Government Agency OR Last name, First Initial., (Year published). *Title of Document or Article*. City published: Publisher, Page(s).

Examples:

- Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, (2012). *BicyclePA Routes*. Harrisburg: PENNDOT, p.1.

GENERAL REQUIREMENT

Introduction

1.   This guide is intended to assist the researcher of CHSR in the preparation of their paper in terms of formatting and writing conventions. Researchers should refer closely to this guide and seek clarification from CHSR on specific matters relating to the preparation of their paper. The general requirements for preparing the research proposal have been discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Language

2.   The paper should be written in English. Language use should be consistent throughout the paper, especially in terms of spelling (American or British). The Roman alphabet should be used unless otherwise required by the discipline.

Technical Specifications

3.   The paper must be printed on a letter quality or laser printer. Only the original copy of a paper or good and clean photocopies will be accepted. Copies with

correcting fluid will not be accepted. Print should be with dark black characters that are consistently clear and dense.

Page Layout

4.   The text should be presented in the portrait layout. The landscape layout may be used for figures and tables.

Type of Paper

5.   White simile A4 size (210mm x 297mm) paper (80g) or paper of equivalent quality should be used. Researchers must include an extra blank sheet for the front and back of the paper. Photocopies of the thesis must be on similar quality paper.

Typeface and Font Size

6.   The text of the paper must be produced with the same font or typeface. Times New Roman font size should be 12-point and should not be scripted or italicized except for scientific names and terms in a different language. Footnotes and text in tables should not be less than 8-point.

Margins

7.   The left margin should be at least 40 mm, and the right, top and bottom margins at least 25 mm. Margin specifications are meant to facilitate binding and trimming.

Spacing

8.   The paper should be 1.5-spaced, with four spaces between paragraphs and sections. The following, however, should be single spaced:
    i.   Footnotes (if absolutely necessary);
    ii. Quotations
    iii. References
    iv. Multi-line captions (tables, figures);
    v.   Appendices, such as questionnaires, letters; and
    vi. Headings or subheadings.

Pagination

9.   All pages (**except title fly**) should be numbered consecutively throughout the paper, including pages containing tables, figures and appendices. Page numbers should be centred either centrally or right flushed at either the top or bottom margins. Page numbers should appear by themselves and should not be placed in brackets, be

hyphenated or be accompanied by decorative images. Text, tables and figures should be printed on one side of each sheet only. Preliminary pages preceding Introduction must be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii etc). Page 1 is the first page from where introduction begins.

Binding

10. Before making the required number of copies and binding the paper, ensure that all University requirements have been met and necessary signatures have been obtained. Check that all pages are in the correct order. The paper should be of a fixed kind in which pages are permanently secured. The researchers should not use rank, designation, degree etc., before or after his/her name.

Submission

11. Researchers should take following actions:

    i. Submit ten (10) hard copies of the paper at least two weeks prior to presentation.

    ii. A short biography of the researcher should also be submitted.

Section, Sub-Sections and Sub- Subsection

12. Theses should be divided as appropriate into sections, sub-sections and sub-subsections. The system of headings must be consistent and should provide a clear indication of changes in content, emphasis and other features that occur at each stage of the work.

13. Numbering Arabic numerals should be used in the format 1, 2 etc (for section), 1.1 etc for sub-sections and 1.1.1 etc for sub-subsections. There should be no further subdivision.

Headings

14. It is recommended that all headings should be **Bold**. The recommended style is: 14 points with capitalized initial letters for section headings; 12-point with capitalised initial letters for sub-section headings; 12-point italicised for sub-subsection-headings. All headings should be on separate lines from the text.

Headers and Footers

15. If headers are used then the recommended style is:

Introduction

The font will be 14-point with **Bold.** Footers must be used only for pagination.

<u>Tables and Figures</u>

16.   Tables and Figures shall be numbered consecutively throughout the paper–Table 1, Figure 1 etc. Within the text tables should be referred to as table 1 etc. For the table/s caption and number should be written top of the table. And for figures the caption and number must be written bottom of the figure/s. This procedure (caption and numbering) is applicable in all the places where table and figures are available in the paper.

<u>Equations</u>

17.   Equations placed on separate lines from the text should be numbered whether or not they are referred to in the text. Numbering should appear in round brackets at the right-hand side of the page and be ordered consecutively either throughout the paper (1) etc, or in each sections (1.1) etc. Equations should be referred to in the text as equation (1) etc.

<u>Use of Colour</u>

18.   Colour may be used in diagrams and figures. However, it is recommended that such use be kept to a minimum, being reserved for situations where it is essential for clarity. The use of colour must be the same in all presentation copies of the paper.