[Title]

Dissertation Proposal

[Name of Program]

[Name of Institute]

[Name of Degree awarding Institute]

[Name of Student]

[Name of Supervisor],

[Date]

# Introduction (1-2 pages)

In this section you describe the problem or issue that you are addressing, including why the problem is interesting (e.g., there is something that cannot be explained; the standard explanations no longer appear to work). The Introduction should start very broadly and then narrow to the specific issue that you are addressing (the “funnel” approach).

# Problem Statement / Hypotheses (1-2 pages)

This section includes a detailed statement and discussion of the problem; in some cases you will be able to state the problem as a hypothesis (please note that not all theses involve hypothesis testing). The problem stated must be one that you can answer with an appropriate methodology (in cases where a hypothesis has been stated, the hypothesis must be testable). This section must also contain the general research approach you will take to the examination (or the testing) of the problem (but not the detailed methods).

# Background / Existing State of Knowledge (2-4 pages)

There must be enough detail in this section so that the relevant theory and empirical work is understandable to public policy people outside the area of your research, such as the members of your committee. In addition, you must include enough background to show that: (a) you are familiar with the work that has already been done in the area and on the topic; (b) you understand that work; and (c) that you know how your proposed research fits in with the existing body of work. This section is not a summary of the literature – instead, focus on pulling out the parts of the literature that in some way are critical for the work that you will carry out (e.g., they are critical building blocks; they raise issues that must be addressed).

# Methodology (3-4 pages)

You should describe the methods you will use in sufficient detail to show that you have a firm grasp of them, and that you have carefully considered how you will go through the various stages – e.g., literature review, data collection, data analysis, and policy recommendations. Of particular importance is the question of how you will address the problem statement you have outlined at the beginning.

# Policy Implications (1 page)

In this section you outline the policy implications of your research. In particular, how does the research problem (or the answer to the research problem) connect with public policy? What can you say about the process by which policy is made, the outcome of policy decisions, or the appropriate policy to put in place.

# Potential Difficulties (1 page)

In this section you describe any roadblocks you can foresee in the project, and how you will work through or around them.

# Draft Table of Contents (1-2 pages)

You need to make the table of contents detailed enough that so that the structure of the thesis can be observed, all the while keeping it short enough so that committee members can quickly determine the key components of the thesis.

# Timeline (1 page)

This should be a table of when you expect to achieve each milestone on your way to completion. Include work that you have already completed as well.

# References (pages as needed)

Every reference must be cited, and every cited reference must be in this list, including references only mentioned in figure captions.

The student friendly way to enter references is Endnote or any other method prescribed by institute.

Choosing a research method:

The research methods you use depend on the type of data you need to answer your research question.

* If you want to measure something or test a hypothesis, use quantitative methods.
* If you want to explore ideas, thoughts and meanings, use qualitative methods.
* If you want to analyze a large amount of readily-available data, use secondary data. If you want data specific to your purposes with control over how it is generated, collect primary data.
* If you want to establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables, use experimental methods. If you want to understand the characteristics of a research subject, use descriptive methods.

What is a sampling frame?

A sampling frame is a list of every member in the entire population. It is important that the sampling frame is as complete as possible, so that your sample accurately reflects your population.

# What is the difference between random sampling and convenience sampling?

Random sampling or probability sampling is based on random selection. This means that each unit has an equal chance (i.e., equal probability) of being included in the sample.

On the other hand, convenience sampling involves stopping people at random, which means that not everyone has an equal chance of being selected depending on the place, time, or day you are collecting your data.

What is the difference between purposive sampling and convenience sampling?

Purposive and convenience sampling are both sampling methods that are typically used in qualitative data collection.

A convenience sample is drawn from a source that is conveniently accessible to the researcher. Convenience sampling does not distinguish characteristics among the participants. On the other hand, purposive sampling focuses on selecting participants possessing characteristics associated with the research study.

The findings of studies based on either convenience or purposive sampling can only be generalized to the (sub) population from which the sample is drawn, and not to the entire population.

What the difference is between stratified and cluster sampling?

Stratified and cluster sampling may look similar, but bear in mind that groups created in cluster sampling are heterogeneous, so the individual characteristics in the cluster vary. In contrast, groups created in stratified sampling are homogeneous, as units share characteristics.

Relatedly, in cluster sampling you randomly select entire groups and include all units of each group in your sample. However, in stratified sampling, you select some units of all groups and include them in your sample. In this way, both methods can ensure that your sample is representative of the target population.

What’s the definition of a dependent variable?

A dependent variable is what changes as a result of the independent variable manipulation in experiments. It’s what you’re interested in measuring, and it “depends” on your independent variable.

In statistics, dependent variables are also called:

* Response variables (they respond to a change in another variable)
* Outcome variables (they represent the outcome you want to measure)
* Left-hand-side variables (they appear on the left-hand side of a regression equation)

What’s the definition of an independent variable?

An independent variable is the variable you manipulate, control, or vary in an experimental study to explore its effects. It’s called “independent” because it’s not influenced by any other variables in the study.

Independent variables are also called:

* Explanatory variables (they explain an event or outcome)
* Predictor variables (they can be used to predict the value of a dependent variable)
* Right-hand-side variables (they appear on the right-hand side of a regression equation).