



## **Institutional Capacity Building of Selected Universities in Uganda**

### **GUIDELINES ON PROPOSAL AND DISSERTATION WRITING FOR THE JOINT MUST AND UTAMU PHD**

**DECEMBER 2013**

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## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

With the world's increasingly complex problems and resource limitations, there is dire need for scholars who are qualified both to train the next generation of professionals to expand society's store of knowledge. Society needs critical minds trained at advanced level with skills and competencies in creating new knowledge and in analyzing the environment. The joint PhD Program (by research) in the six science, technology, and Management and Administration areas is designed to train such teachers and researchers as well as practitioners with broad knowledge, competencies and skills. The program is interdisciplinary in its focus. The program is designed to ensure that all participants:

1. gain substantial competency in the core technology, science management and administrative subject matter and research methodologies that are central for generating new knowledge;
2. become global scholars who can conduct excellent scientific research into , technology, science, management and administrative problems and with capacity to organize seminars and workshops that will attract international scholars;
3. apply the theories to a research problem and write acceptable research proposals and dissertations within the chosen area of specialization; and
4. Apply the acquired knowledge, competencies and skills in writing scholarly papers and publish in international refereed journals.

The program provides a solid methodological basis, exposure to forefront themes and methods, and the ability to design and implement research projects in identified disciplines. This is achieved through attending a balanced mix of advanced doctoral and research

seminars, written term or seminal papers guidelines, field projects, and research attachments at and other leading universities; interactions with international scholars (who shall be visiting professors for each of the areas of specialization), and a carefully tutored dissertation project. The faculty will be composed of research-oriented local and international scholars with significant exposure.

The duration of the PhD will be three (3) years and the students will be expected to complete the degree requirements in a maximum of five (5) years. The program consists of an extensive methodology component, together with doctoral seminars, proposal development and, compulsory proposal defence as well as a well-written and defended dissertation worthy publication in internationally refereed journals. The methodology workshops will help to equip the students with a more solid theoretical foundation, a good grasp of sampling theory and literature review, and a sound knowledge of statistics and research methodology, before the fieldwork, analysis and thesis writing. The MUST-UTAMU PhD programme will enable the graduates to become:

- Academically excellent
- Knowledgeable across disciplines
- Leaders in communities
- Attuned to cultural diversity
- Active global citizens

In order to have uniformity in proposal and dissertation writing, these guidelines are developed. Doctoral degrees at the two institutions seek to develop graduates who demonstrate academic leadership, increasing independence, creativity and innovation in their research and encourage the acquisition of a wide range of advanced and transferable skills. These guidelines for proposal and dissertation writing are intended to harmonise the conduct of research (by students) and supervision (by supervisors). These guidelines provide a standard format for research proposals and dissertations written and presented by students of the two institutions. Both the students and the supervisors should therefore carefully adhere these guidelines.

## **2.0 DEFINITION**

A PhD proposal is an outline of a student's proposed doctoral project that is designed to:-

- Define a clear question and approach to answering it
- Highlight its originality and/or significance
- Explain how it adds to, develops (or challenges) existing literature in the field
- Persuade potential supervisors and/or funders of the importance of the work, and why *you* are the right person to undertake it

Crucially, a proposal gives an opportunity for you to communicate your passion in the subject area and to make a persuasive argument about what your project can accomplish.

A doctoral proposal demonstrates an opportunity to establish the attention of readers and convince them of the importance of your project. Research proposals may vary in length, so it is important to check with the department(s) to which you are applying to check word limits and guidelines. Generally speaking, a proposal should be around 3,000 words which you write as part of the application process.

A research proposal is different from a research report although both have a lot in common.

A research proposal is done before one undertakes research and is written in future tense.

A research report/dissertation on the other hand is written after one has done the research and is written in past tense. The PhD/Masters students are expected to do both but at different points in the process of working towards the award of the Degree. This first part of the guidelines focuses on the research proposal and the next section on the dissertation.

### **3.0 PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL**

Potential supervisors, admissions tutors and/or funders use research proposals to assess the quality and originality of your ideas, your skills in critical thinking and the feasibility of the research project. Please bear in mind that the PhD programmes is designed to be completed in three years (full time). Think very carefully about the *scope* of your research

and be prepared to explain how you will complete it within this timeframe. Good PhD proposals evolve as the work progresses. It is normal for students to refine their original proposal in light of detailed literature reviews, further consideration of research approaches and comments received from the supervisors (and other academic staff). It is useful to view your proposal as an initial outline rather than a summary of the 'final product'.

Research proposals are used to assess your expertise in the area in which you want to conduct research, your knowledge of the existing literature (and how your project will enhance it). Moreover, they are used to assess and assign appropriate supervisors. If you are interested in the work of a particular potential supervisor – and especially if you have discussed your work with this person – be sure to mention this in your proposal. Remember, however, that it may not be possible to guarantee that you are supervised by a specific academic

The main purpose of a research proposal is to demonstrate that the person intending to do research (the student/researcher) has a clear and systematic conceptualisation of the research problem and the research process and that s/he has done adequate reading and is informed about recent work done in the area of interest.

### **1. Common Possible pitfalls**

The following are some of the common pitfalls which students would avoid:-

- Quite often, students face a number of weaknesses in the research proposal. To avoid this, keep the following advice in mind:  
Make sure that your research idea, question or problem is very clearly stated, persuasive and addresses a demonstrable gap in the existing literature. Put time



into formulating the questions- in the early stages of a project, they can be as important as the projected results.

- Make sure that you have your supervisors convinced by your chosen area of research and build a strong persuasive argument.
- Make sure that your proposal is well structured. Poorly formed or rambling proposals indicate that the proposed project may suffer the same fate.
- Ensure that the scope of your project is reasonable, and remember that there are significant limits to the size and complexity of a project that can be completed and written up in three years. Proposals are assessed not only for their intellectual ambition and significance, but also for the likelihood that the candidate can complete this project in the years for the programme.
- Make sure that your passion for the subject matter shines through in the structure and arguments presented within your proposal. Supervisors may not necessary be experts in your field – and it is up to you to make your project and subject matter engaging to your readers!
- Do not over assume that your supervisors do not know. Remember, all of them have gone through the same process and they may know most student tricks
- Remember that irrespective of your status in your profession or society, you remain a doctoral student!

#### **4.0 FORMAT OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

The research proposal should not exceed 40 double-spaced pages of text. A well-researched proposal should take no more than three months to complete and present considering that most of the students are full time employees. The 40 pages include the main text body (excluding title page, table of contents, list of tables and figures, list of

abbreviations, list of references and appendices) but include the references. However, the universities may accept a variance of 5 pages on the upper limit and not less than 15 pages in the lower limit. The proposal must be formatted with a font size of 12 and double spaced using Times New Roman. All figures and tables must have a title (e.g Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework (to be below the figure but for a table, the title is to be above).The conceptual framework must indicate the source (e.g Source: Adapted from Kaplan, 2005).

## **5.0 PRELIMINARY PAGES**

### **5.1 The Cover Page**

The cover page should have the following: Title/topic of the study (whose words should not exceed 20), student's names and registration number centred below the names, names and titles of supervisors, statement about the purpose of the proposal like “ This is a proposal submitted to the department of.....in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy say in Business Administration, Public Administration (of Mbarara University of science and Technology). Finally, the cover page should have a month and year the proposal is submitted (See sample below). *Note that the year and month keep changing as the period progresses.*

**DETERMINANTS OF APPROPRIATE CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION PRACTICES**

**AMONG RURAL WOMEN IN UGANDA**

**By**

**Elizabeth Tukamushaba**

**Reg. NUMBER**

**Supervisors**

**Prof. Jude T. Lubegasira**

**UTAMU**

**Professor Annabella Habimananya**

**Mbarara University of Science and Technology**

**A PhD Proposal submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy  
in say Economics of Mbarara University of Science and Technology**

**December, 2013**

**Note:**

This can change, but make sure to include important 'key words' that will relate your proposal to relevant potential supervisors, funding schemes and so on. Make sure that your title goes beyond simply describing the subject matter – it should give an indication of your approach or key questions.

The title/topic should accurately reflect the scope and content of the study. It should be between 15-20 words. It should be descriptive yet discrete and the key words in the topic should be the key variables; unless the student is doing an exploratory study!. Note that a title can have more than one independent variable or more than one dependent variables. It may have two main parts namely the main title and sub-title. It may also directly relate to the case study without the sub-title. The following example shows the main title and sub-title.

1. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE OF NATIONAL WATER AND SEWAGE CORPORATION IN UGANDA
2. ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY AND DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN UGANDA
3. THE ROLE OF UGANDA'S AGRICULTURE IN RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
4. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, CULTURE, VULNERABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AROUND MT ELGON: A CASE OF THE BAGISU AND SABINY COMMUNITIES.
5. LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF NGOS IN UGANDA
6. CULTURE, STRATEGIC PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE OF SMES IN UGANDA
7. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN UGANDA

## 5.2 Table of Contents page:

The words TABLE OF CONTENTS are in capital letters and bold print and centred on top of the page. The word page is justified to the right. The content page(s) lists all headings and sub-headings and the pages where they appear.

## **5.0 CHAPTER ONE**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The name of the first chapter in a proposal is the introduction. While some institutions may prefer to call it Background to the study, at MUST AND UTAMU, the adopted name shall be the 'INTRODUCTION'. The name should be centred and in capital letters. The first chapter will also need to be introduced hence a need for another introduction of the 'INTRODUCTION'. The introduction (1.1 above) tells the reader what the study is about, the key variables of the study and how the chapter is organised. Students may have variations in the way they introduce their chapter based on the study area and information available. As a guide, the student may write an introduction as, 'This study examines the relationship between corruption and effective service delivery in Uganda Revenue Authority'. Corruption in this study is conceived as the independent variable while effective service delivery is the dependent variable. Corruption will be measured in form of.....while effective service delivery will be measured in form of ...as explained in the conceptual framework in figure...

In addition to the introduction, this chapter will also deal with the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose or general objectives (whichever is appropriate), the objectives of the study, the research questions, the hypotheses, the scope of the study, the significance, Justification and operational definition of terms and concepts. It is sometimes possible to begin with the background to the study without this introduction to the chapter (Note: the whole introduction may take one page or at maximum two pages). The introduction will need to be punctuated with current scholarly citations where necessary.

### **5.2 Background**

The background to the study section will deal with the rationale providing evidence and conditions of the existing situation to make the reader feel the urgency of the problem and the need to study it in order to solve it or contribute to its solution. The background must demonstrate mastery of the subject to be investigated by the student. This mastery will be demonstrated among others by the currency of the citations made. The student's articulate understanding of empirical studies done at the global, regional and national context in relation to the study area will be very critical to show the candidate's knowledge base. The section must demonstrate that the student is aware of the historical evolution and theoretical developments of the proposed study area. It must be consistently and carefully written.

Amin (2005) demonstrates that the background section should demonstrate the historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual elements of the study systematically. These guidelines stipulate that while the above can be adopted, as much as possible, the background should be organised under:-

- (i) Globally, what key debates and (gaps) exist on the subject area to be investigated in terms of the variables
- (ii) Regionally, what key debates (and gaps) exist on the subject area to be investigated in terms of the variables
- (iii) Nationally, what key debates and (gaps) exist on the subject area to be investigated in terms of the variables

This approach would therefore entail the adoption of the Broader-Narrow perspective as suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda(1999). Even if there is logic of triangulation, the historical, conceptual, theoretical and contextual perspectives can be addressed using this broader-narrow perspective. The doctoral students; while writing this section; like the rest of the components of the proposal/dissertation must be written in a scholarly language and

should demonstrate mastery of the area of investigation. It could as a guide be about 600 words but may exceed depending on the literature the student has accessed.

### **5.3 Statement of the Problem:**

As a guide, the statement of the problem must not exceed one page. A problem statement can be a theoretical problem or on the state of nature and the candidate must be clear on which of these problems is to be investigated. A problem is the heart of the research and must show the urgency why the candidate must be allowed to conduct the study. Four basic qualities of the research problem need to be emphasised namely: researchable, theoretically or practically significant (should contribute to the improvement of knowledge), clear and ethical (Amin, 2005). Candidates should avoid giving the symptoms of the problem but must give the real problem of the research. The statement of the problem must clearly define the variable(s) and show the relationships / issue(s) that will be investigated. Reference should be made to the problem that has been detected and needs a theoretical and practical solution, the nature of the problem and its known or estimated magnitude or extent should be clearly stated where practically possible.

Students are guided to rely on the use of facts like statistical information or citations from known authorities in the candidates filed of research in a brief, specific and concise manner. Such facts may be used to highlight the magnitude or extent of the problem. Major previous researches undertaken on the subject should be cited (where applicable in case of theoretical problems) and this will enable the candidate to indicate the gaps in the knowledge and justifies the need for the proposed study. The statement of the problem should be concise (not more than 1 page).

### **5.3 General Objective Or Purpose of the Study**

The student should make a choice to use either purpose or general objectives of the study but not both. A study should be based on a clear conceptualization of relationship between variables, which define the parameters of the problem of the study. The objectives or purpose of the study spells out how the postulated relationships will be investigated and what the researcher hopes to achieve by carrying out the proposed study. It should include words to indicate the intent of the study. The student should start with 'The purpose, or objective, or intent of the study is.....'. As Cresswell (2009: 117) recommends, identify the independent and dependent variables, as well as any mediating, moderating or control



variables used in the study and use words that connect the independent and dependent variables...'

#### **5.4 Specific objectives Or objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives arise directly from general objective of the study. Where a student has used purpose in 1.3, this section should be labelled objectives of the study but where general objective was used, this section becomes the specific objectives. The objectives break down the general objective or purpose of the study. Each relationship between variables to be investigated should be spelt out in a specific objective. The objectives must be aligned to the conceptual framework and the variables of the study. The number of objectives is therefore influenced by the conceptualisation and the nature of relationships the researcher may be interested in investigating. Students should note that the number of specific objectives will influence the volume of the literature review and data to be collected so one should limit the number of specific objectives to be investigated. It is assumed that the findings of the study will lead to recommendations so there is no need for a specific objective about recommendations. As a guide, the objectives may not be less than two and should not be more than six in a study.

#### **5.5 Research questions**

Research Questions refer to questions which a researcher would like answered by undertaking the study (Mugenda & Mugenda 1999). While in some cases the research questions may precede the construction of the conceptual/theoretical framework, in other cases it may follow it (Sarantakos 1998). In our structure for the joint PhD and Masters, the research questions follow immediately after the research objectives and the number of research questions should correspond with that of research objectives in all cases. Some qualitative researchers recommend that research questions may be used only instead of the objectives. However, as a guide, both have to be used even if the student is purely doing a qualitative study.

#### **5.6 Hypotheses of the Study**

A hypothesis is predicted answer to the research question. After variables are operationalised the researcher proceeds to formulate one or more hypotheses. The purpose of formulating hypotheses is to offer a clear framework and a guide when

collecting, analyzing and interpreting the data. In many cases hypotheses serve as a testing tool of the relationships between variables. In this sense, a hypothesis contains a possible solution to the research problem, and as such is expected to be verified or falsified (accepted or rejected) by the evidence gathered by the study (Sarantakos 1998, p.133).

The inclusion of hypotheses in the proposal will be influenced by the nature of the study. For example, as a guide, if the study is exploratory and therefore there are no answers to predict the relationship, then the students may not be required to state hypotheses. As a guide, qualitative studies may not be required to state the hypotheses. However, for quantitative studies, the hypotheses must be presented in addition to the research questions. For all studies that have a quantitative orientation; (depending on how the objectives are stated, the questions to be answered (what, why, how) and the design of the study among others), the candidate has to present testable hypothesis. It is recommended that alternative directional or non-directional hypotheses are formulated. The hypotheses may be the same number as the research questions (recommended), or they can be more or less. Candidates must understand the philosophy of this reasoning. As a guide, the hypotheses should be presented immediately after the research questions unlike in journal articles where hypotheses may be placed within or after the literature review.

## **5.7 Conceptual framework**

Research is based on a conceptualization of a pertinent problem and relationships between problem variables and how they affect one another. The conceptual framework is a diagrammatic model or representation of the relationship between variables and how they are operationalized for the purpose of research. It should indicate the independent and dependent variables (cause/ effect relationship) or vice versa, moderating and intervening variables (where applicable). It is not mandatory that every student must have a moderator or intervening variable but it depends on the facts in the real world and logic as well as student's own conceptualisation. Inclusion of such variables demands that the candidates must test their effects in the dissertation. The source of the variables/framework and an explanation of the diagrammatic representation should be made.

In terms of its location, the conceptual framework may appear in chapter one immediately after the hypotheses or in chapter two after the theoretical review as recommended by Amin, (2005). The candidate will decide where to place the conceptual framework. The

framework must be linked to the theory of the study. Variables and dimensions presented in the conceptual framework must be derived from the appropriate theoretical framework or known authorities who must be cited and acknowledged.

### **5.8 Significance of the Study**

This refers to the relevance of the study in terms of academic contributions and practical use that might be made of the findings to the organization/sector in which the researcher is based and to the public at large. The researcher must tell the reader the reasons why and how s/he thinks the findings might change policies, theory or practice. In short s/he should indicate who will benefit from the findings of the study and how.

### **5.9 Justification of the study**

This gives the rationale of the study. It can be a methodological, problem justification etc.

### **5.10 Scope of the study (geographical, time and content scope)**

The Scope provides for the boundary or limits of the research in terms of content (i.e. independent and dependent variables to be investigated), geographical area and time span of the research.

### **5.11 Operational Definitions**

The key concepts to be used in the study have to be clearly defined. The definition should be operational and not a dictionary definition.

## 6.0 CHAPTER TWO

### 6.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers. A literature review is a survey and discussion of the literature in a given area of study. It is a concise overview of what has been studied, argued, and established about a topic, and it is usually organized chronologically or thematically. In writing the literature review, students are expected to convey to readers what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. This section should enable graduate students demonstrate skills in two areas namely (1) **information seeking**: the ability to scan the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods, to identify a set of useful articles and books and (2) **critical appraisal**: the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies on a problem under investigation. A literature review must:

1. be organized around objectives, themes or concepts related to the study
2. synthesize results into a summary of what is and is not known
3. identify areas of controversy in the literature
4. formulate questions that need further research

A literature review should be a piece of discursive prose, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another. Instead, organize the literature review into sections that present themes or identify trends, including relevant theory. Asking questions such as the following will help you sift through your sources and organize your literature review. Remember, the literature review organizes the previous research in the light of what you are planning to do in your own project.

- What's been done in this topic area to date? What are the significant discoveries, key concepts, arguments, and/or theories that scholars have put forward? Which are the important works?
- On which particular areas of the topic has previous research concentrated? Have there been developments over time? What methodologies have been used?
- Are there any gaps in the research? Are there areas that haven't been looked at closely yet, but which should be? Are there new ways of looking at the topic?
- Are there improved methodologies for researching this subject?
- What future directions should research in this subject take?
- How will your research build on or depart from current and previous research on the topic? What contribution will your research make to the field?

The length of a literature review varies depending on its purpose and audience. In a thesis or dissertation, the review is usually a full chapter, but for an assignment it may only be a few pages. As a guide, students should organize this chapter as follows:

### **6.1.1 Introduction**

The introduction should tell the reader how the chapter is arranged and how the review is to be organised. The rationale of the study, the sources of literature and the procedure of literature review should be stated and briefly discussed by the student in this introduction.

### **6.1.2 Theoretical review**

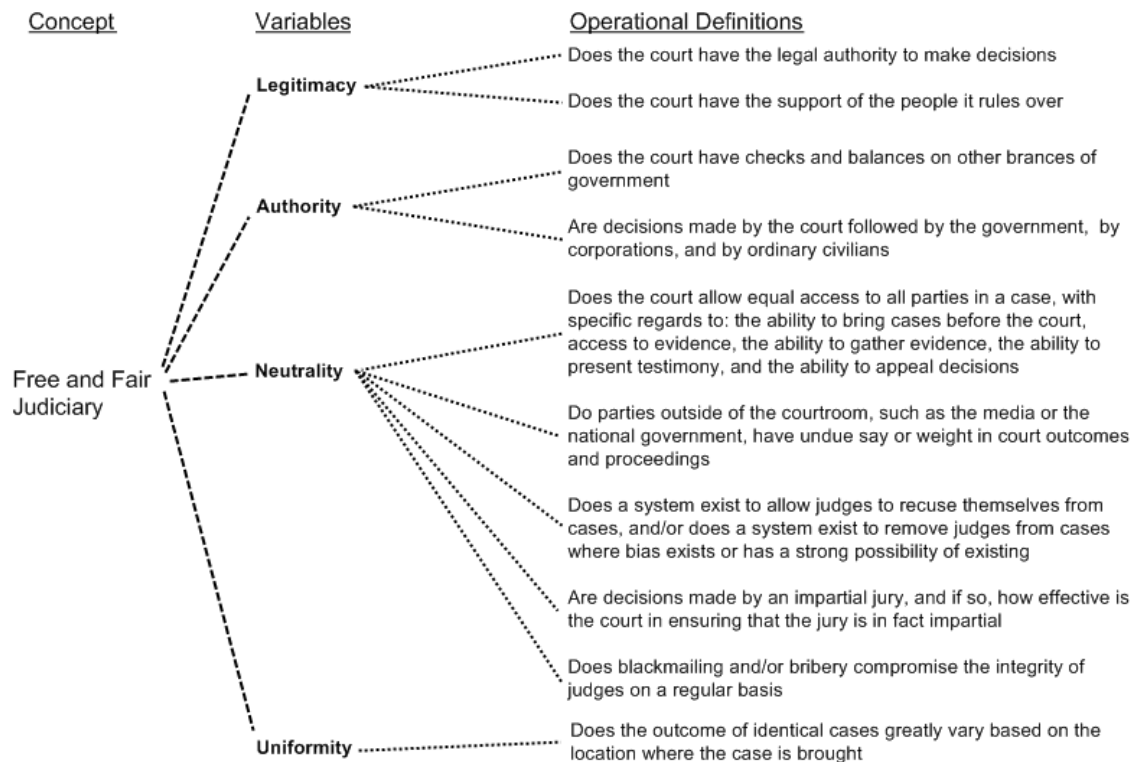
This will be the review of literature on the theory or theories, which the candidate will have identified as being the guiding principle of the study in chapter one under the theoretical background. How the theory (ies) has been used by other researchers and how it will be used in the study has to be highlighted and analytically evaluated. By definition, a theory is a set of concepts and therefore some of the concepts in the conceptual framework may be identified from these theories.

### 6.1.3 Conceptual Review/conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is used in research to outline possible courses of action or to present a preferred approach to an idea or thought. Conceptual frameworks (sometimes called theoretical frameworks by some authors) are a type of intermediate theory that attempt to connect to all aspects of inquiry (e.g., problem definition, purpose, literature review, methodology, data collection and analysis). Conceptual frameworks can act like maps that give coherence to empirical inquiry. Because conceptual frameworks are potentially so close to empirical inquiry, they take different forms depending upon the research question or problem. Proponents claim that when purpose and framework are aligned, other aspects of empirical research such as methodological choices and statistical techniques become simpler to identify.

A conceptual framework is the researcher's own position on the problem and gives direction to the study. It may be an adaptation of a model used in a previous study, with modifications to suit the inquiry. Aside from showing the direction of the study, through the conceptual framework, the researcher can be able to show the relationships of the different constructs that he wants to investigate. Once the conceptual framework has been determined, the next for the researcher is to determine what research methods to employ to best answer the research problem through the proposed framework. The student must clearly operationalise all the study variables a clear way. Take the example below:

## Operationalization of "Free and Fair Judiciary"



Source:

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/07/Operationalization\\_of\\_Free\\_and\\_Fair\\_Judiciary.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/0/07/Operationalization_of_Free_and_Fair_Judiciary.png)

In case the conceptual framework is to appear in chapter two, it should immediately follow the theoretical framework as suggested by Amin, (2005). The conceptual framework must clearly identify the key variables of the study, the dimensions and measurable indicators for each of the variables as well as the relationships that exist among the variables. The source of the variables should be clearly indicated by the student through appropriate citations. The candidate must coherently describe the conceptual framework to enable the reader understand what the study will cover.

### 6.1.4 Actual Literature review (don't include this subheading please in your chapter).

A literature review is written to highlight specific arguments and ideas in a field of study. By highlighting these arguments, the writer attempts to show what has been studied in the field, and also where the weaknesses, gaps, or areas needing further study are. The review should therefore also demonstrate to the reader why the writer's research is useful, necessary, important, and valid. There are several ways to organize and structure a literature review. Two common ways are chronologically and thematically.

**Chronological:**

In a chronological review, you will group and discuss your sources in order of their appearance (usually publication), highlighting the changes in research in the field and your specific topic over time. This method is useful for papers focusing on research methodology, historiographical papers, and other writing where time becomes an important element. For example, a literature review on theories of public administration, or corporate governance might present how the understanding of the discipline of public administration or corporate governance has changed through the centuries, by giving a series of examples of key developments and ending with current theories and the direction your research will take.

**Thematic:**

In a thematic review, you will group and discuss your sources in terms of the themes or topics they cover. This method is often a stronger one organizationally, and it can help you resist the urge to summarize your sources. By grouping themes or topics of research together, you will be able to demonstrate the types of topics that are important to your research. This may involve formulating themes out of the study objectives and reviewing literature objective by objective. These guidelines recommend that the literature review should be done on the basis of empirical studies which have been done on both the independent and dependent variables at global and regional levels. Immediately after, this, the student should review literature on studies (empirical) done on his or her area of study in the country where the research is done. This effort should aim at identifying the gaps which the



previous studies have left. In case the student opts to arrange the literature according to objectives, each objective should be given a theme that should reflect both variables of the study and appropriate literature is reviewed. The student will decide on sub-headings in accordance with research objectives. The literature review should focus on the themes of the study and should inform the objectives and methodology of the study. Citation should be included in the text, indicating author and year of publication in accordance with the approved format e.g. (Mukasa, 2000). Quotations should include the page (s) where the quotations appear to be direct e.g. (Nuwagaba, 2000, Pg. 3). All other details of the citations are included in the reference section. We currently follow the APA STYLE. The review should be critical and use of current journal articles rather than textbooks is recommended

#### **6.1.5 Synthesis of the literature review**

The candidate should identify the key lessons learnt from the literature review. The gaps that have been identified in the literature which the study intends to address have to be highlighted. This section will require a synthesis of what the general literature reviewed portrays and the key gaps. Your primary purpose here is to show readers that you are familiar with the field and are thus qualified to offer your own opinions. But your larger purpose is to show that in spite of all this wonderful research already done on your subject area, no one has addressed the problem in the way that you intend to in your current proposed study. This gives your synthesis a purpose, and even a thesis of sorts.

## **7.0 CHAPTER THREE**

### **7.1 METHODOLOGY**

The methodology chapter is one of the most important parts of a research proposal/dissertation. It provides your readers the information on what procedures will be followed by the student to undertake to come up with the research results. If you are on the process of writing the part, then you should already know **how to make a methodology** segment. Here, let me give you the basic and simple ways of constructing this chapter.

#### **7.1.1 Introduction**

This should tell the reader what is contained in the methodology chapter and how the chapter is to be arranged. It should give the rationale of the chapter and how the researcher is going to go about collecting and analysing the data to solve the problem at hand. All statements/assertions must be justified by citing relevant authorities and available facts. Students should avoid simply writing an argument without knowing the reason behind what they are writing.

#### **7.1.2 Research Design**

This subsection describes the conceptual structure or the type of research design that will be used (structural arrangement within which research will be undertaken). Research design, describes the nature and pattern, which the research intends to follow e.g. whether it is longitudinal or cross-sectional, descriptive, explanatory or experimental, case based or representative. The choice of research design depends on the type of research being conducted and the research questions to be answered; e.g. exploratory designs,

descriptive designs, case study design or across-sectional survey design or correlation research designs are used under different circumstances.

The choice of a particular design needs to be justified and the candidate after articulating the design must state in precise approach (es) that will be used in the study. The choice can be either qualitative or quantitative or a mixed methods approach and whatever choice is made must be explained and justified. The type of data to be handled by each design has to be stated with justification through quoting appropriate authorities.

### **7.1.3 Study Population**

This is the description of the population and its objects/elements from which samples will be drawn. A distinction or comparison could be made between a target and accessible population and the researcher must state the exact or estimated population from which the sample will be selected. All categories of the likely population to be studied must be given and their numbers should be appropriately given.

### **7.1.4 Determination of the Sample size**

This is the description of the actual sample that will be studied and how it will be selected /computed/determined. There are different approaches recommended for sample size determination and students must find the most appropriate approaches without reproducing approaches that other students have previously used. The sample size determination will among others be determined by the nature of the study-qualitative and or quantitative study and the expected degree of generalisation expected. As a guide, the sample size of 30 or less is appropriate for qualitative studies but for the quantitative studies, the sample size

should be above 30 participants. Well accepted scientific procedures must be followed in determining the sample size.

#### **7.1.5 Sampling techniques and procedure**

This sub-section describes in detail the sampling techniques that will be used in selecting the sample to be studied e.g. Probability or non-probability based sampling (probability based sampling: simple random, systematic random, stratified, random, cluster etc: Non-probability sampling: purposive, maximum variation, homogenous, snow ball, quota, convenient or accidental etc). The choice of which sampling strategy to use is influenced by the approach (Qualitative or quantitative) pointed out under the research design. If the approach was qualitative, the non-random sampling strategies will be used. If the approach was quantitative, the sampling strategies will be random sampling techniques. If the approach was a mixed methods approach, both random and non-random sampling strategies will be used. The section should describe in detail the procedure used in selecting the sampling of categories.

#### **7.1.6 Data Collection Methods**

This includes the specific techniques to be used in the collection of data. Methods could include face-to-face interview, key informants interview, focus group discussion (FGD), survey, observation, documentary review, etc.

#### **7.1.7 Data collection instruments**

This section describes the instrumentation to be used e.g. interview guide, questionnaire, Key informants' guides, group discussion topics, observation checklists, etc.

### **7.1.8 Pre-testing (Validity and reliability)**

Data quality control, which refers to reliability and validity of instruments have to be precisely described. It is ensured through piloting. This is encouraged as the pilot findings may enable you to re-design the research instruments to improve the reliability and the validity of data. The participant should briefly describe and explain how the pre-test/pilot study will be carried out, the findings of the study, lessons learnt and he/she will use to re-design and improve the data collection instruments.

### **7.1.9 Procedure of Data Collection**

This requires the researcher to briefly explain the procedures that will be followed in the data collection exercise.

### **7.1.10 Data Analysis**

This spells out how the data will be processed and summarized. It should indicate statistical tests that will be carried out and how the resulting information will be used for the research report. Where both qualitative and quantitative data is expected, the student should describe in a detailed way in which the data will be analysed

### **7.1.11 Measurements of variables (quantitative studies)**

Measurements, which refer to the formulae or scales to be used in the study, have to be described by the students.

## **8.0 REFERENCES**

This is a list of all works cited in the proposal and should be written according to the APA format, which is summarised in Appendix I.

## 9.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

### 9.1 Appendix 2: Work plan and Timeframe

This is the schedule or timetable of activities and the period in which the research is to be conducted with due regard to budgetary limitation. It could be presented in a tabular form indicating activity, duration, and dates. It is preferable on a Gantt Chart.

Activity	Duration (days/weeks/months)	Dates

### 9.2 Appendix3: Budget (Optional)

A budget for conducting the study should be included at the end of the proposal. The budget consists amount of activities and items that are necessary to carryout the research. This is optional for proposal because UTAMU/MUST does not fund DOCTORAL research. This is the financial plan and financial resources needed for the implementation of the research. It should be clear and reasonable (affordable) and preferably activity based. It should be itemized according to an acceptable format (e.g. of the funder). For the MMS proposal the following format is acceptable.

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Subsistence Allowance			
Honorarium			
Travel (Vehicle Hire)			
Data Analysis (use of analytical computer software e.g. SPSS)			

Secretarial Services (Processing the research instruments and reports)			
Photocopying			
Report Production (Printing and Binding)			
Other Expenses (Specify)			

## **10 DISSERTATION FORMAT**

### **10.1 Definition of Report**

The final and very important stage in a research study is to write its report. The report is a means of communicating the experiences of the research to others and adding them to the knowledge bank. A report therefore is a formal statement of the research process and its results. It narrates the problem studied, methods used for studying it, the findings and the conclusions as well as the recommendations made. The main aim of the report is to convey to the reader what was done, how it was done, why it was done, and what its outcome was. The dissertation is a detailed account of the study. It comprises of:

- The preliminaries
- The main text body
- The list of references
- The appendices

### **10.2 The Preliminaries**

The preliminaries consist of:

- Title page
- Declaration
- Dedication (optional)
- Acknowledgement
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables and Figures
- List of Abbreviations (where applicable)
- Abstract

### **10.3 Title Page**

The title page should have the title of the dissertation in CAPITALS; full names of the researcher including qualifications already attained and their awarding universities; a statement that the dissertation is submitted to the institute in partial fulfilment of the award submission (see the following hypothetical example).



**PROCUREMENT GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY IN UGANDA**

**By**  
**Benon Basheka**  
**Reg.NUMBER**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT  
IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY OF MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DECEMBER, 2013**

#### **10.4 Declaration**

This is a pronouncement by the candidate that his/her study is original and has not been published and/or submitted for any other degree award to any other university before. The researcher must sign it. The declaration must also state that the dissertation has been submitted for examination with the approval of the supervisor(s) and carry their signature(s) and date.

#### **10.5 Dedication - optional**

The candidate may wish to dedicate his/her work to a specific person or a number of people respectively. If this is the case, the name(s) must be indicated. However, including a dedication is optional.

#### **10.5 Acknowledgement**

The acknowledgement entails recognition of mentors, colleagues, individuals, sponsors and institutions, which supported the research.

#### **10.6 Table of Contents**

This is the list of headings, subheadings and their corresponding page numbers. It must include all sections and sub-sections of the report, starting with the declaration and ending with a list of appendices.

#### **10.7 List of Tables and Figures**

This comprises of a complete list of all tables and figures presented in the dissertation and the corresponding pages.

#### **10.8 List of Abbreviations - if applicable**

This is a complete list of abbreviations used in the report. Normally only abbreviations other than those commonly used (i.e., e.g., et al., etc.), are listed. It must follow internationally standardised abbreviations (i.e. UGX instead of USh).

#### **10.9 Abstract**

The abstract is a short summary of the complete content of the study (never exceed one page). It should contain four paragraphs with the answers to the following questions:

- What was the study about and what were your research objectives or questions?
- How did you go about answering the research questions?

- What did you find out in response to your research objectives or questions?
- What conclusions did you draw regarding your research questions and what are the key recommendations?

The abstract should be objective, precise and easy to read. Much as it appears here, it is written after the entire dissertation.

### **10.9.1 The Main Text Body**

The main text body consists of six chapters:

- Chapter I: Introduction
- Chapter II: Literature Review
- Chapter III: Methodology and Design
- Chapter IV: Presentation of Results and discussion
- Chapter V: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

#### **10.9.1.1 Chapter I: Introduction**

The introduction (chapter I) should give a comprehensive overview of the entire research dissertation highlighting the introduction, background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, questions, hypothesis, significance, scope, conceptual framework (may be in chapter two) etc.

#### **10.9.1.2 Chapter II: Literature Review**

The literature review (chapter II) should follow similar lines as in the proposal but in greater detail. The main purpose is to show the reader how the study builds on and supplements the work that has already been done in this area of research. *It should be analytical*

#### **10.9.1.3 Chapter III: Methodology**

The methodology chapter is a detailed account of the actual methodology applied. Otherwise, its content is comparable to that of the methodology section in the proposal, which focused on the intended methodology to be applied, except that in a dissertation, what was actually done is detailed here

#### **10.9.1.4 Chapter IV: Presentation and Discussion of results**

This chapter presents the facts, which the research discovered. Opinions on the facts should not be presented here but rather in the following chapters. In order to support a focused communications of the answers to the research questions it is necessary to structure the findings in a clear, logical and easily understood manner. There are many ways of doing this. One of the most straightforward approaches is to use research objectives, or questions or hypothesis and choice is entirely to the researcher.

#### **10.9.1.5 Chapter V. Summary, conclusion and recommendations**

In this part of the report, the researcher summarizes the study undertaken, discusses the results (exploiting cross-referencing and giving personal opinions) draws conclusions and then makes recommendations based on the findings. The summary reminds the reader about the purpose of the study, the process used to collect the data, and analysing the data as well as the major findings. The conclusion culminates ones researcher report and is better to make practical applications and implications of the research. It is the summary and conclusions of the report that leads to a logical way of making recommendations. Recommendations are consistent with the purpose of the study, its objectives, the evidence presented and the interpretations made. Such recommendations should be practical and achievable. Each of the above should be done objective by objective to give a logical flow.

### **11 REFERENCES**

This is a list of all works cited in the proposal and should be written according to the APA format, which is summarised in Appendix I. All documents that were cited in the text have to appear in the references and the appropriate citation style has to be followed. Credit should be given to authors of all works cited in the report. A reference gives the name of the author, the year of publication, the title of the book or journal and the publisher.

### **12 APPENDICES**

This contains the information that the researcher does not deem necessary to include in the main body of the report. These are things that make the report unnecessarily long and non-value adding and appending them is the only option. These may include-instruments used, statistical tables, correspondence related to the study, maps etc.