**Research Concept Note**

**Masters / PhD in Spatial Sciences**

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| --- | --- |
| **Proposed Title** |  |
| **Student’s Full Name** |  |
| **Student Number** |  |
| **Preferred Supervisor/s (if known)** |  |
|  |
| **Date Submitted** |  |

**Please note:**

The purpose of this template is to provide you with an outline on which to develop your research concept note.

The research proposal **should be about 5 pages** (not including the cover page or appendices).

Remove all instructions (written in blue) from the template prior to submission.

This document provides three different styles that you should use for formatting:

**Normal**: for section text;

**Lists**: for tables, numbered lists and bullet-point lists; and

**Headings**: for section headings to ensure correct numbering.

### *Proposed Title*

The title should provide a succinct and concise description of the research problem to be investigated. This can be achieved by adhering to the following guidelines:

* Be concrete, specific, factual, and avoid generalisations, abstract terms, and metaphors;
* Remember that the title must be inviting to potential readers;
* Use sub-titles where necessary to clarify either the context or topic; and

Include relevant information about the study location and study organism(s) as appropriate

### Introduction

[2 pages]

The introduction is combination of background and preliminary literature review.

The background section must provide an explanation of the broad problem or issue to be studied, thus:

* Establish the context and setting of the research, describing the broad issues and their relevance
* Narrow the discussion down to pose the specific research question that your work will address
* This Background section should end with a your specific overall project objective

The background and introduction to the research should include your preliminary literature review, which should place the study in the context of other similar studies and relevant literature, but should include the following:

* Place your work in the context of previous investigations, existing body of knowledge, and current practice.
* Identify significant prior research on the topic; examine whether the issues have been addressed elsewhere before, or whether related questions have been asked, and what answers have been obtained.
* If relevant, synthesise and critically evaluate any past or current debate on the topic, and describe how your proposed study will contribute to this debate.
* Identify limitations of past or current research, highlighting knowledge gaps, misinterpretations, possible mistakes, or apparent contradictions.

### Problem Statement

[0.5 page]

This section should state the ideal state of affairs that should be in place if there was no problem. This is the normative statement. Following this normative statement/s state why the ideal situation is not prevailing; also state the current state of affairs. Substantiate your assertion of the problem at hand. (This constitutes the problems situation). Propose what needs to be done or investigated to solve the problem; and state the rational for solving the problem.

### Aims and Objectives or Research Questions

[0.5 page]

In this section state the general objective in providing the purpose of the study. What does the study hope to achieve? Following this – state the specific objectives (or the research questions) that will help you achieving the purpose of the study.

This section should make it clear to the reader the specific questions that you will investigate. If your project includes clearly defined, testable hypotheses, these should be included here (there would be a testable hypothesis linked to each individual research question/ objective).

### Methods / Theoretical Framework

[1 pages]

Your methods section should clearly explain what you will do and where you will do it. This section can be broken down into sub-headings (Study Area, Data Collection/Sampling, Analysis). When including sub-headings use the “Headings” style and the ”increase indent” to make it into a sub-numbering.

* Provide a detailed description of your study area, so that someone not familiar with the area will know what it is like (e.g., location, topography, geology, soils, climate, plant communities, and animal communities).
* Explain how you will build on strengths and avoid weaknesses of previous research, but be honest about the limitations of your own research.
* If necessary, spell out key assumptions of the research project and clarify why these are made.
* Provide an account of how you intend to answer your research questions and explain why these methods are appropriate.
* Describe the procedures to collect data specifying the techniques, methods, instruments you will use for measurement.
* Discuss the level of reliability and validity of specific instruments and procedures of the entire method.
* Explain and justify how you will analyse your data using generally accepted methods rather than attempting untried methods of analysis.

### Expected Outcomes

[0.5 pages]

Briefly describe the anticipated outcomes of your proposed research and the importance of these outcomes, arguing why your research will be worth the time and effort.

### References

List the references that you cite in the text, using the latest APA style. Your Research Concept Note should include at least 10 references.