

## Doctoral Research Proposal

The research proposal serves as an initial outline of the proposed PhD research. It holds significant importance within your application for the PhD program, therefore it should be carefully written.

### WRITING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**Purpose:** To support your application for the PhD in Business Management

Planning to pursue a PhD in Business Management and you do hold the “view that management practice is best informed by [research evidence](#) and problem solving by investigation and testing?”

Here is what you should know.

The British University in Dubai (BUiD) states that the PhD program involves the undertaking of an independent research project under the guidance of two BUiD faculty supervisors. The result is a written thesis of around 65,000 – 80,000 words.

There are several reasons behind pursuing a PhD thesis, but the final thesis must make an original contribution to knowledge that holds substantial implications for both theory and practice.

A PhD journey is not one without challenges and involves learning many innovative ideas and skills. The duration required to complete a PhD program can vary, however, it is anticipated to take a minimum of 3 years when pursued full-time and at least 4 years when pursued part-time.

The process presents intellectual challenges, as well as physical and emotional demands, yet it also offers great rewards.

The first step in your PhD journey is writing a research proposal where you reflect on and write about your research aims, motivations, and interests.

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This is your opportunity to persuade others about what makes your research interesting and compel them to grant you admission for the PhD program. In an actual sense, your research proposal offers to demonstrate and make a persuasive argument about your interest in the subject area and why your chosen topic is worth studying and discussing too, how you intend to conduct your research.

It is therefore worth noting that a research proposal is the starting point in your PhD research, where you present an idea, whose topic is subject to change during your research.

Also note that, during the application process you are required to submit your research proposal along with other documents, such as your curriculum vitae. Should you receive an invitation to be interviewed, be certain that the content your proposal contains is likely to be the topic and focus the conversation is takes.

In terms of length, there are variations to every research proposal with the recommended length falling anywhere from 1,300 – 1,500 words.

To make sure your research proposal wins the hearts of the reviewers, be sure to cover the required contents in detail.

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## Structure of the Research Proposal

*(adopted from the British university in Dubai)*

The following is a structure with details of the contents your research proposal should cover.

- Title page

The title of the research should be short, to the point, interesting and contain key words around your chosen topic.

- Abstract

This should contain a succinct summary of the project, its aims and significance.

- Introduction

This is where you must clearly address the phenomenon you intend to study, including the background and importance. This section requires that you state the purpose of the research and why it is needed.

- Research questions and objectives

As a result of your interest and knowledge of the topic, initial literature review and consideration of relevant theories, you should identify the gap in the literature in your proposed research area.

You are advised to provide 1-2 initial research questions addressing the gap in knowledge that you aim to address in your proposed PhD project.

Once the research problem and questions have been identified, you will be able to specify the main aim and 3-6 objectives for your project. These statements should indicate what it is that you plan to accomplish by undertaking this research.

- Short literature review

Your literature review should address the research phenomenon through consulting available scholarly literature on the topic (e.g., books and academic articles).

Remember to explicitly identify a gap in the literature that you aim to address in your PhD research.

Your review of the literature should include relevant citations to key literature and show your awareness of the topic and the field of study from an academic perspective.

Your literature review should indicate which business/management theory you will be using in your research.

An effective literature review presents an up-to-date and innovative point of view on the topic. It also incorporates a critical analysis and synthesis of key concepts and debates.

- Methodology

This section should address how you are going to design your research and explain what methods you aim to use to collect, analyze and interpret primary and secondary data.

For example, are you going to use a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods approach to the research?

If it is primarily qualitative research design, what propositions will you study and what methods will you use (e.g., interviews, focus groups, field observation, etc.)?

If it is chiefly a quantitative study what model, hypotheses and methods will you use (e.g., a survey questionnaire or econometric modelling)?

You are advised to state the size of your sample and explain how you will collect your data.

- Significance and contribution of the research

Here you should focus on stating the potential impact of your research for academics, practitioners, and society.

Your research must make an original contribution to (theoretical) knowledge.

- References

You should provide a list of references, in a consistently recognized format (see e.g., <http://www.citethisforme.com/guides> for common referencing styles).

References should include academic journal articles from your proposed area of study. If you do not have access to an academic library, you can obtain articles using Google Scholar and other search engines.

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**Note:** These guidelines reflect the (standard) contents of the research proposal and may vary depending on the requirements of evaluation committee and are subject to institutional regulations.