



BITS COLLEGE

Research and Community Service Policy

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Abbreviations

AB	Academic Board
AT	Advisory Team
CAARC	College Academic Affairs and Research Council
EM	Executive Management
VPAAR	Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research

1. BITS College

1.1 Brief Introduction

BITS College is a private higher learning institution with a vision of promoting excellence in the production, growth and dissemination of advanced scientific knowledge through teaching and research. The College is conceived, established and run by caring and committed educators and innovators who seek to improve the quality of higher education in the country through the introduction of innovative and enlightened education programs that help students realize their potential. It aims at realizing this by engaging a management team experienced in education and business, a dedicated team of faculty and staff, well-designed academic programs, world class educational facilities and cutting-edge technologies.

The executive officer of the College is the President assisted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR) and the Vice President for Business and Administration (VPBA).

The highest decision-making body of the College is the Academic Board (AB). However, most academic and administration activities are carried out by the Executive Management Body (EM). The College Academic Affairs and Research Council (CAARC) is a standing committee accountable to the EM. The CAARC, working under the chairmanship of VPAAR, deliberates and decides on all academic matters of the College on behalf of the EMB. At School level, the Head, program coordinators and staff members deliberate on the day-to-day academic matters in their respective academic committees.

The College has prepared this research and community service policy in order to secure well defined organizational structure with proper rules and regulations. This is also believed to create a conducive environment for research and community service programs and to ensure the quality and efficient work environment. It is expected that anyone who is interested in research and community services read this policy and adhere to the guidelines provided. Faculty and students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this policy, and acting ethically and in accordance with this policy. The policy is subject to revision and change when deemed necessary.

1.2 College's Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

- BITS College aspires to grow in reputation as a model of academic excellence and innovative student support in an environment strengthened by industry partnerships and technology enablement.

Mission

The mission of BITS College is to educate, inspire and prepare each student for a better life of service by:

- providing quality higher education and research of relevance to sustainable development of our society;
- offering a welcoming and rewarding work environment for students, faculty and staff;
- fostering innovative learning, entrepreneurship, community engagement, and industry partnership;
- building capacity to unlock the potential of technology to provide education without boundaries - accessible from anywhere; and
- maintaining financing plans to sustain innovation and growth.

Core Values

BITS College believes in:

- encouraging open-mindedness, dynamism and innovation;
- excelling in performance, and never compromising on quality;
- creating a nurturing environment for our students and employees;
- cultivating integrity, mutual respect, collaboration and unity; and
- developing responsible governance and fostering a commitment of serving.

1.3 Academic Programs

There are two undergraduate programs and two graduate programs offered at the College:

- Undergraduate Program in Software Engineering. (B.Sc. SWE)
- Undergraduate Program in Information Technology and Systems (B.Sc. ITS)
- Graduate Program in Enterprise System Engineering (M.Sc. ESE)
- Graduate Program in IT Management (M.Sc. ITM)

2. Research Programs

2.1 The Office

BITS College orients itself to business oriented, development-oriented and technology transfer-focused research that best supports the fulfillment of aligning IT with business as well as the ICT for Development Agenda. The main focus is on creating an integrated community-based research and high-quality graduate studies so as to maximize the benefits to the society

To this end, the research and outreach programs office is established under a major organ of the College namely the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research. The office works closely with business industries and other stakeholders so as students and staff are able to undertake scholarly study and advanced research on real life business and development problems. More specifically, the office under the supervision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research, shall

- coordinate, and direct interdisciplinary research based on the guidelines for research provided by the College;
- plan, organize, and seek research grants through competitive grant proposal;
- Closely supervise the implementation of approved research programs and budgets;
- Facilitate the production of high quality, peer-reviewed papers by members of the College;
- Facilitate the publication of journals and other research findings;
- Promote and coordinate the dissemination of research findings through channels such as workshops, lecture seminars and electronic media;
- Support students to engage in research by facilitating financial assistance;

- Prepare relevant information on the research activities of the College and disseminate the same
- Ensure effective implementation of the rules and regulations laid down by the College regarding research.

2.2 Research Advisory Team (AT)

2.2.1 Composition

The research and Outreach programs Office has an advisory team which advises the office in the overall strategy of research, research proposals and publications.

The following is the composition of the team:

- Director of the Research and Outreach Programs Office;
- Director of Student Support Office
- Two academic staff of the College nominated by the College VPAAR
- Two persons from outside the College to be nominated by the President on the basis of their professional merit and responsibilities;

2.2.2 Duties and Responsibilities

The advisory team has the following duties and responsibilities

- Advise on course of action in the case of breach of agreement by researchers;
- Review and comment on the calendar for submission of research proposals and research reports;
- examine and endorse the research activity reports;
- advise and assist academic units in securing funds from organizations outside the College;
- design, facilitate and endorse collaborative research activities with national and international institutions;
- establish an award system for recognizing outstanding research;
- assist the Office of VPAAR in preparing the code of ethics governing research and intellectual property rights;
- advise / guide on the allocation of funds for internal research proposals;

The College sees to it that the advisory team among others, assume the responsibility to guide and monitor the implementation of the research policy in accordance with the rules and regulations of the College. The College supports the Office to create the environment for innovative research and the transfer of technology from laboratory to the market place;

2.2.3 Meeting and Reporting of the AT

- The AT shall meet four times a year.
- The Chairperson may also convene a meeting of the AT whenever he deems it appropriate, or whenever three of its members make a request for such a meeting.
- The unit shall submit a quarterly report of its activities report to the office of the VPAAR.

2.3 Major Research Areas and Publications

The focus of research in the College shall be primarily on promoting the relevance and quality of education and on the country's development issues focusing on ICT for Development agenda business, technology and innovation. The Core research areas and themes which relate to the College are:

- Context Based Software Engineering Methodologies
- Software Security, Mobility and Usability
- Internet of Things
- Innovations on IT Service industries
- Big Data Analysis
- Cyber Security
- Ehealth, Education, Ecommerce, etc.

The College shall deploy its academic staff primarily as teachers, researchers, or a combination thereof on the basis of its research agenda and plan. The College shall put in place a system for the dissemination of research findings through publication of articles and periodicals, websites, presentation of occasional papers and participation in seminars, symposia, workshops or through its research journals and organization of its own seminars and workshops.

2.4 Procedures for Initiating and Conducting Research

- Academic staff carrying out research without the need for financial support shall notify their academic units of such activities with proper evidence.
- A research proposal of an academic staff for which internal or external funding is sought shall be submitted to the Research and Outreach Programs Office of the College.
- Where funds are sought from internal sources, the Office reserves the right to have the proposal reviewed by independent professional assessors.
- Where funds are sought from sources external to the College, the proposal shall be reviewed and endorsed by the Advisory Team and approved by the Executive Management Body (EMB).
- The approved research proposal by the EMB shall be submitted to the College Board (CB) for final approval.

2.5 Administration of Research

- The overall administration of research in the College is vested in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR).
- The Research and Outreach Programs Office is accountable to the VPAAR and is responsible for the daily activities related to research and outreach programs of the College.
- Researchers whose proposals have been approved and funded shall submit regular reports to the office in accordance with guidelines set by the Office.
- All reports by researchers to be submitted to external funding bodies shall obtain prior endorsement of the Research and Outreach Programs Office.
- The financial administration of research funds shall be governed by the existing financial policy and procedures of the College and such other relevant guidelines as may be issued by the EMB.

2.6 Property Rights

Without prejudice to the relevant provisions of Federal and/or State laws and unless otherwise expressly provided for under individual research agreements, the College shall have property rights on research findings and/or products developed.

2.7 Research integrity and misconduct

2.7.1 Integrity

Researchers should, in all aspects of their research:

- demonstrate integrity and professionalism;
- observe fairness and equity;
- demonstrate intellectual honesty;
- effectively and transparently manage conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest; and
- ensure the safety and wellbeing of those associated with the research.

2.7.2 Research Data and Records

Researchers must comply with the following requirements:

- data and records should be accurate, complete and in sufficient detail to enable verification of research results and to reflect what was communicated, decided or done;
- data (including electronic data) must be recorded in a durable and retrievable form,
- data must be retained intact for a period of at least five years from the date of any publication which is based upon or longer than this if discussion of results continues, if there are regulatory or sponsor requirements, or if the data has historical or archival value;
- data and records will normally be kept in the department or unit where the research was conducted;
- data forming the basis of publications must be available for discussion with other research workers; where confidentiality provisions apply, the data should be kept in a way that allows reference by third parties without breaching confidentiality; and
- When data are obtained from limited access data bases, or via a contractual arrangement, written indication of the location of the original data, or key information regarding the database from which it was obtained, must be retained by the researcher/s.

2.8 Supervision of Students Undertaking Research

All candidates in a graduate program must have at least one supervisor. The Research and Outreach Programs Office ensures the following requirements are met and appropriate advisors are assigned for students' research undertaking.

- Where a candidate has more than one supervisor, one supervisor must be designated as the principal supervisor. The principal supervisor-
 - must be a member of the academic department of the candidate unless otherwise approved by the College President;
- All supervisors must have theoretical and methodological expertise relevant to the candidate's research project.
- Co-supervisors have a more specific or secondary role in the supervision of a candidate's research.
- A supervisor who is not a College staff member or an honorary appointee may be appointed as an external supervisor.
- External supervisors must agree to take direction in respect of supervision from the Research and Outreach Programs Office.

2.9 Research Misconduct

Research misconduct is constituted by research that:

- Misuses the research funding
- Is dishonest, reckless or negligent; and
- seriously deviates from accepted standards within the scientific and scholarly community for proposing, conducting or reporting research, including, but not limited to:
 - the fabrication or falsification of data or results - making up research data, results, or other information and recording
 - the use of another person's ideas, work or data without appropriate acknowledgement;

- Plagiarism - the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.
- misleading ascription of authorship to a publication including the listing of authors without their permission,
- attributing work to people who have not in fact contributed to the publication,
- the lack of appropriate acknowledgement of work primarily produced by a research student/trainee or associate; and
- failure to disclose conflicts of interest or cases where a conflict of interest might reasonably be perceived to exist.

2.10 Allegations of Research Misconduct

- All members of the College community who suspect research misconduct or who learn of an allegation of research misconduct shall immediately report the allegation to the Research and Outreach Programs Office;
- Where possible, the allegation should be provided, or subsequently documented, in sufficient detail to enable the College to assess it appropriately. This may include details such as relevant dates, witnesses, publications, and the subject matter of the research in question;
- Individual who reports an allegation of possible research misconduct shall be treated with fairness and respect;
- Only the EMB may issue sanctions against an individual who, in bad faith, makes an allegation of research misconduct;
- The Research and Outreach Programs Office shall take precautions to protect the privacy of those who in good faith report apparent research misconduct, to the maximum extent.

2.11 Guidelines for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct

- This guideline applies only to research misconduct that occurred within six years prior to the date the College receives the allegation.
- Allegations of research misconduct shall be processed fairly, confidentially, and promptly.
 - Fairness allows all of those who become involved in research misconduct cases to have the opportunity to participate appropriately in addressing the relevant issues and seeks to protect innocent participants from adverse consequences.

- Confidentiality helps protect innocent people who are incorrectly or unjustly accused and those who bring allegations.
- A prompt response to an allegation helps to minimize any harm to the public that could result if research misconduct is found and allows those who are incorrectly accused to clear their names without going through a long process.
- When the Director of the Research and Outreach Programs Office learns of an allegation of possible research misconduct, he/she shall promptly notify the advisory team and the VPAAR;
- The VPAAR in consultation with the advisory team, shall appoint an investigation committee, usually consisting of three members,
- The investigation Committee interviews the respondent, the Complainant, if known, and key witnesses as well as examines relevant research records and materials.
- The investigation Committee is responsible for preparing a written draft report for the Inquiry, which includes (i) the basis for concluding that the allegation falls or does not fall within the definition of research misconduct and (ii) statement whether the allegation has substance, based on the Committee's review during the Investigation.
- where no finding of research misconduct is made, the Research and Outreach Programs Office in consultation with the VPAAR shall undertake, as appropriate, all reasonable and practical efforts to protect or restore the Respondent's reputation.
- Confidentiality must be maintained for any records or evidence, from which research subjects might be identified, except as may otherwise be prescribed by applicable law. Disclosure is limited to those who have a need to know to carry out a research misconduct proceeding, or to implement its findings.
- Confirmed misconduct is treated in the following manner:
 - Return of improperly received (used) research funds.
 - Suspension for one or two semesters in the case of students.
 - Disciplinary action based on College regulations.
 - Disqualification from applying for funding for a duration specified by the AT.
 - Criminal prosecution in severe cases.

3. Outreach Programs / Community Services

3.1 Statement of Purpose

The College recognizes the importance of community involvement and encourages employees to participate in volunteer activities by providing flexibility in work and class schedules.

It is also the belief of the College that encouraging community service provides a powerful learning experience for our students. Community service fosters responsibility, pride, and leadership in students. Performing community service can be the start of a lifelong habit. We, therefore, wish to impart this value to every student graduating from our College.

This section establishes guidelines for the administration of a community service program. Leave to provide community service allows full-time employees to take time off from work with pay for services within the community. A maximum of 3-4 credit hours per week (equivalent for one course) will be made available each year. This leave may be used only for providing community service as outlined in this policy.

3.2 Activities

The outreach programs / community service activities are run by the Research and Outreach Programs Office under the supervision of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research (VPAAR). The activities shall include

- working closely with Civic Societies, government non-government organizations so as students and staff are able to undertake community Service activities.
- maintaining connections with local organizations so that a list of potential volunteer opportunities is always available for students.
- being accountable on matters related to community service activities.
- preparing relevant information on community service activities of the College and disseminating the same.
- Ensuring effective implementation of the rules and regulations laid down by the College regarding community services.

The Research and Outreach Programs Office plans community service activities of various professional nature. Such services include but not limited to

- Preparing awareness seminars for business and public organization on various issues;
- Preparing awareness seminars for high school students;
- Arranging special hands-on summer training programs for best performing students in public schools. Etc.
- Arranging technology literacy training programs for disadvantaged communities
- etc.

Employees and students are also supported to design and implement their own community services activities individually or in teams per the following rules and regulations.

3.4 Employee Related Community Service Activities

3.4.1 Nature of Community Service

Employees may be granted paid leave under this policy to provide voluntary services to their communities as part of an organized community service project sponsored by the College. For example, an employee could be granted community service leave to provide IT or business related lectures, public seminars or practical hands on training to school children.

3.4.2 Duration of Leave

No Carryover

- Community service leave that is not used in a fiscal year will not be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

No Payout

- Employees will not receive payment for unused community service leave upon separation from the College.

3.4.3 Approval of Leave

- Employees must receive approval from the College President prior to using community service leave.
- Written verification from an official of the community service organization is required before the leave is approved.

- Supervisors should attempt to approve leave at the time requested by the employees, but have the discretion to disapprove the leave if it will significantly impact the activities of the College.
- Employees will not be entitled to any reimbursement for travel, lodging, meals, and other trip-related expense.

3.4.4 Reporting

- With appropriate approvals, employees will report community service leave on the appropriate time report. Employees are expected to present their community service activities for the College community in College seminar, posters, videos or pictures. It is also the responsibility of the employee to follow up on the updating of the website regarding the community service activities.

3.5. Student Related Community Service Activities

3.5.1 Time Frame

- Undergraduate students must complete a minimum of 8 hours of community service per year (total of 24 hours over the four years) as partial fulfillment of the requirement for graduation.
- Service hours earned beyond 8 hours in the first year will be credited toward the student's 2nd year requirements. In this way, a student may complete his/her community service all at once, or at a minimum rate of 8 hours per year.
- The normal calendar year for community service hours begins October 01 and ends May 30th of the following year. Students can also do their service in summer if they are first year or second year students.
- Fourth year students shall complete the required hours of community service one month before graduation in order to participate in the graduation ceremony.

3.5.2 Requirements

- Students shall closely work with the community services office to identify places where they can take community service activities. They can also make contact with an individual or an organization in order to arrange or design their own community service project. The project shall be under the supervision and/or guidance of the community services office.

- When a service project is complete, the Community Service Completion Form must be filled out by the student and signed by the supervisor. The form will then be handed in to the program supervisor for final approval and tabulation of hours served. Copies of paperwork associated with the community service requirement should be maintained by each student.
- Falsification of records for community service shall be handled as plagiarism.

3.5.3 Eligible Activities

- Eligible community service activities must be separate from regular curricular activities (College courses or internship activities). Eligibility is defined as benefiting an organization or individuals outside of the College environment.
- Any profit earning disqualifies the project.
- The main component for approval of a community service project will look at the project's ability to render aid or perform volunteer service that directly benefits at least one other unrelated person, and for which the student does not receive monetary compensation.
- Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Participating in the community service activities of the College
 - practical hands-on training to school children.
 - Helping public and private schools during summer
- Questionable or ineligible activities include, but are not limited to:
 - Any work for which monetary compensation is received
 - Community service for which academic credit is earned
 - Community service to their own employers

3.5.4 Administration

Supervision and record keeping for community service projects will be largely the responsibility of the academic advisor in consultation with the community service office. The advisor will be responsible for:

- facilitating the approval of community service projects by the community services office;
- recording hours served;

- watching the progress of all students and intervening when students are in danger of not fulfilling their community service requirement;

3.5.5 Reporting

- Reports of community service activities by students should be presented to the College community by way of posters, videos, presentation in seminars or pictures.
- A panel selected by the EMB will select the best poster, picture or presentation for posting on the College website and College notice boards.
- The works of students will also be viewed to the public during graduation ceremonies and a dedicated website.
- A Separate guideline is provided for community service which is attached as Appendix A

4. Contact

All applications, correspondence and enquiries should be addressed to:

Research and Outreach Programs Office
BITS College
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Email: ropo@bitscollege.edu.et
Tel. +251930 288791/92

5. References

- BITS College Legislation

Appendix A : Community Services Guideline

1. Purpose and Benefits Community Service

According to Proclamation 650/2009, Community Engagement / community service is one of the missions of all higher education institutions in Ethiopia along teaching -learning and research (Article 4 and Sub Article 4). The activity provides opportunities for young people to develop the values, skills and understandings needed to contribute to civic wellbeing. There is no financial reward or payment as a result of involving in community service.

Community service should be an integral part of students' learning experiences and offers meaningful opportunities for students to engage with individuals of their communities on a deeper level and understand the true concept of giving back. As part of the College's mission, the aim is to prepare professionals that are dedicated to the improvement of society. Community involvement incites personal growth, builds camaraderie, encourages civic engagement, and offers insight into the challenges our communities face. Developing a deeper understanding of the workings and infrastructure of our communities is the first step in making a difference.

2. Initiation of Community Service

The community service may be initiated by the student or the College. The service should be provided as part of the College requirement for graduation and may be provided:

- individually or collaboratively
- through one or multiple activities
- over one or more years
- directly or indirectly

Direct: activities involving personal contact with the direct beneficiary such as mentoring students

Indirect: activities that do not involve personal contact with the person being served such as design of technology platforms,

The College shall maintain, update and publish a list of community partners in Addis Ababa with their respective community service areas.

Based on the identified core needs, a community-based project will be designed to address issues, challenges, trends, and opportunities for interventions in outreach programs. While the community engagement directorate plays primarily a facilitating role, the academic units take charge of the designing of projects that engage communities as important members of the project team. This in turn ensures the exchange of knowledge and improves the implementation of projects.

3. RECORDING HOURS

(i) Expectations

Students must keep a record of their service activities and number of hours completed. While the College expects a minimum of 24 hours of community service for graduation, students are encouraged to give community service whenever the need arises.

The College shall provide an online log book for this purpose. The registrar or the research and outreach services director may access the ‘record of service’ page from the student portal website. Students are also required to keep a hard copy of the completed record of service for College audit purposes.

The service record must include:

- student’s name and program enrolled, etc.
- date the service was undertaken
- service activity and organization (if relevant)
- full name, signature and contact number of person validating the activity
- cumulative tally of hours of service completed
- college academic advisor approval

(ii) Record log book

Record of Service				
Student Id:		Student Full name:		
This is the official record of your community service. Each time you participate in a service activity or event, make sure you record it clearly here. The person responsible for the community service programs or your academic advisor may monitor your record keeping. When you have completed 24 hours of service give the journal to the supervisor who will record that you have met the community service requirement of BITS College				
Date	Service Activity Details	No. of hours	Validated by Name	Signature

Approved by : _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(iii) Community Service Exemptions

In rare circumstances a student may be unable to complete the community service requirements. Exemptions will be granted when it can be demonstrated that a student is unable to undertake community service.

Applications for exemption should be made in writing, to the Research and outreach programs office. The process for considering applications for exemptions will be administered by the Academic council. Applications should clearly state the reason for seeking exemption.

The academic council will assess applications for exemption and will make recommendations to the VPAAR. Applicants will be notified in writing when their applications are received, and will be notified of the outcome of their application within four weeks of receiving the application.

Data submitted in support of applications will remain confidential and will not be communicated to parties outside of those involved in the assessment of applications. The application form depicted below can be downloaded from the student portal.

(iv) Community Service Exemption Form



Community Service Exemption Form

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT	
To: Research and Outreach Programs Office BITS College Addis Ababa	
Name: _____ _____	id: _____
Please detail the reason for seeking exemption from the community service requirement. Attach additional sheets or supporting documentation if necessary. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	
Signed: Date:	
.....	
For office use only Received by Research and outreach programs office Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Appendix B : Guide to Thesis Proposal Writing

Guide to Thesis Proposal Writing

1. Introduction

BITS College requires all M.Sc. students to conduct research/thesis or Industry Project as partial fulfillment of the requirement for M.Sc. programme in IT Management.

A research project or thesis will take at least two semesters to complete. Prior to starting a research and after enrolling in a research methods course, students must go through the proposal stage, during which students develop their proposal and have it reviewed by his/her research advisor. This means that students need months of planning and background research work before the start of the first semester research.

For students planning to start their research in the fall semester, the deadline for the proposal submission (to your advisor) is July 15. The proposal should follow the format as described below.

2. Proposal Contents

Once a student chooses a topic for research in any area related to IS and an advisor is assigned, the details of the research proposal should meet the following guidelines.

2.1 General

Number of pages, font and font type

The proposal should not exceed 20 pages with 1.5 spaced lines, of 12 pt. Times New Roman.

Section Heading and Numbering

The proposal can be divided in sections per the preference of the research advisor and the student. Each section should be numbered with a section heading. Section sub-headings should be numbered accordingly.

Table of contents

The proposal should contain the appropriate section headings detailed in a table of content

2.2 Title

Give a title to the research proposal. The title should be concise and clear. From the title, the reader should be able to predict fairly accurately what the research is about.

2.3 Background

Background or introduction section provides a description of the basic facts and importance of the research area - What is your research area? the motivation of research, and how important is it for the industry practice or knowledge advancement?

The background should generally engage readers with broad themes and topics. At one level, the purpose of a background section is to give the reader the relevant facts about the research topic so that readers understand the material that the candidate is writing about and how it links to his/her research question. This section must not, however, simply provide the general context, but must direct the readers' attention to the empirical details through which the research topic and question are made relevant. As such, this writing must not just fill in details of the topic the candidate is researching, but implicitly illustrate the need for and importance of the research.

In summary, the content of the background should

- reach out to a specific audience.
- lay the broad foundation for the problem that leads to the study,
- place the study within the larger context of the scholarly literature, and
- establish a framework for the research, so that readers can understand how it is related to other research
- create reader interest in the topic,

2.4 Problem Statement

Problem statement provides a clear and concise description of the issues that need to be addressed - What is the specific problem in that research area that you will address? (e.g. lack of understanding of a subject, low performance ...)? Knowing the knowledge gap is crucial

The problem statement section gives a context to the problem of the proposed research. It is in this section that the researcher comprehensively reviews the literature pertinent to the problem to show what other people have published on the problem (citing specific authors where appropriate), what gaps of knowledge still exist, and what additional research needs to be done. Therefore, the research problem has to be delineated or identified in this section. It is also in this section that the researcher demonstrates his/her mastery of the theoretical subject matter in the research area.

Effective problem statements answer the question

- Why does this research need to be conducted?
- If a researcher is unable to answer this question clearly and succinctly, then the statement of the problem will come off as ambiguous and diffuse.
- Make sure to state the problem in terms intelligible to someone who is generally sophisticated but who is relatively uninformed in the area of your investigation.

2.5 Significance of the Study

What are the benefits/impact (e.g. better understanding, improved productivity ...) that will be generated if the research problem is answered?

Indicate how your research will refine, revise, or extend existing knowledge in the area under investigation. While thinking about the significance of your study, ask yourself the following questions.

- What will be improved or changed as a result of the proposed research?
- Will results influence programs, methods, and/or interventions?
- Will results contribute to the solution of a problem facing the society?

- Will results influence the decision making process?
- How will results of the study be implemented, and what innovations will come about?

2.6 Research Questions

Determine and evaluate your research question. What aspect of the more general topic you will explore? What are you trying to find out? Are your research questions clear, focused and simple?

Remember that research questions guide your thinking and are of great value in organizing the research project. Since questions development stage is pre-empirical it should not yet focus on methods. Questions are refined gradually to make them specific and answerable

2.7 Research aims and objectives

Objectives provide a list of goals that will be achieved through the proposed research.

“The purpose statement should provide an accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study”. Try to incorporate a sentence that begins with “The purpose of this study is . . .”

Based on your research problem and research questions, use action verbs

Eg. to describe, to assess, to develop, to understand, to come up with, to examine, to identify, to come up with, to explore/discover, etc.

2.8 Methodology

Research methodology defines the research methods and logic steps - What to do and how to solve the problem and achieve proposed objectives? Which research methods (e.g. survey, modeling, case study ...) will be used? Attach a schedule, if necessary.

A thesis proposal should contain a section giving details on the methods, approaches and techniques to be used when conducting the research. The location(s) where the proposed research will be carried out (when applicable) should also be given in this section. If particular instruments are to be used, their details and specifications should be presented.

If the data are to be collected through sampling, then the research design and sampling procedures should be described. If questionnaires will be used, samples of the proposed questionnaires should be presented. If standard methods will be used, then full references to them should be given. In all cases, the data analysis plan should also be included. If any limitations to the proposed methods are known, then these should be pointed out.

Specifically, this section is divided into:

- **Study design:** What approach will you take to answer your research question or hypotheses? and why? The method must be consistent with the stated research question.
- **Sample:** What population have you chosen? and why? Define the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria for your sample. State how you will recruit participants to be in the study and what sampling method you used. You also need to state how the sample size was determined.
- **Instruments:** what instruments are you going to use to gather data? Report the validity and reliability of each instrument.
- **Variables** (for quantitative approach): Define the variables of interest for the study and provide both conceptual and operational definitions. Explain why you believe the tools used to measure variables are valid and reliable. Specify the Independent, dependent, intervening and extraneous variables
- **Evaluation mechanism (for design science)** - discuss how the proposed design will be evaluated.
- **Procedure:** How will you actually conduct the study? Explain exactly what data will be collected, how they will be collected and who will collect them and what framework is used.
- **Data analysis:** there must be consistency between the data obtained and the type of analysis selected for the study. There also should be a consistency between the research questions and the analysis used to answer those questions.
- **Ethical concerns:** discuss what ethical issues need to be considered; for example, how you will protect participants' confidentiality. If you are working on health

related areas, this might need further ethical approval from a recognized ethical review committee,

2.9 Related Works

Provide a summary of previous related research on the research problem and their strength and weakness and a justification of your research - What is known/what have been done by others? And, why your research is still necessary?

The researcher should present a brief review of the most relevant literature - the most relevant studies around the topic of research need to be discussed under this sub-section to show how the topic at hand is similar with other previous works, yet at the same time different because it deals with a unique and unaddressed topic of interest.

2.10 Timetable

In this section, the researcher should give the total time within which the research is expected to be completed, and also a time-table showing the sequence of the research activities.

- Indicate the length of time required to complete the research
- The proposal must produce a reasonable plan of action for the duration of the proposed research and an estimated completion date
- The Plan of action
 - gives a brief outline of the estimated time needed to complete each section of the research.
 - makes you be more certain that you are not proposing to do too much work.

2.11 Budget

Prepare a budget for your research that shows what you anticipate the cost of conducting the research to be. The section should give in detail the source of funds required for the proposed research and the proposed budget. Some of the main budget items for inclusion in the budget calculation are:

- Personnel
- Travel and per diem
- Stationery
- Data Collection
- Data Organization and Analysis
- Final Report Writing

Be honest and reasonable in preparing the budget

2.12 References

All factual material that is not original with you must be accompanied by a reference to its source. Please use ASCE guideline on reference and citation style.

All the literature that has been referred to in the text must appear in the reference list. In citing references, the researcher must follow the guidelines given by **Turabian citation style**.

References should be alphabetized properly; and in case of resources by the same person, the latest publication should appear first and the second latest should follow. When an author has two or more publications in one year, one publication should be identified from the other by attaching letters with the year of publication [(Eg. Creswell, J. (2014a) and Creswell, J. (2014b)].

Identify references in text, tables by using author's name and year of publication in parentheses. Please pay attention to the following five rules when writing your references.

- **Any work not your own should be clearly marked**
- **Any quotations within quotation marks**
- **Every reference in the text should be listed**
- **Every item in the list must have a reference in the text**
- **Every table, figure or photograph must have a reference in the text**

2.13 Appendix

The need for complete documentation generally dictates the inclusion of appropriate appendixes in proposals. The following materials are appropriate for an appendix.

- Questionnaires
- Interview protocols
- Sample of informed consent forms
- Cover letters sent to appropriate stakeholders
- Official letters of permission to conduct research

3. Proposal Evaluation

The student will first submit his/her proposal to the advisor, a week before the scheduled proposal presentation date, both in hard and soft copy. The advisor shall distribute the proposal to the research committee members within two days of receiving the proposal.

The student will be asked to present his/her work to the Committee members according to a schedule the advisor will announce. All members of the committee have an equal opportunity to express their concerns and provide their comments in the evaluation process. Members must exercise their independent judgment having in mind the best interest of students, as well as their background, abilities and qualifications.

During the proposal presentation, the student is encouraged to involve other faculty members from outside the committee, or the program, for additional input and suggestions.

The proposal shall be evaluated based on the “The Checklist for Research Proposal Evaluation” and students' standing shall be described as *satisfactory*, *modifications*, or *unsatisfactory*.

In the event where a student earns a comment of **unsatisfactory**, she/he would be asked to revise the proposal and present it again.

In cases of **modification**, the student should review the evaluation form with the advisor. The student is expected to address the comments and points raised by the committee to obtain final approval and signature of the advisor based on the committee’s decision. During revision of proposals, any future major divergence from the originally presented proposal should be communicated to the research committee for review and approval before the student continues

working on the research. Normally, final approval should be obtained within one week of completing all required revisions.

4. Proposal Defense

Students will be expected to make a brief oral presentation of their research proposal in the presence of three members of the Thesis Proposal Evaluation Committee (TPEC). The Committee shall be composed of:

- Two faculty members who are related/interested in the research work
- Thesis advisor

The thesis advisor shall chair the defense session. The student will present his/her research proposal for 20-40 minutes. The committee will then ask the student questions regarding the study for about 20-40 minutes. After having attended the presentation and examined the written proposal, the committee members should give comments and recommendations accordingly.

The student will then be asked to leave the room so that the committee can discuss the oral presentation and written document. The committee will then discuss the proposal and complete the form for Research Proposal Evaluation. The student should be informed of the result and what the next research steps will be at that point.

A copy of the completed **research proposal evaluation form** should be submitted to the graduate programs coordinator.