PhD RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Proposed Title: [A clear, specific title that states the problem, approach and context]

[Full Name] | [Email]
Proposed Supervisor(s): [Professor Name(s)] | [Department], [University]

[Month Year]

Template guide: delete every green "Guide" box before submitting. Most universities ask for 1,500–3,000 words (about 4–8 pages). Always follow the length and headings your university asks for.

1. ABSTRACT

Guide: *150–250 words. Summarise the problem, why it matters, your research question, methods and expected contribution. Write it last.*

[This research will investigate [problem] in [context]. Despite [what is known], [the gap] remains unaddressed. This study aims to [aim] by [methods]. The expected outcomes include [contributions], which will benefit [who].]

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Guide: *Introduce the field and the context. Explain why the topic is important now. Use 3–6 key references.*

[Introduce the broad area, narrow it down to your specific topic, and explain its importance with facts or data (cite sources, e.g. Author, Year).]

3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Guide: *One or two clear paragraphs: what exactly is the problem, and what happens if it is not solved?*

[State the specific problem your research will address, the evidence that it exists, and its consequences.]

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS / HYPOTHESES

Guide: *2–4 focused, answerable questions. They should drive your methodology.*

- RQ1: [Main research question]
- RQ2: [Supporting question]
- RQ3: [Supporting question]

5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Guide: *One overall aim, then 3–5 measurable objectives that start with action verbs (develop, evaluate, compare, model…).*

Aim: [The overall goal of the research.]

- Objective 1: [e.g. To review / identify …]
- Objective 2: [e.g. To develop / design …]
- Objective 3: [e.g. To evaluate / validate …]

6. LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH GAP

Guide: *Summarise the main existing studies and approaches, compare them, and show clearly what is missing. Your gap is what your research will fill.*

[Previous studies such as [Author (Year)] and [Author (Year)] have examined [what], using [methods]. However, these studies [limitation]. Therefore, there is a need for [your contribution].]

7. METHODOLOGY

Guide: *Explain HOW you will answer each research question. Be practical and specific.*

Research design: [e.g. experimental, computational, qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods]

Data and participants: [What data, from where, how much, how you will collect or access it]

Methods and tools: [Techniques, models, software, equipment or lab facilities]

Analysis and evaluation: [How you will analyse results and measure success]

Ethical considerations: [Consent, data privacy and approvals, if applicable]

8. EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

Guide: *What new knowledge, methods or practical benefits will your research produce? Who benefits (academia, industry, policy, communities)?*

[This research is expected to contribute [theory / method / tool / evidence], and to benefit [stakeholders] by [impact].]

9. WORK PLAN AND TIMELINE

Guide: *Adjust to the length of the PhD (often 3–4 years). Keep it realistic.*

Period	Main activities and milestones
Year 1	[Literature review, refine research questions, training, ethics approval, first data collection]
Year 2	[Main experiments / data collection and analysis; first conference paper]
Year 3	[Further analysis, evaluation; journal publication(s)]
Final months	[Thesis writing, submission and defence]

10. FEASIBILITY AND YOUR PREPARATION

Guide: *Show you can do this research: relevant skills, experience, publications, and access to data or facilities. Link it to the supervisor's expertise.*

[My background in [area], experience with [methods or tools], and previous work on [project or publication] prepare me to carry out this research. Professor [Name]'s expertise in [area] makes [University] an ideal place for it.]

11. REFERENCES

Guide: *Use one consistent style (APA, Harvard or IEEE). Cite only works you referred to. Recent and high-quality sources are best.*

[Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of article. Journal Name, Volume(Issue), pages. https://doi.org/xx.xxxx]

[Author, C. C. (Year). Title of book. Publisher.]

CHECKLIST BEFORE SUBMITTING

- Your research questions, objectives and methodology match each other.
- The topic fits the proposed supervisor's research. Read their recent papers.
- It is within the word limit, with all references formatted consistently.
- Proofread and ask a mentor to review it. The proposal must be your own original work.

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