



## Guidelines for Research Outline Form for prospective Master's & Doctoral students

A research outline is a brief outline of the research project that you have in mind. It is usually between 5 and 25 pages in length

### Plagiarism

[Unisa's Policy for Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism](#) states emphatically that plagiarism is unacceptable.

This means that your work, including your research outline, must be the result of your own skill and labour. Copying from another person's work without giving due acknowledgement by means of references to the author or reproducing/adapting another's work (or parts thereof) without clear acknowledgement and details of the publication concerned is plagiarism.

Your **application for admission to Unisa will be declined** immediately if any of the following is detected:

- You fail to clearly indicate (eg with quotation marks, indenting or through the use of different fonts) **phrases or passages taken verbatim** (word for word) from a published or unpublished text without crediting the original author and text.
- You **paraphrase** an article, book or electronic text without acknowledging the source(s) and the author(s) of the work. This amounts to reproducing a text in different words than the author, changing the word order of the text, or changing the sentence type/style of the author.
- You **use more than a substantial part of the work** of any author, even if you acknowledge the source and the author.
- You use a **patch-writing** (cut-and-paste) method, which means that you take pieces of another person's work (including those from the internet) and blend it with your own words and phrases without acknowledging the author and the source of the work.

Items	Information
<b>1. Proposed title</b> a. <i>Should have less than 40 words</i> b. <i>Should not be ambiguous and should convey the focus of the study</i>	
<b>2. Name</b>	
<b>3. Student number</b>	
<b>4. Proposed qualification</b>	
<b>5. College</b>	
<b>6. Department</b>	
<b>7. Research focus area</b>	
<b>8. Email address</b>	
<b>9. Problem statement</b> a. <i>The problem statement should define the extent of the problem including its distribution, quantity</i> b. <i>What is the current problem or opportunity which indicates the necessity for the research?</i> c. <i>What is the gap in knowledge?</i> d. <i>For PhD add novelty or innovation of the study/concepts from relevant theory or conceptual framework or originality</i>	
<b>10. Significance of the study</b> a. <i>Why it is important to conduct this research?</i> b. <i>Why does this research need to be conducted?</i> c. <i>What are the consequences of not conducting this research?</i>	
<b>11. Aim and objectives</b> a. <i>There should be one general aim starting with the word "To"</i> b. <i>An aim explains should clearly what you want to do research on</i> c. <i>Objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound</i> d. <i>The objectives should be based on and clearly relate to the research problem or title</i>	
e. <i>The identified variables/constructs deduced from relevant theory or conceptual framework</i>	

<p><b>12. Research questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>What are the main questions that flow from your problem statement?</i></li> <li>b. <i>State the unknown in terms of questions or in terms of solutions</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>13. Literature review</b> (this depends on the discipline)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Write reasons for choosing the topic</i></li> <li>b. <i>How is your study aligned to the chosen focus area?</i></li> <li>c. <i>What literature do you intend to review and why?</i></li> <li>d. <i>It should substantiate the identified gap of the study</i></li> <li>e. <i>It should be informed by the research: problem/questions/objectives/hypothesis methods/models employed by other researchers under similar circumstances may be covered</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>14. Research design or Research or methodology or Theoretical framework or Materials and methods or Procedures including the study area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Methodologies are discipline specific – ensure you use a relevant methodology</i></li> <li>b. <i>Describe the methods that will be used to achieve the research objectives</i></li> <li>c. <i>How will the study be conducted?</i></li> <li>d. <i>How will the data be analysed?</i></li> <li>e. <i>Include the time frame of all research planned activities</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>15. References or Bibliography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <i>Research is built on existing knowledge. It implies that all research must have references.</i></li> <li>b. <i>Use only one of the prescribed referencing styles (for example APA, Harvard, Mendeley Oxford, IEEE, MLA)</i></li> <li>c. <i>Use original sources from accredited publications (reviewed journal, reviewed book etc.)</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Proposed Budget for the project and how the study will be funded</b></p>	