

# How to Write a Successful Doctoral Research Proposal: The Makerere Format

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## 1.0 Introduction

Writing and submitting an acceptable research proposal is not a simple task, and can be an exasperating experience even for the most accomplished researcher. For the novices in research (many doctoral students are), producing a proposal can be a very frustrating and academically challenging exercise. In the College of Education and External Studies (CEES) at Makerere University for instance, the author is aware of some doctoral students who have spent over 10 years on their PhD programmes without submitting any acceptable dissertation or thesis proposal. Such students, of course, are not permitted to commence writing their doctoral dissertations or theses until they have written and submitted their research proposals. Most often, stories are abound on campus why such students delay to produce their proposals. Many claim that “so and so was delayed for several months or even years by a malicious supervisor or administrator, or such and such a student had to change the supervisor because the supervisor had started to demand for sex or money, or ...”. The stories are usually endless! However, amidst these accusations and counter-accusations (because the supervisors also accuse the students of several vices), there are still a few students who write and submit their dissertation or thesis proposals within the recommended time (for example, the author took five months to write and submit his proposal for review in the same University). In fact, there are even a few cases, where some students produce their proposals and final dissertations well before the stipulated time. This raises concern and makes us ask: (i) how do those students who successfully write their proposals make it? (ii) What do they write that others do not? (iii) What is a research proposal, and how important is it in a study? And (iv), what are the key elements of a research proposal and what does the Makerere University’s guidelines say about proposal writing? In this paper, the writer attempts to address some of these issues basing on his experience as a former doctoral student (now staff) of Makerere University. But first, what is a research proposal, and how important is it?

## 1.1 What is a Research Proposal?

Literally, the word ‘proposal’ means a suggestion put forward by someone for consideration or discussion by others - like in the case when someone makes a marriage proposal to you. Applied loosely to research, a proposal is a suggestion or plan by someone (the researcher) indicating a researchable problem and how s/he intends to resolve it. However, technically, a research proposal is a written presentation of an intended research specifying the problem, purpose, scope/objectives, methodology, references and the budget of the study (Amin, 2003; Makerere University, 2011). It is an overview of the intended research describing the proposed project: its design, financial requirements and its potential contribution to the existing body of knowledge (Oso & Onen, 2009). As such, a well-prepared proposal should act as an efficient and effective guide to the researcher while conducting his/her study.

# Guideline For Makerere University Proposal Writing

**Léo Pomar**



## **Guideline For Makerere University Proposal Writing:**

## **Guideline For Makerere University Proposal Writing** Book Review: Unveiling the Magic of Language

In a digital era where connections and knowledge reign supreme, the enchanting power of language has been apparent than ever. Its ability to stir emotions, provoke thought, and instigate transformation is really remarkable. This extraordinary book, aptly titled "**Guideline For Makerere University Proposal Writing**," written by a highly acclaimed author, immerses readers in a captivating exploration of the significance of language and its profound effect on our existence. Throughout this critique, we will delve to the book's central themes, evaluate its unique writing style, and assess its overall influence on its readership.

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