



Office of Vice-president for Research Affairs

Haramaya University Guidelines for Preparing

Research Proposal, Research Report, Manuscript, and Policy Brief

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Contents

Preface.....	4
Formatting.....	5
Font.....	5
Margins.....	5
Page Numbering and Set-up.....	5
Tables and Figures.....	5
Other Style and Formatting Issues.....	5
Referencing and in-text Citation.....	6
Preparation of a Research Proposal.....	7
Cover Page.....	7
Abbreviations and Acronyms (if any).....	7
List of Tables.....	8
List of Figures.....	8
Executive Summary/Abstract.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Literature Review.....	9
Methodology/Materials and Methods.....	9
Work Plan.....	9
Budget breakdown.....	10
References.....	10
Preparation of Research Progress Report.....	11
Preparation of Ongoing Report.....	12
Preparation of Terminal Report.....	13
Preparation of Final Report.....	14
Preparation of a Manuscript.....	15
Preparation of Policy Brief.....	16

Preface

Over the past decades, Haramaya University has been expanding. New colleges, departments, schools, programs, research institutes and centers are emerging. These academic units are required to undertake research in their respective areas. Cognizant of this, the university has organized its research activities in thematic areas. Besides, the university has increased its national and international research collaborations. The volume of research being carried out in the university is also increasing. Therefore, it is imperative to have a uniform system of research activities. This will create a comprehensive platform for managing and sharing knowledge and experiences. Thus, this document provides a framework for preparing research proposals, reports, manuscripts and policy briefs so that researchers follow uniform styles.

Formatting

Spacing should be with 1.5 spacing in all of the communications.

Font

- Use New Times Roman font
- First level headings: title case, bold and 14 font size
- Second level headings: title case, bold and 12 font size
- Third and fourth headings: sentence case, not bold and 12 font size.
- The main text: 12 point font size and justified

Margins

A margin of 2.5 cm on the left, right, top and bottom of the page is required.

Page Numbering and Set-up

The page number is not assigned for cover page. Small Roman numerals are assigned as page number for Table of Contents, Acronyms and Abbreviations List of Tables and List of Figures and Executive Summary. Arabic numerals are used from the first page of the Introduction to the last page of the Appendix. Page numbers are centered at the bottom of the page.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures should be single line spaced. Borders are required above and below the column headings and below the last row of the table. Tables and figures should be logically placed in the narrative of the document and should be as close as possible to the narration where those tables and figures are first cited. Graphs such as bar graphs and line graphs should be prepared in black and white color using different textures for contrast.

Other Style and Formatting Issues

- Where required, scientific names should be *italicized* starting the genus name with a capital letter. The specific epithet should be in a small letter. Similarly, non-English words should be italicized.
- Either American or British English shall be used consistently.
 - All measurements should be given in Standard International (S.I.) units.
 - Contractions such as *shouldn't*, *can't* and *won't* should not be used.
 - The ampersand (“&”) should not appear as a form of contraction in the main text.

Referencing and in-text Citation

All referencing and in-text citation should follow APA style consistently. Ethiopian authors' names should be presented in full as they appear in the publication.

Preparation of a Research Proposal

All researchers in the university are required to submit a carefully planned and well articulated research proposal.

Elements of a research proposal

A research proposal should have the following elements though there are some variations across research disciplines. Each of the elements should start on a new page and be written in capital.

Cover Page

The cover page should contain:

- Name of the University,
- Title of the research proposal (it should be clear, informative, specific, concise and easily understandable),
- Name of the concerned research theme and sub-theme, and
- Details of the researcher(s) (names, academic qualifications, statuses in the proposed research (principal investigator, co-investigator etc.), affiliations (college, schools/department and program), and addresses (email, phone numbers, P.O.Box etc.)).

Abbreviations and Acronyms (if any)

All abbreviations and acronyms must be listed in alphabetical order and be followed by full description of their contents. In the narrative, each abbreviation and acronym should be defined in full when they are first used. Standard Scientific International (SI) units do not need to be listed.

Table of Contents

All of the headings and entries in the table of contents should correspond exactly in wording, font and case with their headings or entries that appear in the text of a particular document. Researchers should not use “title” and “page” at the top of the page in the table

of contents. Also, there should be no dotted lines (or other forms of tab leaders) connecting headings and respective pages. Subdivisions of headings should not exceed four levels.

List of Tables

Where tables are used in the proposal, they should be displayed indicating the page numbers on which they are found in the proposal.

List of Figures

Where figures are used in the proposal, they should be displayed indicating the page numbers on which they are found in the proposal.

Executive Summary/Abstract

Executive summary/Abstract is a quick way for readers or evaluators to understand the research project without reading the proposal in its entirety. It offers a succinct, but clear presentation of a proposal's organization, emphasis, and content. It is usually a one paragraph summary of the research proposal (not exceeding 350 words) and presented in a single block paragraph. It is written in single line spacing without subtitles or divisions. An ideal executive summary/abstract provides relevant information on the background, the questions to be addressed, significance, objectives, materials and methods, the expected output and the potential beneficiaries of the proposed research.

Introduction

This section contains the background information of the research, statement of the problem, significance of the research, and research objectives. The maximum pages for introduction should be four.

Background: The background focuses on the overall issue, problem, or question that the research addresses. An ideal background provides readers sufficient context and background regarding the issue of the research.

Statement of the problem: Statement of the problem includes the nature, symptoms, and extent of the problem and variables influencing the problem. It is a place where the researcher indicates research question and formulates hypotheses that lead to a clear set of research objectives.

Research objectives

This is a place where researchers specify the goals of their research, outline research questions to be answered and/or formulate research hypotheses to be tested.

Significance of the study

This is a place where researchers offer brief and realistic explanations regarding the outcome of the research, the role of the research in overcoming the existing problem and generating new knowledge or information.

Literature Review

The literature review is a summary of critical analysis of relevant body of literature on the research topic. The literature review might systematically lead to development of conceptual/research framework for the proposed research. This section should not exceed eight pages.

Methodology/Materials and Methods

The methodology/materials and methods section is a place where researchers describe the processes, approaches, methods and steps and procedures of their research. A research should be based on appropriate sampling methods, study design, measures and analytical procedures/processes.

Expected output

This is a place where researchers show the knowledge, technology and information to be produced from their research project/activity.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are critical to the completion of any research. Researchers must consider the ethical issues in their specific areas of research. As deemed necessary, ethical clearance must be obtained from authorized body.

Work Plan

Work plan should clearly display the major research activities and their corresponding time frames in a table.

Budget breakdown

The budget breakdown section should clearly indicate required expenses for personnel, transportation, equipment, supplies and materials, laboratory analysis and any associated services in a table format. The budget should be prepared following the government's financial rules, regulations and provisions.

References

The References section is a place where researchers list the works they have cited in text of their research report or manuscript. All references appearing in the References section must only be the ones cited in the narrative following the *American Psychological Association (APA)* style.

Appendices (if necessary)

Appendices (if any) should appear as the last chapter of the proposal. Among others, appendices may include drafts of questionnaires in English and other languages, participant consent forms, observation checklists, pictures and specifications of equipment or measurement tools to be used in the research, mathematical formulae or derivations, a detailed description of the procedures followed during the sample selection and dummy tables.

Preparation of Research Progress Report

Progress report is submitted in a quarterly base. The purpose of progress report is to evaluate the progress of a research project in terms of the time set and budget allocated and to gather relevant information that helps improve the executing of research activities. A progress report should be submitted in a maximum of three pages.

Progress report contains the following elements:

1. Cover page (refer to the guidelines for research proposal for details)
2. Introduction (including objectives and methods in brief)
3. Progress summary (description of accomplished activities and preliminary results)
4. Challenges (describe any concerns encountered and solutions sought)
5. Declaration (declare that you own the report)

Preparation of Ongoing Report

An ongoing research report is submitted on a yearly basis. The purpose of ongoing report is to evaluate the research progress, assess outcomes and decide on the fate (continuation, suspension, or termination) of the research. An ongoing report should be a maximum of 10 pages.

An ongoing research report includes the following elements:

1. Cover page (refer to the guidelines for research proposal for details)
2. Summary/abstract
3. Introduction (brief description of the research problem including duration of the research and activities completed)
4. Methodology/Materials and methods
5. Results and discussion (brief presentation of results of the ongoing research)
6. Remaining research activities
7. Challenges encountered and measures taken
8. References

Preparation of Terminal Report

A terminal research report is submitted when the investigator(s) leave the university or terminate his/her engagement for different reasons before completing the research. A terminal report should be a maximum of 10 pages.

A terminal research report includes the following elements:

1. Cover page (refer to the guidelines for research proposal for details)
2. Planned duration of the project
3. Reasons for termination
4. Financial utilization summary (allocated versus utilized)
5. Person (s) overtaking the remaining responsibilities (with justifications)
6. Summary/abstract
7. Introduction (brief description of the research problem including duration of the research)
8. Methodology/Materials and methods
9. Results and discussion (comprehensive presentation of results up to the date of termination)
10. Description of remaining research activities
11. Challenges encountered and measures taken
12. References

Preparation of Final Report

Final Report is submitted at the end of the project period. The purpose of final report is to synthesize the research output and communicate to the concerned bodies. A final report should be a maximum of 40 pages.

A final research report includes the following elements:

1. Cover page (refer to the guidelines for research proposal for details)
2. Summary/abstract
3. Introduction
4. Methodology/Materials and methods
5. Results (detailed presentation of findings)
6. Discussion (detailed interpretation and explanation)(may be combined with the result as deemed necessary)
7. Strengths and limitations(reflections)
8. Conclusions and recommendations(implications)
9. References
10. Appendices (study tools, instruments, and models, etc.)

Preparation of a Manuscript

Manuscript is a carefully prepared document from the main research work that offers a detailed description and explanation of a research activity or part of a research project which is ready for publication. A manuscript should be completed in 15-25 pages. A manuscript should include the following key elements:

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Methodology/Materials and methods
5. Results (including tables and figures; tables and figures should be properly described following standard and cited in the text)
6. Discussion (may be combined with the results)
7. Conclusion and recommendations (implications)
8. Acknowledgements
9. References

Preparation of Policy Brief

Policy brief is a material that synthesizes a large and complex research details for policy makers or decision makers to gain brief and succinct information regarding the purpose and outcome of a research endeavor. A policy brief should be completed in 2-4 pages. An ideal document for policy brief may have the following elements:

1. Title
2. Key message (a core message the researcher wants to pass in the policy brief and should be written in 45 words)
3. Introduction (should not exceed half a page)
4. Approaches and results (should cover the substantial portion of the policy brief, where necessary pictures and graphs can be used, should be catchy)
5. Policy recommendations (policy directives, required intervention, and measures)
6. Acknowledgements (if necessary)
7. References and footnotes (if necessary)