First draft of research proposal (1200-1500 words, excluding references)

With the (first draft) of your research proposal you task is to answer the following questions 1) What is phenomenon you are studying, 2) What is the motivation to study this phenomenon, 3) What are the research questions, 4) What is the scholarly discussion you are engaging with and 5) How are you going to do it (method), and 6) What is the timetable for your research project?

MAKE SURE THAT THE TITLE, OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION(S) ARE IN LINE.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ONE COHERENT STORY INSTEAD OF COLLECTION OF LOOSELY RELATED FRAGMENTS

Name & student number:
Major:
Supervisor (agreed/suggestion/no idea):
Word count

TITLE OF YOUR STUDY (MAKE IT INTERESTING!)

What is a phenomenon you are studying?
Articulate clearly what is the phenomenon you intend to study. Describe what we know about the phenomenon.

What is motivation to study this phenomenon?
Articulate clearly why the study is important and interesting to you, to practice and academically. Focus especially on articulating the academic relevance of the study by positioning your study within particular academic discussion(s). This is really important. If you do not have a scholarly discussion to converse with you will have no thesis. You can start by identifying a particular conversation in the field (strategy, institutional theory, etc.). Within this broader field you can identify the specific area you will focus on (strategy – strategy as practice; institutional theory – institutional work). Finally your goal is to identify what is not yet known within this specific field. The final step demands substantial reading and is a hard task at this stage but give it a try.

Articulate your research objective (RO). Research objectives are the results south by the student at the end of the study, i.e., what the student will be able to achieve at the end. RO is clear statement, which provides direction to investigate variables.

Example of action verbs to formulate research objectives: To assess, to identify, to figure out, to determine, to compare, to verify, to establish.
What are the research questions? Formulate the exact research questions your study intends to answer. Focus on making the questions as specific as possible, and formulate them in an academic language (i.e. avoid consultant jargon such as “solving problem X for company Y”). You may have a general question that is then divided into several sub-questions.

- How and why?
- Make sure that the literature you refer to is relevant to your research questions.
- Make sure that you use terminology provided by the literature(s)

What is scholarly discussion you are engaging with?

This is where you provide more detail about what others have done in the area, and what you propose to do. Give a brief description about prior research in your chosen area(s) that you consider relevant for your study. Consider especially research that is relevant for your chosen research questions. The literature should be up to date; try to report on the current understanding in the field. If you choose to only report on older studies, chances are you are missing something important. Acknowledge the work of others through referencing. Remember to include a complete list of citations at the end of your plan in academic format.

Method. How you are going to do it?

Report on the methods that you intend to use to conduct your fieldwork (i.e. case studies, ethnography, quantitative method, mixed methods etc.). Justify the chosen method; how is it the best for answering your research questions? In case you do not know which methods you will use, discuss the pros and cons of the ones you consider most relevant.

What is the timetable of the study?

Present a REALISTIC plan of how you will execute your thesis research: literature review, collection of data, analysis of data and write-up process in general. Establish clear checkpoints and deadlines so that your supervisor will get a realistic picture of how you plan to work on your thesis.

Other information

Report here on other relevant details regarding your study that your supervisor should be aware of.

List of references