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## **THESIS PROPOSAL**

The proposal should describe what you propose to do for your research study. It should include: (a) your name; (b) date submitted; (c) a tentative title; (d) the problem; (e) the purpose of your project/study; (f) operational definitions; (g) related research; (h) assumptions; (i) hypothesis(es), question(s), or focus of your project; (j) procedures; (k) subjects or persons for whom the project will be developed; (l) research steps; (m) data analysis; (n) limitations; and (o) other information you consider relevant to your thesis or project. It should also include an approval cover page and human subjects form. In preparing your research proposal you should follow the appropriate format and directions described below.

### **FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A THESIS**

Revised and adapted from Practical Guide to Research Methods by Lang and Heiss.

The proposal should include the following information:

1. **COVER APPROVAL PAGE**  
Complete the information and obtain signatures.
2. **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL REQUEST**  
Include your application for IRB review. For the current protocol and forms, contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (667-3493).
3. **TITLE**  
State the tentative title of your proposal.
4. **PROBLEM**  
Discuss the importance or significance of the problem selected. Show how your project or thesis is related to broader problems in the area.
5. **PURPOSE**  
State the purpose of your study.
6. **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**  
Clearly define the key variables, concepts, and terms which have a special meaning in your proposed study.

7. **RELATED RESEARCH**

Present a critical review of the related research, not just a summary of the findings. Show the relation of the reviewed material to your problem, hypotheses, questions, assumptions, and procedures. Note: For the proposal, the review of literature should be an abbreviated one. The complete review is needed for the actual project/thesis.

8. **ASSUMPTIONS**

List the assumptions (generalizations taken for granted) underlying various phases of your study.

9. **HYPOTHESIS(ES), QUESTION(S), OR FOCUS**

Clearly state the hypothesis(es) and/or question(s) to be investigated. Make sure that your hypotheses are stated in research format (either directional or non-directional) and in a manner that can be empirically tested. State the focus of your thesis.

10. **METHOD**

State clearly and fully the methods to be used to gather data, test hypotheses, develop a model, and/or to answer questions.

- a. Participants: Indicate nature, sources, characteristics, and size of sample to be used. The sample may comprise children, adults, animals, primary and secondary material, courses of study, TV programs, etc.

Describe your sample in terms of factors such as age, sex, socio-economic status, ethnic group, or any other variable of potential significance.

- b. Procedures: Indicate techniques to be used, e.g., experimentation, questionnaire survey, interview survey, drawings, observations, analysis of published evidence, examination of documents via internal and external criticism, etc. Techniques not commonly used should be described in detail giving information concerning validity and reliability. Techniques to be devised by the investigator should be pretested and examined for utility before suggesting them as methods of measurement.
- c. Research Steps: List all research steps in the order in which they are to be carried out.
- d. Data Analysis: State appropriate methods of analyzing your data, e.g., specify the statistical methods to be used for testing each hypothesis or to answer each question. Indicate the criterion of significance. Common statistical procedures like product-moment correlation, analysis of variance, t, F, or Chi Square tests need not be elaborated further. For non-statistical research, indicate qualitative methods of analyzing your data.

11. **CONCLUSIONS, GENERALIZATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS**

- a. Conclusions: State probable findings or conclusions.
- b. Generalizations: Indicate the extent to which your findings may apply beyond your situation.
- c. Implications: What lessons might be learned from your study?
- d. Limitations: What deficiencies does your study have? How serious are they?
- e. Suggestions for further research: Indicate avenues for further research.

12. **REFERENCES OR BIBLIOGRAPHY** - Follow *APA Publication Manual* (5th Ed.) format.

## Proposal for a Masters Thesis or Project

Attached is a proposal that I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(student)

submit for approval for partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters degree in Education with an emphasis in School Counseling.

Thesis or Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check appropriate choice:

\_\_\_\_\_ Creative Project  
\_\_\_\_\_ Thesis

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chairperson Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Date

**Note:** The committee chair and at least one other voting member must be from the Advanced Studies in Education Department. The third voting member may be from outside the Advanced Studies Department, but all voting members must be full-time members of the University faculty. A committee is considered complete when there is a chair and two voting members.

## CREATIVE PROJECT

The California State University Education Code has adopted the following definition:

"A project is a significant undertaking appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It evidences originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. It is described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation." (California State University Code [Title V, Section 40510] p. 473)

The creative project involves producing a creative activity and a written report. The creative project involves synthesizing and integrating knowledge and theory gained in the school counseling program and then demonstrating such through various media.

The creative project is written in the same manner as a thesis and includes (a) pre-text information (i.e., title page; approval page; copyright page; table of contents; list of tables and/or figures, if used; abstract); (b) text (i.e., four chapters); and (c) post-text (list of references and appendices, including the project itself if it is a written document). Following are brief descriptions for each of these items. For complete guidelines, see CSU Stanislaus Thesis/Project Information at [www.csustan.edu/Graduate\\_School/Thesis-Proj-Information/Index.html](http://www.csustan.edu/Graduate_School/Thesis-Proj-Information/Index.html)

TITLE PAGE:	AN EXPLANATORY TITLE THAT IS STATED CONCISELY • include author's name, date and CSU, Stanislaus
APPROVAL PAGE:	CERTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF PROJECT • include title, author name, and signature of committee members
OPTIONAL PAGES:	INCLUDE COPYRIGHT, DEDICATION, PREFACE, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
TABLE OF CONTENTS:	LIST TITLES AND SUBTITLES • include first page numbers only
LIST OF TABLES:	LIST TABLE NUMBER, TITLE, AND PAGE NUMBERS • include first page numbers only
LIST OF FIGURES:	LIST FIGURE NUMBER, TITLE, AND PAGE NUMBERS • include first page numbers only
ABSTRACT:	150 WORD SUMMARY OF STUDY • include the purpose, sample and findings • write specific findings in past tense

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

- introduce topic
- state the purpose of the project
- state the theoretical bases underlying the study
- describe the scope and setting of the study
- define variables operationally
- describe the significance of the project

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- describe previous research and information on topic
- integrate the research; do not merely list
- discuss relevant research, theories and approaches that support the need for the project

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

- describe the participants or intended participants
- describe the materials used or developed (tapes, interviews, questionnaires, books, etc.)
- describe the reliability and validity of published instruments
- describe the activities you used
- describe the procedural steps

CHAPTER IV: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

- write a summary and brief overview of the project
- list your conclusions: What were the results, if any? Who benefits from the study? What would you do differently next time?
- state the implications of the project: what was or will be accomplished as a result of it?
- list any limitations
- write recommendations for further development of this project, future research

REFERENCES: LIST OF ALL SOURCES CITED IN TEXT

APPENDICES: ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- include questionnaires, interview materials, bibliographies, etc.
  - Include the written part of the project (handbook, grant proposal, etc.)

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The following information is taken from the *Master's Degree Program Guidelines for Thesis or Project* developed by CSU, Stanislaus Office of Graduate Studies.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Creative projects should be based on a compilation of comparative analysis of the works done by others. Although such material provides the project with substance, you must show evidence of originality and critical thinking, and also demonstrate scholarly and/or creative ability.

The type of creative project you develop is limited only by your creativity, capability, and budget. The graduate advisory committee is most concerned with the manner in which the material is researched, organized, developed, and presented. The content guidelines are more flexible for a project than for a thesis. Often, as in cases where the project is a manual or handbook, the project itself is placed in the Appendix, while sections in the main body of the text are tailored to introduce, justify, and validate the creative effort.

While requirements for specific creative projects will vary, there are certain elements common to each project. Because the format of the creative project is similar to the format for a thesis, you will need to check the information described in the university guidelines for theses and projects at, available at:

[www.csustan.edu/Graduate\\_School/Thesis-Proj-Information/Index.html](http://www.csustan.edu/Graduate_School/Thesis-Proj-Information/Index.html)

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE CREATIVE PROJECT**

Because of the uniqueness of projects, the introductory sections and the main body will vary in number. The following information should be adapted as necessary. As a general rule, however, creative projects will contain at least some descriptive sections similar to those listed below.

### **PRE-TEXT PAGES**

Pre-text pages usually include a title page, approval page, copyright page, acknowledgment page, table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, list of symbols, and abstract. Each of these follow the same format as used in a thesis, substituting the words “creative project” for “thesis.”

### **BODY OF TEXT**

The text in a creative project is divided into chapters in a manner similar to a thesis. It may include the following chapters: Introduction; Review of Related Literature; Methodology; Results; Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations. Note that the subtitles are different from those of a thesis, but follow the format described in the university guidelines.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

The primary function of this initial section is to provide a comprehensive overview of the creative project. You may or may not need all of the subsections described here.

**Purpose of the Project:** A statement of the purpose of the project explains why the project was attempted. In this section you should explain why the project is important to undertake.

**Scope (Description) of the Project:** Define what the project is in terms of content and format. Include specific information regarding the subject matter, the intended audience, how the project is to be used, and the results or effects expected.

**Significance of the Project:** Explain the importance of the project in the field of study. Discuss the new dimensions or concepts that have been presented. Emphasize the importance of the project in its use of techniques and specify the intended effects. If the project is designed to be informational, persuasive, or instructional, specify the effects in terms of behavioral objectives.

**Limitations of the Project:** If applicable, present and discuss the content or method's limitations with regard to resources, time, and other factors.

**Definition of Terms:** Define any special terms and establish standard abbreviations which will be used throughout the text.

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter constitutes the major research effort of the project. It provides the source material for the creative project and places the present project in context of existing information in the field. You should review and cite related studies and discuss their strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the purpose of the project. Discuss the techniques or theories examined and their respective implications for the present project. Summarize the review with a synthesis of the literature identifying various approaches and themes. This section ultimately justifies the need for the project.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes in depth each aspect of the creative project. It should be significantly detailed and should describe the format and techniques used. Techniques, questionnaires, interviews, study sites, artistic materials, and performing art elements used to accomplish the creative project should be described here.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

There may or may not be a results section, depending on the type of project. If there are findings to report, they should be synthesized for inclusion in this section. If the result is a performance or artistic creation, it should be described. Evaluation of the project is also included in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Summary:** Present an overview of the previous sections and how the final project addresses issues which have been raised. Reacquaint the reader with the conceptual framework and the design of the study. Basically, this section summarizes the entire project effort.

**Conclusions:** Conclusions presented should validate the need for the project and explain how the present study responded to that need.

**Recommendations:** Include comments regarding potential improvements or further development regarding the content, technique, and process of the creative project.

### **POST-TEXT**

Post-text pages usually include references and appendices. In addition, oversized materials and photographs also may be placed in the post-text section.

### **REFERENCES**

You must cite references in accordance with the *APA Publication Manual* (5th Ed.). Include every source cited in the study and material which has been adapted for use in tables and figures. (The reference list cites works that specifically support the thesis; a bibliography cites works for background or for further reading.)

References cited in the text must appear in the reference list; conversely, each entry in the reference list must be cited in the text.

### **APPENDICES**

As a general rule, a written project itself is placed in the appendix. This will allow more freedom in the format of the work. In addition, material too detailed for inclusion in the body of the text, or material which cannot be effectively presented due to its length or size, may be included in the appendices.

**BINDING**

All projects must be bound, according to university guidelines. Have at least four copies made and bound. One copy of your thesis will be kept in the School Counseling Program Coordinator's office and two copies will be cataloged in the California State University, Stanislaus library. You also may want to make additional personal copies and, if reasonable and desired, provide a copy to each committee member.

## **CREATIVE PROJECT PROPOSAL**

The proposal should include: (a) cover approval page, (b) human subjects form, (c) title, (d) description, (e) rationale, (f) background, (g) operational definitions, (h) goals and objectives, (i) methods and procedures, and (j) evaluation.

### **FORMAT OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A CREATIVE PROJECT**

The creative project involves producing/implementing a creative activity and completing a written report. Following are brief descriptions of items that must be included in the written report.

1. **COVER APPROVAL PAGE**  
Complete the information and obtain signatures.
2. **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW APPLICATION**  
Attach your completed IRB application. For the current protocol and forms, contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (667-3493).
3. **TITLE**  
State your title in concise form.
4. **DESCRIPTION:**  
Describe that which you plan to do.
5. **RATIONALE:**  
State the reasons why what you plan to do is important and how it relates to the counseling profession (i.e., significance).
6. **BACKGROUND:**  
Describe theory, research, and information relevant to your creative activity. (Review the literature in your area of interest.) Note: For the proposal, the review of literature should be an abbreviated one. The complete review is needed for the actual project.
7. **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:**  
Clearly define key variable, concepts, and terms that have special meaning in your project.
8. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:**  
State your desired outcome and effect.

9. **METHODS AND PROCEDURES:**

Describe the methods, materials, and steps you will employ to complete your project.

- a. Sample: Indicate who will be involved in the creative activity. The sample may include children, adults, programs, courses of study, etc. Indicate age, sex, socioeconomic status and/or other variables of significance.
- b. Activities: Describe what you and participants will do. For example, attend workshop, make a presentation, test students, create videotapes and the like.
- c. Step-by-Step Development: List the steps necessary to complete this project.

10. **EVALUATION:**

List any limitations in your project. Also, describe the system of evaluation which you will use to assess the worth/value of your project.

11. **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Discuss the implications of creating the project. Also state what you hope will be achieved as a result of your project.

12. **REFERENCES OR BIBLIOGRAPHY** - Follow *APA Publication Manual* (5th Ed.) format.

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(student)

submit for approval for partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Masters degree in Education with an emphasis in School Counseling.

Thesis or Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Check appropriate choice:

\_\_\_\_\_ Creative Project  
\_\_\_\_\_ Thesis

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chairperson Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member Date

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