Adama Hospital Medical College

Research and Publication Office



Thesis Proposal Guideline for Graduate Program

August 2015

Adama, Ethiopia

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the guideline

This guideline aims to provide vital information regarding the regulations and practical aspects of thesis proposal in Adama Hospital Medical College. The information is based on the Legislation of the Adama Hospital Medical College. This document contains information that will be useful for students and academic staff involved in advising activities. Members of the Department Council and Program Coordinators involved in organizing the public defense of theses will also find useful information. In addition, this handbook, will also attempt to provide the answers needed regarding the rights and duties of both students and advisors. Finally, this handbook provides essential information to facilitate and promote a good working relationship between the students and supervisors. The DPH will strive to update this handbook periodically to accommodate emerging provisions of the college. The students are expected to write a thesis and submit to the department. The students should also demonstrate the ability to communicate their work to the scientific community. The format for presentation, the thesis layout, pagination and word format should follow as per this guidance. Therefore every student of Public health department attending graduate program is expected to submit his/her thesis proposal based on the directions of this guideline

1.2. Research requirements for graduation

Students must satisfy all the graduation requirements stipulated in the Adama Hospital Medical College's Legislation to be eligible for graduation. After completing coursework, the students will be immediately involved in a research work. At the end of the first year, students are required to develop and obtain approval for their research protocols by the AHMC Institutional Review Board (IRB). Satisfaction of the requirements for the MPH entails proposal development, data collection, preparation of a thesis and a successful public defense of the thesis in the presence of the Board of Examiners (BoE) comprising of external and internal examiners and a chair person. This shall be done in accordance with AHMC regulations. Finally the students must score the minimum grade for over all thesis work that is B.

1.3. Duties and Responsibilities

Various types of staff are involved in the whole process of research works. The duties and responsibilities of these staff are briefly described as follows.

1.3.1. Responsibilities of advisors

Advisors are selected by the student and assigned by the respective Departments Council to take academic responsibility to guide students throughout the training period. Each student is expected to have a major advisor and co advisors. The primary supervisor, who is the main academic supervisor, is the contact person between the student and the Department. The primary supervisor is a full time staff member, while the co-supervisors can be employed within or outside of the college. The overall responsibility of supervisors is to assist the student to complete his/her research successfully within an agreed time frame. The supervising intervention mainly includes assisting the candidate in developing and executing a research proposal, obtaining ethical approval, monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the thesis, preparing the candidate for defense and encouraging publication. Generally, the responsibilities of the primary supervisor are also shared with the other co-supervisor(s).

1.3.2. Responsibilities of Student

The student is generally responsible for planning and executing the thesis research, identifying any problem related to his/her training, and meeting administrative and ethical requirements. He/She is also required to submit progressive feedback to his/her supervisors, address comments given by his/her advisors and complete the thesis within the stipulated time. A thesis that is not approved by the major advisor or his/her delegate will not be submitted and accepted. If the major advisor is outside the country, the co advisor may sign on the thesis. It is the responsibility of the candidate to make sure that the thesis is signed by his/her advisors on time. Failure to do so will lead to postponement of the thesis defense. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the student to identify list of three advisors from the college or outside of the college for approval or endorsement by the Department Graduate Council. In general, the student is responsible to:

1. Be familiar and comply with the relevant regulations and guidelines and the general regulations of the college;

2. Plan and carry out the research project under the guidance of supervisors, within the expected time period;
3. Devote sufficient time to the course of study, be committed to the research and avoid activities which will interfere with its satisfactory completion within the time limit;
4. Discuss with the major advisor about the type of guidance and comments found most helpful and agree to a schedule of formal meetings to review progress;
5. Contribute to a constructive and effective working relationship with the major advisor and other members of the supervisory team;
6. Maintain the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the major advisor, including the presentation of any required written material in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
7. Provide regular written progress reports to the major advisor as required and responding to the major advisor's comments on progress;
8. Participate as fully as is possible and appropriate in the research activities of the Department and the general activities of the college;
9. Take the initiative in raising with supervisors any problems or difficulties with the project or its supervision. If the student is unable to discuss the matter with the supervisor/s, he/she should contact the Department Head or Graduate Program Coordinator;
10. Ensure the proposal and the thesis are submitted within the timeline;
11. Take responsibility for the content, style, presentation, and production and binding of the thesis that is finally submitted, and for promptly making any required amendments after examination;
12. Keep the major advisor informed of any changes in personal circumstances which might affect the progress of their study as planned;
13. Participate in the Department community by attending seminars, presenting their work and interacting with the staff and other postgraduate students;
14. Read and complying with the information contained in this guideline;
15. Look for funding sources and training opportunities in their area of concentration.
16. Identify and submit the list of three advisors to the Graduate Program Office before the due date.

2. Thesis Proposal Format

2.1. Part one. General information and formatting requirements:

2.1.1. First Title Page

1. Full title of the Thesis Proposal
2. Logo of AHMC
3. Name of PI with qualification
4. A Thesis/research Proposal submitted to Adama Hospital Medical College Department of Public Health in partial fulfillment of the requirements for _____
5. Date , Year
6. Adama, Ethiopia
7. All text in the title page is centered, all words in capital letters, 16 font size for Thesis title; 14 font for others
8. Title is better to be clear and as short as possible

2.1.2. Second Title Page

1. Name of Institution and Department
2. Full title of the Thesis Proposal
3. Name of PI with qualification
4. Name of Advisors with qualification
5. Date , Year
6. Adama, Ethiopia

2.1.3. Contents and Numbering of thesis Proposal

The sections for the body of thesis should be labeled using numbers as follows:

Section One: Roman numbers should be used for pages of these elements

I. Summary
II. Acknowledgment
III. List acronym /abbreviations
IV. Table of contents
V. Lists of table
VI. Lists of figures

Section Two: Arabic numbers should be used for pages of these elements

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Objectives
4. Methods
5. Work plan
6. Cost of project/Budget
7. Reference
8. Annex

2.1.4. General Instructions

- It is preferred not to use abbreviations, other than those that are commonly accepted and a list of abbreviations should be arranged alphabetically.
- No Plagiarism! It is an academic crime. Plagiarism is the presentation of the work, idea or creation of another person without the acknowledgement of the owner. It is considered as cheating and is a very serious academic offence that may lead up to expulsion from the program. Plagiarism occurs when the origin of the material used is not appropriately cited. Enabling plagiarism is the act of assisting or allowing another person to plagiaries or to copy your work.
- Style of reference: Vancouver style has to be used.
- Minimum of 40 relevant articles need to be referred to prepare the proposal
- Clearly indicate the source of unpublished data used for the study
- For any reference material taken from Internet: date of access and the full URL (web) should be indicated.
- Final submission must be approved by the first advisor and graduate program coordinator.
- Three copies of the final proposal should be submitted.

2.2. Part two. Overview on Contents of thesis proposal

Summary/Abstract ----------*(Only one page)*

- **Introduction**: [Describe briefly the background information, the problem statement and the rationale for conducting this particular study; why is it important to study now and in the proposed area/setting]
- **Objectives**: [Main objective of the study]
- **Method**: [Briefly describe the study design, study setting, sample size determination, sampling, data collection and analysis plan]
- **Work plan**: [Describe the duration of the study period]
- **Budget**:[Describe the estimated budget of the study project］
- **Keywords:**

Introduction [*Background, Statement of the problem]* **----------** ***[3- 4 pages]***

- *Introduction is the heart of the proposal!*
- *What is the problem to be studied? Define the problem, concepts and issues*
- *What is the magnitude of the problem in general and in the specific setting for the study*
- *What is known clearly about the problem to be studied including risk factors generally and in the specific context*
- *Provide the rationale for undertaking the research in global and/or local context.*

LITERATURE REVIEW ---------- ***[4-5 pages]***

- *Discuss the theoretical and methodological concepts.*
- *Discuss what is known and what is not known in the area of the research.*
- *What are the methodological challenges in the area of the research?*
- *Are there ethical or feasibility problems in conducting the research; discuss only when appropriate.*
- *Discuss the focus of the study based on the above points of discussion.*
- *Conceptual frame work*

OBJECTIVES ---------- [*Only one page*]

- *Study objectives should be clearly defined.*
- *Think critically on clarity of your objective(s) before proceeding to other sections of the proposal.*
- *The formulation of clear objectives will help you to focus on the study.*
- *Use action verbs to state your objectives such as: to determine, to compare, to verify, to identify, to describe, and to establish. Avoid non-action verbs such as: to appreciate, to understand, or to study*
- *Divide your objectives to general and specific:*
  - *General objective: Should be comprehensive and requires assessing more than one aspect.*
  - *Specific objectives: Each specific objective should addresses one aspect of the study problem and in a logical order. For example: measuring prevalence comes before determining risk.*

METHODS ---------- *[Maximum of 5-6 pages]*

- ***Study area and period: [****describe most related issues to the study area and period of the study*]
- ***Study design:[***Describe the specific study design used to address the objectives of the study.
- ***Population: [****source and study population, inclusion and exclusion criteria]*
- ***Sample size determination: [*** *show your formula and results]*
- ***Sampling procedures:*** **[***describe your sampling procedure in detail; if multi stage sampling is used describe the sampling at each level and show the sampling procedure using figure***]**
- ***Data collection procedure:***
  - *Describe the data source(primary or secondary]*
  - *Data collection tool [interview, observation, self-administered , language …….]*
  - *Who will collect data [gender, age, qualification and experience……]*
  - *Where data will be collected [at home, at work place, at health facility…..]*
  - *When will be data collected [in reference to time or other situations……]*
- ***Data quality control:****[training, pre-testing, supervision, etc]*
- ***Study variables****:[if applicable, show the dependent and independent variables]*
- ***Data quality and management :***
- ***Data analysis: [use*** *appropriate method of analysis to answer the specific objective]*
- ***Operational definitions (if any)***: [*provide operational definition for key concepts and measurements in the study (don't give unnecessary long list)]*

- ***Ethical clearance:[****discuss the ethical issues specific to your study and describe the procedures you will follow to minimize risk to study participants*]
- ***Plan for dissemination of findings:*** *[describe how the findings will be disseminated]*

WORK PLAN ---------- *[only one page]*

- *Describe briefly the expected accomplishments of the project by phase, and the estimated time for each- use Gant chart).*

BUDGET ----------[*only one page*]

- *Given an itemized list of direct costs of the project.*
- *No contingency budget, try to provide details in as much as possible.*
- *Give specific resource requirements for each specific activity shown in the work plan*
- *Categorize items as follows:*
    1) *Personnel*
    2) *Materials and equipment*
    3) *Transport*
    4) *Communication*

ANNEXES

1. *Study tools: questionnaire, interview guide…in English and appropriate local language*
2. *Information sheet: in English and appropriate local language*
3. *Consent Form: in English and appropriate local language*
4. *Questionnaire: in English and appropriate local language*
5. *Procedures and others as necessary*

ASSURANCE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

The undersigned agrees to accept responsibility for the scientific ethical and technical Conduct of the research project and for provision of required progress reports as Per terms and conditions of the Research Publications Office in effect at the time of Grant is forwarded as the result of this application.

Name of the student: _____

Date._____ Signature _____

APPROVAL FORMS OF ADVISORS;

Name of the primary advisor:_____

Signature _____ Date._____

Name of the secondary advisor:_____

Signature _____ Date._____

2.3. Document's Formatting Requirements

2.3.1. Word processing format:

1. Font size for main body: 12-point
2. Font type possibly for all text: Times New Roman
3. Lines spacing for main body: 1.5
4. Lines spacing for Footnotes, text in figures/tables, quotations and captions for figures and tables: single-spaced.
5. There should be text free space (blank line) between the paragraph and below the subheadings and subdivision headings in the text;
6. Page margins should be 1 inch in top, bottom, left and right sides
7. Main headings should be aligned center in bold upper case letter with 14 font size
8. Subheading should be aligned left in bold upper case letter with 13 font size
9. Main heading and sub- heading should be written in Arabic numbers

2.3.2. Pagination:

1. Page numbering with Arabic starting from Introduction consecutively on every page in consistent position of bottom right or centered of the paper
2. Preliminaries with lower case roman numeral bottom centered
3. No page numbering on the cover page and title page

Annex: Research project proposal submission form:

Name of investigator	1. _____
Name of advisors	1. _____ 2. _____
Title of the research project	
Duration of the project	
Study area	
Total cost of the project	
Address of investigator	Phone:_____ E-mail:_____
Address of primary Advisor	Phone:_____ E-mail:_____
Address of secondary Advisor	Phone:_____ E-mail:_____