

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DENTISTRY

THESIS PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

THESIS PROPOSAL

During first semester of 2nd year, the MSc in Dentistry students are required to identify a research topic, find a research supervisor (in coordination with Program Director/Academic Advisor), understand the background of the research project, formulate a hypothesis, develop appropriate methods, and summarize the project as a thesis proposal. The completed research proposal needs to be submitted to the Department Chairman by the end of first semester of the 2nd year for initiation of the proposal approval process. The proposal review and approval process must be completed during the 4th week of the 2nd semester (of the 2nd year).

The purpose of writing a thesis proposal is to demonstrate that;

1. The thesis topic addresses a significant issue/problem.
2. An organized and practical plan is in place for collecting or obtaining data.
3. Methods of data analysis have been identified and are appropriate to the data set.

Before preparation of the final thesis proposal, it is recommended that the student prepares a summary of his/her proposal in coordination with his/her proposal supervisor and submits it to his/her Program Director (who is also the Academic Advisor of the student) for preliminary evaluation. This is to ensure that the research idea meets the minimum National and International standard for a Master thesis, in addition to assessment of practicality of the proposed project. The Program Director may undertake this task personally and/or seek the advice of any person whom he/she deems necessary.

After the preliminary approval by the Program Director, the student must develop a detailed thesis proposal (not more than 15 double-spaced pages in total) that is then submitted to the Department Chairman for initiating the approval process. The Department Chairman on receiving the proposal will immediately appoint a proposal evaluation committee in coordination with the Program Director consisting of three members. All the evaluation committee members must have publications related to the research topic in the last five years (this condition shall be waived for one or more of the members, if it could not be applied to sufficient number of the Department members to formulate the committee).

The evaluation committee appointed by the Department Chairman shall consist of:

- One member nominated by the Department Chairman.
- One member (out of the two members) recommended by the student and the research supervisor.
- One member (out of two members) recommended by the Program Director.

The person with the highest rank in the committee will serve as Chair of the committee. In case the committee has more than one person of the same rank, the senior most will be the Chairperson. The evaluation committee shall complete the evaluation process in two weeks. The student will have an opportunity of 15 minutes presentation to the committee followed by question/answer session by the committee. The thesis supervisor will be present during this session, and may assist the committee in proposal evaluation. The committee will submit its report to the Department Chairman with the following options.

- Thesis proposal approved
- Thesis proposal approved with recommended changes
- Thesis proposal rejected.

In case the committee recommends approval with changes, the Chairperson or his/her nominated member shall monitor the recommended changes before final approval of the proposal. If the thesis proposal is rejected, the committee will write the reasons for rejections to the Department Chairman.

After the approval of the Departmental Graduate Committee, the Department Chairman will send the proposal to Vice-Dean for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research. The Vice-Dean will call a meeting of the JGPC within 15 days after receiving the proposal from the Department. The JGPC serves as a second evaluation body of the proposal. The JGPC has the following options.

- Thesis proposal forwarded for approval by the higher authorities.
- Thesis proposal returned back to the Department with recommended changes.
- Thesis proposal rejected.

If the thesis proposal is rejected, the JGPC will write the reasons for rejections to the Department Chairman.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL

The thesis proposal should have the following sections.

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Table of contents
4. Introduction and implications of research
5. Thesis statement
6. Materials and methods
7. References
8. Work plan including time table
9. Budgetary details

Title Page

- Contains short, descriptive title of the proposed thesis project that should be fairly self-explanatory.
- Title in Arabic
- Student's name, Department and institution.
- Supervisor's name, position, Department and institution
- Date of delivery

Abstract

- A brief summary of the thesis proposal, with its length not exceeding 200 words
- A brief introduction to the issue
- A key statement of the thesis objective
- A summary of Methodology to be utilized
- End with possible implication(s) of the work/results

Table of Contents

- List all headings and subheadings with page numbers
- Indent subheadings

Introduction

- This section sets the context for the proposed project and must capture the reader's interest. Cite relevant references.
- Explain the background of the proposed study starting from a broad picture narrowing in on the research question

- Briefly review what is known about the research topic, and what gap the proposed research will fill in the existing body of knowledge
- Justifying the need for the project and what will the possible major implications of the result(s).

Thesis Statement

- State your thesis in the form of null hypothesis (alternate hypothesis), research question or a goal statement
- The thesis statement should capture the essence of the intended project and helps to put limits/boundaries around it.

Materials and Methods

- This section contains an overall description of the approach, any materials utilized, and procedures.
- Describe the methods that will be used for determining sample size, criteria for selection, distribution of sample and randomization technique.
- How will data be collected
- Describe if any materials will be used.
- Describe if any technical help or equipment is going to be utilized in the project from outside the College; and any preliminary agreement made with outside authorities.
- Include calculations, technique, procedure, equipment, and calibration graphs
- How the written consents will be obtained where applicable. Include consent form/letter.
- Give detail of any limitations, assumptions, and determination of validity and reliability including inter- and intra-examiner reliability
- How will data be analyzed, and determination of significance

Registration with College of Dentistry Research Center & Ethical Approvals

- Commencement of research involving human or animal subjects shall not be allowed until appropriate registration and ethical clearances are obtained from concerned College and University Committees. All the required ethical approvals, both from inside and outside the University, as well as institutional consents to fully cooperate in the research project have to be obtained before the final approval of the Research Proposal by JGPC. The Department Chairpersons, Director, Research Center and concerned Vice-Deans' offices are expected to support the student and his/her Supervisor in seeking institutional consents and ethical approvals outside the College.

- Similarly, research involving drugs/radiations also needs ethical approval.

List of References

King Saud University's format is utilized for citations in the text and then listing of the references.

Examples are given below for journal and text book references, respectively:

- Bragger U, Pasqualli L, Kornman KS. Remodeling of interdental alveolar bone after periodontal flap procedure assessed by means of computer-assisted densitometer image analysis. J Clin Periodontol 1988; 15:558-564.
- Branemark PI. Introduction to osseointegration. In: Branemark PI, Zarb G, Albrektsson T (eds). Tissue Integrated Prostheses. Berlin, New York: Quintessence, 1985: 11-76.

If a reference has more than three authors, then the names of the first three authors are mentioned followed by “*et al*”.

Work Plan including Time Table

- Describe in detail what you plan to do until completion of your thesis project
- List the stages of your project and their duration in a table format
- Indicate deadlines you have set for completing each stage of the project

Budgetary Detail

List (in the form of a table) the cost of following items as related to your project.

- Any equipment required
- Materials needed
- Instruments and related items
- Additional manpower for the project
- Transportation/travel
- Stationery
- Publication
- Miscellaneous