

# SDSU School of Nursing

## PLAN B QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

### Plan B Non-Thesis Option Requirements:

You have elected to follow the Plan B Non-Thesis option to fulfill final requirements for the Master's Degree. Plan B requires, in lieu of a thesis, a comprehensive examination which is defined in the SDSU Graduate Bulletin as "an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of the area, show critical and independent thinking and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination evidences independent thinking, appropriate organization, a high level of writing competency, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation." In the School of Nursing, the Plan B comprehensive examination requirement is fulfilled by completing a research proposal as outlined below. You may use any literature or written source available, however, **consulting with any person about any aspect of your proposal is not permitted. Consulting with others will be considered cheating and will be subject to University policy as outlined in the Bulletin of the Graduate Division.** This is an examination and your work is expected to reflect your independent ability to demonstrate the accomplishments required for award of the master's degree as defined above.

**Directions:** After you receive your research problem, develop a written research proposal incorporating the elements presented below. The proposal should adhere to APA format and should be no longer than 15 typed pages excluding the title page, references and appendices. Use 12 point, Times New Roman font.

### 1. Introduction and Background

- a. The introduction and background should be succinct.
- b. Describe trends and issues in society, technological or scientific advances, or epidemiological data that substantiate areas of concern that are relevant to your research.
- c. Provide sufficient background to lead into the problem including all variables.
  - Organize logically (e.g., by major variables).
  - Use literature from refereed journals that is current (within 10 years). Exceptions are seminal and landmark studies.
  - Integrate and summarize the current state of the science/research, including inadequacies (i.e., gaps in knowledge, faulty assumptions, a need for novel approaches) of previous research that will be remedied in your study.

### 2. Specific Research Problem

- a. Clearly state the purpose of the study.
- b. Clearly state the problem to be investigated.
- c. Identifies relationship between 2 or more variables; or differences between 2 or more dependent or independent groups
- c. Identify the target population for which the study will be generalizable.

### **3. Significance of the Study**

- a. Briefly discuss the significance of the study (e.g., contributions that may come out of the investigation for nursing practice or patient care).
- b. Clearly state the anticipated results of your study and who might use these results.

### **4. Theoretical Framework**

- a. Briefly describe the theoretical framework or conceptual model you selected for your study. (Do not limit yourself to nursing theories).
- b. The framework should fit with the problem and variables you selected for the study
- c. The framework should lead into hypotheses/research questions.

### **5. Definition of Variables**

- a. Briefly identify the major variables. For descriptive or correlational designs, identify variables of interest. For quasi-experimental and experimental designs, identify independent and dependent variables..
- b. Define each major variable conceptually and operationally.

### **6. Hypotheses**

- a. If this is an exploratory or descriptive study, you may develop specific research questions rather than hypotheses.
- b. Each hypothesis or research question should be one sentence in length. Do **not** use null hypotheses.

### **7. Study Design**

- a. State the design of your study (e.g., descriptive, correlational, quasi-experimental, true experimental and then in more depth: pretest-posttest, repeated measures, nonequivalent control group, post-test only).
- b. Identify the confounding or extraneous variables and how they are controlled for in your study.
- c. You may include a conceptual map as a figure if you wish. The optional conceptual map is placed in the appendix.

### **8. Sampling Plan**

- a. Specify your criteria for inclusion/exclusion.
- b. Specify the type of sampling procedure you will use (e.g., random, convenience, snowball, purposive).
- c. Specify your sample size using a Power Analysis
- d. Include a demographic questionnaire in the Appendix that illustrates the kind of data you will collect to describe your sample.

### **9. Data Collection Procedures**

- a. Describe how you will collect your data. Be specific enough to enable another researcher to duplicate your study.
- b. Briefly state all essential elements to show how you will conform to IRB requirements to protect your subjects.

## **10. Instrumentation**

- a. Describe each instrument.
- b. Discuss the appropriateness of the instruments for your population (age, gender, educational level, etc)
- c. Cite reliability and validity data for the total scale and each subscale.
- d. If using bio- physiologic instruments, discuss accuracy and sensitivity. If reasonably available include a copy of the instrument in the appendix.
- e. Describe how the instrument will be scored and/or interpreted and what level of data it yields (nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio).
- f. If using an exploratory research design, include a copy of the survey you created.

## **11. Planned Statistical Analysis**

- a. Restate each hypothesis/question.
- b. Be specific as to the type of statistics you will use to test each hypothesis or answer each research question and why used.
- c. Statistical tests should be appropriate for the level of the data collected.
- d. State how you will analyze demographic data to describe your sample.
- e. Explain how you will statistically evaluate instrument reliability.

## **12. Limitations**

- a. Identify the limitations of your study design.

## **Recommended Readings**

Polit, D., & Tetano Beck, C. (2004). Nursing Research (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Flaskerud, J., & Winslow, B. (1998). Conceptualizing vulnerable populations health-related research. Nursing Research,47(2), 69-78.

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