

# SDSU School of Nursing

## PLAN B QUALITATIVE 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 title page, references, and appendices.

### 1. Introduction and Background

- a. The introduction and background should be succinct.
- b. Describe trends and issues in society, technological or scientific advances, and epidemiological data that substantiate areas of concern that are relevant to your research.
- c. Provide sufficient background to lead into the problem.
  - Organize logically (e.g., by major concepts, theories, models/frameworks).

### 2. Specific Problem

- a. State the purpose of the research study clearly
- b. Clearly state the empirical problem to be investigated.
- c. Identify the target population you intend to study and state why?

### 3. Significance of the Study

- a. State clearly and concisely the long range objectives of the research study.
- b. Briefly discuss the significance of the study (e.g., contributions that will come out of the research for nursing practice, patient care, health, ethics or social policy statements, or hypotheses for future studies).

- c. Clearly state the anticipated results of your study, who will benefit, and who might use these results.

### **Present the Integrative Review of the Literature**

- a. Review the literature from refereed journals in a logical, cohesive, persuasive manner that retraces the state of the science on this topic.
- b. Include assumptions, theoretical frameworks, or conceptual model(s), and concepts and their definitions from previous research to explain the significance of the research question and justify the selected qualitative research design. (Do not limit yourself to nursing models).
  - i. Use literature that is current (within 10 years). Exceptions are landmark studies and integrative reviews of the literature.
- c. Integrate and summarize the current state of the science/research, including inadequacies of previous research that will be remedied by your study (i.e., gaps in knowledge, faulty assumptions, a need for novel approaches, methodological flaws, lack of research in your target population).
- d. The framework(s) /model(s) should fit the problem to be studied.
- e. The framework should support the research question and justify the research design and sample selection

### **6. Research Question(s)**

- a. State one or more specific research questions.
- b. The research question should be one sentence in length.

### **7. Study Design (Methodology)**

- a. State the specific design of your Qualitative study from: ethnography, phenomenology, or grounded theory,

### **8. Sampling Plan**

- a. Describe your sample. Specify the type of sampling procedure you will use (convenience, snowball, purposive).
- b. Specify your inclusion and exclusion criteria
- c. Specify your sample size and how will you determine an adequate sample size to answer your research question(s).
- 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 (Method)**

- a. Describe the setting in detail, the researcher's role, and assumptions that affect gaining entry to the setting and collecting data.
- b. Describe in detail how you will collect your data. Be specific enough to enable another researcher to duplicate your study. Ensure that your method is appropriate to your design and your research question(s)
- c. Briefly state all essential elements to show how you will conform to IRB requirements to protect your subjects. Discuss how you will obtain informed consent.

**10. Interview Guide**

- a. Create your interview guide and include it as an Appendix.
- b. Discuss how your guide is appropriate for your theoretical framework and the phenomenon you are studying.

**11. Identify the Limitations of your Study**

- a. Describe in detail the strategies you select to counteract any of the following limitations or possible criticisms of your study:
  1. Confirmability
  2. Credibility
  3. Transferability
  4. Authenticity
  5. Trustworthiness

**12. Planned Analysis**

- a. Describe in detail, step by step how you plan to analyze your data.
- b. These procedures must match your research design and must be cited from a specific qualitative 'tradition' (assumptions and goals).
- c. Include concepts such as coding, categorizing, clustering, themes, patterns, reading across the data, abstracting to higher levels of generalizability and theory development where appropriate.

Reaffirmed in GCC Jan 2009