## Full time students

**COURSE COORDINATOR**
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**OTHER COURSE PRESENTERS**
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**TIME**: This course is taught in the *FIRST SEMESTER*. The course is face to face and intensive for 7 weeks every Wednesdays 16:00 – 18:00

**PURPOSE AND CONTENTS OF THE COURSE**
Each section of the course will be presented to you by the responsible lecturers. The course must meet the needs of students from various educational specializations/areas with a range of research problems, questions and methods. It therefore presents you with a core related to general research methodology, designed to enable students to understand the common principles that guide educational research. The purpose is to prepare you to produce a good research proposal. Alongside the course, you will also be working closely with a supervisor in your specialized area of education.

**An Ulwazi learning site is** set up for this course, accessible through the Wits University website, on which you will be registered as a student. All documents associated with the course will be made available to you there under *Files*. The slide presentations by your lecturers will be available there, as will questions and guidelines they will post from time to time to assist you. Please make sure that you also keep up to date with *Announcements*.

**PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**
You are required to attend at least 75% of 'face-to-face' sessions in this course. You are expected to participate in the course by contributing in the class discussions. Failure to do so may mean that you will be denied a Satisfactory Performance certificate for the course, the implication of which is that you may fail the course. Students who need to miss class because of an emergency must inform the course coordinator, preferably in advance. Throughout the course, students are expected to work between 5 and 8 hours a week, doing required reading and writing activities; this is essential to mastering course outcomes.

**BOOKLETS**
Please read this course outline in conjunction with the following:
- *From Application to Graduation* – Faculty procedures for post-graduate students in the WSoE.

- *BEd Honours programme information handbook* – WSoE 2024

**COURSE OVERVIEW**

| Sessions | Session Focus | Course Presenters |
|---|---|---|
| **Week 1** 14 Feb | Welcome and Introduction Why do we conduct research? Understanding Assessment grid | Lawan |
| **Week 2** 21 Feb | Searching and Reading Literature Critically | Lawan |
| **Week 3** 28 Feb | Research methodologies and research paradigms | Tebello |
| **Week 4** 06 March | Scoping and Systematics Reviews | Emmanuel |
| **Week 5** 13 March | Conceptual Research | Thokozani |
| **Week 6** 20 March | Looking at Coherence in a research proposal | Tebello |
| **Week 7** 27 March | Education research ethics and ethics waivers | Lawan |

**RECOMMENDED GENERAL READING**

Badenhorst, C. (2007). *Research Writing. Breaking the Barriers*. Van Schaik.

Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: a guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science*. 4th Edition. Open University Press.

Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C. & Kagee, A. (2006). F*undamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective.* Juta.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2000*). Research Methods in Education*. 5th Edition. Routledge.

Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. 4th Edition. Pearson.

Gall, M.D., Gall, J.P. & Borg, W.R. (2010). *Educational research: an introduction*. Pearson.

Gorard, S. (2001). *Quantitative methods in educational research: the role of numbers made easy.* Continuum.

Lillis, T. & McKinney, C. (2003). *Analysing language in context: A student workbook.* Trentham Books.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005*).* Qualitative research design*: An interactive approach*. SAGE. Maxwell, J.A. (2012). *A Realist Approach for Qualitative Research*. SAGE.

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-based inquiry.* 7th edition. Pearson.

McMillan, J.H. (2012). *Research in education: fundamentals for consumers.* 6th edition. Pearson.

Mouton, J. (2010). *Understanding social research*. Van Schaik.

Muijs, D. (2011). *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS*. SAGE.

Mutua,K. & Swadener, B.B. (Eds.). (2004). *Decolonizing research in cross-cultural contexts:*

*Critical personal narratives.* State University of New York Press.

Newton, P.E. & Shaw, S.D. (2014). *Validity in educational and psychological assessment.* SAGE.

Paltridge, P & Phakiti, A. (2015). *Research methods in applied linguistics: A practical resource*. Routledge.

Patel, L. (2015). *Decolonizing educational Research: From ownership to answerability*. Routledge.

Parpura, P. (2011). *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning*. Routledge.

Phakiti, A. (2014). *Experimental research methods in language learning*. Bloomsbury. Saldaňa,J. (2012). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.

Scott, D. & Usher, R. (1996). (Eds.). *Understanding educational research*. Routledge. Vithal, R. & Jansen J. (1997). *Designing your first research proposal. Juta.*

**ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

The course is assessed with a PASS or FAIL result. There is no examination for this course. In order to obtain a PASS mark, you must submit 1500 – 2000 word Research Proposal on the **15 May, 2024** via Ulwazi. ***Your research proposal must be that of non-empirical study or empirical study that uses a secondary data***. The last day of the contact session for the course is 6 April, you are expected to work closely with the supervisor assigned to you to guide you in doing the proposal.

The intention of the proposal is to ensure that you have done sufficient preliminary reading in the area of your choice; that you have thought about the issues involved; and that you are able to provide more than a broad description of the topic which is to be investigated. At the same time, however, the proposal is not a 'fixed blueprint'. One cannot predict one's findings or conclusions beforehand or cling mechanically to an argument since the research will inevitably alter or even 'unseat' one's initial expectations. Thus, while there is no fixed formula for writing a proposal, we suggest that you use the following sequence of headings as a guideline

*Title:* The title of a proposal captures the essence of the topic you intend to investigate. It should be brief and precise and should avoid redundant phrases such as "A study of …", "An investigation of …", and so on. Very importantly, the title should contain the essential concepts/words that a researcher would need to locate your research in an electronic database.

*Motivation and Rationale*: Your proposal needs to show why the proposed research is important and to justify the effort of doing such research. Such justification may either be of an empirical nature (i.e., you hope to add to, or extend an existing body of knowledge using empirical methods), or of a theoretical/conceptual nature (i.e., you hope to elucidate contentious areas in a body of knowledge or will provide new conceptual insights into such knowledge). Remember, all research is part of a larger scholarly enterprise (or a scholarly conversation) and you should be able to argue for the value and positioning of your research.

*Research Aim and Research Questions***:** The aim of your proposal should provide a concise statement of what you intend to research and should include your research question (and subquestions) or a brief indication of the central argument/s you intend to pursue.

*Literature Review*: An essential component of any research proposal is the provision of what may be seen as a 'history' of the specific issues to be researched. By reviewing the pertinent literature in the area of your research interest, you are able to show the origin and development of the issues and debates in the area concerned and, very importantly, demonstrate how and where your particular research concerns would fit into these debates. Furthermore, the literature review is intended to show how your research will relate to, and/or extend the existing research on the topic. In such a review it is important to concentrate on the central issues, debates, and literature in the area of concern and to disregard any issues or literature that may be tangential to your specific concerns. An important consideration in a literature review is the inclusion of primary sources and secondary sources.

*Theoretical/Conceptual Framework*: While some researchers believe that a proposal (as well as the final research report) should contain a theoretical framework, the necessity to provide such a framework is often dictated by the nature of the research to be conducted. In some cases, issues might arise due to the inadequacy of an existing theory to explain a phenomenon and in these cases the researcher would need to provide a comprehensive account of the theory to show how and where in the theory the shortcoming occur. In other cases, the researcher would investigate something empirically and consequently require a theory (or explanatory framework) to help him/her to explain (or make sense of) the data obtained from such empirical investigation. Finally, a researcher might simply interrogate an idea/concept philosophically to gain greater clarity and understanding of the meanings of such a concept, or to propose alternate ways of understanding the concept. In the latter instance it would be more appropriate for the researcher to show (in the literature review) the various ways the concept has been understood by previous researchers and hence would not need to provide a theoretical framework. Stated in simple terms, the type of research you intend to pursue would determine whether a theoretical framework/explanatory framework is necessary.

*Research Method*: The description of the research method, like the theoretical framework, is determined by the nature of the research you are proposing to conduct.

*Empirical Research*: If your research is empirical your research method could be either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. In any of these cases you would describe how you will conduct the research by outlining the design of your research, the exact research method you intend to adopt, the nature of the sample you intend to use, the research instrument you will use to collect data, and how you will analyse/interpret the data. If your research is quantitative, you should also include the statistical methods you intend to use to interpret the data collected. ***Please make sure your supervisor has already collected data for you to analyse before you decide on doing empirical research. No B.Ed Hons student will be allowed to go to the field to collect primary data.***

*Non-Empirical Research/Conceptual Research*: As the label indicates, conceptual research does not involve empirical research and is based on working with issues at a conceptual level. That is, non-empirical/conceptual research seeks solutions to problems using existing knowledge as its source. It is premised on working with concepts or ideas - and the assumptions on which they are based - as they appear in texts. As such, conceptual research focuses on how texts frame particular issues and the concepts which influence them. Conceptual analysis is variously labelled as 'discursive analysis', 'textual analysis' and 'content analysis'. Such research can take on a variety of forms such as theory development, historical research, systematic literature reviews, and critical analyses. Furthermore, depending on the specific form, it may also utilise hermeneutics (i.e., the art or science of interpretation) or semiotics (i.e., the study of signs and symbols especially as they occur in language or other forms of communication such as texts) as a specific research method. What is important to note is that there is no clearly defined or standard "template" which can be used to engage in non- empirical research and each of the approaches listed may use one or more methods to accomplish its objectives.

*Ethical Considerations:* As a University ethical policy requirement, either you are doing empirical research (with secondary data supplied by your supervisor) or non-empirical research you must apply for ethics waiver. You will learn more about ethics in the Week 7 of this course on the 15th and the 27th of March, 2024.

*References*: Referencing is a process of formally acknowledging another person's ideas used in constructing your own writing. It consist of 'in-text' referencing (citations) and the list of references (Reference List) at the end of your work. When you refer to another piece of work you must always acknowledge the source of that information.

- to demonstrate the evidence supporting your arguments
- to credit the author of the idea
- to enable others to identify your sources and follow up your work • to avoid accusations of plagiarism

## PROPOSAL ASSESSMENT RUBRIC
For the assessment of the proposal attention will be directed towards the following five key areas

- Identification of relevant research problem
- Understanding the theoretical/conceptual framework
- Critical analysis and evaluation of the literature, including description of the research design
- Style, grammatical and linguistic accuracy
- References

The output of identification of a relevant knowledge problem will be evaluated based on the relevance, clarity, and specificity of the identified problem, including research aim and research questions. The output of understanding of the theoretical and conceptual framework will be evaluated based on the depth and breadth of understanding of the theoretical and conceptual framework, including key concepts and definitions. The output of critical analysis and evaluation of the literature will be evaluated based on the quality and rigor of the analysis and evaluation of the literature, including identification of gaps, inconsistencies, and limitations. Overall, the assessment should evaluate the student's ability to conduct a comprehensive and critical review of the literature in their chosen area of study.

| Output | Core Elements | Feedback |
|---|---|---|
| Is the topic appropriate | The topic should be well-defined and focused, with clear boundaries to guide the research process and avoid ambiguity. | |
| Identification of a relevant knowledge problem | Relevance, clarity, and specificity of the identified problem, including assessable research questions. | |
| Critical analysis and evaluation of the literature | Quality and rigor of the analysis and evaluation of the literature, including identification of gaps, inconsistencies, and limitations. | |
| Identification of relevant research methodologies | A clear plan for how the research will be conducted - with appropriate research approaches and methods, including criteria for inclusion and exclusion for selection of papers in systematic reviews. | |
| Coherence | Writing clarity and accuracy, including grammar and sentence structure. | |
| References | American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition referencing style. | |

**PLAGIARISM AND REFERENCING**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Note that the Wits Plagiarism Policy deems all plagiarism at postgraduate level as requiring consideration by a University disciplinary committee. This may lead to your expulsion from the University. The sources you use to obtain information for your work must be clearly acknowledged. Do not copy and paste information directly from your sources. Use your own words. Please familiarize yourself with the Wits Plagiarism Policy if you have not already done so:
http://intranet.wits.ac.za/governance/registrar/Policies/Forms/AllItems.aspx

***When you submit the assessment tasks, you are expected to pass then through the Turn-It-In plagiarism software on Ulwazi. Your "score" should be less than 10%.***

The referencing convention recommended by the Wits School of education is APA 7th edition. This means that you are expected to use this in your research proposal. Note that this is not the only referencing system that exists, it is simply by convention that the school chooses to use it. Make use of conventional style and referencing rules effectively (note that no research proposal or research report– no matter how good it is – will be accepted if it does not comply with this rule).