**DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROSPECTUS**

A prospectus is used to evaluate the viability and feasibility of a study. Thus, it is evaluated to ensure clarity, conciseness, and manageability of the study's research questions. Additionally, the design method's appropriateness and alignment in relation to the study's purpose are ensured. Finally, the feasibility of the candidate to complete the study using their respective skillset, available resources, and allotted time frame will be considered. Overall, the prospectus identifies the evidence-based problem the proposed study will address and the significance of the problem. It further elaborates on the purpose of the study, the questions and hypotheses that will guide the study, and the methods that will be used to answer the specified questions and analyze the collected data.

Prior to completion of the prospectus, a preliminary literature review must be conducted to familiarize oneself with published literature currently available on a given topic. Additionally, the literature review will assist the researcher in identifying possible gaps in the available research. As the prospectus is a plan for research, the future verb tense will be used. Once the research is complete, the tenses of verbs must be changed to the past tense.

*(Please delete this informational page before submitting the document.)*

**TITLE OF DISSERTATION HERE CENTERED WITH UPPERCASE LETTERS**

**UPPERCASE BOLDFACE LETTERS APPEARING AS AN**

**INVERTED PYRAMID**

Doctoral Dissertation

Submitted to the

College of [College Name]

Westcliff University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of [Program Title]

Concentration: [Concentration Title if Applicable]

by

[Doctoral Candidate’s Full Name]

[Month, Year of Completion]

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**Table of Contents**

[CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION 1](#_Toc170115812)

[Problem Background 1](#_Toc170115813)

[Problem Statement 1](#_Toc170115814)

[Purpose of the Study 2](#_Toc170115815)

[Theoretical and Conceptual Framework 2](#_Toc170115816)

[Research Questions 2](#_Toc170115817)

[Hypotheses 3](#_Toc170115818)

[Nature of the Study 3](#_Toc170115819)

[Research Methods 3](#_Toc170115820)

[Data Collection 3](#_Toc170115821)

[Data Analysis 4](#_Toc170115822)

[Definitions of the Terms 4](#_Toc170115823)

[Significance of the Study 4](#_Toc170115824)

[References 5](#_Toc170115825)

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chapter One of the dissertation introduces the study problem, background of the problem, and identifies the framework of the research. In the introduction to this chapter, provide context of the chosen topic, clarity of scope in how this research will engage with the topic, and an overview of the structure of the dissertation and chapter flow. The following sections are required at minimum, but additional sections can be included if deemed appropriate.

## Problem Background

The problem background will provide information regarding the central problem of inquiry the research seeks to address. A focused, timely, and relevant problem, as supported by the current scholarship, is required. In this section, verify the existence of this problem through evidence-based research, the extent to which it spans, who or what it impacts, and how it has been presented within current scholarship. Objectively identify what the research will achieve within the context of this centralized problem and the continued inquiry into the problem that is needed.

## Problem Statement

Based on the context of the central problem identified in the problem background section, this section indicates specific problems that this research addresses. These problem statements form the basis of the research question(s) posed. Each problem statement should be evidence-based and contextualized within the current scholarship. Problem statements are written as single sentences but should be followed by discussion on the origins and potential impact of each problem as it connects to the aforementioned centralized problem. Add a maximum of three problem statements in this section. The format of the problem statements should follow:

**Problem Statement 1:**Identify the specific problem.

Include discussion in paragraph format with APA citations.

## Purpose of the Study

Based on the context of the centralized and specific problems indicated above, this section will explain, in general terms, the purpose or reason for this study. Identification of the research method and design, direction, objective, and overarching goal of the study is incorporated and expanded upon in this section. This section begins with the statement: The purpose of this study is…

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This section explains the theoretical or conceptual foundation of the research and its credibility in the context of previous studies and/or commonly accepted theoretical understandings. A conceptual framework identifies the expected outcome(s) of the research through identification of the variables and how they connect or impact one another. A theoretical framework identifies, compares, and synthesizes prevalent theories established in literature that support the basis of the study and its theoretical context.

## Research Questions

In this section, identify the research question(s) that has guided the research. This question(s) should align with the problem statement(s) and ensure appropriate collection of data to achieve the purpose of the research. Research questions are formatted as simple interrogative sentences, address one issue per question, and cannot be answered with a yes or no response. In addition to listing the question(s), explain in subsequent paragraphs how the answers to the research question(s) will cumulatively lead to the achievement of the purpose of the research. As noted in the problem section, the research questions must be directly aligned with the problem statements and study purpose. The format of a research question should be incorporated as follows:

**Research Question 1:** What is your research question?

Incorporate information regarding how this question will lead to the achievement of the aforementioned purpose.

## Hypotheses

This section is optional and will be dependent upon the type of study conducted (verify with the Dissertation Chair). Hypotheses primarily identify the expected outcomes of a quantitative or mixed methods study and must be directly aligned with the research question(s).

## Nature of the Study

This section provides an overview of the study’s method, design, and data collection and analysis methodology. Note that this section is more general, as the doctoral candidate will expand upon the details of the research methodology in Chapter Three. The following subsections are required at minimum, but additional subsections may be included if deemed appropriate.

### Research Methods

This subsection identifies if the study is quantitative, qualitative, or both (mixed methods) and explains the rationale for the selection in the context of the purpose of the research. Include the research design, justification for the design, and an overview of the implementation of the research plan.

### Data Collection

This subsection describes the primary and/or secondary data to be gathered for the study and how and why the specific data collection method(s) will be employed. A description of the data collection instrument(s) and method used in the research is explained and the rationale justified. Indicate the underlying population, sampling method, and minimum sample size to be gathered from the target population.

### Data Analysis

In this subsection, the doctoral candidate identifies the data analysis methodology chosen for the study and presents justification for the selection. The data analysis method must be aligned with the study method and design choice for the research. The software application to be used for analysis should also be noted here as well as any data assumptions to be tested prior to data analysis to address the research questions.

## Definitions of the Terms

This section will be explained and required at a later point in the dissertation writing process. Leave this section blank for now.

## Significance of the Study

The significance of the study explains the potential impact of the study. Specifically, the doctoral candidate describes, in scholarly, objective, and unbiased language, the study’s potential contribution to the existing body of knowledge on the chosen topic and the relevant field. Doctoral candidates can stipulate who or what may benefit from this research and the extent of that benefit.

(Note: The doctoral candidate must use non-confirmatory language, such as: *The potential findings of the study* ***may*** *lead to a better understanding of the effectiveness of computer assisted instruction; the evaluation of employee attitudes* ***could*** *help improve productivity.*)

# References

The reference list contains all sources cited in the dissertation. There should be one-to-one correspondence between the citations in text and those included in the references. The references follow APA 7th edition and start on a new page after the significance of the study of the prospectus.

While formatting references, ensure:

1. They are organized alphabetically.
2. A hanging indent of 0.5” is used.
3. They are double-spaced with no additional space ‘before or after.’
4. DOIs are used whenever available, and hyperlinked.
5. Database URLs are not included.
6. References are predominantly from the last five to ten years.
7. References are from credible sources.

**Prospectus Formatting Guide**

Please see the following formatting guides below. Delete this page prior to submission of prospectus.

**General Guidelines**

1. The prospectus text should be double-spaced with all paragraphs indented.
2. Font should be black and Times New Roman 12-point (except for tables/figures, see below).
3. All margins should be set to one (1) inch (top, bottom, left, right), on all pages.
4. Page numbers must be at least ¾ inch from the edge of the page.
5. Align text to the left (do not use full justification).
6. The spacing should be set to zero (0) point before and after lines of text (paragraph spacing).
7. Seriation should follow APA 7th edition guidelines.
8. Level headings should follow APA 7th edition (except for chapter titles - see deviations from APA 7th edition below).
9. In-text citations should follow APA 7th edition guidelines. All claims and references to ideas or conclusions found in a source must be properly cited. Results of the doctoral candidate’s findings do not need citation support unless a direct quote from a participant is being used. In these situations, cite the personal communication.
10. Language used in reference to people or people groups should adhere to the bias-free guidelines stipulated by APA 7th edition.
11. Using survey instruments developed by third parties requires the owner's written permission to use or proof of purchase. In this case, the permission or the proof should be provided in an appendix separate from the one that contains the survey.

**Opening Pages**

1. The prospectus title should be bold, in all caps, and in an inverted-pyramid format.
2. On the Title Page itself, there should be no visible page number, though it is considered page 1 of the entire document. Pages prior to Chapter 1 should be numbered by Roman numerals. The pages in the main body of the prospectus should be numbered by Arabic numerals.
3. Entries in the Table of Contents should not be bolded or italicized.

**Tables and Figures**

1. Tables and figures may be displayed in color to enhance clarity.
2. Contents of tables and figures must be no less than 9-point font; notes for tables and figures must be no less than 10-point font; table/figure numbers and titles must be 12-point font.
3. Tables or figures used from alternative sources require copyright permission and should be stipulated in the note under the table/figure along with the reference.
4. Any table or figure should not be divided between two pages. If a table requires more than one page, divide the table so that all separated portions share a common heading row.
5. All tables and figures should have an in-text callout and should be placed as close to their callout as possible.

**Deviations from APA 7th Edition**

1. Chapter titles are to be bold, centered, and in all caps.
2. Starting with Chapter One, use arabic numerals in the top right corner.
3. References will be single-spaced.
4. To verify supplemental file requirements, please check the [ProQuest Formatting Requirements](https://about.proquest.com/globalassets/proquest/files/pdf-files/preparing-your-manuscript.pdf).