**RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

1. **Background to Research (500 words):**

Any good research proposal should start with a problem and should explain the background to the problem and the reason for undertaking the research in order to solve the problem.

**Key Questions:**

* Why is the research important?
* What is the research question or problem, which needs solving?
* How does it relate to your current or previous employment?
* What are the aims and objectives of the research?
* What do you envisage as the outcome when the work is complete?

1. **Evidence of Previous Research (1000 words)**

It is important to be able to look any research proposal in the context of previous work done by other researchers in the proposed or similar field of study. The whole objective of the research programme is to build upon existing knowledge or to discover new knowledge. It is unlikely that no previous work has been done in the area of your chosen problem. You need to evidence this work by reference to other publications and preferably refereed Journal publications which have an international standing. Also the references should be current (say within the last 5 years) unless it can be demonstrated that there is little up to date published work in the field. Normally 6-10 key references should be adequate.

* What other work has been done on this topic?
* What publications are available?
* How can your work link to these publications?

1. **Potential Contribution to Knowledge (500 words)**

The contribution is one the key elements an examiner will be looking for when judging whether the thesis is worthy of the award of PhD. It is useful to have this in mind at the outset of the work in order to ensure that the programme of study is sufficiently targeted to enable such a contribution to be made. Work already undertaken by others and the research questions which remain unanswered is the starting point for identifying the contribution to knowledge.

**Key Questions**

* How will your work build upon previous work reported in the publications?
* How will your work help answer some of the questions remaining unanswered from previously published work?
* Will it lead to the collection of new empirical data, and or the discovery of new facts?

1. **Research Methodology (500 words)**

This section is about you explaining how the will be undertaken. Your problem statement and literature review should lead to a number of questions which remain unanswered. Your research programme should then be about collecting information to help answer these questions.

**Key Questions**

* Where will the information be gathered from? Secondary or primary data?
* In the case of primary data. What methods will you use for data collection?
  + Questionnaires?
  + Interviews – structured or semi structured?
  + Case studies?
  + Focus groups?
  + Action research etc.?