Checklist for Research Proposals
(to be used in conjunction with the Proposal Guidelines outlined in the M.Ed. MRP/Thesis Handbooks)

**Background and Significance of the Research**
- Will the results of the research fill a gap in our knowledge?
- Will the research advance our understanding of this topic?

**Literature Review**
- Does the proposal demonstrate thorough and current understanding and knowledge of the peer-reviewed literature related to the topic?
- Is the literature reviewed critically?
- Does the literature review identify gaps, shortcomings, and/or limitations in existing research, therefore providing a context for the study?
- Does the literature review justify the question/problem being studied?

**Theoretical Framework**
- Is a theoretical framework identified and clearly described?
- Is the theoretical framework linked to the research problem/question/hypothesis?
- Does the theoretical framework demonstrate understanding of current and relevant peer-reviewed literature?

**Research Problem/Question/Hypothesis**
- Does the proposal clearly frame the research question/problem/hypothesis?
- Is the research problem/question/hypothesis logical and researchable?
- Is the research problem/question/hypothesis manageable and achievable?
- Is the research problem/question/hypothesis ethical?
- Is the research question/problem/hypothesis focused and grounded in relevant peer-reviewed literature?
- Where relevant, is the research grounded in the researcher’s experience and context?

**Methodology**

**Rationale for Research Method**
- Is the methodology (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) appropriate for the research question/problem?
- Does the proposal identify and describe the specific type of methodology (e.g., qualitative (ethnography, grounded theory, case study, etc.), quantitative (descriptive, quasi-experimental, etc.), or mixed methods (from both traditions)?
- Is the methodology clearly articulated and supported by current and relevant peer-reviewed literature?

**Research and Data-Gathering Procedures**
- Are the procedures well organized and clearly described in a carefully focused step-by-step, straightforward manner?
- Are the procedures consistent with the selected methodology?
- Are the methods reasonable and appropriate for the research question/problem?
- Is a timeline for the project provided? Is it manageable and achievable?
- Does the proposal demonstrate thorough and current understanding and knowledge relevant peer-reviewed literature related to selected research and data-gathering procedures?
Data Description and Preparation

- Does the proposal identify the who, what, where, when, why, and how of data collection?
- Does the proposal identify possible problems with data sources, collection of data, and/or preparation of data?

Resources Required

- Are required resources (i.e., any special equipment or materials that will be needed during the research) described?
- Are required resources available to the student?

Data Analysis

- Does the proposal identify possible methods for data analysis?
- Does the proposal demonstrate thorough and current understanding and knowledge of the research/peer reviewed literature related to their data analysis?

Ethical Considerations

- Does the proposal anticipate and/or discuss potential difficulties and obstacles in the approach I have chosen?
- Have I fully considered potential benefits and risks to research participants?
- Does the proposal discuss how confidentiality of subjects and their responses will be maintained?
- Does the proposal discuss how data will be stored to ensure confidentiality of subjects?

References

- Does the proposal provide a list of cited references?
- Are the references current and relevant?
- Is APA used appropriately in the reference list?
- Are references cited appropriately in the literature review, theoretical framework, and description of methodology?

Overall

- Is the proposal coherent and easily understood by reviewers?
- Is peer-reviewed literature used effectively to support the proposal’s theoretical underpinnings?
- Are headings used to organize sections and demonstrate understanding of essential components?
- Do the headings reflect an organizational structure for the final product?
- Is the research, as proposed, likely to get ethics approval?
- Are there any spelling, grammar, punctuation, or presentation features that interfere with coherence and clarity?
- Is APA formatting consistent and appropriately applied?