# Improvement of Research Proposal Writing Skills for PSDKU USU Lecturers in North Nias

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

The Tridharma of Higher Education mandates that higher education institutions conduct education, research, and community service (Article 1, Clause 9, Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education). Research is a methodical endeavor that adheres to scientific principles and methodologies to collect information, facts, and explanations pertinent to the comprehension and/or examination of a field within science and technology. The USU Abdimas Team's community service is to consistently educate and support academics at PSDKU USU Nias Utara, hence addressing the research aspect of the Tridharma of Higher Education. The given materials are: (1). The resources seek to elucidate research concepts and offer guidance on building a well-structured proposal in accordance with scientific standards and research ethics. Two. The procedure for formulating a suitable proposal grounded in scientific principles and research ethics is addressed in the section. Three. Investigating local potential to be elevated as research topics, and (4). There are techniques for forging links in research initiatives. The aforementioned four materials are considered particularly advantageous for cultivating a research culture among academics at PSDKU USU Nias Utara. This commences with improving their expertise in research planning, hence facilitating the execution of the SDGs point 4 initiative, Quality Education. Quality Education is a fundamental component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Due to the time limitations of in-person training, mentoring has transitioned online, with the anticipation that the training participants will generate many high-quality research proposal drafts.

**Keyword:** Research Proposal, Scientific Writing, Local Wisdom, Research Ethics

## 1. Introduction

The Study Program Outside the Main Campus (PSDKU) of USU in North Nias is one of the vocational-based higher education institutions under the auspices of USU. The legal basis for the teaching and learning activities at PSDKU USU, located in Lotu, North Nias, is the Cooperation Agreement between the North Nias Regency Government and the University of North Sumatra, Number: 180/07/PKS/HK/2021, Number: 4510/UN5.2.1.3/KPM/2021, dated September 10, 2021. The above agreement is an elaboration of the Ristekdikti Ministerial Regulation No. 1 of 2017 regarding the transformation of community academies into PSDKU. Currently, the number of permanent local lecturers at PSDKU USU is 15, and the number of non-permanent local lecturers is 12. According to information from the Coordinator of PSDKU USU Nias Utara, none of these lecturers have ever conducted research activities [1][2]. According to Law No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, every lecturer in Indonesia is required to conduct research in addition to teaching and community service. Research generally requires three steps: planning the research (proposal), conducting the research, and reporting the research [3]. The proposal is a crucial initial step that determines the quality of the

research itself. To ensure effective execution and valid results, a high-quality research proposal necessitates the consideration of various important factors [4]. Here are the steps you need to follow: (1). The title must be clear and specific, reflecting the content and purpose of the research. A well-crafted title will offer a concise summary of the research topic. (2). The study aims to establish a robust background for the research subject, elucidate its significance, and pinpoint the particular issues that require attention. The study encompasses a comprehensive literature review, which validates the presence of a knowledge gap that necessitates resolution. (3). Describe the goals this research aims to accomplish. These objectives must be specific, measurable, and achievable within the scope of the proposed research. (4). The hypothesis statement must be specific and testable. The hypothesis demonstrates the expected correlation between the variables under investigation. (5). Describe the research design in detail, taking into account the type of research (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed), the data collection methods (interviews, surveys, experiments, observations, etc.), the population and sample, and the data analysis techniques. The methodology must be logical and adequate to answer the research questions. (6). The timeline should be realistic and encompass all phases of the research, such as data collection, data analysis, and report writing. (7). The research requires a comprehensive budget plan that addresses all financial requirements, including equipment, travel expenses, participant incentives, and more (8). The research results are expected to yield benefits for science, practice, and policies related to the research topic. (9). The task involves anticipating potential risks during the research, devising strategies to mitigate them, and identifying potential obstacles that could impact the execution and outcomes of the study. The task involves anticipating potential risks during the research, devising strategies to mitigate them, and identifying potential obstacles that could impact the research's implementation and outcomes [5][6][7]. Nias, an archipelagic region with diverse natural and cultural wealth, remains largely unexplored and underutilized. As a coastal area, Nias Island undoubtedly possesses significant potential for natural tourism, food, and various local wisdoms, all of which can contribute to the economic development of the island.Nias Island has established 4 regencies and 1 city, namely Nias Regency, North Nias Regency, South Nias Regency, West Nias Regency, and Gunungsitoli City [8]. Until now, neither students nor lecturers in the Nias Islands have conducted many studies that directly address the local wisdom potential of the Nias region, unlike the lecturers at PSDKU USU in North Nias. In fact, the academics at PSDKU USU in North Nias, who work in the vocational field, possess significant potential to study the local wisdom of North Nias economy [9]. This could potentially lead to the emergence of potentials that directly enhance the welfare of the North Nias community.

Both PSDKU USU lecturers in North Nias require direct mentoring to guide their research, whether it takes the form of student theses or faculty research, in order to make local wisdom an engaging subject of study. The training is expected to broaden perspectives and stimulate the emergence of interesting ideas to elevate local wisdom as a research object [10]. The mentoring will also focus on exploring aspects of Nias local wisdom that align with the study fields of PSDKU USU lecturers in North Nias. Given the challenges faced by the partner previously mentioned, the service team, in collaboration with the partner, aims to address these issues by enhancing the capabilities of PSDKU USU lecturers in North Nias, particularly in the area of research proposal writing. This solution also facilitates the implementation of the SDGs point 4 program, Quality Education, which is a key component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This program is based on awareness of the importance of quality education as a key factor in sustainable development [11][12].

## 2.   Methods
The implementation of community service at PSDKU USU Nias Utara was carried out on July 2, 2024, followed by online training targeting all lecturers and students at PSDKU USU Nias Utara.The following methods are employed in this community service:

1. Inviting resource persons to explain various local wisdom.
2. Conducting training on designing research proposals based on local wisdom.
3. Providing continuous online mentoring.

## 3.   Result and Discussion
Lecturers at PSDKU USU Nias Utara need to improve both the quality and quantity of their research proposals. As is well known, Nias possesses the potential to utilize local wisdom as a valuable data source for conducting research. The community service team believes that fostering a culture of proposal writing through training and mentoring approaches is crucial for achieving high-quality and increased quantity of higher education's tridharma.The community service team's arrival at the partner location marks the first step towards a face-to-face meeting with all PSDKU USU Nias Utara lecturers.

**Figure 1.** USU Service Team

The implementation of community service activities through training and discussion methods. The three proposing teams each presented different materials according to their areas of expertise. Saharman Gea presented material on scholarship information, Iskandar Zulkarnain presented material on why research is important, and Rahmawaty presented material on an introduction to research proposals. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions or discuss the presented topics in between the presentation of the materials. The event went well, concluding with a group photo of all participants with the speaker.



**Figure 2.** The Service Team is delivering the training material



**Figure 3.** PSDKU USU North Nias lecturers participating in training

The implementation of this service was highly appreciated by all the participants present, as conveyed by the coordinator of PSDKU USU North Nias, Yulius Zai, in his opening remarks, who emphasized the relevance and positive impact of the program on local development and capacity building within the community.



**Figure 4.** Yulius Zai as the Coordinator of PSDKU USU North Nias is delivering his speech.

After the community service was successfully carried out, the service team, together with all the lecturers of PSDKU USU North Nias, gathered to commemorate the moment through a group photo session, as depicted in Figure 5. This symbolic gesture reflected the spirit of collaboration, commitment, and shared responsibility toward community empowerment.



**Figure 5.** Group photo between the abdimas team members and the training participants

## 4.    Conclusion

The community service activities indicate that this program fosters comprehension and insight into research, facilitating the formulation of sound and accurate recommendations aligned with research principles and ethics. These projects can investigate local possibilities and positively influence partners. Future research must prioritize sustainable practices to cultivate an expansive network for research initiatives.

## 5.    Acknowledgements

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