

Academic Project Studio Step-by-Step Guide

How to plan, write, analyse and submit your final-year project from start to finish, with an example at every stage.

fundpeeps.com · Free for students · Version October 2026

The screens and button names in this guide match the Studio. Examples are illustrations only: use your own topic, data and real sources.

Before you begin

The Academic Project Studio is a workspace that guides you through a final-year project: topic, outline, writing, references, data tables, checks and formatting. It is a helper. You do the thinking, the reading and the writing, and your supervisor decides what is acceptable.

Four ground rules

1. **Your work stays in your browser.** Projects are saved on the device you use, with no account. Download a backup often (Step 13).
2. **Real sources only.** The Studio can only cite sources you add to your library, and it marks unsupported claims as [CITATION NEEDED].
3. **AI suggests, you decide.** Every AI suggestion is shown to you first. Edit it, check it, or reject it.
4. **Honest checks.** The readiness score is a checklist, not a prediction of your grade. There is no plagiarism percentage and no AI-detector score.

The 13 steps

1. **Step 1.** Create your project · Welcome page → Start a new project
2. **Step 2.** Find and confirm your topic · Topic and Problem
3. **Step 3.** Build your outline · Outline
4. **Step 4.** Collect real sources · Literature Library
5. **Step 5.** Write your chapters · Write
6. **Step 6.** Manage citations and references · Citations
7. **Step 7.** Plan your methodology · Methodology
8. **Step 8.** Analyse your data · Data Analyzer
9. **Step 9.** Write Chapter Four · Write
10. **Step 10.** Run the evaluation · Evaluate
11. **Step 11.** Use your supervisor's corrections · Supervisor Corrections
12. **Step 12.** Practise for your defence · Defense Practice
13. **Step 13.** Format and export · Format and Export

The example used in this guide

An HND Business Administration student studying **the effect of mobile money adoption on the monthly income of small retail traders in Ikeja, Lagos**, using a questionnaire with 300 respondents, APA citation style and the standard five-chapter structure. Where a name or number is shown, it is made up to show the format.

How to move around

Use the menu (on a phone, the menu button at the top) to move between screens. The **Dashboard** shows your progress and **Suggested next steps**, so when you are lost, open the Dashboard first.

1

Create your project

Where: **Welcome page** → **Start a new project**

Everything you write is kept in a project. Setting it up properly at the start means the Studio suggests the right chapters, citation style and checks for you.

What to do

1. Open the Academic Project Studio page and press **Start a new project**.
2. Choose your **Level** (for example HND or Undergraduate), your **Institution type**, then type your **Institution, Faculty / School, Department** and **Discipline / course**.
3. Pick the **Citation style** your department requires (APA, Harvard, MLA, Chicago, IEEE, Vancouver or Custom). If you do not know, ask your supervisor now. Changing it later is possible, but it is better to start right.
4. Choose your **Approach** if you know it (quantitative, qualitative, mixed). Leave it if you are unsure.
5. Under **Chapter structure**, keep the suggestion or choose another. The standard five-chapter layout suits most Nigerian ND, HND and BSc projects. Science, engineering and computing projects have their own layouts.
6. If you already have a topic, type it in the **Topic** box. If not, leave it blank. Paste any rules from your department (word limits, compulsory sections) into **Department requirements**.
7. Press **Create project**.

EXAMPLE

Level: HND · Institution type: Polytechnic · Department: Business Administration · Citation style: APA 7th · Approach: Quantitative · Structure: Standard five-chapter. Topic: left blank because the student is still deciding.

TIP

No account is needed and nothing is uploaded. Your project is saved in **this browser on this device**. Open the Studio on the same phone or laptop each time, or use the backup in Step 13.

WATCH OUT

Clearing your browser's data or using a private window can delete your projects. Download a backup often.

A good topic is narrow, measurable and possible to finish in the time you have. This screen helps you shape the topic, the problem statement, the objectives and the research questions.

What to do

1. Open **Topic and Problem** from the menu.
2. If you have no topic, use **Suggest topics with AI**. Tell it your area of interest, your course and any limits (budget, time, access to respondents). It gives ideas to choose from. It does not choose for you.
3. Press **Use this topic** beside the idea you like, then edit the wording until it is clear and specific.
4. Write your **Statement of the problem**: what is going wrong or missing, who is affected, and why it matters. Keep it to a short paragraph.
5. List your **Objectives** (one per line) and your **Research questions** (one per line). Each objective should match one question. Add **Hypotheses** only if your work uses them.
6. Set **Topic status** to show whether your supervisor has approved it. Use **Check against objectives** to see whether anything does not line up.

EXAMPLE TOPIC

The Effect of Mobile Money Adoption on the Monthly Income of Small Retail Traders in Ikeja, Lagos.

EXAMPLE OBJECTIVE

To determine the relationship between mobile money use and the monthly income of small retail traders in Ikeja.

MATCHING QUESTION

Is there a significant relationship between mobile money use and the monthly income of small retail traders in Ikeja?

MATCHING HYPOTHESIS

H0: There is no significant relationship between mobile money use and monthly income.

TIP

Words like *effect*, *relationship*, *difference*, *extent* help you pick a method later. If an objective cannot be measured, rewrite it.

WATCH OUT

Always show your supervisor the topic before you build on it. Mark it approved only after they agree.

3

Build your outline

Where: **Outline**

The outline is the skeleton of your project: chapters and the headings inside them. Writing is much easier once this is settled.

What to do

1. Open **Outline**. Your chapters from the structure you chose are already there.
2. Press **Apply template** to switch structure, or use **Add chapter** and **Add heading** to build your own.
3. Use the **↑** and **↓** buttons to reorder. Rename anything to match your department's guide.
4. Not sure what goes under a chapter? Press **Suggest headings (AI)** for ideas, then keep only what fits.
5. When you are happy, press **Open chapter** beside Chapter One to start writing.

EXAMPLE CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction · 2.2 Conceptual Review (mobile money, income) · 2.3 Theoretical Framework (Diffusion of Innovation) · 2.4 Empirical Review · 2.5 Research Gap · 2.6 Summary

TIP

Follow your department's handbook. If it differs from the template, your handbook wins.

Your literature review is only as good as your sources. The Library finds real papers and keeps every source you plan to cite. The Studio can only cite what is in your library, and it never makes up references.

What to do

1. Open **Literature Library**. In **Find sources**, type a key phrase and choose a **Published from year** (the last 10 years is a good rule).
2. Press **Search**. Results come from the OpenAlex database. Read the title and abstract, then press **Add to library** for the useful ones.
3. Press **Verify** on any source to confirm with Crossref that it really exists and the details match. Verified sources show a mark.
4. Have a textbook or a source you found elsewhere? Use **Add a source by hand**. Fill in the authors (one per line, Family name, Given names), year, title and where it was published. Paste the abstract if you have it and use **Fill from abstract**.
5. For each source, use **Edit** to record the chapter it mostly concerns, its key concepts and the theory it uses. This builds your **gap matrix**.
6. When you have six to ten sources on a topic, press **Draft a short synthesis from my sources (AI)** to see how they relate. You must still read the sources yourself.

SEARCH PHRASES

mobile money adoption small traders Nigeria · financial inclusion informal sector income · digital payments retail business performance

TIP

Add sources as you read, not at the end. Tag every source with a chapter and a theme straight away.

WATCH OUT

A source with no author, year or title is a red flag. If **Verify** cannot find it, check your own typing first, then ask your supervisor.

This is the main editor. Write one heading at a time, add citations as you go, and save versions so you can go back.

What to do

1. Open **Write** and choose the chapter from the list. Your headings from the outline are in place.
2. Type your text under each heading. The toolbar gives you bold, italic, underline, headings (H2, H3), lists, tables, undo and redo.
3. To cite, put the cursor where the citation belongs and press **Cite**. Choose one or more sources. The in-text citation appears in your chosen style, and the reference list updates by itself.
4. Stuck? Use **Write this chapter** or **Review this chapter**. The AI gives a suggestion which you can accept, edit or **Reject**. Facts it cannot support are marked **[CITATION NEEDED]**. Find a real source for each one or delete the sentence.
5. Press **Save version** before big changes. Open **Versions** to restore an earlier copy.
6. Watch the word count and the Chapter note at the top to remember what is left to do.

YOUR OWN WRITING

Mobile money has changed how small traders receive payment in Lagos markets. Traders who accept transfers report fewer cash handling problems (Author, 2022).

WHY THIS WORKS

The claim is specific, it is in your own words, and the citation points to a source in your library.

TIP

Write a rough version first, then improve it. Short, clear sentences score better than long, complicated ones.

WATCH OUT

Do not paste AI text and submit it. The text must be edited into your own words and checked against sources. Your supervisor and your school decide what AI help is allowed.



Manage citations and references

Where: **Citations**

This screen controls how every citation and reference looks, and checks that nothing is missing.

What to do

1. Open **Citations**. Confirm the **Style** is what your department requires. Changing it reformats every citation and reference in one go.
2. Look at the generated reference list. It is sorted correctly for the style (alphabetical for APA, Harvard, MLA; numbered for IEEE and Vancouver).
3. Read the **Reference checks**. They show sources you listed but never cited, citations that point to missing sources, and references with missing details.
4. Fix each item with **Edit**, then go back and read the list once more.
5. Use **Copy list** if you need the reference list elsewhere. The Word export includes it already.

APA FORMAT

Surname, A. B. (Year). Title of the article. Journal Name, volume(issue), pages. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

IN TEXT (APA)

(Surname, 2022) or Surname (2022) argues that...

TIP

Check a few references against the original source. Software formats, but only you can confirm that the details are right.

7

Plan your methodology

Where: **Methodology**

Choose a design that fits your objectives, then work out your sample size with a recognised formula.

What to do

1. Open **Methodology**. Under **Choose your approach**, press **Explain suitable design (AI)** to learn which designs fit your objectives. Discuss the choice with your supervisor.
2. In the **Sample size calculator**, enter your population. Choose **Yamane (1967)**, **Cochran (1977)** or **Krejcie & Morgan (1970)**, whichever your department accepts.
3. For Yamane, set the margin of error (0.05 is common). For Cochran, set the confidence level, expected proportion and margin of error.
4. Press **Add the formula** if you want the working shown, then **Insert statement into methodology chapter** to place a ready paragraph in Chapter Three.
5. Use **Generate questions from my project (AI)** or **Add standard questions** to start your questionnaire, then edit it for your study.

YAMANE EXAMPLE

Population 1,200 traders, margin of error 0.05: $n = 1200 / (1 + 1200 \times 0.05^2) = 300$.

STATEMENT INSERTED

The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, giving 300 respondents.

TIP

Always state the formula, the population and the margin of error. Examiners look for these.

WATCH OUT

The formula assumes a simple random sample. If your sampling is different, explain why in the sampling section.



Analyse your data

Where: **Data Analyzer**

After collecting questionnaires, put the answers in a spreadsheet and analyse them here. Everything is calculated in your browser. Nothing is sent to a server or to the AI.

What to do

1. Prepare your file: one **row per respondent**, one **column per question**, and the question names in the first row. Save as **Excel (.xlsx)** or **CSV**. Old .xls files must be saved as .xlsx first.
2. Open **Data Analyzer** and press **Import your data**. For Excel, choose the sheet and the row that holds your column names (the Studio guesses it, and you can change it), then press **Import**.
3. Check the **Columns** table: every column should have the right type (numeric or categorical). Read any yellow warnings.
4. In **Analyse**, pick the analysis: frequency and percentage table, descriptive statistics, cross-tabulation or, if installed, a statistical test (t-test, ANOVA, chi-square, correlation).
5. Choose the column or columns, give the table a **Title**, then press **Analyse**. Tables and charts appear.
6. Press **Insert table and reading** to place the table with a short written reading into your chapter, or **Insert table** for the table only. **Download PNG** saves a chart as an image.

FREQUENCY TABLE

Gender of respondents: Male 142 (47.3%), Female 158 (52.7%), Total 300 (100%).

DESCRIPTIVE

Monthly income (€): Mean 184,500; Median 160,000; SD 92,300; Min 40,000; Max 650,000.

TEST

Pearson correlation between mobile money use (transactions per week) and income: $r = 0.46$, $p < .001$.

TIP

Clean the file before you import: no merged cells, no blank rows in the middle, and the same spelling for the same answer (for example always *Female*, not *female* or *F*).

WATCH OUT

The Studio only calculates what is in your file. It does not fill gaps. Percent-formatted Excel cells import as fractions (25% becomes 0.25), and dates become text like 2025-03-14. Ask your supervisor which test your design needs and check the assumptions listed with each result.

Now explain what the numbers mean. This is where many students lose marks, so go slowly.

What to do

1. Open **Write**, then Chapter Four. Your inserted tables are already in the right sections.
2. Under each table write three things: **what the table shows**, **the main pattern** in a sentence with real figures, and **what it means for the objective**.
3. In **Discussion of Findings**, compare your result with sources from your literature review. Use **Cite** to add them. Say whether your finding agrees or disagrees, and give a reason.
4. Use **Get feedback (AI)** on a section if you want a second opinion, then decide yourself what to keep.

READING A TABLE

Table 4.1 shows that 52.7% of respondents were female and 47.3% were male, so the sample is fairly balanced by gender.

DISCUSSION SENTENCE

The positive relationship ($r = 0.46$) agrees with Author (2022), who found that digital payment use is linked to higher trader income.

TIP

Every table needs a number, a title above it, and a mention in the text.

WATCH OUT

Do not claim more than the data shows. A relationship is not proof of cause.

The Evaluate screen gives you an honest picture of how complete your project is and what to fix. It is a checklist, not a grade.

What to do

1. Open **Evaluate** and press **Run evaluation**.
2. Read the **Readiness** result. Sections that cannot be checked yet are marked **Incomplete** and are left out of the percentage.
3. Open the **Score breakdown** for the seven areas (structure, objectives, literature, method, analysis, referencing and presentation).
4. Read the **Academic integrity check**. It lists claims without sources, text that looks copied from your sources, and other warnings.
5. Press **Go and fix** beside an issue to jump straight to the right place.

EXAMPLE RESULT

Readiness 74% · Incomplete: Chapter Five · Warning: 6 sentences marked [CITATION NEEDED] in Chapter Two.

TIP

Run the evaluation weekly. Small fixes made often are easier than a big rush before the deadline.

WATCH OUT

There is no plagiarism percentage and no AI-detector score here, on purpose. The Studio helps you write original work. Your supervisor and school decide what is acceptable.

Supervisors often give feedback in a message or a marked draft. This screen turns it into a to-do list so nothing is missed.

What to do

1. Open **Supervisor Corrections** and **Add feedback**. Paste the comments as they were given.
2. Press **Split into correction items** to turn the comments into separate tasks.
3. Work through the items. Use **Go** to open the right chapter and **Suggest revision (AI)** if you need an idea.
4. Mark each item done when you have changed the text, and keep the **Deadline** visible.

FEEDBACK PASTED

Objectives are too many. Chapter Two needs more recent sources. Add the questionnaire as an appendix.

TIP

Answer every comment, even if you disagree. If you disagree, explain politely and ask your supervisor to decide.

Be ready for the questions you will probably get at your viva or defence.

What to do

1. Open **Defense Practice**. The questions are based on your own objectives, method and findings.
2. Read each question aloud and answer in two or three sentences. Time yourself.
3. Write short notes for the hard ones: why this topic, why this method, what the main limitation is, what you would do differently.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS

Why did you choose Yamane's formula? What is the main limitation of your study? How do your findings add to existing knowledge?

TIP

Practise with a friend. Explaining aloud shows you what you still do not understand.

Your final step is to produce a clean, correctly formatted document and a backup.

What to do

1. Open **Format and Export**. Fill in the **Title page and preliminary pages**: title, your name, matric number, department, supervisor, month and year, and the declaration, certification and dedication if required. **Use registered details** fills what you entered earlier.
2. Check **Page layout**: font, size and margins to match your department's rules.
3. Press **Download as Word**. Open the file in Word, check the table of contents (right-click it and choose Update Field), and read the whole document once.
4. Need a PDF? Use the PDF option, or open the Word file and save as PDF.
5. Press **Download project backup** and keep the file somewhere safe (email it to yourself or put it in Google Drive). To continue later or on another device, use **Restore from backup**.

FILE NAMES

Surname_FirstName_MatricNo_Project_Final.docx and Surname_Project_backup_2026-10-18.json

TIP

Print one page first to check margins before printing the whole project.

WATCH OUT

Never rely on one copy. Back up after every long writing session.

Suggested timetable

Adjust to your deadline. The point is to do a little every week and to show your supervisor each stage.

Weeks	Focus	Steps
1–2	Topic approved, outline built	1–3
3–5	Collect sources, write Chapters One and Two	4–6
6–7	Methodology, questionnaire, supervisor check	7
8–10	Collect data	8
11–12	Analyse data, write Chapters Four and Five	8–9
13	Evaluate, fix, supervisor corrections	10–11
14	Defence practice, format, export, backup	12–13

Final checklist before you submit

- ☐ Topic and objectives approved by my supervisor
- ☐ Every objective has a matching research question and a result
- ☐ No [CITATION NEEDED] left, and every reference checked
- ☐ Every in-text citation is in the reference list, and the other way round
- ☐ Tables and figures numbered, titled and discussed
- ☐ Evaluation run again with no serious warnings
- ☐ Title page, declaration and contents page complete
- ☐ Word file read from start to finish
- ☐ Backup file saved in two places

Common problems

Problem	What to do
My project disappeared.	Projects live in one browser on one device. Check you are on the same browser and not in a private window, then use Restore from backup if you saved one.
The AI says it is not available or limited.	The service has a fair-use limit. Wait a few minutes and try again. The rest of the Studio works without AI.
Search finds nothing.	Use fewer, simpler keywords. Remove the year filter. Try a different phrase.
My Excel file will not import.	Save as .xlsx (not .xls), remove password protection, and check that the file is under 12 MB and 20,000 rows. As a last option, save the sheet as CSV.
Numbers show as text.	Remove symbols and spaces from number columns (for example write 150000, not ₦150,000) and import again.
The table of contents in Word is empty.	In Word, right-click the table of contents and choose Update Field , then Update entire table .

Need more help? Visit fundpeeps.com and use the contact page. Fundpeeps provides study tools, not academic supervision, and cannot guarantee a grade.