

Format and Contents of Research Proposals for The School of Sports Science, Exercise and Health

All Research Proposals should be divided into following sections and formatted as set out below, and should be no more than fifteen pages long. [You can save a copy of rtf file of this web page by going to this link.](#)

A. PROPOSED STUDY

1. Cover Page

A cover page ([template available here](#)) needs to be created with the following details:

- **Banner on the top of the cover page**
- Title:
- Degree:
- Faculty:
- School:
- Student Name:
- Student Number:
- Supervisor[s]:
- Date and Time of Presentation:

2. Introduction

This provides a very brief overview of the study, and should not exceed 1 page in length. It should include of a brief statement of the research question(s) or aims to be studied and outline the need for the proposed study in terms of its anticipated contribution to the field. The suggested subheadings for the Introduction are

- **General Aims:** The general problem or questions that will be answered by the proposed research.
- **Background:** This is to be a brief statement of the current state of knowledge of the area of study.
- **Methods and Procedures:** Briefly describe the overall methods and procedures and how these address the general aims.
- **Significance:** The significance of the proposed research should be described and should also address the required scope for either the Master or PhD study. The scopes for these are

A **Masters study** must be a "substantial work generally based on independent research which shows a sound knowledge of the subject of the research, evidence of the exercise of some independence of thought and the ability of expression in clear and concise language". The justification of the study will state how the proposed study is expected to fulfil this requirement.

A **PhD study** must make a "substantial and original contribution to scholarship, such as the discovery of new knowledge, the formulation of theories, or the innovative re-interpretation of known data and established ideas". The justification of the study will state how the proposed study will fulfil this requirement, i.e., a statement of the need for the proposed study in terms of its anticipated contribution to the field.

B. RESEARCH PLAN

The research topic should have been defined to the mutual satisfaction of the candidate and the supervisor(s). The supervisor(s) should assist the candidate in preparing a framework for the research with a detailed time-plan including estimated dates of completion of its various phases bearing in mind that the maximum period of candidacy is four years (full-time) for PhD, two years (full-time) for a Masters, and one year (full-time) for Honours. This will ensure that all parties have a template for monitoring the progress of the research and a positive orientation to the timely completion of the thesis.

1. Background

The background should put the proposed study in its historical and/or experimental context and then indicate the rationale for the study. The background should also state as precisely as possible the question(s) which the proposed study is designed to answer, any expectations and/or hypotheses which have been formulated, and what the significance of the findings are likely to be.

An example of sub-headings are:

- **Literature Review:** This is to be a brief overview of the literature that identifies current state of knowledge of the area of study. It should lead the reader through to what is known and what is not known about the area and lead to the specific aims of the project (see next).
- **Specific aims:** The problem(s) it hopes to solve or particular question(s) it will answer.
- **Hypotheses:** If a substantial theoretical basis is considered to underlie the research problem, hypotheses may be generated. Otherwise, the student is encouraged to develop a set of logically related propositions that may ultimately formulate a theory, or test an existing theory.

- **Delimitations and Limitations:** Any known delimitations placed on the study for the purpose of controlling its scope and the effects of related influences. Any known weaknesses or limitations placed on the studies that are beyond the control of the researcher, or the result of imposed delimitations.
- **Definition of Terms:** Any term regularly used throughout the text that might not have common every day usage.

2. Methods and Procedures

This section should cover the design, specification of independent and dependent variables, type and number of subjects to be used, the materials and the apparatus to be used, and the procedure(s) to be followed. Pilot study data may be included if available. Finally, the proposed method of statistical analysis should be specified.

Suggested sub-headings for experimental research are:

- **Sample:** the characteristics of the sample to be studied including stages of selection and the population group of which it is representative. The statistical power of the study should be addressed with respect to sample size.
- **Procedures:** the logical steps to be undertaken in the chosen research design including both the sequence of procedures and instrumentation involved. To ensure that the proposed experiments are achievable, this section should assess what similar projects have been undertaken here or elsewhere and if similar methods been used previously. The rationale for the used of the methods and procedures should be discussed.
- **Research Design and Data Analysis:** the organisation of the research problem in terms of relationships to be tested (dependent and independent variables) and statistical treatments to be applied (e.g., ANOVA factors and levels of analysis; multiple regression-path analysis; etc.)

The "Methods and Procedures" section also needs to state what efforts have been made to ensure the project does not duplicate work that has already been done.

3. Time-plan of Research Activity

- Literature review period
- Data collection period
- Data analysis schedule
- First draft of results section completed

- Target date of completion/submission

4. Agreed tasks to be achieved for Formal Confirmation of PhD Candidature (for PhD students only)

The student and supervisor must set a series of tasks or milestones that the student has to achieve within the first year (or full time equivalent) of candidature. The agreed milestones and timeframe have to be included in this research proposal, and have to be achieved for the student's Formal Confirmation of PhD Candidature at the end of the first year (or full time equivalent). Achievement of these tasks will be reported on in the student's first Annual Progress Report. [The following web page has the formal agreement document with suggested milestones.](#)

C. SCHOLARS

Identify some leading scholars in the field, particularly some whose published work you have had occasion to study. If possible, include at least one from Australia.

D. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Candidates should show familiarity with the literature in the field.

E. FACILITIES

In addition to confirming that proper supervision is available for the project, please comment on any other requirements, for example:

1. Existing Laboratory Usage:
 - a. Please identify the laboratories and facilities that will be used.
 - b. Please assess how much time will be required to perform the proposed studies in the various laboratories and facilities. An example of the table to be created for the Laboratory Usage is as follows

Laboratory	Activity	Hours per week	Estimated Dates of Activity

c.

2. Special Equipment: If not already available, how it will be obtained.
3. Special Techniques: May be required and if so, what are these and what

staff expertise is available for assistance?

4. Special Literature: If not available from the Library, how will it be obtained?
5. Statistical Advice: This section needs a statement on statistical advice, which should be in the form
"The School of Sport Science, Exercise and Health has appointed specialist academics who can provide statistical advice as required for proper design and analysis of the experiments proposed in this research proposal"

F. HIGHER DEGREE RESEARCH PROPOSAL BUDGET FORM

Below is the Higher Degrees Research Proposal Budget form. Please ensure that this is completed as accurately as possible and attached to your presentation document.

http://www.sseh.uwa.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/582526/HD_Proposal_sheet.pdf

G. CONFIDENTIALITY & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

If your thesis is likely to contain information of a confidential nature, the matter must be drawn to the attention of the Board of the Graduate Research School from the outset, or as soon as it becomes apparent. The Board's attention must also be drawn to any intellectual property issues that need to be considered, including any existing intellectual property of value that is pertinent to the research and to any agreements that may affect the candidate's right to intellectual property arising out of the research.

A simple guide for Research students as to confidentiality and intellectual property issues is available at <http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/policies>

Candidates who are likely to be affected by matters concerning confidentiality or intellectual property should familiarise themselves with Rules 3.1.24- 3.1.30 of the University General Rules for Academic Courses, General Provisions for Research Higher Degrees (by thesis) and with the University's Intellectual Property Policy. Both are available on the WWW at <http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/policies>

H. APPROVALS

The Head of School is required to certify on the Research Proposal that all necessary approvals in relation to it have been obtained from the appropriate

University committees. Approvals will be required prior to the use of animals, the participation of human subjects, genetic manipulation, potentially biohazardous procedures and situations, the use and disposal of potent teratogens and carcinogens, the use of ionising radiation, or other matters of a hazardous nature. It is the responsibility of the candidate, the supervisor and the Head of School to ensure that appropriate approvals have been obtained. Similarly, it is essential that all required safety and other training is complete prior to the commencement of research.

A human research ethics proposal must be submitted at the same time as, or immediately after, the Research Proposal has been submitted to the SSEH Higher Degree Committee. Please use the SSEH Human Research Ethics procedures on the SSEH web site. The address for this is <http://www.research.uwa.edu.au/staff/human-research>.

CHECK WITH DL AND BL FOR NEW PROCEDURE – THEY SHOULD HAVE IT.

All work to be carried on animals needs ethical approval from the UWA Animal Ethics Committee. [The procedures for these are accessed on the UWA web site](#).