

Confirmation of Candidature

Candidate Guidelines

Written Proposal Guidelines

Proposals should be written within the guidelines below and should be between 5,000 and 10,000 words. Words in excess of 10,000 will not be considered. The literature review, footnotes, tables and figure captions and bibliography are included in the Confirmation of Candidature written proposal word count.

Students are encouraged to run their proposal through a plagiarism detection program such as 'Turnitin' which is available through Moodle, before submission, to assist in establishing academic integrity.

Title of thesis

The title should be as brief as possible whilst giving a clear indication of the major thrust of the thesis. The title given at the time of confirmation may be subject to change as the work on the thesis progresses and nears completion; any change will be the subject of a formal request via the Change in Title or Supervisor Form.

Brief overview of the research project

A concise description of the project, which sets out the background to the study, the proposed area of research enquiry, the planned study design, and the anticipated contribution of the study to existing knowledge. This description should briefly clarify the epistemological basis of the study, and the underpinning theoretical perspective.

The research question or questions

A precise statement of each of the research questions to be addressed in the study.

Brief overview of relevant literature

An outline of sufficient relevant literature to clarify the context of the study which highlights the paucity of knowledge in the area addressed by the research question(s).

Contribution to the literature provided by the project

A description of the anticipated contribution to knowledge of the project and a summary of the anticipated body of knowledge arising from the study.

Justification of the significance of the research and how it will contribute to knowledge

This section should explain why the study is important, what significant problems it will address, and what the expected outcomes are likely to be. This explanation should focus on the beneficial nature of the theoretical and/or applied outcomes resulting from the expanded knowledge base.

Research approach and method(s) to be used

A description of the overall study design, and the methods to be used in the collection and analysis of data. This section should include a brief statement of the methodological framework that governs the use of these methods.

Justification of the research approach and methods

A brief explanation of the rationale behind the choice of research methodology and a justification of the data collection methods. This explanation should make it clear why the chosen methodology is the most appropriate for investigating the research problem and answering the research question(s) and why the chosen methods are most appropriate for the data collection.

For creative works, computer software etc., demonstration of the links among the practical works and the exegesis

An explanation of the links between the various practical works, and between the practical works and the thrust of the exegesis.

Ethical issues raised by the project and details of progress through ethics approval if appropriate

An outline of any ethical issues associated with the conduct of the research and a brief description of how these issues will be addressed, and progress towards obtaining ethics approval.

Timetable for completion of the project

A listing of the major milestones of the study including the literature review, ethics approval, data collection, data analysis, thesis write-up, and thesis submission, and the estimated target date for completion of each item.

A one page Proposed Project Budget and anticipated Funding Source(s) (Note: confirmation of candidature does not constitute approval of the proposed budget)

A listing of the major budget items involved in conducting the study (such as travel, equipment, expendables (e.g. survey distribution, chemicals, glassware), research support (e.g. assistance in administering surveys, transcription) and the anticipated costs associated with each item. Details of confirmed or anticipated sources of funding to meet these costs should also be included where possible.

Note: 'Research' is taken to include scholarship and creative works as appropriate to the discipline, as well as empirical research.

Note: If the proposal contains confidential material the candidate and his/her supervisors should seek advice from Research Services.

Oral Presentation Guidelines

The oral presentation will be for no more than 25 minutes and should:

- Be clearly and succinctly presented so as to be understandable to those not necessarily expert in the specific discipline.

- Indicate a clear engagement with, and understanding of, the research topic.
- Engage the audience: this is not likely to be achieved by a straight reading from a prepared script.
- Make use of technology, as appropriate, to assist with the achievement of the previous three points.
- Be cross referenced to the written proposal with a view to elaborating on and clarifying important aspects of the research, in particular:
 - the research question and associated objectives/questions/hypotheses;
 - how the research will address gaps in the literature and make a substantial contribution to knowledge;
 - why the chosen research approach and methodology/methodologies is most appropriate;
 - the theoretical basis of the research where appropriate;
 - the systematic line of enquiry and investigation being developed in cases where the research component of the program will consist of a series of research reports and an exegesis.

The presentation will be followed by a period (of approximately 15-20 minutes duration) of questioning. It is important that answers are concise and directed at the question(s).

Questions to be considered

The Confirmation Panel's task is to determine if the candidate 'has developed a viable PhD research program, made satisfactory progress, and is able to complete degree requirements within the period allowed' (Regulation 5.1 Doctor of Philosophy, section 6).

The following statements are considered by the Panel to assist with their deliberations:

1. The candidate is working with a significant/important research issue.
2. The candidate has developed a clear and focused research question, and sub-questions where appropriate
3. The candidate has displayed a critical and detailed knowledge and understanding of the relevant literature, and theoretical constructs where appropriate
4. The candidate has demonstrated that the research will make a substantial contribution to knowledge.
5. The candidate has chosen a suitable research approach and methods, and justified the choice convincingly.
6. The candidate has shown awareness of ethical issues and addressed them appropriately.
7. The candidate has provided a clear and realistic timeline for the project.
8. The standard of the oral presentation is appropriate for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy.
9. The standard of the written proposal is appropriate for the degree of the Doctor of Philosophy, including appropriate use of referencing systems as applicable to the discipline.
10. Optional: Where applicable, the candidate has demonstrated the systematic line of enquiry being developed with the practical work(s) and has indicated how those works will link to the exegesis
11. The Panel is confident that the candidate will complete in the minimum period.