



Preparation of Research Proposals in Research Degrees

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#), and Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#).

A. Research Proposal Overview

1. Before the expiration of a maximum of three (3) months full-time study (Master of Research students) or six (6) months full-time study (PhD students), the research degree student must develop, and subsequently maintain, a comprehensive Research Proposal. A Research Proposal is designed to provide a structure and time frame for a student's research program and can be used to assess the student's progress at times of review. The Research Proposal should indicate how the student intends, in performing the research project, to elaborate the [Research Degree Graduate Qualities](#).

B. Research Proposals Sections

2. The proposal should contain the following sections, and should normally be 10 to 20 pages in total length.

- a. **Statement of the Research Topic and Rationale for the Research.**

This section should typically include the following details.

- i. Introduction in which the research degree student states the nature of the topic, why it is considered important and how the research will contribute to its solution. This section should also include a proposed thesis title and the ratio of written to creative work components, where relevant. The proposed creative work(s) should be of a nature agreed with the Supervisory Panel and Research Degree Coordinator.
- ii. Review of relevant research and theory, an integrated statement that affords some explanation of why the literature and creative works cited are important to the research the student proposes to undertake.
- iii. The Research Topic (or Hypothesis). The research topic should be clearly stated and provide clear indication of the focus of the research project.
- iv. Subsidiary Issues, which like the research topic, may be stated in hypothesis form (where relevant).

- b. **Research Methodology**

- i. A description of the theoretical or conceptual framework to be employed.
- ii. Details of analytical techniques and research design to be used to undertake the research project.
- iii. Timetable or Project Plan for undertaking the research and completing the thesis, including gaining ethics approval and timelines for writing up the thesis. This is included in the Statement of Agreement.

c. **Trial Table of Contents**

This section should normally comprise 1 or 2 pages and has the advantages of indicating to the reader the dimensions of the topic and providing the research degree student with a provisional organisational framework.

d. **Brief Bibliography**

The chief advantages are that it enables the Research Proposal Panel to form an opinion of the quality of the sources available and to suggest any useful references which may have been overlooked. Work on a preliminary bibliography, which may include a creative work review, provides the foundation for the more comprehensive listing which will be incorporated in the final thesis.

Approved by: Academic Board, 27 November 2020

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Enterprise, 20 August 2021 (minor amendments)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Enterprise, 26 October 2023 (minor amendments)