Research Proposal Presentation Guidelines

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<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Faculty Research Committee</th>
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<td>Date approved</td>
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<td>Date effective</td>
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<td>Responsible staff</td>
<td>Heads of Postgraduate Studies</td>
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<td>Research Training Director</td>
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<td>Supporting documents, procedures &amp; forms of this policy</td>
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<td>References &amp; Legislation</td>
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Introduction

This document sets out the guidelines on the procedures for the first year research proposal review to be followed within the Faculty of Social Sciences. The guidelines are to be used in accordance with the UOW Research Students Progress Review Guidelines: http://www.uow.edu.au/research/rsc/student/UOW101219.html

Purpose

The research proposal presentation is an important milestone in research training. It provides an opportunity for the students to communicate their research ideas to an audience and receive feedback on the plans from fellow research students and experienced academics. Higher degree research students are required to give a presentation of their research proposals within the first year of their candidature. The presentation is required within the first 6-12 months for full time doctoral students and 12-18 months for part time students. Master of Philosophy (MPhil) students should complete their review presentation within the first 6 months for full time students and 12 months for part time students.

The student’s continuation of candidature is dependent upon the satisfactory confirmation of the proposal review. All research students should not proceed to data collection until after their research proposals have been reviewed and confirmed.

Procedures

The student, in consultation with supervisors, is to contact the HPS to arrange for a proposal to be presented. This should be done a minimum of four weeks prior to the preferred presentation date.

A research proposal (up to twenty pages) must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the presentation, which will be circulated to the Review Panel.

A short 100 word abstract must also be supplied for publicising purposes.

Format
Students are to deliver a 30 minute seminar, including 20 minutes of presentation, 10 minutes for questions and comments from the participants and the review panel. The panel will then meet to discuss the appropriateness of the research project for the degree and quality of the proposal and presentation in light of the criteria set out in the UOW Research Proposal Review Form.

The format of the proposal will vary from discipline to discipline but it should comprise the following main sections:

- **Cover page** with details of the title, name, student numbers, degree sought, name of the supervisors.
- **Abstract** with a summary that describes the problem under investigation, the location of the research in the literature, methods to be used to collect and analyse the data, and the likely outcomes and implications of the research.
- **Introduction** – covers the following aspects of the study:
  - *Background* – outline a preliminary literature review of the topic.
  - *Problem or purpose of the study* – describe the problem which gave rise to the research.
  - *Research questions or hypotheses* – outline a clear statement of research questions and/or hypotheses that the research is designed to address.
  - *Significance of the study* – discuss why the research is significant and whether the research addresses an important problem. Describe how the anticipated outcomes will advance the knowledge base of the discipline and why the project aims are novel and innovative.
- **Literature review** – argue (a) why your proposed study needs to be done, and (b) that it needs to be done in the way that you propose to do it, i.e. using the methodology that you propose to use.
- **Theoretical or conceptual framework** – identify the theoretical concepts and principles and philosophical assumptions underpinning the study; and/or variables impacting on the research questions and their inter-relationships.
- **Research design and methods** – describe research design and methods and demonstrate that these are adequately developed, well integrated and appropriate to the aims of the project.
- **Ethical, intellectual property and safety considerations** – identify any such issues relevant to the project and how these will be addressed, and any potential problems likely to impede progress and suggest solutions to these problems.
- **Thesis outline and proposed timeframe** – outline the likely thesis structure and a brief timeline indicating how you will approach the task and complete it.
- **Resources** – identify any materials, training, travel or access to infrastructure required for completion of the project. Specify sources of funding that will cover these costs.
- **References** – include a list of all cited references.

**Composition of the Review Panel**

The first year proposal presentation will be reviewed by a panel of at least four members. The panel will consist of principal and co-supervisors, and two members of academic staff with relevant expertise from within the School, Faculty, and/or other areas of the University, who are deemed appropriate by the supervisors. Where appropriate, a person external to the academic or research unit may be nominated to the panel. Where there is only one supervisor attending the review, a third academic should be appointed to the panel. One panel member is to be nominated as the Chair. This is generally the more senior member of the two appointed academics.

A student representative should be nominated to observe the process and provide support. The student would be the one who has successfully presented his/her first year proposal. The student will not participate in the panel discussion.
**Recommendations**

Based on the quality of the oral and written presentations, and panel discussions, the Chair of the Panel will complete and sign the Research Proposal Review Form in discussion with the panel members. The review report will outline strengths and specific areas in which the proposal is satisfactory or unsatisfactory, making recommendations for improvement.

Results of the review assessment will be communicated verbally to the student after the panel discussions, at which point the student will be asked to sign a copy of the Research Proposal Review Form to acknowledge receipt. A written notification letter from the HPS together with the Review Form will be sent to the student within 5 working days.

Recommendations may include one of the following options:

- **Full acceptance** of the proposal
- **Conditional acceptance** of the proposal subject to written revisions to the satisfaction of the panel or supervisors
- **Re-review of the proposal in 3 months**: If the proposal is deemed unsatisfactory, the student will be given a second opportunity to revise and present within 3 months of the first review as designated by panel. If the second review is also deemed unsatisfactory, the panel may make a recommendation to the Executive Dean regarding the student’s continuation of candidature. Recommendations may include one or a combination of these recommendations, including change of supervisor(s), change of topic, downgrading of degree (from PhD to MPhil), probation, or termination of candidature.

**Appeals**

The student will receive a written notification of the final outcome of the review from the HPS or Head of School (where the HPS is a supervisor) within five (5) working days.

The student has the right to appeal the panel decision. The appeal must be lodged in writing to the HPS or Head of School within ten (10) working days of receiving written notification of the decision and clearly state the reasons for the appeal and include any supporting evidence. The grounds normally considered for an appeal include lack of due process in the review process, evidence of prejudice or bias during the review process, or additional/new information.

If no informal resolution can be found within the School the student can launch a formal appeal (Stage 2) following guidelines in the HDR Academic Grievance Policy ([http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW058652.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW058652.html)). This includes informal resolution in Stage 1 (in writing to HPS); Stage 2: formal resolution within Faculty (in writing to Research Training Director or Associate Dean Research); Stage 3: Student Ombudsman; Stage 4: HDR Appeals Committee.

**Related Documents and References**

The student will be sent the following documents upon registering for the proposal presentation:

- Guidelines on Research Proposal Presentation
- HDR Research Proposal Review Report

Two weeks prior to the presentation date, panel members will receive:

- HDR Research Proposal Review Report
- HDR Research Proposal Presentations Instructions for Chair
- A hard copy of the student’s Research Proposal