



Research Proposal Presentation Guidelines

Faculty of Social Sciences

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Responsible staff	Heads of Postgraduate Studies Research Training Director
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy	
References & Legislation	UOW HDR Course Rules
Audience	Internet – public access
Review date	July 2019 and/or if any relevant changes to Course Rules

Introduction

This document sets out the guidelines on the development and presentation of 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 Proposal Review (RPR) Guidelines:

<https://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW238026.html>

Purpose

The Research Proposal Review (RPR) 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 research plans from experienced academics and fellow research students. The RPR is also an important means to ensure that students have the skills, knowledge and supervision arrangements required to complete the project at the standard appropriate to the degree course.

Higher degree research students are required to give a presentation of their research proposal within the first year of their candidature. The University RPR Guidelines require the RPR process be undertaken early in the candidature: a. between 1.0 and 1.5 EFTSL (1-1.5 year full-time enrolment or equivalent) of the thesis component of the degree of doctoral students; b. between .5 and 1 EFTSL of the thesis component of the degree for Master of Philosophy students. See more information outlined in the UOW RPR Guidelines: <https://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/UOW238026.html>

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

Procedures

Students, in consultation with supervisors, are to contact the Faculty Research Proposal Coordinator by emailing social-sciences-research@uow.edu.au to indicate readiness to present the proposal. This should be done a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to the preferred presentation date. Students from School of Health and Society (HAS) are expected to indicate their intent to present the proposal two months prior to the presentation date.

A research proposal (up to twenty pages) must be submitted at least two (2) weeks (four weeks for HAS students) 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 will deliver a 30 minute seminar, including 20 minutes of presentation, and 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 the 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 number, degree sought, names 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* – outlines a preliminary literature review of the topic.
 - *Problem or purpose of the study* – describes the problem which gave rise to the research.
 - *Research questions or hypotheses* – outlines a clear statement of research questions and/or hypotheses that the research is designed to address.
 - *Significance of the study* – discusses why the research is significant and how the research addresses an important problem; describes how the anticipated outcomes will advance the knowledge base of the discipline and why the project aims are novel and innovative.
- *Literature review* – positions the research in relevant contemporary literature through a critical review and analysis of previous research relevant to the chosen topic.
- *Theoretical or conceptual framework* – discusses the theoretical concepts, principles and/or philosophical assumptions underpinning the study; and/or variables impacting on the research questions and their inter-relationships.
- *Research design and methods* – describes research design and methods and demonstrate that these are adequately developed, well integrated and explaining how they are appropriate to the aims of the project.
- *Ethical, intellectual property and safety considerations* – identifies 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* – outlines the likely thesis structure and a brief timeline indicating how you will approach the task and complete it.
- *Resources* – identifies any materials, training, travel or access to infrastructure required for completion of the project. Specify sources of funding that will cover these costs.
- *References* – includes a list of all cited references that follows a style guide used in your discipline.

Composition of the Review Panel

A panel of at least four members will review the research proposal and presentation. The panel will consist of the supervising team, and two panel members with relevant expertise from within the School, Faculty, and/or other areas of the University, who are deemed appropriate by the supervisors and HPS. HPS or a senior academic staff member of the review panel will serve as the Chair of the panel. Where there is only one supervisor attending the review, a third academic should be appointed to the panel.

A peer support person should be nominated to observe the process and provide support. This student will have successfully presented his/her first year proposal. The student will not participate in the panel discussion.

Recommendations

Based on the quality of the written and oral presentations, and panel discussions, the Chair of the Panel will complete 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.

Once panel deliberations are complete, assessment will be communicated verbally to the student. A final outcome letter from the HPS, together with the completed Review Form will be sent to the student and supervisors within five (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
- 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 Associate Dean Research regarding the student's continuation of candidature. Recommendations may include one or a combination of these recommendations: 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 Research (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 Faculty Research Training Director within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the 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 Faculty the student can launch a formal appeal (Stage 2) following guidelines in the HDR Academic Complaints Policy (<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.