


How to build a research proposal


Preparing a strong PhD application

UGC ReD
University of Canberra Research Development

CRICOS #00212K




- What is a research proposal?
- Why do I need one?
- How will the proposal be assessed?
- How do I prepare an effective proposal?



What is a research proposal?


- An outline of the proposed research
- Submitted when applying for admission
- Helps provide evidence of your competency to undertake research at a masters or doctoral level



Why do I need a research proposal?


- Makes your argument for a PhD place
- Demonstrates your:
 - knowledge of the field of proposed research
 - ability to think critically about the current literature
 - proposed research questions and methods

and
How **your** proposed research fits with the research strengths of the University and the supervisor



How is the proposal assessed?


- The nature of the proposed topic
- The fit of the proposed research with an area of the University's research strength
- Availability of appropriate supervision and resources




How do I prepare an effective proposal?

In a maximum of two pages:

- context and justification: the *what?*
- aims of the research: the *why?*
- proposed methodology: the *how?*




- Briefly summarise what is known about this particular topic area
- Critically evaluate that knowledge as it relates to your proposed research in order to present an argument for your proposed research
- Justify that your research is worth doing – what will be the contribution to knowledge?
- Demonstrate how your research fits in with the University's research



A proposal is a persuasive document.

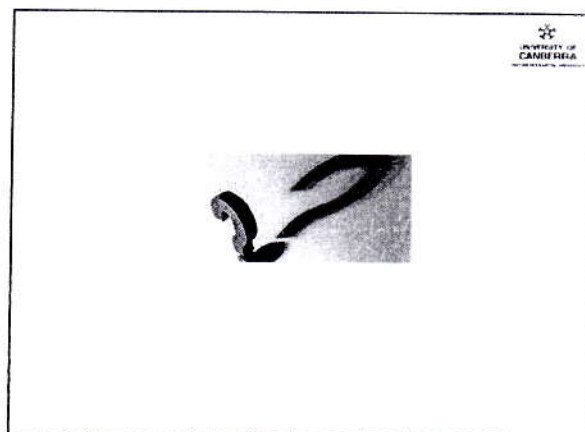
Make it clear that:


- you intend to make a useful contribution to your chosen field of research
- the project is worthwhile
- the project is feasible (data, supervision, resources)
- you have the background, knowledge and resources to do it



Resources, References & Presentation

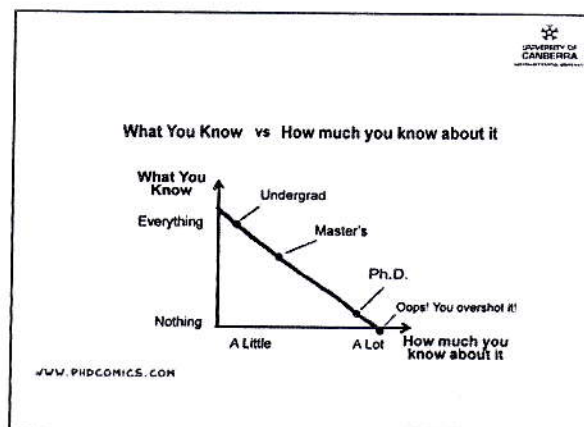
- Discuss any special resources or equipment you may need
- Include references for any literature you have cited
- Presentation is important: a poorly presented proposal will not inspire confidence in your abilities





Finishing your PhD on time

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Developing a thesis plan

Consider

- the overall timeframe for the project
- the project's main stages and deadlines
- the concrete milestones along the way

You can use a Gant Chart, a list, a table
Check planners available from [Thinkwell](#)

- Include enough time for:

- ethics approvals
- data collection
- data analysis
- drafting chapters and/or publications
- getting feedback at each stage
- editing and reviewing the thesis

Know your proposed thesis structure

- What will be the main sections of the thesis?
- Structure differs very much depending on nature of research:
 - For a traditional humanities structure look [here](#)
 - Science theses tend to follow the IMRAD model (introduction, methods, results, and discussion)
 - Creative degrees usually exegesis plus creative work
 - Thesis presented as a collection of publications
 - Thesis including publications
- Look at theses in the library for examples

Tips

- Start to develop your thesis plan from the end – submission date – and work your way backwards
- Develop a timeline that can grow with you as you progress
- Build the plan using deadlines, include [major milestones](#)

- Double the time you *think you need* for tasks such as data collection, analysis and feedback
- Triple the time required for reviewing at the end

Good luck!

