

RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEW

Faculty of Law Guidelines 2009

This document supplements the University of Wollongong 'Higher Degree Research Students Research Proposal Review Guidelines' <www.uow.edu.au/research/> In particular it seeks to:

- clarify what is expected of the candidate in terms of written and oral presentations;
- clarify the composition and role of members of the review committee;
- clarify the process of assessment and the role of the postgraduate research student representative;
- clarify and supplement the assessment criteria.

Research students at the University of Wollongong are expected to present a research proposal after six months of enrolment, and not later than one year after commencement. The proposal is presented at a seminar attended by fellow students, supervisors and other assessors with an understanding of the field and the research involved, decided by the Faculty. This review is also known as the 'Higher Degree Research Proposal Review'.

Format of the presentation and the review process

The research proposal consists of an oral presentation and a written document. At least three copies are required by the Faculty, one for each of the assessors.¹ These are to be provided to the chair of the research proposal review committee 7 days before the scheduled oral presentation. The chair of the review committee is normally the principal supervisor.

The oral presentation must be kept to a time limit (normally 15-20 minutes). The chair of the review committee is to notify the candidate of the time limit of both the presentation and ensuing discussion seven days before the presentation date.

Use and operation of any visual aids are the responsibility of the candidate, and should be tested in situ before the seminar. If a laptop computer and

¹ If there are to be more than three assessors, the chair shall notify the candidate two weeks before the presentation, so that the right number of copies of the written proposal may be provided.

data projector are required these should be booked with the audio-visual store well in advance of the seminar.

The chair of the committee is responsible for keeping the presentation, questions and discussion to time, and may terminate any of these which run over time. Questions may only address the issues raised in the candidate's presentation and the chair may rule certain questions to be irrelevant if they digress. The student is not expected to answer such questions.

Following the oral presentation and public discussion, the chair may, at their own discretion or on the request of the candidate or any assessor, convene a private session with the candidate and the student representative. This is to provide an opportunity for the candidate and assessors to clarify any issues relevant to the assessment.

The final decision and assessment of the research proposal are made through oral or written comments given to the chair of the panel who consolidates these onto the Research Proposal Review Checklist (appendix 1). This is to be given to the student within one week of the oral presentation. The student signs one copy and returns it to the chair, who passes it to the Head of Postgraduate Studies (HPS). The HPS reports the outcomes and resource implications of all research proposal reviews to the FRC, keeps a copy on file and returns the assessment form to the Research Student Centre.

Composition and role of the committee

The research proposal is assessed by a review committee, consisting of the principal supervisor (who normally chairs the panel and the seminar), any co-supervisors, and other appropriate members of academic staff capable of assessing the proposal. The aim is to have a review panel of three members, including at least one member who is not a supervisor or co-supervisor. In the event that a candidate has more than two (co-) supervisors, the panel may be expanded to more than three members.

Appointment and role of the postgraduate research student representative

The postgraduate research student representative is nominated by the candidate. The candidate is to give the name of the student representative (who has agreed to this role) to the chair of the panel 7 days prior to the presentation. The student representative may be any higher degree research student currently enrolled in the Faculty of Law.

The postgraduate research student representative is intended as a support person for the candidate whose research proposal is under review. The student representative is not a member of the Research Proposal Review Committee. The student representative is to be present during the candidate's

presentation and while the candidate is asked questions by the Committee, unless the candidate being reviewed asks that no postgraduate research student representative be present. The postgraduate research student representative can be nominated by the candidate being reviewed: candidates and postgraduate research student representatives should avoid situations that may give rise to a conflict of interest.

Criteria for assessment of research proposal

The review committee shall assess the written and oral aspects of the candidate's research proposal having regard to the following criteria.

Topic should adequately state
the field that it falls into
the specific part of that field which the research will explore
why the topic area is of significance
how the proposed research will contribute to the area

Research questions
should be specific and answerable
must be clearly related to the topic area
must be appropriate to the degree

Literature review
a preliminary literature review must be completed which
demonstrates adequate understanding of the research area

Research design and plan
must be appropriate to the topic
demonstrate sound knowledge of the field of research
indicates appropriate and achievable draft timelines
identify any anticipated ethical, IP or safety issues
indicate any anticipated periods of field research
indicate any other resource implications

Presentation
oral presentation clearly conveys the scope & design of the research
conforms with time allocated by committee chair
written material to be of an acceptable standard

Determination and notification

The results of the committee's deliberations shall be recorded by the chair and signed by each of the assessors on the attached checklist ('Appendix 1 – Law'). The student is to be given a copy of the checklist, together with any other written feedback provided by assessors, and sign the original within seven days of the review. The checklist signed by the student is to be given to the Head of Postgraduate Studies, Law, to forward to the Research Student Centre within two weeks of the presentation.

TIMELINE SUMMARY

- two weeks prior:	Chair tells candidate number of copies of written proposal to provide
> one week prior:	Assessors determined
at least 7 days prior:	Candidate submits required number of written proposals to chair of committee. Chair tells candidate the time limit for both oral presentation and public discussion. Candidate nominates the student representative to the Chair.
0	Research proposal review
within + 7 days:	Student notified, signs off on completed checklist and receives any other feedback
within + 14 days:	Signed checklist returned to HPS and Research Student Centre

Higher Degree Research (HDR) Students

RESEARCH PROPOSAL REVIEW CHECKLIST*

To be completed within 12 months of starting candidature.

Candidature Commencement date:...../...../.....	Date of Review:/...../.....
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1. Candidate Details	
Name:	Student No:
Academic Unit:	
Degree:	
Principal Supervisor:	
Co-Supervisor/s:	
Other Review Committee Member/s:	
Postgraduate student representative:	
Title of Thesis/Topic:	

2. Topic: significance and research questions	YES	NO
The topic area is sufficiently specific		
The significance of the topic is appropriate to the degree		
Research questions are specific and answerable		
Research questions are relevant to the topic and appropriate to the degree		
Comments		

3. Literature review	YES	NO
Preliminary literature review completed		
Literature review demonstrates adequate understanding of research area		
Comments		
4. Research design and plan	YES	NO
Research design and methods appropriate to the topic		
Candidate displays sound knowledge of field of research		
Draft thesis outline appropriate, given the stage of research		
Draft timelines appropriate and achievable		
Ethical, IP and/or safety issues identified		
Comments		

5. Research presentation	YES	NO
Oral presentation clearly conveys the scope and design of the research		
Oral presentation conforms with time allocated by the committee chair		
Written material of an acceptable standard		
Comments		

6. Overall Research Proposal <i>(The overall research proposal should be assessed in terms of the feasibility, aims, significance, and originality. The scope of the research should be appropriate for the degree)</i>		
	YES	NO
Overall Research Proposal accepted:		
Comments		

7. Supervisory arrangements			
Comments about the adequacy of the arrangements for supervision of this research project			
Additional comments attached? Yes (number of pages:) No			
8. Resource Implications <i>(The Research Proposal Review Committee should consider the research implications identified in relation to the Commencement of Candidature Form completed at the time of the student's first formal interview with their Supervisor(s)).</i>			
	YES	NO	N/A
Study space appropriate			
Adequate equipment inc computer & software			
Library and information access adequate			
Additional support/funds inc any anticipated field research (If 'yes' note level of Faculty support required below)			
Further training or assistance required (If "Yes" please provide details below)			
Comments			

9. Signatures		
Name	Signature	Date
Chair		
Other (co-)supervisor/s		
Other Committee Members		
Student observer		
Received by the student		
Student		
Head of Postgraduate Studies		
<i>The student and Faculty should retain copies of the signed form. The signed, original form should be forwarded to the Research Student Centre for inclusion in the student's file.</i>		