

FACULTY OF ARTS UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

MPhil/PhD candidature – Research proposal template

The detailed research proposal should be at least 1000 words long but should not exceed 5000 words (excluding the list of sources cited and bibliography) and should be presented in the format suggested below.

Please remember that:

- The principal criteria for the award of a PhD are that the research constitutes a significant contribution to knowledge in a particular field of study and that it includes evidence of originality. The research area and topic should therefore be defined clearly and the parameters of research clearly established.
- The proposal is about identifying a viable topic and a plan of approach following the research proposal template below. You need to show that a considerable amount of reading around the subject has been carried out.
- The proposal must demonstrate that a candidate has realistic and adequate aims and objectives for the period leading to the transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD (normally corresponding to 12 months of full-time study or 24 months of part-time study).

Research proposal template

1. Working title:

- Provide a working title that describes the nature and scope of the research project.

2. Statement on topic, aims, rationale:

- Identify the general subject area and outline how your topic relates to the field.
- Establish why it is a significant topic and what contribution your work is expected to make.
- Identify a working hypothesis where appropriate.

3. Situating the research:

- This part of the proposal, often referred to as a literature review, should anchor your research topic in the particular area of academic discourse pertinent to the field.
- In order to demonstrate that the research project makes a significant contribution to the field, you need to show that you are aware of the traditions and recent research in the field.
- If you want to take up a theoretical position or specific concepts, identify which stands and concepts are useful and how you will apply them to achieve a particular result or reach particular conclusions.

4. Approach, methodology and methods of research:

- Outline how you will approach your topic. The aim should be to demonstrate that your chosen method or approach will serve to advance your argument. If you need to gather data, describe how you will go about this.
- Remember that for many PhDs the questions of method and approach are complex and continue to be considered throughout the candidature. The proposal provides an indication; it is the beginning of the process.

5. Outline of the research:

- This will take the form of a tentative thesis structure/'Table of Contents' with a summary of each chapter. The outline is NOT binding and should serve as the basis for thinking about the research project as a whole.

6. Timeframe:

- The various tasks for researching – including any fieldwork or practical work – and writing the thesis should be identified along with specific dates in which it is anticipated these tasks will be accomplished.
- Any required research travel or other research related expenses should be identified.

7. List of sources cited and bibliography:

- The sources referred to in your proposal should be included in a List of Sources Cited Reference List.
- Append also a list of works that you have consulted at the time of writing the proposal in a Bibliography. This bibliography could take the form of an annotated bibliography.

Research for a Doctorate at the University of Malta is regulated by the Doctor of Philosophy – PhD – Degree Regulations, 2008:

www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/general/phd