

Guidelines for Producing a Research Proposal

PhD / MPhil Applications

This document is intended as guidance to assist postgraduate research applicants in their initial application to Newcastle University.

We would advise you to consult the web site of the school responsible for your subject area before applying to see the areas in which we can offer supervision.

When you apply for a research degree at Newcastle University you will be asked to supply a short summary of your research topic. The University needs to know in outline form what you are proposing to research so it can decide whether it is able to offer you the high-quality research supervision and the resources that are needed to support you.

The research proposal also helps the University to assess your application and to ensure the research you are proposing is appropriate and realistic.

The purpose of this document is to guide you in producing the research proposal, which will then be carefully considered by academic selectors in the light of our ability to supervise and support you to a successful conclusion.

In the first few months at Newcastle University you will also have an opportunity to refine and revise your research proposal, and you will be given advice from your supervisor and training from a Faculty Research Training Programme to help you do this.

The research proposal should be approximately 1,000-2000 words long. The research proposal should address the following questions:

Title of proposed project

[A short statement of the topic you would like to investigate]

What are you setting out to do?

[Describe briefly what you would propose to do in the research]

Why are you attempting to do this?

[Explain why you think it is important to conduct this particular research project]

Are you aware of previous research in this area?

[Set out a brief statement of what other research you know has been done in this area with a short bibliography of the key works. This will help the School to assess whether there are appropriate library resources to support your work. It is also possible to draw on previous work that you have done (eg a Masters dissertation) in the research proposal.]

Why do you think that is appropriate to undertake this research at Newcastle University?

[Outline any academics or research groups at Newcastle]

University that you feel are relevant to your research]

What data will you need for the research?

[Briefly outline the data you need and the sources you will use indicating whether the data comes from published sources or field work. Again this will help the School to assess whether there are appropriate resources in the University to support your work.]

What techniques are you proposing to use to do the research?

[Say how you would go about doing the research in terms of the methods that you would use for example to collect data and analyse it]

Why do you think that these techniques are appropriate?

[Say why you think it is appropriate to use these methods]

Are you familiar with these techniques or would you need further training?

[Briefly summarise your experience in using these techniques and identify any areas where you think that you would benefit from further training]

What problems might you encounter in the course of the research?

Think of any problems that you might encounter during the research project and how you might go about overcoming them. For example are there any safety or ethical issues?

Can you do the project within the required time period (three years for a full time PhD student and 6 years part time; for an MPhil the periods are 1 year full time and 2 years part time)?

[Indicate roughly how you would allocate the time for doing the research project over the duration of your studies]

What contribution do you think that your research might make?

[Say how, if your research is successful, it might contribute to knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Bibliography

[A brief bibliography should demonstrate your familiarity with literature in the field you wish research]

The research proposal can only be accepted for consideration when it is accompanied by a completed Newcastle University PostgraduateApplication Form.