

Manchester Metropolitan University

Postgraduate Research Degree Proposal

About Your			
Surname:		First Name:	
School/Department:		Faculty:	
Research Degree Programme:	MA/MSc by Research MPhil PhD Professional Doctorate PhD by Published Works		
Mode of Attendance:	Full Time/Part Time/Full time Distance Learning/Part time Distance Learning		
Research Project/Studentship Reference number (if applicable)			
Have you spoken to any MMU staff members about your research? Please give their name(s).			
Are you applying for funding? Please tick all that apply.	01 Research Council 02 University Scholarship 03 Industry 04 Part industry and part self-funded 05 Self-funded 06 NHS 07 Overseas government, university, industry or agency 08 Staff development/departmental funding (MMU staff only) 09 Other (please state)		
Have you previously registered for a postgraduate research degree? If yes, please give the name of the institution, dates, and project title.			
Have you previously applied to MMU for a research degree? If yes, please give details of the date and the outcome.			
Are you applying to transfer study from another university?			
If yes, please contact the Graduate School gsresearchdegrees@mmu.ac.uk			

Details of previous research experience

Examples of this include research undertaken as part of an undergraduate or master's qualification, or research projects as part of employment. Please provide evidence of how your past research activity relates to your proposed project. Please also include any publications or other types of output produced or connected to previous work experience.

Details of professional or work experience which is relevant to your research proposal.

Please include a CV including your qualifications and work history along with this form.

Research Proposal

Your research proposal is the key document which your potential supervisors will use in deciding whether to offer you a place for postgraduate research study.

If you are applying for a project opportunity, you should tailor your proposal to the needs of the project.

Your research proposal should be around 2000-2500 words/4 pages of A4, which can include visuals, formulae, or other non-lexical items.

Guidance on how to write a thesis proposal is attached.

Does your proposal include a portfolio of work? If so, please include a web link to your portfolio.

Where do you intend to carry out your research/fieldwork? State the countries, how long you expect to be there, and any anticipated problems.

Provide around 6 key words which describe your research.

What research training needs do you anticipate you will have?

What ethical and research governance issues do you anticipate encountering in your research? This could include working with vulnerable people, secure data storage, overseas fieldwork.

What resources do you think you will need for your research project? Resources including things like equipment (including IT equipment and software), materials, chemicals, studio space.

How to write a thesis proposal – Guidelines

Doing a research degree can be a transformative experience. It presents an opportunity to spend time focusing on a topic that you really care about. You will meet other engaged researchers at all stages of their career, from master's students, through to senior professors, and become part of a global research community. The skills you develop will be used in your career, whether in academia, business, industry, the third sector, creative industries or any other area. Put simply, a research degree can be a hugely positive and enriching experience.

Your research study starts with your research proposal. Your research proposal is your opportunity to tell us why you want to study your chosen topic and demonstrates your skills and knowledge around your subject area and the importance of your research. Well-formed, considered and concise proposals will give potential Supervisors a better understanding of whether they would be interested in pursuing the project with you, and begin a narrative around your proposed direction.

Many applicants send a draft of their proposal to an academic they are interested in working with before they apply, which helps them to develop their ideas. You can apply without contacting a potential supervisor, and, if an academic is interested in your draft proposal, they will help you develop your proposal before deciding whether to offer you a place.

Time spent on your research proposal is time invested in your research degree. Through working to improve your proposal, responding to feedback and suggestions, you will start to build a relationship with your potential supervisor.

Preparing your proposal

Questions to ask yourself

- Why is my research important? What impact will it have? What difference will it make?
- Why is now the right time to conduct the research? Personally (for you) and professionally (developments in your field of study)?
- How will my research contribute to existing research and/or benefit society?
- If applying for funding, why should my study be funded? Why am I the best person to undertake the project?

Writing the proposal

- Write an outline
- Use short sentences
- Structure your proposal with headings, using paragraphs for the main points
- Include visuals (e.g. diagrams, charts) if they support your proposal

Finding a potential supervisor

- Look for possible supervisors and contact them with your draft proposal
- Show that you are familiar with their academic work and explain why you think they are a good person to supervise your project.
- If the academic is interested in your idea, they are likely to provide you with feedback. Work on your proposal to improve it. This is an important part of the research supervision experience, and gives you and your potential supervisor early experience in working together

You may already have some ideas about who you would like to supervise your project. For more information on potential supervisors, look at our [Research Degree Finder](#), click on the subject area

you are interested in which will take you to the e-Prospectus, where you can find more information on our areas of supervisory expertise and academics working in your area.

What to include in your proposal

The guidelines below are general guidelines, and there may be different emphases in different subject areas. If you are applying for a funded project, your proposal should be tailored to the requirements of the project.

Your potential supervisor may read a lot of research proposals, so a clear and well-written proposal will improve your chances of your proposal being accepted.

Your research proposal should be between 2000-2500 words (not including the bibliography), along with the following:

- The proposed title of my research project is...
- My research project will be about... (a short abstract)
- I have approached the following potential Supervisor(s)...
- This is a brief overview of my topic area with a *summary of current knowledge (literature review), recent debate, and any gaps in knowledge...
- My study aims to develop new knowledge/understanding/contribution to policy or practice by ...
- These are the main aims and questions that will guide my research (Including how I intend to approach them, evidence of my familiarity in my research area)...
- My proposed methodology and main research techniques (why I have chosen these and my plans on how to use them)...
- Who my research is going to benefit and how
- My research is important because...
- The potential issues or limitations I may encounter when doing this research are...
- Potential ethical issues and approaches to resolve these include ...
- My proposed timeline is...
- How will I share my findings
- My draft bibliography...

To also think about ...

- I intend to carry out my research/fieldwork in ...
- My anticipated research training needs are ...
- Resources I think I will need are ...

***A word on plagiarism**

Make sure you reference all sources you use in your proposal. Your overview of the literature should be quite short and summarised, and if you have used an author's exact words, then put that section in "quotation marks".

Don't forget

- include your CV including your qualifications and work history along with your application
-if your research has a practice element, or your proposal includes a portfolio, include a link to your portfolio.