

# SUBMITTING A PRELIMINARY RESEARCH PROPOSAL

## GUIDELINES FOR PROSPECTIVE PHD/MMEDSCI STUDENTS

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
DISCIPLINE OF PUBLIC HEALTH



In order to assess the suitability of prospective MMedSci and PhD students, we require all applicants to present *inter alia* a Curriculum Vitae and a short preliminary research proposal. Although we do not require that you submit your preliminary research proposal in a particular format, you may find the following guidelines helpful.

### ***Guidelines for Preliminary Research Proposals***

The preliminary research proposal should be a statement of about 750 to 1000 words describing the field of study, sketching the chief scholarly elements of the field, and suggesting a principal supervisor (if possible or appropriate).

The proposal does not have to be grand and it does not have to be long. It should include the following elements:

**Date:** Please date the first, and any revised, proposal submitted.

**Student:** Full name

**Supervisor:** Names of possible supervisors, if appropriate

**Title:** No more than 160 characters including spaces.

**Introduction:** What is the problem to be investigated? Why is it a public health issue?

**Scholarship:** What have other people had to say about this issue? What work has been done on this problem in the past? This should indicate how the question being posed sits within the field of current knowledge.

**Research Question/Argument:** How will you go beyond what others have learned? What question will this thesis investigate? Why is this question important? What are your aim and objectives? What are the potential outcomes of this research? While it is not always necessary to formulate hypotheses, it is necessary to formulate a clear research question. This section will indicate what will be original about your work.

**Methodology:** In this section you are expected to specify, briefly, your research design. This will vary considerably from student to student, depending on the thesis topic and on the disciplinary approach which informs and determines your investigation and analysis. It may include the reason for selection of a particular methodology, discussion of particular difficulties anticipated in the research design and the ways in which you propose to overcome them, methods of sample selection, data collection, controls or comparisons to be used, methods of analysis, the time frame, the specific role of the student as researcher, and any other relevant practical aspects.

This section will also provide information about the resources needed to complete the research. For example, do you have access to existing data bases or the time to gather your own? Do the necessary historical sources exist for your enquiry? How will you go about conducting interviews, and with whom, and how will you analyse interview data?

In general, the methods described must be appropriate for the research question and must be described in sufficient detail for members of the Discipline of Public Health's Research Committee to be confident that the research is feasible, and that it will be intellectually rigorous.

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