

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM

Before accepting an applicant into a research higher degree, Avondale College needs to ensure that infrastructure, resources and supervisory capacity are available. Each student is requested to provide an initial proposal of 8-10 pages which is not intended to be onerous, fixed or perfect; but rather it forms the basis on which potential supervisors are matched with prospective applicants. You are welcome to discuss your ideas with a potential supervisor from the published list before lodging the application; however other supervisors may be available. Also, please indicate if you are flexible in your choice of topic and/or methodology.

INITIAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL: Components and Features (AR.07)

Purpose

The purpose of an initial proposal is to obtain sufficient information to be able to allocate supervisors and to ensure resources are available for the intended project. Therefore, the initial proposal does not need to be perfect and complete in all respects. A final proposal will be developed under supervision during the first year of candidature. These guidelines are provided to assist in developing a proposal of 6-8 pages in length that is detailed enough to allow the Research Committee to make a decision about whether the project can be supported within Avondale's areas of research strength and available resources.

Title Page

Include a tentative title, your name, relevant qualifications, the name of the degree for which you are applying, and the date of application.

The following guidelines are not prescriptive and discipline areas may vary to some extent:

Title

The title should be clearly focused, self-explanatory, and a clear description of the proposed research project. Some researchers seek to capture attention through the use of highly expressive or even cryptic titles but mostly this style is better kept for presentations.

Introduction

The introduction may include a description of the research problem (potential or tentative), should be as clearly and unambiguously stated as possible, and to some degree linked to the body of information available in the field of study to be investigated. The connection between the available information and the problem should establish the importance of the study being done, and justify the need for the research. Attempt to write a **purpose statement** by completing the sentence: *The purpose of this study is to ...*

Second, if you have conducted any form of literature review, then present either a brief review of relevant literature, or the areas of literature that you intend to review. If possible, the review should outline any key issues relating to the topic. Aim to demonstrate your knowledge of the intended topic and placement of the research in the context of related literature. The aim is to justify your proposed investigation on the basis of this project being the next logical step in understanding a significant issue relevant to the topic.

Finally, the problem could be stated in question form, dependent on the research approach being used and the purpose of the study. Quantitative research might posit a research hypothesis, whereas a qualitative or mixed approach may use questions or equivalent. Outline what are the research questions to be addressed?

Methodology

This section indicates how the study is to be structured in order to address the problem by answering the posited questions or hypothesis. There may be both “art” and “science” in the design being used within the study. In this section, all steps in the investigation process should be as clearly and sequentially delineated as possible. If subjects are involved, ethical concerns should be noted in this section. Though methodologies vary, the following describes one simple design process.

- (a) Who are the proposed participants (or equivalent) in the study, and what procedures will be used to select these participants (or equivalent).
- (b) What proposed methods and/or instruments will be used in the study, and how are these methods and instruments to be chosen or developed and/or trialled?
- (c) This section describes the way in which the study will be set up so that data can be gathered, organised and analysed.

Analysis of data

This section is optional and if available may include how the findings will be organised for relevancy to the topic and research questions, and to the overall research approach. Use may be made of spreadsheets or tables, or emergent themes and indicators, etc.

Significance of the study

A description of the importance and timeliness of the study may include an anticipation of what the results will mean for knowledge or theory in the field of study (in a local situation and/or more general situation), and its relationship to further research that may emanate from this current study. This is the place to persuade your readers about the need for this project. Finally, highlight any perceived benefits, limitations, and expectations relating to the project.

References

List key references essential to the project and which you may have referred to in the proposal.

NOTE: If you require additional information, assistance or guidance in developing this initial proposal, please call the coordinator of the program on 02-49802120.

Please attach your proposal to your application.