

|  |
| --- |
| Australia Awards |
| Indonesia |
| PhD Research Proposal Template |
| *for Research Proposal Writing Workshop*March 2021 |

#

## Aims of this template

Prospective PhD students are required to complete a draft research proposal and submit it prior to the Research Proposal Writing Workshop (RPWW). PhD students need to write research proposals for Australian academics who may eventually supervise your research based on the proposal. A research proposal can be rejected as unsuitable, and on the basis of this, a potential supervisor may decline a request from you to supervise your thesis at their university. The research proposal, therefore, is a very important document; one that is worth spending some time on to get right, and to gain feedback and advice about, to attract the supervisor and university that you most desire.

The proposal that you will send to your potential supervisor should be maximum of 6-10 typed A4 pages in length including an up to date reference list of 8-12 papers/articles that are mentioned in the research proposal.

***For RPWW purpose, please use this file as a guide and develop your draft Research Proposal by using 8 (eight) elements/sections explained below. Please upload your draft to the online application system in Word document (no other format is acceptable). You may include graph/picture in the draft, but please note that the size of uploaded document must not exceed 2MB.***

The following elements must be included in the draft research proposal:

1. **Thesis working title** that is 20 words maximum.
2. **Justification for the proposed research** – this is an introduction that outlines in brief the research problem or issue, including why this topic is important, that must include a brief identification of the gaps either to our knowledge, or to our theoretical thinking or to current practices/policies in Indonesia or other contexts, or all of these. This section is 1/2 to 1 page maximum.
3. **Research questions** that is 1/3 to 1/2 page.
4. **Preliminary literature review** that is covering what other researchers whose articles you have read have already done in this area of research. This section is 2-3 pages maximum.
5. **Theoretical framework** to be used in the proposed research. This section is 1/3 to 1/2 page.
6. **Proposed research methodology** which is 1 page maximum.
7. **Research plan and outline and timetable** of proposed research. This section is 1/2 to 1 page maximum.
8. **List of references** used in preparing the proposal. This section is 1-2 pages maximum.

## Instruction on how to use this template

Read this template in full, using what is written in BLUE font as a guide to what you might write for each required section.

1. **Thesis working title**

In your thesis title, only make reference to Indonesia if you think it is critical to the work. But if Indonesia only offers another context for the study of this issue, then keep it out of the title. (e.g. “Resolving social class inequality: Lessons from Indonesia” is best said as “Resolving social class inequality” as this is a topic across nations). You will have plenty of opportunity to talk about why Indonesia is an important place to do this research in other parts of the proposal.

**This section is no more than 20 words in length.**

1. **Justification for the proposed research**

This section is an introduction that outlines in brief the research problem or issue, including why this topic is important, that must include a brief identification of the gaps either to our knowledge, or to our theoretical thinking or to practices/policies or all of these. The introduction should endeavour, from the very beginning, to catch the reader’s interest. Often it is powerful to cite compelling data or statistics to get the reader’s attention (e.g. the cost of traffic jams in Indonesia is ….; the longer a patient stays in hospital the more likely they will contract a hospital based infection). Also, add a brief statement on the potential theoretical and practical implications of this research.

**This section is ½ to 1 page maximum (between 180-350 words)**

1. **Research questions**

There are usually 2-5 questions as a maximum. Below is an example. Note the move from a general area, to a specific area, to the gap in the research and then to the proposed thesis statement (the second part).

*According to business marketing theory, businesses are more likely to succeed if they utilise marketing management approaches or techniques. For example, the marketing concept, a cornerstone of business marketing thought, stresses the importance of determining the needs and wants of consumers and delivering the desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than competitors (Kotler, 2016). Philosophies from marketing management have recently been applied to almost every industry from insurance to travel and hospital services, but not often to farming. However, concerns have been raised about the distinction which appears to exist between agricultural and business marketing theory (Bartels, 2013; Bateman, 1996; Muelenberg, 2019).*

*In this research proposal, the role of marketing management in agricultural marketing theory and practice is described. Together with* *McLeay and Zwart (2018) it is argued that the marketing strategies of farmers are not adequately described by either the business or agricultural marketing disciplines, and this gap has consequences for both theory and practice. Three research questions are addressed:*

*Q1. What are existing farmer marketing strategies?*

*Q2. How well aligned are these existing strategies to the key arguments put forward in contemporary agricultural and business marketing theories and popular practices?*

*Q3. What are the consequences for the future developments of marketing theory and practices around this level of alignment or misalignment?*

This example shows that:

* The general area is business marketing theory
* The specific research area is marketing management concepts (especially the difference between agricultural and business marketing theory)
* The gap is the application of these concepts in theory and practice to the farming sector
* The research questions are about how agricultural marketing or business marketing concepts or both are appropriate or not in the farming sector and that developments in theory and practices are needed.

It is possible to use hypotheses instead of research questions in some disciplines, particularly those utilising the quantitative methodology. Hypotheses should be well linked to the literature review and theoretical framework (see Pajares, 2007).

**This section is 1/3 to 1/2 page maximum** **(between 100-180 words)**

1. **Preliminary literature review**

This is the most critical section. First of all, it demonstrates to a potential supervisor that you have built a solid knowledge of the field where the research is taking place, that you are familiar with the main issues at stake, and that you have critically identified and evaluated the key literature. This might include the research by a potential supervisor as well.

It shows that you have created an innovative and coherent view, integrating and synthesising the main aspects of the field, so that you can now put into perspective the new direction that you propose to explore.

This is where you provide more detail about what others have done in the area, and what you propose to do. You need to write around two or three pages maximum using 8-12 references to articles in the better-quality journals or books that in which you cover the following:

* The major issues or schools of thought
* Gaps in the literature (in more detail than is provided in the introduction)
* Possibly a short section around definitions of key terms, provided either when you introduce each idea, or in a definition sub-section
* The literature review should connect very closely with the research questions being posed. Often the research questions can be presented at the end of the literature review – and you can choose to do this if you wish to.

**This section is 2 to 3 pages maximum (between 700-1,000 words)**

1. **Theoretical framework**

This can be included in the Literature review above or provided as a short section here.

The theoretical framework usually forms the final part of the literature review section. It describes the model that you are using in the thesis to demonstrate your point. Or talks about how the thesis will add to existing theoretical thinking by (a) extending theorising or (b) challenging existing theoretical thinking or (c) other. If you decide to provide a figure in your proposal of the guiding model or theory that shows its key constructs or variables, make sure that you also write a number of sentences in the proposal that describe what the reader should be most aware of about the figure; for example, the links between two or more constructs that you will be studying in the research; the insertion a new construct in an existing model/theory that shows you are extending an existing theory.

**This section is 1/3 to 1/2 page (between 100-180 words)**

1. **Proposed research methodology**

This section should be about 1-2 pages max. You do not have to describe the methodology to be used in great detail, but you should justify its use over other methodologies. For example, you could explain the reasons for using:

* qualitative or quantitative research
* a case study of a specific kind; or any surveys, experiments, field studies, specific statistical measurements,
* certain dependent or independent or moderating variables
* a particular sampling frame and the size of a sample

You could also explain how you are proposing to:

* have access to the data
* collect the data (e.g., questionnaires, interviews, and observation)
* analyse the data (and specify the data analysis technique, e.g., multivariate analysis, structural equation modelling, and thematic analysis)
* any special or unique data sets or locations that you can access that might be attractive to a potential supervisor

**This section is 1 to 2 pages maximum (about 350-700 words)**

1. **Research plan and timetable**

The research plan can include a research timetable. It gives the reader a draft framework for the direction that your proposed thesis will take and it shows the reader the project is well-organised and achievable in the time available. Note that:

* The timetable is approximate only, and things always take longer than you think
* The timetable does not commit you to anything though obviously it helps if you can follow it.

**This section is 1/2 to 1 page maximum (about 180 – 350 words)**

1. **List of references**

This must be provided in the usual scholarly fashion. It helps to convince your reader that your proposal is worth pursuing if you can identify literature in the field and demonstrate that you understand it. In this section you should list all the references you have used in writing the research proposal, making sure that you comply with the referencing conventions or citation styles that have been established for your specific field.

It makes a very strong impact if your list of references meet the following criteria:

* Consists of recent literature (preferably within the last 5 years)
* Consists of better-quality journals that a reader will know (reputable internationally peer-reviewed journals)
* Includes references from papers written by the potential supervisor(s)
* Includes articles that offer up to date reviews of the existing literature and talk about gaps in theory and practice; avoids references to older journal papers (unless the classic papers that everyone cites), or undergraduate text books (but OK to reference edited recent books that provide major reviews, e.g., handbooks).

**This section is 1 to 2 pages maximum (no less than 8 references)**

## Sources

University of Melbourne <https://library.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/1924163/Research_Proposal.pdf>

Australian National University

<http://www.uc.pt/en/fctuc/dei/ensino/doctoral_program/PhDprop4?utm_source=buffer&utm_campaign=Buffer&utm_content=buffer95a7b&utm_medium=facebook>

Pajares, F. (2007). Elements of a proposal. Retrieved from <http://des.emory.edu/mfp/proposal.html>

