

## PhD PROPOSAL GUIDANCE NOTES

When applying to the programme, you should prepare a Research Proposal around 3,000 words in total. Your proposal should clearly indicate your research question and area of research and should demonstrate your ability to develop and execute a 3-year programme of independent research. Your Research Proposal may contain the elements described below. This structure is intended as a guide only. It should be adapted to the requirements of your proposed research where necessary.

### [1] Title

Your title should summarise the main idea of the proposal simply and, if possible, with style. You may want to use a title and subtitle, separated by a colon.

### [2] Literature review

Explain the academic context from which your research emerges. This should involve a critical review of existing literature(s). The important thing to establish here is the extent to which your proposed thesis research makes a contribution. In other words, it should add something conceptual, methodological and/or empirical which is not already offered by the extant research literature. This section should therefore introduce issues that will be addressed by your research questions and explain the importance of the research to others.

### [3] Research Questions

Provide a statement of your research question(s) ideally in the form of a central overarching question and a small number of further subsidiary questions. Your questions can be open-ended or presented in the form of testable hypotheses. These should be grounded in past research literature.

### [4] Methods

This section should outline the empirical work you plan to undertake. You should identify the method or methods you propose to use. These choices should be justified in terms of the kinds of evidence or data your research questions will require you to obtain. Some detail should be provided here that gives a clear idea about the scale of the research you plan to carry out as well as its nature. You need to think carefully about the data you will capture, how much you think you will need and what arrangements will need to be made to complete the process. You may wish to refer to other similar studies that provide illustrations of the sort of research you have in mind. In doing so, it may be helpful to indicate where the strengths and weaknesses of these studies lie.

### [5] Importance, relevance and impact

Why is your project important? Who will benefit from it? Is your research likely to have an impact – even beyond an academic one? In this section you will need to justify your selection of topic and persuade the selection committee that your proposed research is compelling and viable.

### [6] Conclusion

In this section you can briefly summarise what the research is expected to produce and the academic contributions you expect it to make.

## [7] References

This section should contain a bibliographic list of all works referred to in your proposal, indicating who the authors were and where these works were published or can be accessed.

Please also see here for further information: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/study/research/how-to-apply/research-proposals>