UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF LAWS
GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESENTATION OF AN
M.PHIL/PH.D. TITLE AND PROPOSAL

The Faculty Doctoral Committee of the Faculty of Laws has created this document to help prospective applicants when drafting the proposal leading an M.Phil/Ph.D studies.

HOW TO BEGIN:

1. The University of Malta requires a formal proposal from prospective M.Phil/Ph.D candidates;
2. The Length of a detailed research proposal should be of around 3,000 words; and
3. The Proposal needs to convince readers that the area of research chosen is important and relevant, that the research methodology is original and viable and that the conclusions of the research make a significant contribution to knowledge.

APPOINTING A SUPERVISOR:

1. A supervisor who holds a Ph.D, or the equivalent and/or has published in areas directly relevant to your study, in peer reviewed journals or books is normally appointed to supervise an M.Phil/Ph.D thesis.

CHOOSING A TOPIC:

1. Make sure that you are genuinely interested in the area of study.
2. It is crucial that your research in your chosen area of study should make a contribution to scholarship in your field.
3. It is recommended that you read widely and check the databases available before you decide on a topic.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL:

To enable the Faculty Doctoral Committee to decide on the suitability and feasibility of your study, it is important that you develop a well thought out research proposal. The Committee suggests that you develop your proposal using the following headings:

REQUIREMENTS WITH APPLICATION FORM:

1. **Title:** This should be as brief as possible but clearly indicates the main focus of your research.
2. **Rationale:** In this section you are expected to build a case for your study. You should state why the proposed research is of interest and why it is important.
You also need to position yourself in the research and develop your own standpoint.

3. **Research questions of hypotheses:** In this section, the focus of your research should be expressed as a question/set of questions or a hypothesis.

4. **Preliminary literature review/proposed theoretical framework:** The question/s/hypothesis should reflect a preliminary review of the literature in the field. An exhaustive list of references is not considered to be necessary at this stage.

5. **Research design:** This section should describe the research design and the methods you intend to employ to gather and analyse the data. There ought to be clear indication of the qualitative/quantitative design to be used, including (where relevant) information regarding participants and settings of the study.

6. **Ethics:** The Faculty of Law expects high ethical standards in the process of conducting research. Participants need to be protected at all times. This section is meant to reassure the readers of your proposal that you are aware of the ethical issues that underpin your study. It might be the case that you will have to refer your proposal to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

7. **Timetable:** It would be useful to present a timetable for the research.

8. **References:** The Faculty Doctoral Committee expects the main references to be included in a select bibliography, using OSCOLA and the University of Malta Library’s Digitization document.

9. **Communication and presentation:** The proposal should be written in clear precise English. It should demonstrate your fluency of expression, a style which is grammatically acceptable, and have a professional standard of presentation.

10. **Type of Study:** A statement on whether the studies will be undertaken on a full-time or a part-time basis, and, in the latter case, the number of hours that shall be dedicated to this research work;

11. **Language:** Where appropriate, a request to present the thesis in a language other than English;

12. **Research:** Where appropriate, a request to undertake the research outside the University of Malta.

Applications should be handed in at the Admissions Office together with the receipt of the relevant application fee. In turn these will be forwarded to the Faculty for eventual consideration by the Faculty Doctoral Committee and Faculty Board. The applications will also be vetted by the Head of Department in whose area of study the proposed research falls to provide any comments s/he might have thereupon. Once approved by Faculty Board it will be forwarded to the University Ph.D Committee and to Senate for their approval.

**APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR/CO-SUPERVISOR**

Upon approving the thesis title, Senate shall also appoint a Principal Supervisor and normally a co-Supervisor for each candidate.
Evaluation Checklist: (Make sure every answer is YES)

1. Does my proposed dissertation make a significant contribution to knowledge in the area?
2. Does my rationale convince the reader of the importance of the study?
3. Does my review of the literature show adequate reading in the area?
4. Do I have a strong research design based on a sound theoretical framework?
5. Have I discussed the ethical issues underpinning the study?
6. Have I set myself a realistic timetable?
7. Have I presented a set of references in Oscola and Thesis Digitization?
8. Is the proposal clear and well presented?
9. Can I defend my proposal in an interview?