Research Proposal and Application - guidelines
Doctoral Degrees

This is a Faculty guideline based on the <u>Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - Degree Regulations, 2008</u>[1] <u>and the Bye-Laws of 2010 in terms of the Doctor of Philosophy – Ph.D. – Degree Regulations, 2008 for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the auspices of the Faculty for the Built Environment</u>[2]. The weblinks for these Regulations and Bye-laws are given below, and must be carefully read before submitting an application or proposal.

Requirements for admission are given in the Faculty Bye-Laws 2010.

The Faculty Bye-Laws also state that applicants should submit an application form, together with a comprehensive research proposal outlining the proposed project.

Details on the application form are given in the PhD Regulations 2008.

With the application, a recommendation from the Head of the Department that the research topic is acceptable is also needed.

The application must also indicate whether studies will be carried out full-time or part-time. If the candidate expects to be away from the country for an extended period of time, reasons must be clearly given.

The candidate must indicate that he/she has read the General and Faculty PhD regulations by signing a declaration and presenting it with the proposal.

Guidelines for preparing the proposal are given below.

The PhD Regulations 2008 state that a potential candidate <u>must undergo an interview</u> before being accepted.

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[1] https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/53088/PhD-2008.pdf

[2] https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/105675/PhD-Built-Env-BL-2010.pdf

Research Proposal – guidelines

This is a Faculty guideline based on the <u>research proposal sample form</u> given on the website of the Doctoral School[3], University of Malta. It shows the important sections to be included, and an indication of the word count of each.

<u>In all, the proposal should be around 3000 words long (not including references).</u>

Summary of what a research proposal should include:

Title

The title should be short and clear and indicate in broad terms the content of the proposal and thesis. Make sure to include important 'keywords'. A subtitle can also be included.

Proposed Supervisor and Department

It is advised that the name of a member of staff, and Department, of the proposed supervisor, should be given. In special cases, the name of a member of staff of this or another University or of a specialist who has agreed to act as co- supervisor must also be given.

Should the proposed supervisor not be identified yet, the candidate is to list three research qualities that he/she should have.

Examples:
a) knowledge in marine engineering
b) a research portfolio in engineering materials
c) is open to future collaborative projects

Introduction

An introduction should provide an overview and the essential background to your proposed research (*around 700 words*).

Aims, research question/s and hypotheses

These should give a concise, clear - cut and unambiguous outline of the proposed work. It is essential that the research question/s is/are clearly stated and well defined (*around 250 words*).

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[3] https://www.um.edu.mt/doctoralschool/applyforyourdoctoralstudies

Context of the research

A brief literature review should outline research issues as well inform on existing gaps in knowledge (*around 700 words*).

Methods & techniques

The methods and techniques expected to be used in the research should be discussed, together with practical issues arising as a result of your work (around 300 words).

Ethics

The ethical issues[4] affecting the proposed research and matters arising from the inquiry process should be identified and reported as per guidelines below (around 150 words).

Significance of the research must be outlined

This section should describe the value of the research project to academia, to specific communities and to other fields (around 500 words)

Plan

A plan over time must be included – here an outline of the project schedule is given as well as a related budget (this can appear as a Gantt chart or other charts).

Key references

At least five main key references must be given. Full and correct referencing is required.

The proposal must be signed by the candidate and countersigned by the proposed supervisor (if already nominated).

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[4] A check must be carried out whether the research work requires any clearance from the University Research Ethics Committee. If it is the case, you are required to indicate clearly the ethical issues at play.

Additional information for candidates

The following process will be adopted in the validation process of the PhD proposals:

PhD Candidate completes the research proposal and application form

This form is submitted to the Faculty Doctoral Committee

Faculty Doctoral Committee reviews the proposal and identifies a Supervisor (if not already nominated by student)

Faculty Doctoral committee informs Head of Department and informs Supervisor for approval of the proposal

Interview is scheduled if both approvals received from Head of Department and Supervisor