



# PHD RESEARCH PROPOSAL GUIDELINES



The research proposal is the first important milestone of doctoral studies at DMST. The aim of the research proposal is to provide information about the intended research project, in terms of content and methodology, in order to assess both the feasibility of the project and the work progress during the first year of studies. While we do not insist on a definite format, we encourage doctoral candidates to adhere to the guidelines present below.

A typical research proposal consists of the following parts:

1. **A working title of the topic area**: This should do more than just convey the key words associated with the proposed research.
2. **General overview of area**: By way of introduction, this should take the form of a relatively brief abstract of the general area of study and also signify the discipline(s) within which it falls.
3. **Detailed Literature Review**: In this section you should develop your proposal to demonstrate that you are aware of the debates and critical issues raised in relevant bodies of literature. It is important to be able to demonstrate familiarity with major lines of argument which have been developed in your area, and to demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and findings of key researchers working on your topic. References to key articles and texts should be there to establish that you appreciate their relevance to your research area. A PhD is an original piece of research and so you should demonstrate that your proposed area has not been studied before. So you need to identify your niche, which will lead on to the thesis preparation.
4. **Key Research Questions**: Since you need to demonstrate that the topic can be completed within the normal time period allowed, you need to demonstrate that it is manageable and so focus on key questions within your niche area. You must state the key issues that your research intends to address. What empirical phenomena or theoretical debates are driving your research proposal? Try to be specific. If your research is being driven by empirical phenomena (e.g. e-commerce, global branding, etc.), what aspects of these phenomena are you trying to explain? If your research proposal is being driven by theoretical debates, which specific points in these debates are you going to focus on?
5. **Methodology**: You need to demonstrate an awareness of the methodological tools available to you and show some understanding of which would be suitable for your research. It may be that qualitative methods, including the analysis of interviews, are appropriate. Alternatively, your approach may involve forecasting or statistical, financial or econometric modelling, in other cases you may be combining methodologies. You need to specify the approach you feel will be most appropriate. Most doctoral work involves empirical research. The successful completion of doctoral work in the time allotted thus often depends on the ability to obtain the data needed. If your proposed research proposal involves empirical work you should provide an indication of the form and location of that empirical work and where and how you might collect any relevant data. For example, you might like to say something about access to particular sources of information

- (whether you need on-line access to databases, whether you can use relevant archives etc). It is also worth saying something about the subjects of the research (are you looking at individuals, groups, texts, companies etc) and provide some justification for your choices. You should give special attention to the feasibility of collecting the data. Your proposal may contain interesting and highly relevant research questions, and it may be well grounded in the literature, but it may not be a practical research enterprise. You must balance the scope of your proposal against the practical problems of data gathering. Tailor your data gathering to your research question and vice-versa: shape your research question to reflect your data gathering resources.
6. **Timescale/research planning**: You need to demonstrate an awareness of the need for planning and the timescale of the research.
  7. **Conclusions**: Finally, although no indication of the research findings can be presented, it is often beneficial to conclude the research proposal by indicating how you envisage the contribution that your research will make to debates and discussions in your particular subject area. This means providing an indication of the original contribution that you feel your research will make, suggesting how it may fill gaps in existing research, and showing how it may extend understanding of particular topics. You should avoid making any substantial changes to the broad direction of your research after admission into the program. It is natural for ideas to evolve and change, so you will not be forced to adhere to the specifics of your proposal. However, the proposal is the foundation of your working relationship with your supervisors and thus it cannot be radically altered without discussion and consultation with your supervisors.
  8. **Bibliography**: You should include a short list of references to key articles and texts included in the application.

The research proposal is not only judged on content, it is also judged on form. Your research proposal must look professional. It should be typed and it should be written in good syntax and grammar. It should be well structured, with section headings clearly indicated. In terms of length, a research proposal should typically be between 4,000 – 8,000 words. Although the language used can be English, at least a brief synopsis (circa 1,000 words) of the proposal must be submitted in Greek.

The research proposal and synopsis will be submitted by the PhD candidate prior to the thesis leading supervisor who will distribute it to the Chair of the Department and the Doctoral Program Coordinator. The supervisor must also forward the material to two faculty members that are likely to participate in the 3-member supervisory committee of the thesis. He must also ensure that they shall attend the oral presentation of the research proposal. On the basis of the research proposal and oral presentation, the supervisor will formally submit his recommendation to the Departmental General Assembly for Postgraduate Issues. Following a positive recommendation and approval by the General Assembly, the 3-member thesis supervisory committee will then be assigned.