

Guide to Preparing a Full Research Proposal for Confirmed Enrolment

Postgraduate Studies

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

CONDITIONAL ENROLMENT

All candidates are conditionally enrolled for the first six months of their doctoral candidacy at the University of Waikato. During this period, your efforts should be focused on developing your full research proposal.

The research proposal forms the basis of the research project and the subsequent work leading up to the preparation of the thesis. Its development should be a major part of the early work of the candidate (usually about three months for doctoral study and one month for MPhil) and have the pro-active support of their supervisor(s).

The proposal should be reviewed at each scheduled meeting between the candidate and supervisor(s) and updated as necessary. The chief supervisor and the candidate should retain copies of all versions of the research proposal.

A number of departments have particular requirements relating to the format of research proposals, so candidates are advised to check with the relevant department before preparing their proposal. However, some requirements are common to all departments.

CONFIRMED ENROLMENT

At the end of the period of conditional enrolment, the chief supervisor is required to assess the candidate's progress in a series of skill categories. In particular, candidates are assessed as to whether a level of competence is demonstrated in the following broad criteria as appropriate for the discipline or field of enquiry:

- Technical skills.
- Conceptual or theoretical knowledge of field of study.
- Ability to evaluate literature critically.
- Ability to design appropriate methods of investigation.
- Ability to develop and present coherent arguments.
- Ability to focus on the research topic.

WRITING THE FULL PLAN

Full research plans submitted to the Postgraduate Studies Committee for confirmation of enrolment should usually contain the following:

1. A working title for the thesis.
2. A statement of the research topic/problem.
3. An outline of the significance of the topic (for example, its importance for advancing knowledge in the field, discipline or region and/or implications for methodology or understanding).
4. A review of the literature.
5. A statement of research questions or hypotheses.
6. The methodologies by which the questions or hypotheses will be investigated.
7. The forms of analysis proposed.
8. A thesis outline.
9. The resource requirements including the impact of timing of resource availability.
10. A timetable for the total project and thesis writing.
11. Ethical approval from the appropriate committee. A copy of the approved application should accompany your full research proposal. If your research does not require ethical approval, a statement stating that approval is not required, and why, should be included in your full research proposal.

If you experience any difficulties when preparing your full research proposal or your full plan, please discuss these with your Chief supervisor in the first instance.

Note: Applying for ethical approval can be time consuming and all candidates are encouraged to start this process as soon as possible following in-depth discussions with their supervisory panel.