

FOBL

**Guidelines for
Development and
Format of
Research
Proposals
Step 2**

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW

POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE

Final Proposal Certification

1. The Faculty Postgraduate Committee is now responsible for approving applications for candidature for research degrees. As part of the approval process candidates must present a research programme outline to a Peer Review Session before the completed proposal is presented to the Committee

2. As well as making a presentation at the Peer Review Session the candidate is responsible for having this endorsement form completed and signed by her/his principal supervisor and two other academic members of staff, one of whom should be the co-supervisor (if applicable). *The other should be a member of the Faculty Postgraduate Committee other than the particular School's Postgraduate Studies Co-ordinator.* Separate forms may be used for different signatures.

3. Once completed this form must be attached to the application for candidature form and the proposal. The Candidate must then lodge the completed forms and the proposal with the School Postgraduate Studies Co-ordinator for forwarding to the Secretary, Postgraduate Committee. An electronic version of the proposal document should also be sent to the Secretary.

Candidate Name: _____ **Course Code:** _____

Thesis Title:

Date of Peer Review Session _____

Note to supervisors and other academic staff: Please note that in signing this form you are indicating that you have read the attached proposal thoroughly, that it is of sufficient academic quality and standard of presentation to be considered by the Faculty Postgraduate Committee and that it has your support. The Principal Supervisor and the candidate are invited to attend the Postgraduate Committee meeting at which this proposal is considered to respond to questions and to provide information.

Principal Supervisor:

(Name: please print) _____ *(Signature)* _____ *(Date)*

Co-Supervisor (or second member of academic staff):

(Name: please print) _____ *(Signature)* _____ *(Date)*

Postgraduate Committee Member: (outside the School of enrolment)

(Name: please print) _____ *(Signature)* _____ *(Date)*

_____ **School Postgrad. Studies Co-ordinator**

**FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND LAW
POSTGRADUATE COMMITTEE**

Application for Candidature for a Research Degree

This form must be completed by the appropriate parties and lodged with the Faculty Postgraduate Research Officer, together with the student's research proposal document, at least 10 working days prior to the meeting of the Faculty Postgraduate Committee.

Full-time students must lodge an *Application for Candidature* within six months from the date of enrolment; part-time students must lodge an application within twelve months from the date of enrolment

1. Student details

Title Family name

Given name(s)..... Student ID No.....

2. Enrolment details

Degree Title Course Code

School/Centre.....

Date of Enrolment Date of Expected Completion

	Full-time		Part-time	
Master of Business (Research)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Doctorate (DBA or SJD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doctor of Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate below your enrolment status for each semester from the initial date of enrolment (FT=Full-time, PT=Part-time, LOA=Leave of Absence).

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
SEM 1									
SEM 2									

3. Research program

Title of Thesis

.....

.....

4. Student signature

My research proposal for the above degree is attached.

Signed:..... Date:.....

5. Supervisors' details

Sections 5 – 8 to be completed by the principal supervisor and co-supervisor.

The *principal supervisor* proposed for this application is:

Title: Family name:
.....

Given name:
.....

School/Centre:
.....

Institution: Campus:
.....

Signature of Principal Supervisor

Date

The *co-supervisor* proposed for this application is: Internal External

Title: Family name:
.....

Given name:
.....

Dept/School/Centre:
.....

Institution: Campus:
.....

Signature of Co-Supervisor

Date

6. Facilities and support

Are the facilities needed /required for this research project available within the School/Centre?

Yes No

Is finance available for the facilities (as outlined in the candidature proposal) from the University?

Yes No

If facilities of an external institution are to be used please provide full details.

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If the student has indicated that special support is required, what provisions have been made by the School/Centre?

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7. Human and animal experimentation

Does this program include research that has ethical implications?

Yes No

If unsure of this, check with the Faculty Postgraduate Research Officer.

If Yes

- (a) an application for approval to conduct the research has been lodged with the Faculty Human Research Ethics Committee.
(Projects involving human subjects require approval.)

Yes Register No.

- (b) an application is forthcoming
(one of the above)

Yes

8. Standard duration

Is the research project as outlined in the candidature proposal achievable within the standard duration as indicated at the time of enrolment? (refer to enrolment details - front page)

Yes No

Comments:

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.....

Have you (ie; the principal supervisor) advised the candidate and/or Head of School that you are intending to take a period of more than three months leave within the next eighteen months?

Yes No

If yes, have you notified the student and discussed possible supervision arrangements?

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9. Head/Director of /School/Centre's Comments

Please comment on the following:

(i) the suitability of these supervisors for this research proposal.

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(ii) the appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed research program

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(iii) the availability of the facilities and budgeted items required to complete this program

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.....

I recommend that the Faculty of Business and Law Postgraduate Committee approve this application for candidature

(Please note: if the Head of School/ Director of Centre is also the Principal Supervisor the Dean of the Faculty must sign in place of the Head/ Director.)

.....

Signature of Head of School/Centre

Date

10. Approval of the Faculty of Business and Law Postgraduate Committee

The Faculty of Business and Law Postgraduate has approved this application for candidature and it is now submitted to the Committee for Postgraduate Studies for information.

Signature of Secretary to Faculty Postgraduate Committee:

Date:

Instructions for Completing and Submitting your FOBL Research Proposal

September 2004

- ❑ Upon being enrolled in a research degree at Victoria University, you should work with your provisional supervisor to develop your Candidature Proposal. You should target achieving candidature by six months into your enrolment (or twelve months for part time students).
- ❑ You can use the template in the following pages to prepare your candidature proposal
- ❑ The Postgraduate research coordinator of your school/centre will need to arrange a peer review session for you to present details of your proposed and receive feedback from your peers. **You should prepare a PowerPoint presentation for the session and bring along some printed handouts of your slides (about 15 copies should be enough). Your postgraduate research co-ordinator can provide you with a PowerPoint template for the presentation. The peer review session will occur before the submission of the proposal. You should use comments received in this session to improve your proposal.**
- ❑ When your supervisor and the PG research coordinator of your school are satisfied with your proposal they will ask another member of the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee to read and comment on your proposal. This means that, by the time it reaches the committee, your proposal will have been reviewed by many of your peers already. **Do not approach a PG committee member directly - please do it through your PG research co-ordinator.**
- ❑ When you are ready to submit your proposal to the committee make sure you do so with the Faculty of Business and Law Postgraduate Committee 'Application for Candidature for a Research Degree' forms, signed in various places by yourself, your supervisor, co-supervisor, Head of School or Unit and the faculty member that has read your proposal.
- ❑ Keep an eye out for the dates of the faculty committee and when you need to submit the paperwork by.
- ❑ When your proposal is ready to be submitted to the committee you should save the file with the following name:
 - *Surname dd/mm/yy.doc (eg Burgess 03/09/03.doc)*

..and forward a 'hard' and electronic copy with the completed form to Tina Katselos at the Victoria Graduate School of Business on Level 10 of the City Flinders campus.



Project Title

Candidature Proposal
For the [enter award here](#)

Student Name
Student ID: 3029218

Supervisor: Name
Co-Supervisor: Name

School or Unit
Faculty of Business and Law

Month, Year

Date Prepared: [day/month/year](#)

Plain Language Statement

Aims of Project

Maximum half page.

Clearly state the aims of your project. The reader will be guided by them throughout the remainder of the proposal.

It often helps to have an introductory paragraph or two introducing the reader to terms that may not be well known or placing the study in context so that the aims can be easily understood. The aims can then follow, perhaps in bullet form or numbered, but this is not essential.

Contribution to knowledge

Maximum half page.

Explain how research will extend knowledge in discipline within the conceptual framework of the discipline/ problem.

Why should your project be worth researching? Show how it is knowledge that someone will regard as being important. Indicate how the study fits in the Faculty of Business and Law. Argue to convince the reader that the research is important: Does it have practical use? Does it extend knowledge? Does it..... ?????? Be clear and specific.

Introduction to Context of Project

Maximum one page.

You should show how your research problem arises. You can link the background of the project with its expected outcomes. The context may arise from your own experiences; discoveries from the literature or situations arising in professional practice.

It is a chance to describe the influences that guide the research and lead the reader easily into the next section where you describe the benefits of the research.

The context of the project seeks to locate the project within different frameworks.

These frameworks will be specific to the project at hand but may include:

- (i) the history of the topic,
 - What was the situation historically?
 - What factors have changed this position?
- (ii) the literature surrounding the topic:
 - What methodologies are traditionally employed?
 - What theories apply to the topic?
- (iii) the geographical location of the topic:
 - Is there a specific geographical location for this project?
 - Is this relevant to the understanding of this project?

Statement of Significance

Maximum half page.

Explain the benefits of research for the community.

It will probably turn out that your research will not benefit the 'entire' community as such, so you should identify those areas of the community that will benefit from your project. Why is your study significant? Who is it significant to?

Literature Review

Maximum two pages.

Demonstrate awareness of literature relevant to proposed research.

You need to prove that the particular piece of research has not been carried out yet.

You should critically analyse the major literature items you have identified. You should eventually prove that your idea of research has not been undertaken yet. As you have only two pages you need to be quite specific in your selection of literature to include.

Do not include literature to support the methodology of your study here. You can do that in Section 9 – Proposed Methodology.

Finish this section with a one paragraph summary of the gap you have identified.

Conceptual Framework

Maximum one page.

The purpose of the conceptual framework is to set out the theoretical basis for the study, to identify constructs that will be investigated and to establish the research questions and propositions or hypothesis.

At Masters level, the task is to conduct original research. The problem being addressed is often the prime focus. The study may be exploratory or descriptive. At Doctoral level, the theoretical focus is more important.

You will need to highlight if you are using an existing (pre tested) framework for your study (where the research is replicated and results compared with previous findings) or developing your own framework.

Identify the constructs

The theoretical basis draws directly from the literature review:

What are the constructs that your literature review showed are relevant to your study?

Will investigation of these meet the aims of the study?

Do you expect new constructs to emerge out of the research?

State the definitions of constructs

The constructs (or variables) you are investigating should be defined and operationalised. The definition should be tied to previous research.

‘Operationalisation’ means specifying the measures. You must define the constructs as they will apply in your study.

Establish the research questions and propositions or hypothesis

The research questions address the aims in your study. At this stage you should ensure that the reader can see the link between your aims in Section 1 and your research questions as identified here. You usually have an implicit model in your mind about the relationships that you expect to find.

A diagram can often be helpful in displaying the relationships. The diagram will include all the constructs that you intend to measure. Arrows show the relationships between them. At this stage of your thesis the relationships are what you *expect* to find through your research. So, for every arrow there will be a research question or proposition.

In this section, try to avoid a discussion that refers to your research approach (for instance, positivist versus interpretivist approaches; quantitative versus qualitative approaches). You can do this at the start of the next section.

Proposed Methodology

Maximum two pages.

Describe the research design in a manner that enables disciplinary experts to assess its appropriateness, the scale of the research and its feasibility.

You should justify your methodology here. You may wish to commence with a discussion of how you are framing your study (for instance, a positivist or interpretivist approach?) and then discuss your method in this context. Show how the method you have chosen matches the research questions and propositions or hypothesis you have generated in your conceptual framework.

Be specific about how you are collecting your data, what you are collecting and how you will analyse it. What data collection techniques are you using? What are their advantages/ disadvantages? If there are possible alternative techniques that you are

not using you should indicate why you are not using them (for instance, why use a survey for a particular section of the study instead of interviews?).

If you are analysing statistics be clear as to what statistical procedures you will be using and how they might provide answers (for instance, a statement such as “SPSS will be used to analyse the data” is not suitable).

Be clear about how the data will be used to address your research questions, propositions or hypotheses.

Show how it will be feasible to achieve everything you mean to.

If possible, outline different phases of your study and how the completion of one phase leads logically into the next. This should match neatly with your timeline in Section 4.

Indicate how your study will address the aims of the project that you have identified in section one.

You will also need to address the ‘generalisability’ of your findings. A limited sample size or focus of your study may limit the applicability of your findings. This is not necessarily a problem – but it is important to relate it back to the earlier contributions that you stated your study will make.

You should also mention whether you need to get ethics committee approval for the project and what stage this is at.

Reference List

Only include references here that are mentioned in this document. The committee understands that there are many accepted methods of referencing. Please ensure that whichever method you choose to use that you are consistent **throughout** the document.