Research Skills for Students Commencing a PhD or Masters by Research

Workshop 2

Writing Your Research Proposal
(Science/Applied Science Stream)

22nd August 2008

Key reference:
http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/studentnet/proposals

Presenter:
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Graduate Education Officer

http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au
http://www.studysmarter.uwa.edu.au
Objectives:

- To consider the role of proposals in the research process
- To identify the key components of a UWA research proposal
- To identify the elements of an effective proposal
- To clarify your thoughts regarding your research proposal
Workshop Outline

9.00 – 9.30  The research journey and the role of the research proposal
or 2.00 – 2.30

9.30 – 10.15  Evaluating some UWA research proposals
or 2.30 – 3.15

10.15 – 10.30  Break
or 3.15 – 3.30

10.30 – 10.45  The review process for a UWA research proposal
or 3.30 – 3.45

10.45 – 11.45  Starting on your research proposal
or 3.45 – 4.45

11.45 – 12.00  Evaluation and close
or 4.45 – 5.00
From research topic to research question

Managing your research

Writing for your research

Becoming a research professional

Data collection and analysis

Communicating your research

The Research Journey
The Cornerstones of a research proposal

A Proposal is a persuasive document that:

- establishes that there is a research problem ("what")
- establishes that addressing this problem will contribute to knowledge ("why")
- outlines a plan for answering that question using the principles of academic inquiry relevant to your discipline ("how")
- is a plan to answer that question using available resources ("how")
- is a plan that YOU will implement using the skills you have and/or will acquire ("how")
- outlines expectations, commitments and obligations that the student and the University have to each other ("how")
- is a very early draft of your thesis abstract
**Exercise:**
What benefits are you likely to gain from preparing a research proposal? Do you see any pitfalls, risks or disadvantages associated with this process?
Research Proposal Format


- your proposal should be no more than 15 pages long.

A. Proposed study

1. Title
   Aim for about 20 words that give a clear and specific idea of what the research question is.
   Some examples are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title too ambiguous</th>
<th>An improved title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organic matter in horticultural production</td>
<td>How does the addition of organic matter alter nitrogen cycling in commercial horticultural production in south-western Australia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless sensory networks</td>
<td>Formal techniques for design and analysis of reactive sensory networks for environmental monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A study of cerebral palsy and perinatal death in Western Australia, 1980 – 1995.</td>
<td>A case-controlled study of cerebral palsy and perinatal death in term and preterm infants in Western Australia, 1980 to 1995: how shared are the causal pathways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A performance analysis in rugby union</td>
<td>Quantifying the impact of the individual player and of team momentum in analysis of team performance in rugby union.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Outline how the proposed study fulfils the requirements of your degree (i.e. contribute to solving an academic and/or practical problem)
   e.g. “This study takes the next logical step in integrating……”
   “This study will extend…”
   “Until now it has not been possible to…. however ….”
   “Until now ……has not been understood, however…..”
   “……has been overlooked in previous studies of…”
   “Previous work was limited by ……. we propose to…”
   “It has been suggested by previous research that …..be investigated further”

B. Research Plan

Framework for the research including a detailed timeplan including estimated dates of completion of its various phases:
   o identify key phases in the research and allocate realistic completion dates.
   o work back from your date for completion.

Specific aims:
These should be described in one or two sentences as concrete statements that achievable.
Use verbs that tie into the methods you plan to use (e.g. obtain DNA fingerprints for …so that; compare growth and P uptake of….in order to evaluate.; validate the relationship between……using….algorithms; calculate correlation coefficients between…..and……in relation to the theory that;)

Arrange your statement of aims in order of importance.

**Check** that the aims link closely to and follow on from your statement of your key research problem, AND that they are **realistic** given time and resources.

**Methods:**
Show that the methods you propose to use are workable (have they been used successfully elsewhere?) and that you have, or have a strategy to acquire, the skills to apply these methods effectively.

**Avoiding duplication:**
How is the work unique? What steps have you taken to ensure you are not duplicating work already done?
Ph.D. students in particular, need to show how the work will make an original contribution to scholarship in the field.

**C. Scholars**
Identify three or four of the leading scholars in your field of research whose published work has inspired you. Include contact details including an email address, a concise biography and a list of their major publications that relate to your research field. Include at least one scholar from Australia if possible.
This section demonstrates to the reviewer that a group of people exists who could examine the thesis.
Scholars may be contacted if there is need to call on an additional evaluation of the work, for example, in the examination process.
In this section, you have identified experts in the field that you could contact in order to introduce yourself and your work (start building your networks in research).

**Example entry**
Associate Professor Carol Delaney
Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology
Stanford University
+1 (650) 723 0072

Associate Professor Delaney came to Stanford from Harvard University after serving two years as the assistant director of the Centre for the Study of World Religions. Prior to that she received a master’s degree in Theological Studies from Harvard Divinity School and a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Chicago.

Her interest in Islamic cosmology became the basis for her fieldwork in Turkey (1979-1982). Her dissertation *Seed and Soil: Symbols of Procreation* won the Galler Prize for the best dissertation in the division of social science at the University of Chicago.
Associate Professor Delaney has written extensively on many aspects of Sünni Islam in rural Anatolia. Her emphasis on patterns of human movement, the orienting power of religious symbols and the incorporation of Islamic concepts into Turkish national identity will all provide useful ideas for my own research.

**D. Bibliography**

This should show that the candidate is familiar with the relevant literature.

Your proposal should:
- outline the history of the problem (its antecedents)
- describe the primary characteristics (or debates/dialogues) of the area
- discuss and evaluate major and minor theories relevant to the problem
- quote landmark studies and major authors (start with no more than 5 or 6 main authors)
- cover the most recent literature
- 12-15 references will usually be enough
- Use the conventional form of referencing for your discipline

Some students cover these points in the Section A of the Proposal, and therefore the Bibliography is a reference list. If Section A is brief, then the Bibliography section should cover these points.

**E. Facilities**

**This is important** as it is a statement of what is the School/University is agreeing to provide. You should take account of facilities and equipment that are essential for the successful completion of your project, and know what access you have to facilities outside your School.

Things to consider are specialised equipment necessary to carry out your research, financial assistance (for example, with field work or preparation and distribution of questionnaires and surveys), and statistical assistance. You should also consider any special training you might need (e.g. training to gain proficiency in specialised laboratory techniques or techniques for analysis of data).

**F. Estimated Costs**

You will be expected to detail the costs of the project, including the cost of all resources such as travel, accommodation and equipment.
Budgetary considerations are important for all students, especially if you have limited access to funds. You need to ensure your project is feasible and establish where the funds will be coming from to finance it.

For example, postgraduate research students at UWA can submit an application to the Graduate Research and Scholarships Office for a travel award to attend a national or international conference. Also, your school may have resources that you can draw from.

You need to recognise the extent of your entitlements and be capable of bearing out-of-pocket costs for resources not provided by the University.

List your expenses by category (refer to the example below).

### Example entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unit cost</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy class airfare Perth-Jakarta-Perth</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>$800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local transport in Jakarta</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research visa application fee</td>
<td>$80</td>
<td>$80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment rental and purchase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital voice recorder</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcription machine (hire)</td>
<td>$130</td>
<td>$130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials and supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithium batteries (4)</td>
<td>$7</td>
<td>$28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 GB memory stick</td>
<td>$95</td>
<td>$95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone and Internet charges</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation service (linguistic analysis skills; Bahasa Indonesian to English)</td>
<td>$500</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>$2,433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### G. Fieldwork

If you are intending to undertake fieldwork, you must:

Be adequately insured. Consult the [University's Insurance Policy](#).

Read the [University's Field Work Policy](#).

The University must be able to contact you while you are in the field.

You may also need to obtain the appropriate documentation, such as a research visa, if you are intending to do research in another country. In some cases this may take several months, so it is wise to apply early.

### H. Supervisors

You must provide a list of your supervisors and the role they will fill such as

- **Co-ordinating supervisor** who is responsible for ensuring that all reporting and administrative requirements of supervisors are met. The Coordinating supervisor must be a UWA staff member. If you are enrolled in joint Schools you need a coordinating supervisor from each School.
- **Co-supervisor** who works with the coordinating supervisor to provide research advice in the discipline
- **Secondary supervisor** who provides advice with particular aspects of research
- **External supervisor** who does not hold a UWA appointment, may be from Industry or another University

N.B. “Where a candidate has more than one supervisor, the supervisors and the candidate must discuss the relative roles of the supervisors, record this in writing and lodge the record with the Graduate Research School as part of the Research Proposal.”

Please provide a list of your supervisors and their role, including percentages, as indicated in the Research Proposal Cover Sheet.

**Example entry in this section**

**Co-ordinating supervisor:** Dr Susan Broomhall 75 per cent  
Meetings every three weeks. Review of two drafts of each chapter as completed and one review of the final thesis. Dr Broomhall will be responsible for ensuring that all administration and reporting requirements from the supervisors are met. As co-ordinating supervisor, she will receive all correspondence from the Graduate Research School relating to the candidate, and is responsible for all communication with and between other supervisors.

**Co-supervisor:** Professor Philippa Maddern 25 per cent  
Meetings once per quarter and one review of the final thesis. Professor Maddern will also respond to queries relating to Latin.

**I. Confidentiality and Intellectual Property**

The Graduate Research School needs to know if your thesis is likely to contain information of a confidential nature, or if there are any agreements that may affect the student’s right to intellectual property arising out of the research.

READ the relevant policies and seek advice from the UWA legal office if in any doubt  

**J. Approvals**

The Head of School is required to certify that all necessary approvals have been obtained from the appropriate UWA committees. Similarly all required safety and other training must be complete before the research commences.

Approvals will be required prior to the use of animals, the participation of human subjects, genetic manipulation, potentially biohazardous procedures and situations,
the use and disposal of potent teratogens and carcinogens, the use of ionising radiation or other hazardous materials.

**K. Submission of the Research Proposal/details of proposed research**

Enrolled candidates should complete a Research Proposal Coversheet and submit TWO copies of their proposal and coversheet through the supervisor and Graduate Research Coordinator/Head of School to the Graduate Research School.

Applicants applying to transfer from a Masters programme at UWA to a PhD should complete the Application to Upgrade Form and submit TWO copies of the Details of Proposed Research AND upgrade form through the proposed supervisor and Graduate Research Coordinator/Head of School to the Graduate Research School.

Prospective candidates applying on the basis of an incomplete PhD from another institution should complete an Application Form and submit TWO copies of Proposed Research and application form (and other documentation as required) through the proposed supervisor and Graduate Research Coordinator/Head of School to the Graduate Research School.

Your reviewer will expect that your proposal has already been assessed by your School.

The signatures of your co-ordinating supervisor and head of school on your proposal coversheet confirms:

- the information contained in the research proposal is complete and correct
- you have access to resources
- you will be provided with adequate supervision
- you have obtained all approvals in relation to your proposed study.
Research Proposal Coversheet for Candidates in Research Higher Degrees

Research Fields, SEO Index and Government Type of Activity: required by the Australian Government (DEST) and must be filled out.

Supervisor details: the percentage contribution of each supervisor to the project must be estimated. A coordination supervisor must be nominated from each School.

Formal Confirmation of Candidature for PhD candidates:
Possible tasks/milestones that candidates could be required to complete in order for candidature to be confirmed include the following, as appropriate:

- having the Research Proposal approved;
- presenting work orally to the School;
- producing one or more piece/s of academic writing, additional to the Research Proposal, to an acceptable standard;
- applying for (and possibly obtaining) any ethics and other approvals required for the research;
- completing an annotated bibliography or review of literature if this is not included in the Proposal;
- passing appropriate safety courses such as Laser Safety, Radiation Safety, Chemical or Laboratory safety;
- completing a 1 or 2 day course in intellectual property;
- completing an introductory course in electronic literacy, eg using electronic data bases available at UWA;
- completing relevant, approved coursework units; and
- completing other relevant, approved development activities as cited specifically in the Research Proposal. These could include, for example, training in statistics, academic writing, project management, microscopy, and so on.
### School-specific Confirmation of Candidature Requirements


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal and Rural Health Care</th>
<th>Women’s and Infants’ Health Care</th>
<th>Plant Biology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Human Biology</td>
<td>Mathematics and Statistics</td>
<td>Population Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Biology</td>
<td>Medicine and Pharmacology</td>
<td>Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biomedical, Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences</td>
<td>Opthamology and Visual Science</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science &amp; Software Engineering</td>
<td>Paediatrics &amp; Child Health</td>
<td>Sport Science, Exercise and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth and Geographical Sciences</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Further information required**

- research proposal that follows the guidelines above
- a detailed timeplan for timely completion
- an estimate of anticipated annual costs
- a statement of the amount of money the School will provide each year to support the research
- the source of extra funds (if necessary)
- **an assurance that the student is aware of any possible financial obligations they may have, if the research costs exceed the support available from the School**
- an assurance that appropriate statistical advice is available within the School or will be sought elsewhere (needs to be specified)?
- confirmation that the proposal has been adequately discussed with supervisors
- confirmation that the proposal can be carried out with the available funding, facilities or equipment or that the necessary funding, facilities and equipment will be made available during the candidature.
- confirmation that you have read the UWA Field Work Policy if relevant
- are there confidentiality or intellectual property issues that need to be considered (if so, more detail is required, and another questionnaire needs to be completed)
○ a checklist that asks about aspects of your research that may require approvals. You are also asked to state whether approvals have been obtained or not.
○ A statement as to whether or not you have completed training required before your research can commence.

Signatures required from
the candidate,
coordinating supervisor,
Graduate Research Coordinator or Head of School
Manager of Animal Facilities and Biosafety
The Review Process for a UWA Research Proposal

Board members reviewing Research Proposals are expected to evaluate, and to comment if appropriate, on any or all aspects of the Research Proposal. These include:

- The budget and funding issues
- Ethics and safety issues, and whether the appropriate approvals have been obtained.
- Conflicts of interest, for example, in the proposed arrangements for supervision
- Suitability of expertise of the proposed supervisors
- Appropriate use of references and absence of plagiarism
- Overall acceptability as a piece of academic writing
- Appropriateness of the project for the degree in which it is intended to be undertaken (in terms of scope, structure and originality)
- Any perceivable shortcomings in data analysis skills
- Appropriateness of, or anything that is potentially problematic in, the research design.

The process of review will generally take about three to four weeks. When your Research Proposal has been formally approved, a letter will be sent to you – and to both your coordinating supervisor and Head of School – confirming this. Administrative staff in the Graduate Research School will also place an electronic copy of your Research Proposal on your student record.
Getting your thoughts together:

My research topic is:

Brainstorm some questions that your topic suggests.

Which question grabs you the most? What is it about this question that particularly appeals to you?

After you’ve given this some thought, discuss this with a partner. Take this opportunity to help each other clarify your thinking – i.e. be a “critical friend”.
More thoughts...

Think again:

My research topic is........

My research question is (or may be).........
What is your angle on the research question? Make some notes next to the headings below then discuss these with your partner. If you find you need some different headings, include them. Again take this opportunity to help each other clarify your thinking.

What?

Why?

Where?

When?

How?
Exercise 5:

Writing a pre-Proposal

1. What is your research topic/ research question?

2. What will you spend most of your research doing?
3. What is the importance or significance of the study?

4. How do you know this project is worth doing?
5. How do you propose to go about addressing your research question? What is your proposed methodology?

6. What evidence can you provide in your research proposal that this project can be completed within the time frame of your Research degree?
Writing your timeline

Second half of 2008
- Have a workable research proposal that has been passed by the Board of the Graduate Research School
- Start a “Thesis” file that has a working title contains a draft outline for your chapter headings
- Develop your literature searching skills
- Organise a system for managing your references
- Other skills development

First half of 2009
- Make progress on shaping your “Thesis” file:
  - Add your current draft/s of your lit review, introduction, methods and materials etc
  - Amend the working title for your thesis, and outline for chapter headings as your work unfolds
  - Present some aspect of your work in a public forum
Second half of 2009
  o  Continue shaping your thesis document

First half of 2010
  o  Continue shaping your thesis document
  o  Obtain peer review of your work (eg paper, conference presentation)
Second half of 2010
- Have a draft thesis document that outlines the entire work (although this will need substantial modification in the coming months, including addition of results that have not yet been finalised)

First half of 2011
- Finalise results/data analysis
- Amend draft thesis based on comments from your supervisor/s
Second half of 2011
- Choose thesis examiners in consultation with your supervisor/s
- Final editing of draft thesis document
- Submit the required number of copied and bound theses for examination
Developing your proposal
Masters Research Proposal

A. PROPOSED STUDY

1. Title

2. Outline how the intended research will fulfil the requirement of University Rule 3.2.3, namely, that it be a substantial work demonstrating "a sound knowledge of the subject of the research, evidence of the exercise of some independence of thought and the ability of expression in clear and concise language.

3. If the proposed study includes a creative component, describe the creative component. You must also show how the thesis and creative components will be linked.

B. RESEARCH PLAN

1. Please provide a time plan, including estimated dates of completion for your project.

2. What are the specific aims of the project?

3. What are the methods to be used or the approach to be taken? You must justify your choice of methods by referring to other research where a similar approach has been taken.

4. What efforts have been made to ensure that the project does not duplicate work already done?
C. SCHOLARS
Identify and provide contact details for some of the leading scholars in your research field.

D. BIBLIOGRAPHY
Provide bibliographic details of some of the major publications in your research field (no more than twenty).

E. FACILITIES
1. Identify any special facilities or resources you will need to conduct your proposed research. Specify whether you have these, or if not, how you will obtain them.

F. ESTIMATED COSTS
Please provide a detailed budget for the proposed research. You must indicate expected contributions from your School.

G. FIELDWORK
If you are conducting fieldwork as part of your research, you must read the University’s Field Work Policy which can be found at http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/field_work. You must also ensure that you familiar with the University’s Insurance Policy which can be found at http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/student?

H. SUPERVISORS
Please list your supervisors and briefly outline their area of academic expertise. You must indicate their role, including percentages, as explained on the Research Proposal Cover Sheet.
I. CONFIDENTIALITY & INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

If your thesis is likely to contain information of a confidential nature, the matter must be drawn to the attention of the Board of the Graduate Research School from the outset, or as soon as it becomes apparent.

The Board's attention must also be drawn to any intellectual property issues that need to be considered, including any existing intellectual property of value that is pertinent to the research and to any agreements that may affect the candidate’s right to intellectual property arising out of the research.

Please outline any aspects of your research which may contain confidentiality or intellectual property issues.

J. APPROVALS

Please outline all necessary approvals that either have, or need to be obtained in relation to the proposed research.
PhD Research Proposal

A. PROPOSED STUDY

1. Title

2. How will the proposed study make a substantial and original contribution to knowledge? (Refer to University Rule 3.3.3)

3. If the proposed study includes a creative component, describe the creative component. You must also show how the thesis and creative components will be linked.

B. RESEARCH PLAN

1. Please provide a time plan, including estimated dates of completion for your project.

2. What are the specific aims of the project?

3. What are the methods to be used or the approach to be taken? You must justify your choice of methods by referring to other research where a similar approach has been taken.

4. What efforts have been made to ensure that the project does not duplicate work already done?

C. SCHOLARS

Identify and provide contact details for some of the leading scholars in your research field.
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Please outline any aspects of your research which may contain confidentiality or intellectual property issues.

J. APPROVALS

Please outline all necessary approvals that either have, or need to be obtained in relation to the proposed research.
Emails sent to International students to facilitate progress through key stages of candidature

Dear Student,

It is now approximately 2 months since the commencement of your Masters candidature, and the half-way point towards the due date for your research proposal. This email is intended to direct you towards information you may find useful at this stage of your candidature.

1. If you have not already done so, please look carefully at the Research Proposal Guidelines and Research Proposal Coversheet. These can be viewed from http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/home/current/preparing/research_proposals

2. If you have not already done so, please look through the Writing Research Proposals website http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/home/current/proposals

3. If you have not already done so, prepare an inventory of specific skills and resources you expect to draw on in the course of your candidature. Use this inventory as the basis for an audit of the skills and resources you already have, and to identify skills you still need to develop and resources you may need to acquire.

4. In addition, please assess your progress to date against the list of Generic Skills that UWA research students are expected to acquire during their candidature. This list is available from http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/home/current/generic_skills

5. You should be working on costing your proposed project. This should include estimates of direct costs of the research including consumables necessary for the completion of the project, of costs associated with meeting needs for skills development and costs associated with supporting your candidature (excluding staff salaries and infrastructure costs borne by the University). This item refers to part F of the Research Proposal Guidelines, and is also referred to in the Research Proposal Coversheet.

6. If you have not already done so, please familiarise yourself with the various sources of financial support available to research students, for example Travel Grants, Supplementary/Top up Scholarships or Awards for particular purposes. Some of this information is available from http://www.scholarships.uwa.edu.au/home/postgrad

If you have any questions or comments, please contact one of us by email, phone or in person. We wish you all the best as you progress in your research and trust you are finding the process both challenging and enjoyable.

Kind Regards,

Krystyna Haq and Michael Azariadis,
Graduate Education Officers,
Graduate Research School (M302)
The University of Western Australia

Dr Krystyna Haq,
Graduate Education Officer (Science/Applied Science)
krys.haq@uwa.edu.au,
Phone: 6488 3783

Dr Michael Azariadis,
Graduate Education Officer (Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)
michael.azariadis@uwa.edu.au
Phone: 6488 1726
Dear Student,

It is now approximately 3 months since the commencement of your PhD candidature, and the half-way point towards the due date for your research proposal. This email is intended to direct you towards information you may find useful at this stage of your candidature.

1. If you have not already done so, please look carefully at the Research Proposal Guidelines and Research Proposal Coversheet. These can be viewed from http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/home/current/preparing/research_proposals

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3. If you have not already done so, prepare an inventory of specific skills and resources you expect to draw on in the course of your candidature. Use this inventory as the basis for an audit of the skills and resources you already have, and to identify skills you still need to develop and resources you may need to acquire.

4. In addition, please assess your progress to date against the list of Generic Skills that UWA research students are expected to acquire during their candidature. This list is available from http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/home/current/generic_skills

5. If you have not already done so, please familiarise yourself with the requirements you will have to meet for your Confirmation of Candidature. The Research Proposal Coversheet requires a list of the tasks agreed for your Confirmation of Candidature, for approval by the Board of the Graduate Research School. These requirements are determined by agreement between the student, supervisor/s and the School. General information about Confirmation of Candidature, and lists of tasks set by some Schools for this process is given at http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/home/current/confirmation_of_candidature. The skills audit suggested in 2 above should help you identify specific developmental tasks suitable for your Confirmation of Candidature.

6. You should be working on costing your proposed project. This should include estimates of direct costs of the research including consumables necessary for the completion of the project, of costs associated with meeting needs for skills development and costs associated with supporting your candidature (excluding staff salaries and infrastructure costs borne by the University). This item refers to part F of the Research Proposal Guidelines, and is also referred to in the Research Proposal Coversheet.

7. If you have not already done so, please familiarise yourself with the various sources of financial support available to research students, for example Travel Grants, Supplementary /Top up Scholarships or Awards for particular purposes. Some of this information is available from http://www.scholarships.uwa.edu.au/home/postgrad.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact one of us by email, phone or in person. We wish you all the best as you progress in your research and trust you are finding the process both challenging and enjoyable.

Kind Regards,
Krystyna Haq and Michael Azariadis,
Graduate Education Officers,
Graduate Research School (M302)
The University of Western Australia.
Dear Student,
It is now approximately 5 months since the commencement of your PhD candidature and one month until your research proposal is due. We hope the preparation of this important document is proceeding smoothly and encourage you to make every effort to submit a well planned proposal by the due date. This email is intended to help you in this regard.

1. Please review the email we sent you 3 months into your candidature and complete any tasks that you have not yet addressed. Pay particular attention to the tasks that will be required for your Confirmation of Candidature and the costing of your project. This email is attached for your convenience.

2. If you have not already done so, discuss a suitable time frame for considering the final draft/s of your research proposal with your supervisor.

3. Make the most of opportunities you have to obtain feedback on your proposal from your peers and from friends. Non-specialist readers can often provide useful feedback on the clarity of your writing.

4. If you would like to improve your use of language or your writing style, please make use of the free services provided by the Learning, Language and Research Skills team at Student Services. More information is available from http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/learning.

5. Once your proposal is complete, please keep at least one copy for your own records.

6. If you foresee the likelihood of a delay in submitting your proposal beyond the due date, please let us know. However it is in your best interest to submit the proposal when it is due, so that your research is not unduly delayed.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact one of us by email, phone or in person. We wish you all the best as you progress with your research.

Kind Regards,
Krystyna Haq and Michael Azariadis,
Graduate Education Officers,
Graduate Research School (M302)
The University of Western Australia