

## DOCTORATE IN DESIGN (DDES)

### HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

As part of your application to the **Professional Doctorate in Design**, you must submit a research proposal (approx. **1,000 to 2,000 words**). The proposal outlines your intended project and is used to assess its **originality, relevance, and feasibility**, as well as your readiness to undertake it with academic supervision.

Your proposal should follow the structure below:

- **TITLE**  
Include the working title, your name, and the submission date.
- **INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**  
Give a brief overview of the project, explaining why it matters, its impact within the field of design, and why it suits a professional doctorate.
- **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**  
Set out the specific questions your research will explore. These should be clearly defined, relevant, and consistent within the scope of doctoral study.
- **BACKGROUND**  
Provide the context for your project. Outline key theories, previous research, and related design practices. Reference both academic sources and creative work where appropriate.
- **RESEARCH METHODS AND PLAN**  
Describe how you will carry out the research. Describe the methods and approaches you will use, notably any practice-based or practice-led elements. Indicate how practice is used for enquiry or as an outcome.
- **EXPECTED RESULTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**  
Summarise what your research may produce, whether new knowledge, methods, or artefacts. Please explain what is innovative about your work and how it contributes to design practice or theory
- **TIMELINE**  
Outline a provisional timeline of key milestones and stages of the research. Please break down each phase into specific tasks and estimate the time required for each.
- **BIBLIOGRAPHY**  
Provide a complete list of all sources referenced in your proposal, along with any additional key texts, publications, or works that inform and support the development of your research.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

The research proposal serves as an initial outline of your project. It should demonstrate that your idea is clear, achievable, professionally relevant, and thoughtfully integrates theory and practice.

## REVISING THE PROJECT

Your proposal is not final. In the first year, you will refine and develop it through supervision and study. Revisions are a regular part of the process as your thinking progresses.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSAL

The proposal is assessed to ensure:

- You possess a solid foundation in the field and research practices.
- The University can provide the necessary expertise and resources to support your work.

## INTERVIEW

If your proposal is approved, it will form the basis for discussion during your interview. All applicants are interviewed, either in person or via online platforms.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS OFFERING PRACTICAL GUIDANCE INCLUDE:

- Samuels, P. (2024). *Doctoral proposal writing: A guide for international students*. Taylor & Francis.
- Terrell, S. R. (2015). *Writing a proposal for your dissertation: Guidelines and examples* (2nd ed.). Guilford Publications.
- Cryer, P. (2006). *The research student's guide to success*. Open University Press.
- Phillips, E. M., & Pugh, D. S. (2002). *How to get a PhD*. Open University Press.