

# RESEARCH OUTLINE

## MA or PhD application for departmental consideration

This outline provides guidance as to what is being looked for in a preliminary research proposal at this stage of applying for departmental consideration and should assist you to clarify some of your initial ideas.

Please note that this research outline is asking you for your thinking at this initial stage. If the department supports your application to register for a Masters by Thesis (MA) or Doctorate by Thesis (PhD) degree in Psychology then you will work with a research supervisor to develop a more detailed and comprehensive research proposal which will be reviewed by departmental and faculty review committees in your first year of registration.

In a separate document provide the following information using these headings.

The body of the document should not exceed 2000 words (excluding references). Your reference list should not exceed 10 references. The outline should be typed in one-and-a-half spacing on A4 paper and in 12-point font size.

### **(Cover page)**

Name, topic area, proposed degree, proposed supervisor, date, and word count.

### **1. Central Focus**

What is the topic you wish to investigate in your research? What is the central question or thesis you wish to address? Sketch this in a few sentences, indicating why it is a worthwhile question to pursue.

### **2. Context**

Provide a brief overview of the general area of study within which your proposed research falls, including stating who will be your key scholarly dialogue partners. This is an important part of the research outline as it allows you to demonstrate your familiarity with the relevant field as well as your ability to communicate clearly and concisely.

### **3. Key Research Questions**

List key research questions (about 3 to 4) which arise from your central focus. In other words, break down your central question or issue into specific, focused questions which may form the basis for your research and might lead to chapters or sections of your thesis.

#### **4. Research Methods**

What will be the key method(s) you will use to address your topic and research questions? Why is/are these the most appropriate method(s) for your topic and questions? Provide details of your method(s), e.g. if you plan to conduct interviews, who will you interview? How many interviews will you conduct? Will there be problems of access? This section should also explain how you are going to analyse your research findings.

#### **5. Significance**

In one or two paragraphs, sketch the contribution you hope your work will make to the specific topic and the relevant wider field of study.

#### **6. Reference List**

References must be in APA 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>

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