

Master of Psychology Research Project Supervisor Information

Subject Requirements

The requirements for this subject are divided into the year of study that they are completed. Year 1 refers to the first year of the MPsych, when the student is enrolled in Research Proposal (PSYC90003). Year 2 refers to the second year of the MPsych, when the student is enrolled in Thesis (PSYC900095/96).

Year 1

There are 3 hurdle requirements for this subject, all of which occur in Year 1.

1. A written Literature Review of no more than 3000 words, culminating in a research question and hypotheses. This is **due to the student's supervisor(s) by Friday 5pm of Week 1 of Semester 2** of the first year of the MPsych. Once submitted to their supervisor, the student must ensure that the Literature Review Submitted box is endorsed and signed by their supervisor on the Research Thesis Proposal Feedback Form, available on LMS. This must be done before the Research Thesis Proposal Feedback Form is submitted to postgrad-psych@unimelb.edu.au
2. A written Research Proposal of no more than 1500 words, comprising literature review, methodology and anticipated statistical analyses. This is due to the student's supervisor(s) and the mini-conference panel **2 weeks prior to the student's Proposal Presentation**. The student will be notified of their mini-conference panel members prior to the submission due date. Supervisors may wish to see one or more drafts of the Proposal in the weeks prior to its submission date. See the Extensions section for the policy on extensions.
3. A Research Proposal Presentation. This will comprise a 15 - 20 minute oral Powerpoint presentation of the research proposal to an academic staff

audience, consisting of the Supervisor(s) (if available) and two invited members of academic staff. Other students are welcome to attend these presentations. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an avenue for constructive discussion of the proposal, including suggestions for recommended changes. This oral feedback will occur at the completion of each presentation; written feedback will not be provided. The presentation must include: a) a review of relevant background literature, b) aims and hypotheses, c) method section d) anticipated method of analyses. **The due date for the presentation and the presentation schedule will typically be determined by academic staff** and circulated to students. The presentation will occur within the context of a mini-conference that will be scheduled during Semester 2. In certain circumstances, students may be required to organise their own presentation time and arrange the attendance of two independent academic members of staff to attend their presentation; this must occur by the end of the second semester in which they are enrolled in this subject. A Research Thesis Proposal Feedback Form, available on LMS, must be completed by each student and taken to the presentation by each student for the panel members to sign. Once this form is completed (see point 3 below), it should be submitted to postgrad-psych@unimelb.edu.au **An ethics application must be submitted to the relevant ethics committee by the time of the proposal presentation.**

Note: For combined degree (MPsych/PhD) students, the Proposal should portray an intended study, but would not constitute the final PhD proposal.

Year 2

In addition to the hurdle requirements listed above, a thesis of at least 6,000 words, but no more than 10,000 words, must be **submitted via Turnitin by 11.59pm on October 31st** of the final year of enrollment in the Thesis (PSYC900095/96) subject.

Subject Assessment

Year 1: For the hurdle requirements, no mark will be allocated for these pieces of work. Completion of all pieces of work, with submission by the relevant due date, is required to receive a Pass grade for the Year 1 subject Research Proposal (PSYC90003).

Year 2: Details regarding thesis marking are provided below, in the section titled: Marking of Theses.

Types of Research Projects

A number of research types are permissible. These include empirical research based on data collection, meta-analysis of a cutting edge and clinically relevant topic, single case designs, and analyses of previously unanalyzed archival data. Whatever the methodology, the topic should inform a clinical issue, either at a basic or applied scientific level.

Research Supervision and Research Topics

All student research must be supervised by one or more research supervisors. It is the student's responsibility to seek out a supervisor and determine whether they are able to provide supervision. Due to fluctuating supervision loads not all supervisors will take on students every year.

Many supervisors have projects that they can offer to students, but a student may also approach a researcher with their own idea(s). It is expected that students approach potential supervisors from the beginning of Semester 1 of their 1st year of the course (or earlier). Once a supervisor-student relationship has been agreed to by both parties, the student must complete **the Supervisor & Thesis Registration form** (available on the Research Proposal (PSYC90003) LMS website in the Documents tab) and **submit** it at the 12th floor of the Redmond Barry Building to postgrad-psych@unimelb.edu.au **by the end of Week 7, Semester 1** of the first year of the course. The student's internal supervisor must also sign this form.

During Orientation Week of the first year of the MPsych, students will attend a

session that provides information regarding the MPsych research process. At this session, a number of internal and external supervisors will present some of the available projects to students. A list of these research topics is provided on the Psychological Sciences webpage:

<https://psychologicalsciences.unimelb.edu.au/study/postgraduate-coursework-master-of-psychology> - press the link to Masters Projects. Students are also

encouraged to identify other potential supervisors and projects by examining staff and lab profiles on the School website and approaching members of staff within the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences, (MSPS). A staff member can be approached even if that staff member does not have a project listed in the available topics document. All MSPS academic staff can supervise an MPsych research project, as long as the research topic informs a clinical issue at either a basic or applied scientific level. Researchers at affiliated or external institutions may also be approached by students to supervise their research, but all students must have at least one internal MSPS academic supervisor for their project. It is the student's responsibility to obtain an internal supervisor if they wish to have an external supervisor.

Time commitment for research projects

Students are expected to undertake up to approximately 120 hours of data collection activities across the course of their MPsych research project. Many different types of research projects can be completed to fulfil the requirements of the MPsych thesis, some of which may not formally include direct data collection. Consequently, the student may need to clarify with their supervisor what this time commitment will mean in the context of their particular project.

MPsych students have a large number of coursework and clinical placement requirements, which require significant investments of time. These requirements will fluctuate across both First and Second Year of the course. Supervisors and students are strongly encouraged to have regular open and frank conversations regarding expectations about the time a student can allocate towards their thesis. In

particular, it is important that supervisors and students are aware that students may experience periods of particularly high demand from their coursework and clinical placement obligations, which may impact on their available time to do research. At the same time, it is also important that supervisors and students be aware that the due date for the thesis is pre-determined; regular and consistent work in both First and Second Year is required to achieve submission by this date.

Thesis writing style

Students are required to write their thesis in the targeted style that is appropriate for an internationally peer-reviewed journal article, rather than in a traditional 'thesis' style. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, this aims to teach the important skill of writing journal articles, which is the principal method of communication in the research field. Secondly, it is to facilitate publication of the student's research on completion of the thesis.

There are no specific requirements for the 'journal article' style thesis as different fields and different journals require different formats and different lengths.

Therefore guidance from the primary supervisor regarding appropriate style is paramount. The supervisor should be assisting the student towards creating a piece of work that could be submitted directly to a journal for review. In general, a more targeted 'journal article' style thesis is likely to be briefer than a traditional 'thesis' style piece of work, particularly with respect to the Introduction and Discussion sections. Specifically, the student should write their work for an audience comprising experts/researchers in the field – as they would for a genuine article submission - rather than an audience of more generalist research psychologists. This can mean that the Introduction and Discussion sections are more focused around the research question and hypotheses of the study than in the traditional 'thesis' style of writing. Writing a 'journal article' style thesis may result in the finished piece of work being less than 6,000 words in length. If this is the case then the student can provide an additional section (at the end of the thesis) to make up the required word count, which should include a more fleshed out description of the

background relevance and importance of the study as well as the implications of the study's findings for the broader field.

Students who consider that their research study is not at a publishable level (e.g. due to small numbers, methodological issues etc.), are still required to write their thesis in the style of a journal article. Markers will not be considering the 'publishable' nature of the thesis in their determination of a student's mark.

Submission of Work

All assignments are to be submitted via **LMS (Turnitin) by 11.59pm** on the **31st October** of the final year of enrollment in the Thesis (PSYC900095/96) subject. There is no grace period, so it is strongly suggested that all students submit by 7:00 am at the latest to allow for unforeseen difficulties such as slow internet connections etc. Technology failure is not an excuse for late submission.

Obtaining a Receipt

On submission, Turnitin will display a receipt showing the date and time of submission. It is imperative that you take a screenshot of this receipt. If the thesis "goes missing", the late penalty cannot be waived unless a receipt can be shown. You should not rely on Turnitin emailing you a receipt since Turnitin typically does not email a receipt when the thesis "goes missing".

General submission reminders.

Students must:

1. Type and double space their thesis
2. Include an accurate word count on the title page
3. Save their file according to the following format to be uploaded to LMS Turnitin:
LAST NAME (UPPERCASE)_ First name_Student Number e.g. Smith_Jane_123456
4. Ensure they have **backup copies** of their work – technology failure is not an excuse for late submission

5. Take a **screen shot** of their Turnitin receipt showing the date and time of submission

Penalty for Late Work

For theses submitted after the due date without an approved extension, the mark awarded will be reduced by 10% of the total marks available for each working day the work is late. Theses submitted more than 5 working days after the due date without an approved extension will not be marked and will receive no marks.

Technology failure or lack of access to computers/word processing software is not an acceptable reason for late submission. Computers with the complete Microsoft Office suite have been made available for student use by the School on the 10th floor of the Redmond Barry Building and by the University in the Baillieu, ERC and Brownless Medical Libraries

Extension requests: First Year Hurdle Requirements

Students who require an extension for the written Research Proposal and/or Literature Review can negotiate this directly with their Supervisors. They do not require permission from the Subject Coordinator, but they must still submit documentation confirming completion of the hurdle requirement prior to the end of Semester 2.

Extension Requests: Second Year Thesis submission

The submission date for the thesis is 11.59pm on October 31st of the of the final year of enrollment in the Thesis (PSYC900095/96) subject (typically in the 2nd year of the MPsych). Extensions are only approved under exceptional circumstances. You are expected to manage your time to allow for minor illnesses, technology problems, heavy workloads, recruitment issues, outside work commitments, transport problems etc.

- The subject coordinator may grant an extension of up to 10 working days to allow for unforeseen circumstances that have impacted a student during the time

allocated for the preparation of the thesis.

- Applications submitted more than 3 days after the original submission deadline has passed will automatically be rejected. If there exist exceptional circumstances that prevented a timely application from being made, then you are advised to request support under the Special Consideration Procedure. Information about Special Consideration can be found on this subject's LMS site under the tab: Extensions
- Submission of an application for extension does not guarantee approval.
- If you need an extension of more than 10 working days, or were granted the maximum extension but are experiencing circumstances that are still preventing you from submitting the assessment by the revised due date, then you must submit an application under the Special Consideration Procedure. Information about Special Consideration can be found on this subject's LMS site under the tab: Extensions
- If you are experiencing difficulties of an ongoing or recurring episodic nature, then you are advised to seek support and advice from the Student Equity and Disability Unit: <http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability>

Procedure for Submitting a Request for Extension of Thesis Submission Date

- Compile supporting documentation that outlines how your circumstances have affected your ability to complete the assessment item before the original deadline
- Complete the process outlined on this subject's LMS site under the tab: Extensions
- The School will contact you about your application within three working days of the receipt of the electronic Extension Request form.

Evidence Requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure that adequate supporting documentation is included in your application for an extension request. Applications submitted without supporting evidence will be rejected. Supporting evidence may take the

form of a medical certificate, a University academic adjustment plan, or an authorised legal document such as a statutory declaration.

Further information about statutory declarations can be accessed from the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation:

<http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/justice+system/legal+assistance/statutory+declarations/>

Medical Certificates

The School will not approve an extension request that exceeds the duration of the medical condition as stated by the health professional on a medical certificate. If your condition continues to affect your studies and you require a continuation on your extension, then you will need to provide new and updated medical documentation. Be advised that the School regularly checks the validity of medical certificates. DO NOT, under any circumstances, forge or falsify medical documents. Falsifying documents constitutes fraud and is treated very seriously by the University. Students caught falsifying medical documents may have their enrolment at the University terminated.

Eligible circumstances for requesting an extension to thesis submission date

Extensions may be granted in circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- Illness or a medical condition, supported by a medical certificate.
- Injury or physical or psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event (e.g. as a result of a car accident), supported by a medical certificate and related documentation (e.g. police report).
- The death or diagnosis of a serious illness of a close family member or friend, supported by documentary evidence, and an explanation of the nature of your relationship to the person.
- Illness of a child, parent/guardian, or spouse, for whom the student is the

primary caregiver, supported by documentary evidence.

- An unforeseen event that substantially impacts on the preparation of an assignment, such as family breakdown or substantial change to economic circumstances (e.g. bankruptcy), supported by documentary evidence.
- Legal commitments, where a student is called for jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend a court, tribunal or hearing, supported by documentary evidence.
- Obligatory involvement in a religious ceremony or cultural event of a unique nature, supported by documentation from a relevant official or leader.

Ineligible circumstances for requesting an extension to thesis submission date

Extensions **will not** be granted for the following circumstances:

- Computer failure. Software malfunction, disk failures and printing difficulties are an unavoidable aspect of computer use and should be anticipated and planned for.
- Clinical placement demands. Variations in time demands at placement are an expected component of placement and should be anticipated and planned for.
- Assessment tasks in other subjects being due. You will be given fair notice of assessment due dates and are expected to manage their time in order to meet the set deadlines. This specifically includes assessment resulting from an approved overload.
- Employment responsibilities and routine financial support needs.
- Stress or 'normal' anxiety. The stress or anxiety normally associated with the completion of required assessment tasks or any aspect of coursework or placement is not considered grounds for an extension. A medically diagnosed anxiety disorder may be grounds for an extension or other accommodation under the Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure.
- Study difficulties. Difficulties adjusting to university life, the self-discipline needed to study effectively, and the demands of academic and/or clinical

placement work, or resulting from a lack of knowledge of the requirements of academic and/or clinical placement work or failing to anticipate correctly the time required to complete a specific task, are not grounds for extensions. You should consult with a student adviser about the options provided by support programs such as the learning skills programs offered by Academic Skills.

- Language difficulties. You are expected to possess a specified competency in English. If you are experiencing English language difficulties you should consult with a student adviser about ESL support options, such as those offered by Academic Skills.
- Minor inconveniences
- Regular, normal life events, such as family life, work, sporting activities, social, or other commitments

Minor interruptions and disruption to routine that might result from minor illness, mishaps or other minor adversity.

Marking of theses

Allocation of markers is undertaken by academic staff in a central allocation process that is somewhat similar to the Honours allocation process. All MPsych research supervisors are expected to mark theses of MPsych students.

It is expected that marking occurs within a 4-week timeframe from receipt of the thesis unless other arrangements have been specifically made (e.g. if staff members are on leave etc.).

Once examination is complete, students will be notified of their final mark and receive feedback from their examiners. A mark of at least 70% is considered a satisfactory mark for the Thesis (PSYC900095/96) subject. If, on examination, the thesis is awarded a mark that is 70% or greater, the student will receive this as their final mark for Thesis (PSYC900095/96); in this instance amendments and/or comments from the examiners should be considered as constructive feedback to

facilitate publication of the thesis. If, on examination, the thesis is awarded a mark that is less than 70% the student will be required to undertake the amendments outlined by the examiners. To ensure that these amendments satisfy the requirements of the examiners, the amended thesis together with a document that outlines in detail how the student has addressed each amendment, must be submitted to the student's supervisor. Once amendments are completed to the satisfaction of the student's supervisor the amended thesis, and the document describing the amendments undertaken, must be submitted to the Master's Thesis (PSYC900095/96) Chair of Examiners for ratification. Once ratified, the student will receive a final mark of 70% for their Thesis (PSYC900095/96) subject.

Final submission after marking is complete

Students are required to send a copy of their finalised thesis, including any amendments (if required), to their supervisor together with a full copy of their research project database. The student may provide either an electronic 'soft' copy or a bound 'hard' copy of their thesis to their supervisor.