PhD in Linguistics by Thesis and Coursework

Application Form Guidance Notes

We want applicants to be able to successfully present their proposed research, so we are providing specific guidelines about what we want to see in this form. Applicants who exceed the word limits or who do not directly address each topic are less likely to be accepted into our programme.

1. **Title of Research Project (maximum 15 words)**

What to include

A title of no more than fifteen (15) words that clearly identifies your topic.

How this section is evaluated

Good titles are precise, poor titles are overly general. If you are accepted into our programme, the title of your project will likely change as you learn more about research methodology and your topic; however, a title helps us understand the direction you want to pursue with your research.

2. **Issue addressed (maximum 750 words)**

What to include

A succinct but reasonably dense literature review that is specific to your project. This section should also identify gaps or unexplored issues that your project will address.

How this section is evaluated

This is a critically important section in a Thesis and Coursework application; no applicant will be accepted if it is poorly prepared. Your statement of the issue should be a synthesis of key research that is relevant to your proposed study. We take into consideration:

- The extent to which you are aware of current developments in your proposed area of research.

- The extent to which you are aware of seminal research in the field.

- The extent to which you demonstrate the capacity to read and understand relevant original research and/or theoretical works.

- The extent to which you are able to synthesize information from a range of relevant sources.

- Your depth of understanding of issue(s) relevant to your proposed research project.

Note: Applicants sometimes state that their research project is unique because they are taking an established topic and researching it in a new context (ex. motivation and language learning; media coverage of Arab Spring). Changing the research context is not usually sufficient for PhD research. If you believe context is important, then you need to be able to explain how re-researching a topic in a new context will add to the body of academic knowledge.

3. **Research questions (maximum 50 words)**

<u>What to include</u>

Two or three research questions that frame your research project. These will likely include concepts that were discussed in the previous section.

<u>How this section is evaluated</u>

As with titles, research questions typically evolve as you continue in a PhD programme and the questions in your application are unlikely to be your final questions. However, we expect that:

- Your questions will connect with issue(s) you've identified in the previous section.

- Your questions can be answered. Too often, applicants pose questions that are so broad and open that they cannot be answered by a single research project.

4. **Connections with previous academic and/or research experience (maximum 100 words)**

<u>What to include</u>

A short summary that makes explicit connections between your Masters degree, your previous work and/or research experience, and your proposed research.

<u>How this section is evaluated</u>

PhD students are expected to build on their existing expertise. This is your opportunity to explain how your proposed research connects with your previous achievements. Students whose proposed research does not connect with their Masters degree and/or experience are less likely to gain admittance to our doctoral programmes.

5. **Personal importance (maximum 100 words)**

<u>What to include</u>

A short statement that explains why you are passionate about your topic.

<u>How this section is evaluated</u>

If you don't think your research is important to your field, to the larger research community and/or to society at large, then you are unlikely to convince others. A strong statement focuses on the reasons your proposed study is important; a weak statement "tells" us that it is important.

6. **Collection and analysis of data (maximum 200 words)**

   <u>What to include</u>

   A brief list of the methods you will use to collect and analyze your data.

   <u>How this section is evaluated</u>

   Students in the Thesis and Coursework programme take 60 credits of coursework on research methodology, so you are not expected to have finalized your research design before beginning your PhD programme. However, we should be able to see logical connections between the issue, your research questions and your proposed methods for collecting and analyzing your data. Most importantly, we should be able to see how the data you collect and the methods you use to analyze the data will allow you to answer your research questions.

7. **List of references**

   Only list those books, book chapters and/or academic journal articles that you have cited in a previous section. References should be formatted in accordance with APA, MLA or Chicago style. You can find useful guides to referencing here: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/