



# HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH

in the School of Arts and Sciences, Sydney

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY / MASTERS BY RESEARCH / DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

## What should I do before I apply?

So you are thinking of undertaking a research degree in the humanities, creative arts, social or behavioural sciences, or mathematics? The School of Arts and Sciences can offer you a number of choices: the Master of Philosophy; the Masters by Research; and the Doctor of Philosophy.

For further information about these, please see the Postgraduate Guide [www.notredame.edu.au/pubs/guide/PG-Research-Guide/](http://www.notredame.edu.au/pubs/guide/PG-Research-Guide/). The remainder of this document tells you how to apply once you have decided which program is right for you.

### 01

Allow at least three months to prepare your HDR application, including doing some initial research for your proposed topic. **First you need to find out if we have someone to be the principal supervisor** for your proposed thesis topic. This academic should have a PhD, be in your discipline area (History, Sociology etc) and have experience in the field you wish to research (eg publications, grants). (Be aware, however, that even if someone fulfils this criteria they may not be available to take on more students.)

The School of Arts and Sciences does not accept applications that have not first been discussed with the potential principal supervisor.

Take a look at staff available to supervise here:

- [www.notredame.edu.au/about/schools/sydney/arts-and-sciences/school-staff](http://www.notredame.edu.au/about/schools/sydney/arts-and-sciences/school-staff)
- [www.notredame.edu.au/research/research-at-notre-dame/postgraduate-research/research-opportunities](http://www.notredame.edu.au/research/research-at-notre-dame/postgraduate-research/research-opportunities)
- [www.works.bepress.com/experts/the-university-of-notre-dame-australia/search/](http://www.works.bepress.com/experts/the-university-of-notre-dame-australia/search/)

### 02

The best way to contact a potential principal supervisor is to email them. Include the following information in your correspondence:

- a. A brief introduction to yourself;
- b. An explanation of why you think they will be the best supervisor for you. It is good to show you are familiar with their research and publications;

- c. Your academic qualifications for the degree you wish to apply for (check the UNDA Research Office page at: [www.notredame.edu.au/research/research-at-notre-dame/postgraduate-research/postgraduate-information/](http://www.notredame.edu.au/research/research-at-notre-dame/postgraduate-research/postgraduate-information/)), and any relevant publications and/or research experience you have;
- d. A brief description of your proposed research idea (c. 100 words).

### 03

Once you find someone who might be able to supervise your project, seek their feedback, where possible, on your application before submitting. This might be in person, on the telephone, by email or via Zoom.

### 04

As well as a principal supervisor, **you will need at least one co-supervisor**. The co-supervisor (or associate supervisor) should likewise be appropriately qualified, working in the research field, and offer skills that complement those of the principal supervisor. The co-supervisor may be at UNDA in the same or a different School, or they could be external to UNDA. You should discuss this with your potential principal supervisor, and the potential co-supervisor's name, once they have agreed, must be included in your application.

## What should I include in my application?

### 01

In consultation with your potential principal supervisor, you need to develop an **initial research idea**, which should contain information relevant to your research project, as listed below. The outcome of your research may be a thesis (traditional) or a creative work with an exegesis (non-traditional). Remember, though, it is expected that your research will evolve and change over time. This is just the first stage to demonstrate that you have a viable research idea.

### 02

Visit the Application for Enrolment page at UNDA to find out **what other documentation you need to apply**, such as identity documents, transcripts, and your personal statement: [www.notredame.edu.au/study/how-to-apply](http://www.notredame.edu.au/study/how-to-apply)

Note that the proposed supervision team is subject to the final approval of the School and the University.

### For 'traditional' research (thesis) include:

- a. A **draft title** for your project;
- b. The **discipline area** of your research (eg Social Justice, International Relations);
- c. The **proposed principal and co-supervisor names** and their professional suitability for your project;
- d. A **description** of your **proposed** research idea that includes a **rationale** for the research and a brief review of **relevant scholarly literature** (including references);
- e. A set (c.3-4) of **draft key questions** that will drive the research;
- f. The **expected methods and theoretical contexts** for your research. How will you carry out the research? (eg interviews, discourse analysis, archival research.) Is the research informed by a particular theory or framework? (eg. autoethnography, Foucauldian, social history);
- g. What is the **likely significance** of your proposed research project? (How will it make a new contribution to knowledge? Which knowledge gaps might it fill?);
- h. A **brief draft plan**, which may include such things as a **timeline, budget**, and any **resources** such as specialist equipment, software programs or infrastructure you will likely require to complete the project;
- i. A **bibliography or reference list**.

### For 'non-traditional' research (exegesis + creative artefact) include:

- a. A **draft title** for your project;
- b. The **discipline area** of your research (eg Writing, Film and Screen Production);
- c. The **proposed principal and co-supervisor names** and their professional suitability for your project;
- d. A **description** of your **proposed** research ideas (both creative project and exegesis) that includes a **rationale** for the research/project and a **brief review of relevant scholarly literature** (including references);
- e. A set (c.3-4) of **draft key questions** that will drive both the creative project and exegesis;
- f. The **expected methods and contexts** for your research. How will you carry out the research? (eg textual analysis, visual analysis.) Is the research informed by a particular theory or framework? (eg deconstruction, historicism);
- g. What is the **likely significance** of your proposed research project? (How will it make a new contribution to knowledge and creative practice?);
- h. A **brief draft plan**, which may include such things as a **timeline, budget**, and any **resources** such as specialist equipment (digital video camera) or infrastructure (theatre space) you will likely require to complete the project;
- i. A **bibliography or reference list**.
- j. You may also be required to demonstrate you already have creative outputs in the area of your proposed research, particularly for entry into the PhD. This might include published short stories or novels for Writing, or short films and documentaries for Film and Screen Studies.

## 03

If you are planning to apply for a **scholarship**, visit the Research Office information page: [www.notredame.edu.au/research/research-at-notre-dame/postgraduate-research/scholarships](http://www.notredame.edu.au/research/research-at-notre-dame/postgraduate-research/scholarships)

## What happens after I apply?

Assessing the application could take some time, so build this into your projected application timeline. The application needs to be assessed by the Research Office, the School Research Committee, and the Dean of the School. You may also be required to attend an interview with the School. Once a decision has been made, you will be formally notified by Student Admissions. Please note that not all applications are successful for a variety of reasons, and some may need to be resubmitted.

### For more information, contact or consult:

**The UNDA Sydney Research Office:** [sydney.research@nd.edu.au](mailto:sydney.research@nd.edu.au)

**The Associate Dean, Academic Development and Research:** [www.notredame.edu.au/about/schools/sydney/arts-and-sciences/school-staff](http://www.notredame.edu.au/about/schools/sydney/arts-and-sciences/school-staff)

**The Postgraduate research guide:** [www.notredame.edu.au/pubs/guide/PG-Research-Guide/](http://www.notredame.edu.au/pubs/guide/PG-Research-Guide/)

**Finally, we wish you good luck with your application!**

## 04

**Apply!** This is done via **Student Admissions:** [www.notredame.edu.au/forms/apply](http://www.notredame.edu.au/forms/apply)



*Useful contacts regarding HDR programs include:*

**Research Office**

sydney.research@nd.edu.au

ph. 02 8204 4426

**Admissions Office**

sydney.admissions@nd.edu.au

ph. 02 8204 4430

**The Associate Dean, Academic Development and Research,  
and your prospective supervisors**

[www.notredame.edu.au/about/schools/sydney/arts-and-sciences/school-staff](http://www.notredame.edu.au/about/schools/sydney/arts-and-sciences/school-staff)

## Contact us

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