FHES Guideline for Doctoral Confirmation of Candidature Document

Introduction

This guideline is intended to assist doctoral students in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences (FHES) at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in completing their Confirmation of Candidature document. It provides an overview of the required sections, key considerations, and references to relevant documents and resources. For further information and resources refer to the Postgraduate Handbook, GRS documents and the FHES Canvas page.

The development of your confirmation of candidature document should be informed by ongoing discussions with, and feedback from, your supervisors. Your proposal should be consistent with methodological and disciplinary norms in your field of research. Suggested headings, word counts and links to resources are provided for guidance only.

Research Proposal

Working Title (10-15 words)

Provide the current proposed title of your research. Usually, the title embodies the research question and methodology.

Research Question(s) (10-25 words)

Clearly state the research question(s). Ensure they are focused, methodologically congruent, and framed as a question.

Rationale and Significance of the Study (300-750 words)

Explain the key reasons for undertaking the research and why the study is worth conducting. Highlight its significance and potential impact.

Literature/Past Research Review (2,000-3,500 words)

The review of literature, along with other sources as appropriate, should define key concepts and terms, and provide a synthesis and critical evaluation of the existing knowledge in the field. The review should illustrate where the proposed research may extend, contribute to, or address gaps in the current body of knowledge.

Design of the Study (2,000-4,000 words)

In collaboration with your supervisors as you prepare your study design, carefully consider the size, scope and complexity of the proposed work. The recommended timeframe for completing a doctorate is 3 years full-time or 6 years part-time. Following confirmation of candidature students in both the PhD and DHSc programmes will have approximately two years full-time or four years part time to complete their research and write up the thesis. It is important that your doctoral proposal is both rigorous and feasible.

Methodology and Methods

- Describe and justify your overarching methodology and research design. Some disciplines require discussion of the research paradigm, underpinning theoretical frameworks, methodology, and researcher positionality.

- Clearly outline the phases of the research, the aim/objective/hypothesis of each phase, and how it addresses the research question.

- Outline the likely structure of your thesis by chapter and/or manuscript, using text or a combination of text and diagrams.

- Describe and justify the sample and sampling/recruitment strategy.

- Describe and justify the data collection methods.

Analysis

- Describe the analysis methods you will use to interpret the data, clearly justifying why these methods are appropriate for addressing your research questions and objectives.

- If statistical analysis is planned, justify the selected statistical techniques. Include power calculations where relevant to demonstrate the adequacy of the sample size. Specify the sources of expert advice consulted, such as the School Biostatistician, an External Biostatistician, or your Supervisor.

- Outline how you will manage and store the data, including management of data sovereignty and protection, privacy considerations, and plans for data sharing or archiving if applicable

Refer to the [Biostatistics and Epidemiology department page and clinic booking system](#)

Also refer to the [Research, Statistical Consulting and Data Management section of the Faculty PGR Canvas page.](#)

Cultural Considerations

- Ensure cultural considerations are thoughtfully incorporated throughout your research proposal, including in the background, methodology, and methods sections where relevant.

- Identify the social, cultural, and ethnic groups likely to take part, benefit from, or be impacted by your research. Discuss the relevance of your proposed research to tangata whenua specifically.

- Describe your current and planned engagement with social, cultural, and/or ethnic groups likely to take part, benefit from, or be impacted by your research.

- Identify how commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi is reflected in the proposed design and conduct of this research.

Refer to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Research in Aotearoa resources

Hazards and Risks

- Summarise the potential hazards and risks associated with the research. Separately complete the Postgraduate Research Hazards and Risks Assessment.

Refer to the Postgraduate Research Hazards and Risks Protocol

Ethical Approval (150-500 words)

- Identify the key ethical issues your research raises for participants, yourself as the researcher, wider communities, and institutions (beyond those already discussed above), and how you have/will address these issues in the design and conduct of the research.

- Identify and provide details of all ethical, legal, public health, environmental and locality obligations or approvals required for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken, and your progress toward achieving approvals.

- Please note, it is the responsibility of the student and supervisors to ensure that all required ethical, legal, public health, environmental and locality obligations or approvals are obtained prior to commencement of the data collection. In addition to any required jurisdictional ethical approvals, AUT postgraduate students must also have approval from Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) before commencing their research.

Refer to the AUT research ethics | Matatika Rangahau page

Resources and Budget (150-300 words)

- Identify the key university resources needed for the conduct of this research.

- Where relevant, identify any training and resources required beyond that provided through Faculty, Library and Graduate Research School researcher development opportunities.

- Use a table to provide an itemized budget for all research-related costs. This may include equipment, consumables, travel, gifts, koha, staffing, analytical support, access to specialist facilities, and/or access to specialist IT platforms/software.

    o For each item, list the source of funding that will cover its cost.

    o Where these costs are covered through in-kind support from another institution or external organisation, or an external research grant, this should be noted and supporting evidence made available on request.

- Acknowledge that any costs exceeding approved faculty research funds and available external grant funding will be covered by the student.

Refer to Research Basics on the Faculty PGR Canvas page for a [sample budget](#) and [workshop](#)

Location (150-300 words)

- State where the research will be conducted. If not at an AUT campus, justify the location (either within New Zealand or internationally) and provide a brief summary of the 'Off-campus plan'.

- For international research locations identify the local supervisor/advisor and their contribution to the research. *[Refer to the Off-Campus Registration Protocol](#)*

Progress and Activity to Date (50 – 150 words)

- Summarise your progress over the past six months and address any issues from the previous Progress Report.

Timetable for Completion (50-150 words)

- Provide a comprehensive timeline for completion of the research using a Gantt chart or similar.

- Outline the major activities required to complete each phase of the research and thesis chapter write-up, with expected completion dates.

  Refer to Research Basics on the [Faculty PGR Canvas page for an example Gantt chart](#).

Publications and Presentations

- List any research outputs related to your study, such as papers, presentations, and publications.