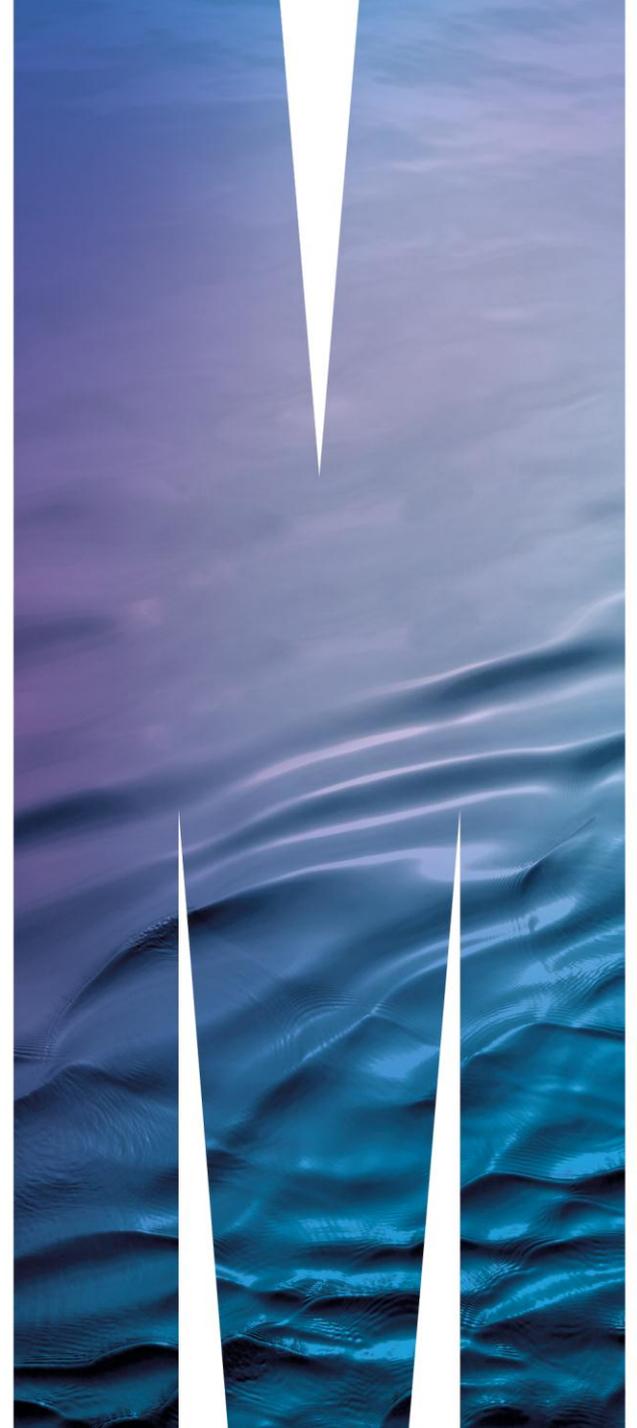


Writing a proposal for a social science discipline

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Writing your proposal

What we are looking for...

▪ THE PROPOSAL

- Clear and realistic objectives.
- Why is the topic is timely and important?
- How does your research contribute to and benefit society? What is the hoped for impact? How does it contribute to knowledge?
- What is innovative?

▪ The Candidate

- Highlight any project management, data analysis and any previous research related writing.
- The most important achievements of your academic career, degrees obtained.
- Work experience (both paid and unpaid) including any successful projects you have been involved in.
- Why you want to do a PhD and how it will aid your professional development/further your career.
- Ability to work independently.

- A research proposal is written to:
 - Propose a research project that is worthwhile and will result in a significant contribution to knowledge
 - Formulate a detailed plan of the project including methodological approach and theoretical framework
 - Ensure that the proposed research is achievable within the required time and with the available resources
 - Demonstrate that you have adequate expertise and experience to undertake the project

YOUR PROPOSAL HELPS TO FORM A 'FIRST-IMPRESSION' TO PROSPECTIVE SUPERVISORS AND THE UNIVERSITY.

- The following sections should be included:
 - A working title
 - Introduction
 - Research aims, question(s)
 - Literature review
 - Methodology and methods including case study selection if relevant, and brief discussion of ethics.
 - Stages in the research
 - Feasibility including resources required.
 - Time lines
 - Conclusions
 - References

Finding a supervisor: do your research!

- Research the goals and priorities of the Faculty, Schools/Departments, as well as interests of the individual faculty members.
 - Can your research be supervised by this Faculty?
- Try to align your project to the general interests goals and priorities.
 - E.g. Faculty of Arts is focused on **resilient and inclusive societies** → We have a related focus program on **gender, peace and security** → personnel in that initiative are Professor Jacqui True, Dr Swati Parashar and Dr Samantha [Gunawardana](#) → we jointly supervise Ms. [Jenny Hedstrom](#)
- But, remember, you can also raise new, innovative topics.



Gender, peace and security, political economy of violence



Gender, peace and security including women as perpetrators and survivors of violence.



Gender, peace, security and development, political economy of households



Gender, political economy of households and militarism in Myanmar

Write personalized emails to potential supervisors.

✓ A good example of an initial approach

Dear Dr. Gunawardana,

I am a US citizen of Sri Lankan descent who will embark on a Fulbright research grant this fall to study the formation of gender norms and identities in ...(proposal attached). Last year, I worked inand studying and writing about(see attachment) as a....Fellow. I also conducted my Master of Public Health research at on the relationship between(journal article attached).

I am hoping to enter a PhD program in fall or 2017 to study gender in Sri Lanka. Many hours of searching have revealed your study at Monash University in partnership with Oxfam to be the only large international university research project in the world specifically focused on gender in Sri Lanka. I am writing today to inquire whether you open to mentoring PhD students at Monash?

If you have time, it will be great to have a Skype conversation with you to discuss if we can collaborate in any way. I am in Madison, Wisconsin, USA, which I believe puts my time 15 hours behind yours. I am generally free on the weekends and on weekdays after 2 pm my time, meaning that the times I would be free for a call in the next week are: [insert times].

This student had not yet formulated her PhD proposal, however, we are in regular contact as she embarks on her Fulbright and formulates her EOI for the PhD.

- **X** A poor example.

Dear Samanthi,

Hope you are well. I am a civil servant from [...] friend of your student named [...]. I collect your email address from [...].

I am interested for studying PhD in Australia, specially in Melbourne as I completed my Masters from University of Melbourne. My husband is currently studying in Melbourne. So, I urgently need to come in Melbourne as my two kids are missing their father very much. I want to apply for Endeavour scholarship. Could you pls. be my supervisor for my phd studying?

I need your kind support in this regard and I would be grateful for your positive effort.

Here I have attached my research proposal. Pls. have a look and give me feedback.

This student had formulated their PhD proposal, but the area of research was completely outside of my expertise.



MONASH
University

Good luck!