

## **Research program**

### **Writing a proposal**

The following tips and hints may help you when writing a research proposal for your application. Research implies a formal academic process that investigates, analyses, and contributes original knowledge to that field of study.

Research Degrees may be undertaken either by thesis or by project. Where the outcome of the research is a project, rather than a thesis, the most common trap when writing a proposal is to describe the content or subject matter of the published work instead of the 'why, what and how' of the research process. The project component needs to provide a method of finding answers to your research questions. In fact, you must try to keep some of the passion out of your description and be more analytical about what it is you are doing.

The official Higher Degree by Research Application document has three major components to it. The information you supply for each section should be contained within a single page. It is therefore a sharp, smart document that avoids dense prose and written in a language that is accessible to non-experts.

### **What?**

#### **Title & Description - WHAT is the research program?**

The research proposal should have a descriptive title that is clear, concise and which reflects the content of the proposed program. The title should be no more than one long sentence. The description should provide a detailed and accurate outline of the program which addresses the following:

- What are the aims and objectives of the research?
- What problem(s), issue(s) or questions are to be investigated?
- What stages or tasks are involved in the research?

- What resources and facilities are required?
- What is the end product of the research?
- Will it be a written thesis, work of art, or some other form or combination?
- What is the location of the program?
- Will it be studio based or involve industry research or field work?

## **Why?**

### **Rationale - WHY this research program?**

This section should contain a detailed account of the reason(s) for undertaking this research.

- Why is this research important?
- What will be the benefits to the community or industry which are expected to result from the research?
- How will your research advance the understanding and perception of the issues involved?
- How will your research contribute to that body of knowledge that constitutes your field of study?

The benefits of the program to your self-development are assumed and do not constitute a sufficient rationale or reason for undertaking post-graduate research.

Academic research inevitably results in the production of original knowledge. Therefore it is important for the candidate to emphasize this aspect of their proposed research program. This may pose more of a difficulty in the disciplines of the creative arts, but the fine arts as compared with the sciences. It is therefore necessary for the candidate to clearly articulate the issues and debates within the realm that represents the focus of their work.