

Writing one page research proposal

- This brief notes is for potential candidates who wish to do PhD level research with me at the University of Melbourne.
- I always request one page proposal to potential research candidates and current students who are in probationary candidature before writing the confirmation or conversion report.
- One page research proposal helps me figuring out what the students think they will be doing.

Why one page?

- There are several reasons, important ones for me are:
 - Good potential research students should be able to write concisely and communicate what would they like to do in one page.
 - I do not wish to spent time reading more than one page. ☺ I am a time poor academic trying to be productive and trying to enjoy life.
- I promised this notes be one page too.

Suggested contents

- Candidate name
- Title
- Aim/Objectives
- Research method
- Expected outcomes
- Resources required

(Email questions regarding the contents to me.)

What I am looking for in one page proposal written by potential candidate

- Is the topic in the areas of my interest?
- What is the level (PhD or Masters)?
- Is the proposed study feasible within the time frame of the candidature?
- Does the potential student have background knowledge in the area?
- Do we have enough resources to support the research project?

What I am looking for in one page proposal written by current students

- Is the student informed about the current knowledge about the topic?
- Is the study going to contribute beyond the current knowledge about the topic and the findings useful?
- Does the student have capability to complete the research topic which was started?
- Is the proposed research method feasible in terms of time and resources?
- Do I have enough resources to support the research project?

My observations

- Most of the initial research proposals are OK (i.e. good enough for application for candidature) after one or no revisions.
- Two or three time revisions of current student proposals are not uncommon (i.e. what they thought they will be doing are not exactly what they have done to obtain a degree).
- Getting the one page proposal right in the first place is not so important, it helps us in clear thinking process and communication.