

## Getting started with a thesis: Helpful hints for 2017

Roeline Kuijer  
Postgraduate Research Coordinator  
Department of Psychology  
September, 2016

## Definitions

- PSYC 690/695 MA/MSc thesis (120 pts)
  - One year of full-time study
- APSY 660 Dissertation (90 pts)
  - Deadline 1 February of the next year
- PSYC 790 PhD
  - Three to four years of full-time study



## General source of advice

- MA/MSc/PhD
  - Postgraduate Research Coordinator (PGRC)
- APSY 660
  - Director I/O programme

Get these identities from the Department Handbook – they change

## Useful online sources

Go to the PSYC department website and find:

*Forms and Guidelines: PhD/Masters/APSY660 and PSYC470/475 Project Students :*

[http://www.psyc.canterbury.ac.nz/for/pg\\_studies/thesis/Project.shtml](http://www.psyc.canterbury.ac.nz/for/pg_studies/thesis/Project.shtml)

PSYC Department website:

<http://www.psyc.canterbury.ac.nz/>

College of Science  
Department of Psychology

UNIVERSITY OF  
CANTERBURY

Guide for Master's Thesis Students

Updated January 2016



## Useful online sources

All Postgraduate information is available at  
[www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgrad/](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgrad/)

General MSc/MA information is available at  
[http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgrad/ma\\_students/](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgrad/ma_students/)

MSc Enrolment information and links  
[www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/students/Masters\\_thesis\\_enrolment.shtml](http://www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/students/Masters_thesis_enrolment.shtml)

MA Thesis Enrolment information and links  
[www.arts.canterbury.ac.nz/for/postgrad/thesis-students.shtml](http://www.arts.canterbury.ac.nz/for/postgrad/thesis-students.shtml)

## Other sources of advice

- Issues specific to Psychology
  - ✓ Administrative Services Manager (Robyn Daly)
  - ✓ Head of Department
  - ✓ Professional Programmes Administrator (Clinical and APSY) (Anna Leuzzi)
- General issues about enrolment, regulations etc
  - ✓ College academic advisors
- Examination of your thesis
  - ✓ Dean of Postgraduate Research / Postgraduate office

## Prerequisites

- First (getting into BA(Hons), MA/MSc pt 1)
  - ✓ BA/BSc/PGDipSci with B average GPA in 300-level PSYC
  - ✓ PSYC 344 Research methods (or equivalent)
- Second (getting into MA/MSc pt 2 – the thesis)
  - ✓ Passing 120 pts of 400-level courses (a B average across 4<sup>th</sup> year courses is normally required)
  - ✓ Credited with PSYC 460/464

## What is a thesis?

### 2. Nature of Master's thesis work

2.1 **Master's thesis work involves a period of individual scholarship and research**, usually uninterrupted by other studies, though concurrent enrolment in coursework and thesis is often the case for the ME and is possible for the MSc. Typically a thesis is completed within one or two years of full-time study, or the part-time equivalent, but the time limits and restrictions vary from subject to subject. The Calendar must be consulted for definitive information.

Notwithstanding the time limits available for its completion, a thesis should comprise a body of work which could, in the given discipline, be completed in the equivalent of one full calendar year of full-time study (i.e., 1 EFTS).

2.2 **A Master's thesis is expected to demonstrate the student's ability to undertake independent research under guidance, using the established methods of research and analysis appropriate to the particular discipline or subject area.**

From the *Masters Thesis Work Policy and Guidelines v. 1.02 p. 3* (see [http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgrad/ma\\_students/policies.shtml](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgrad/ma_students/policies.shtml))

## What is a thesis?

- Written document reporting research
  - ✓ Introduction
  - ✓ Method
  - ✓ Results
  - ✓ Discussion
  - ✓ References
  - ✓ Appendices
- Using APA style, but Tables and Figures are integrated into the text
- Typical length 50-70 pages (+ Appendices) (12 point, double-spaced, Times New Roman or similar)  
(A dissertation or project report is like a thesis but usually smaller)
- Degree not awarded until PDF of thesis is deposited in UC library



## Getting started

- Informal process
  - ✓ Idea
  - ✓ Topic
  - ✓ Supervisor(s)
- Formal process
  - ✓ Enrolment
  - ✓ Thesis registration
  - ✓ Progress reports
  - ✓ Thesis submission



## Getting started: Informal process

- Idea / question / topic:
- ✓ From course work, reviews, projects, discussions, brainstorming
  - ✓ Fundamentally, must be **psychological**
  - ✓ Must be **practical** (i.e. realistic within the masters thesis time frame)
  - ✓ Must be **within the Department's resources**

Supervisors – you need one to start with; shop around

Every step iterative

## Supervisors

- You must have at least 2 by the proposal stage
- Senior (primary) supervisor must be continuing academic staff of the PSYC Dept.
- Other supervisors may be Co-supervisor or Associate supervisor (has a smaller or more specific input than co-supervisor)
- Co/Associate may be from
  - ✓ Other university dept
  - ✓ Other university
  - ✓ Outside organization (Dean may check qualifications)

## Who is available to supervise?

- All academic staff expected to do PG supervision
- Have to balance Masters and PhD
- Have to balance new vs existing students
- Have to balance availability – study leave, teaching load, part-time work, etc
- I/O team: often fully engaged with APSY 660 Dissertation students

Sometimes issues resolved by negotiation, e.g., around roles between senior and co/associate supervisors

## Supervisors

Ideally:

- Expert in research topic area
- Have the time and resources to help
- Are a person you are comfortable working with

**Sometimes, ideals must be compromised!**

You and supervisors need to be clear about roles and responsibilities

You can change supervisor arrangements after thesis begins, but this can get very messy

## Supervisors

**How do I know which staff supervise which topics?**

- Use what you know about their teaching areas
- Look at their research interests  
[http://www.psyc.canterbury.ac.nz/people/index\\_academic.shtml](http://www.psyc.canterbury.ac.nz/people/index_academic.shtml)
- Make an appointment and talk to them about your ideas and theirs – a conversation is not a commitment!

## Staff research interests

- **Neville Blampied:** conceptual, applied and experimental analysis of behaviour (PT)
- **Eileen Britt:** clinical psychology, motivational interviewing (PT)
- **Chris Burt:** I/O, workplace health/safety/stress
- **Janet Carter:** clinical psychology (psychotherapy, rumination, eating disorders) (PT)
- **Zhe Chen:** cognitive psychology, in particular topics related to visual perception
- **Sarah Christofferson:** clinical psychology, in particular forensic psychology
- **John Dalrymple-Alford:** neuropsychology, behavioural neuroscience
- **Martin Dorahy:** clinical psychology, complex traumatic stress and dissociative disorders

PT = part-time

## Staff research interests

- **Randy Grace:** experimental analysis of behaviour, forensic psychology, research methods and stats
- **Brian Haig:** theoretical psychology (PT)
- **Jacki Henderson:** developmental psychology (infant sleep, psychopathology, child and family interventions)
- **Rob Hughes:** behavioural pharmacology and teratology
- **Simon Kemp:** economic psychology, memory, history of psychology
- **Roeline Kuijer:** health psychology (partner relations and adaption to stress, self-regulation and health behaviour)
- **Joana Kuntz:** I/O, organisational change, employee and organisational resilience
- **Anthony McLean:** experimental analysis of behaviour, forensic psychology

PT = part-time

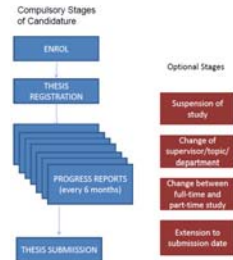
## Staff research interests

- **Kyle Nash:** psychology of motivation and conflict (nature of threat and defensive reactions to threat, individual differences in the affective experience of conflict and distress, social decision making processes)
- **Katharina Näswall:** I/O, work-related stress and well-being
- **Ewald Neumann:** selective attention, working memory, cognitive control
- **Julia Rucklidge:** clinical psychology, role of nutrition and mental health
- **Kumar Yogeewaran:** social psychology (social identity, stereotyping and prejudice, cultural diversity, applied social psychology)

PT = part-time

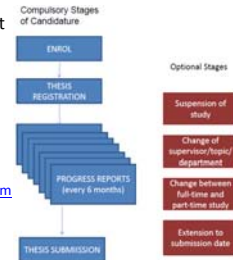
## The formal process

1. Enrol – through normal university process
- APSY 660 in S1 of any year
  - PSYC 690/695 anytime/1st Monday of month
- BUT – that starts the clock ticking! Often best to wait until you are close to topic decision
- You need one provisional supervisor at Enrolment
- [http://www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/students/Masters\\_thesis\\_enrolment.shtml](http://www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/students/Masters_thesis_enrolment.shtml)



## The formal process

2. Thesis Registration
- You have **2 months** (fulltime) to get to this stage
  - Requires that you have Dept approval of your Proposal
    - Masters Research Proposal application (Faculty forms, different for Arts & Science)
- [http://www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/form/s/m\\_research\\_proposal\\_application.pdf](http://www.science.canterbury.ac.nz/form/s/m_research_proposal_application.pdf)
- + Completed Dept Proposal form
  - + Budget
  - + IP agreement
  - Ethics - HEC or AEC needed before you can begin + Bicultural consultation



## Faculty form application form

You, your supervisor, and the PGRC have to sign this before it goes to Faculty



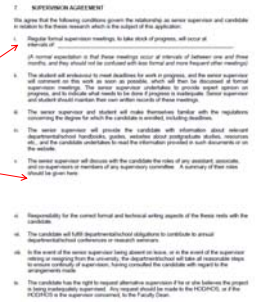
Check that you have the right form for either Arts (MA) or Science (MSc)

## Faculty form application form

Supervision agreement is key part

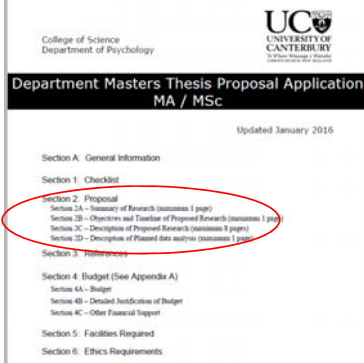
Note

- Formal meetings
- Supervisor roles



## The Departmental Proposal

Section 2 should form the core of your thesis introduction



## Budget

- See the Guidelines for advice
- Discuss with supervisor
- Normal range between \$200 and \$1200 - exceptions go to HoD
- Keep participant incentives under close control
- Get supervisor to sign

**Section 4: Budget**  
 Section 4(b) - Budget (and optional space for extra categories as necessary). You need to please your budget covering several years of spending in study for course of the calendar year.

| Category                     | Details               | Cost Year 1 | Cost Year 2 | Expected |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Printing                     | Copying (costs)       |             |             |          |
| Participant costs (not type) | Travel (not included) |             |             |          |
| Equipment                    | (not items)           |             |             |          |
| Advertising                  | (not items)           |             |             |          |
| Laboratory Expenses          | (not items)           |             |             |          |
| Other                        | (not items)           |             |             |          |
| Total Estimated Budget       |                       | \$          |             |          |

Approved as Feasible by Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

## Intellectual Rights Agreement

- This is an important agreement
- It safeguards both you and your supervisors
- It can be re-negotiated if circumstances change (e.g., you get a new supervisor)

Department of Psychology Intellectual Rights Agreement 2013 version

DEPARTMENT of PSYCHOLOGY  
University of Canterbury

Student-Staff Intellectual Rights Agreement Form  
Concerning Copyright, Intellectual Rights (including Property Rights and Moral Rights), Data Access and Storage, and Publication & Dissemination.

Version: January 2013

All the resources contained in documents from external organisations are copyright and intellectual property. When completed it should be printed out and the text typed (typed to the parties to the agreement and signed with the Department Administrator. PDF files cannot be used for the text and print for the agreement and any other intellectual property. Signatures will be required.

Parties to the agreement

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(If there are additional students involved, add their names by copying and pasting more of the above into the document)

University Staff

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Different forms for different degrees

Carefully note that there are a different set of forms for

- APSY 660 Dissertation
- PhD

## What do you do with the paper work?

1. Carefully check that you have the most up to date version of any forms – download from web
2. Carefully check that it has all been completed!
3. Make sure you and the supervisor have signed it everywhere those signatures are required!
4. Hand the completed forms to Robyn.

## What happens next?

1. Everything is reviewed by the PGRC
2. Any gaps, no signatures, etc are noted and forms returned to student and supervisor for correction
3. PGRC signs on behalf of Dept
4. Robyn scans the forms and sends them to the Faculty
5. You will be advised by the Faculty that your thesis is Registered.
6. Once you have ethics approval, you are good to go!

## General information (Psychology)

**Postgraduate office space:** The Department will endeavour to provide research students with office desk space and, but this may not be possible in all cases. Students will normally share an office with others. Applications must be made annually to the Administrative Services Manager, Room 222 and allocations are normally assigned in the first week of March.

**Common room:** A Postgraduate Common Room is available on Level 4, (Room 409, Lab Block)

## General information (Psychology)

**Seminars:** The Department runs a seminar series throughout the year. Speakers include both members of the Department and external visitors. Students are expected to use their best endeavours to attend as many of these seminars as they are able to – they provide an excellent means of staying “up to date” with research across a variety of domains in psychology.

## General information

### Opportunities to present your research:

- Postgraduate Student Yearly Conference (Psychology)
- Annual Thesis Student Conference (university wide)
- Thesis-in-Three (usually in August)

### Scholarships and awards: information on Scholarships website (including application deadlines)

<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/future-students/fees-and-funding/scholarships-at-uc/>

### Support for PG students:

<http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/postgraduate/support-for-postgraduate-students/>

## General information

### Academic Skills centre:

- <http://www.lps.canterbury.ac.nz/lsc/>

### Statistics Workshops:

- The Statistics Consulting Unit of Maths & Stats (see monthly news letter from the Dean of PG research)



## General information

### UCCareerHub for Students

- [http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/uccareerhub\\_for\\_students.shtml](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/uccareerhub_for_students.shtml)

### Careers, Internships and Employment Seminars

- [http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/career\\_options/seminars.shtml](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/careers/career_options/seminars.shtml)

## The END

**Questions??**