



School of Biological Sciences

Honours & Graduate Diploma

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

GUIDELINES

Completing The Proposal:

Project Summary

It is critically important that the one hundred-word summary should be presented in a clear and easily understood style so that the examiners with broad but not specific expertise can determine why the project is of significance.

Aims, Background and Significance of the Project

Research grants are recommended for specific, clearly defined research projects. Projects should be submitted as mature research plans ready for implementation. The aims should be stated concisely. The rationale and research plan of the proposed project should be clearly set out. Include an indication of the relation to work elsewhere. The examiners are unlikely to give a high rating to data compilation, the preparation of bibliographies, or the development of research aids and tools (including computer programmes).

Research Plan, Methods and Techniques

Set down a specific strategy and a specific set of tactics of investigation; that is, an experimental design. Applicants must be able to give a sufficiently detailed indication of what material is expected to be available, the proposed research methodology and why this is appropriate to the field and will lead to the achievement of expected outcomes. Proposals that are vague or buried in seemingly impressive jargon will not be rated highly.

- **Project Time-line.** The proposal should make clear the scope and limitations of the project and give an indication of the timetable by which the objectives are to be realised.
- **Budget and Justification of the Budget.** Show Summary of total funds requested as whole dollars only. Applicants should not devise “ambit claim” budgets. Budget items should relate to the objectives of the research proposed, to allow the project to move expeditiously to a conclusion.

The following financial information is required:

- specification of the various items requested under the headings
 - i) equipment
 - ii) maintenance
 - iii) travel
 - iv) other
- a costing of each of the items at current prices that will apply; and
- Budgets must be **GST exclusive** and should not include University overheads.

Publications:

List any publications referred to in this application. Unpublished papers not subject to peer review or conference abstracts should not be included.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Applicants are requested to use A4 format.

Font: Twelve-point type size is required.

Margin: at least a 2 cm margin on each side.

Length: A maximum of **5 pages** of text, **single space**, not including bibliographic references.

Reductions in type size and minimal margins will not be favourably regarded.

School of Biological Sciences
Honours Research & Development (R&D) Proposal
Criteria and Assessment Sheet

Comments for the Reviewer

Identify the major contributions of the proposal. What are its major strengths and weaknesses, and its suitability for an honours/graduate diploma project? Please include both general and specific comments bearing on these questions, and emphasise your most significant points.

General comments on each section should address the following:

Project Summary (10%)

- Is there a cohesive 100 word statement on the significance of the project
- Project aim is clearly stated
- Innovation and significance clearly stated

Aims and Significance of the Project (40%)

- Provides significant background information to evaluate the project
- Importance and interest
- Originality
 - The anticipated outcomes will advance the knowledge base of the discipline
 - The project aims and concepts novel and innovative
- Organisation and clarity
 - Cohesiveness of argument
 - Conciseness and writing style

Research Plan, Methods and Techniques (50%)

- Scientific soundness
 - The conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed
 - The study well integrated and appropriate to the aims of the project
- Project Time line
 - Time line consistent for an honours project
 - Contingency plans adequate
- Budget and Justification of the Budget
 - Budget reflect all the true costs to the project
 - The costs justified

Specific Comments:

Support your general comments, positive or negative, with specific evidence. Remember that a review lacking substance will generally have less impact than a review that is well-reasoned and rich in content. Comment on any of the following matters that significantly affected your judgment of the proposal.

**GRADE DESCRIPTORS FOR:
University of Sydney Research and Development Scheme applications**

First Class

90-100

Student will have demonstrated outstanding quality, a flair for the subject, comprehensive knowledge of the subject area; the student has shown a real potential for achieving the standard of writing and thoroughness required for awarding of a grant. The student has been able to critically evaluate the established work in the area, has situated his/her study extremely well within the literature and has articulated the significance and potential of their findings. This mark reflects an exceptional achievement with a high degree of initiative and considerable student input into the experimental design and direction of the study. Budget and project time-line are satisfactory.

80-89

Student will have shown an understanding of the field both broad and deep. Student will have shown a solid foundation of conceptual thought and a breadth of factual knowledge of the discipline. The student has a clear familiarity with and ability to use central methodology and experimental practices of the discipline, and clear evidence of some independence of thought in the subject area. Some student input into the direction of the study or development of techniques, and critical discussion of the outcomes. Budget and project time-line are satisfactory.

Second Class

75-79

Student will have shown a command of the theory and practice of the discipline. They will have demonstrated their potential to conduct work at an independent level and complete tasks in a timely manner, and have an adequate understanding of the background factual basis of the subject. Student shows initiative but is more reliant on other people for ideas and techniques and project is dependent on supervisor's suggestions. Student is dedicated to work and demonstrates competence. Budget and project time-line are satisfactory.

70-74

Student is proficient in the theory and practice of their discipline but has not demonstrated complete independence of thought, practical mastery or clear communication. Student shows adequate but limited understanding of the topic. Budget and project time-line are satisfactory.

Third Class

65-69

Performance indicates that the student has successfully completed the work, but at a standard barely meeting honours criteria. The student's understanding of the topic is extremely limited and they have shown little or no independence of thought or performance. Budget and project time-line are satisfactory.

Note: Given the variation in the experimental approaches of the sub-disciplines of biology, assessing the degree of student input into his/her project needs to be sympathetic to that sub-discipline's experimental approach and the feasibility, or not, of allowing high order student input.