



**PhD in Applied Science
Doctoral Research Proposal (APSC 7602)**

Information for Students & Faculty

- The Evaluation Form for the Doctoral Research Proposal is included at the end of this document.
- The student should complete Part I of this form and email it to their Supervisor prior to their Proposal Defence.

Overview

- PhD students should complete the Research Proposal within three terms (one year) from the start of their program. For students who have transferred from the MSc program, the Research Proposal should be completed within two semesters of starting the PhD program.
- The Research Proposal consists of two elements:
 1. a written research proposal,
 2. a public presentation with an *in camera* question period.
- It is the Supervisor's responsibility to chair the Proposal Defence.
- Both elements of the Research Proposal are assessed by the Supervisory Committee.

Written Research Proposal

- Approximately 2 weeks before the Proposal Defense, the student must submit a written research proposal to their Supervisory Committee. The Supervisor must approve the written research proposal prior to its distribution to the Supervisory Committee.
- The written proposal should be 10-20 pages long (double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins) including figures and table, but excluding references. Despite these length guidelines, it will remain at the discretion of the Supervisory Committee to decide if the length of the prepared document was adequate.
- The written proposal should include:

- a brief survey of the relevant literature
 - existing knowledge gaps and associated research questions that the proposed work plans to address
 - research objectives and/or hypotheses
 - summary of the main methods to be used
 - any research progress that has been made
 - anticipated significance of the results
 - a proposed timeline for completion of major research and degree components
- Detailed methods can be placed in appendices, which are not counted toward the document length guideline given above.

Presentation

- Prior to the Presentation, it is the Supervisor's responsibility to inform their Departmental Administrative Assistant to post the information for those interested in attending.
- The student's presentation should be approximately 20 minutes long and must summarize the elements of the written research proposal.
- After the presentation, a few brief questions from the audience can be entertained.
- The audience will then be asked to leave the room.

Question Period

- The objectives of the Question Period are to
 - assess the merit of the proposed research,
 - assess the feasibility of the proposed research,
 - assess the appropriateness of the proposed research for a doctoral dissertation,
 - assess the student's background knowledge of the key concepts and methods related to their proposal, and
 - to identify any areas of weakness that should be addressed before the Qualifying Examination (APSC 7603).
- The question period should last no longer than 1.5 hours.
- The student will then leave the room while the Supervisory Committee deliberates.
- In relation to the objectives stated above, the Supervisory Committee must provide an evaluation of the student's Research Proposal (oral and written) using Part II of the attached Evaluation Form. The Committee must reach an agreement on the overall outcome of the proposal: pass, conditional pass, repeat, or fail.

Pass

Assigned if the research proposal is acceptable, and a passing grade is recommended for APSC 7602. Note that when assigning an outcome of Pass, the Supervisory Committee can still recommend that additional background study, including coursework, be completed prior to the Qualifying Exam.

Conditional Pass

Assigned if the research proposal is largely acceptable, but some immediate remedial action should be taken. For example, the proposal may contain conceptual or methodologic flaws that should be addressed before the student begins their research. The Committee must outline the actions to be taken and a timeline for their completion, and document these in Part II of the attached Evaluation Form. **Once these actions have been completed to the satisfaction of the Committee, the Supervisor must send a memo to the Program Coordinator outlining the remedial actions that were undertaken**, and requesting a change of grade to Pass for ASPC 7602.

Repeat

May be assigned if the proposal needs substantial revision, the research project is not viable in its current form, the student is not able to adequately demonstrate their background knowledge, or the student is not ready to begin their research. The Committee can require the student to repeat any or all of the Research Proposal components: written proposal, presentation, and/or question period. Actions to be taken and associated deadlines must be clearly documented in Part II of the attached Evaluation Form, which must be submitted to the Program Coordinator. Assessment of the student's second attempt must be made using a new copy of the Evaluation Form.

Fail

Should only be assigned if the student's second attempt to pass the Research Proposal remains inadequate.