

## Writing the research proposal

The research proposal submitted with the application is not expected to be a perfect or finished product, as it is likely to undergo changes over the first year of study, in consultation with your supervisor/s. However, it has an important role to play in that it is used to judge both the quality of the proposed project as well as the fit of the topic with the research expertise and supervisory availability within the school.

A successful research proposal is therefore likely to:

- be of relevance to the school's research area (see [Research in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning](#))
- have an appeal for supervisors who have interests or expertise in that area (see [here](#) for research interests of potential supervisors, as well as their research profile and publications to gain a good idea). The application asks you to identify possible supervisor/s and this will help speed up the processing of your application
- convey any relevant prior experience – research or practice - related to the topic, you can indicate why are you motivated or excited by the topic
- focus on a viable issue or set of questions that it proposes to explore
- have a sense of the contribution the research can make to the field (in terms of professional practice, theory and/or methodology) and respond questions such as: who might benefit? how might it change things? what 'new' knowledge might we gain?
- convey a good grasp of key texts or debates in the research literature in the field, and if possible, a theoretical framework for the investigation
- contain a tentative research plan outlining possible research methodology and methods that will be used to explore the topic, also, indicate what kind of data you might collect, how much, how might you analyse it, etc.
- contain a reasonable timescale for completion (see the course structure to get a feel for how this might assist you)
- exhibit excellent referencing and bibliography skills.

Selection will be based on the proposal's quality, applicant's qualifications, the interview, as well as on the availability of supervisors with appropriate expertise and interest in your area of research.