

KOLLING INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Guidelines for a Thesis Proposal (for 1st year Kolling students)

The purpose of writing a thesis proposal is to:

1. encourage you to read in the area of your thesis topic
2. help you focus your research aims, organise your research plan (methods, data analysis, etc), predict problems and outcomes, and plan alternatives;
3. train you in the art of scientific writing.
4. use it as a nucleus for writing a more comprehensive review of the literature

Your thesis proposal should demonstrate that you clearly understand the research topic, relate it to other relevant literature, and describe a research plan that will lead to a contribution of new knowledge. The following outline is an example of what should be included in your thesis proposal.

Introduction (2-4 pages)

This should be a short review of the current literature on your topic of research. Consult with your supervisors on the “boundaries” to be set on the review. Generally, you can use a pyramid model where you start at the broad area (brief discussion) and refine to smaller areas (detailed discussion) closer to your research aims. In particular you should identify the “gap in knowledge” or problems that you aim to contribute new knowledge or solutions to. Point out the significance/importance of the research topic.

Hypotheses and Aims (0.5-1 page)

Formulate testable hypotheses and set out specific aims to test the hypotheses.

Research Plan (2-4 pages)

Describe the proposed methods that you will use to test these hypotheses, taking the following into consideration:

1. Why have you selected this methodology and/or approach?
2. What resources (eg training on specialised equipment) will you require?
3. Are there ethical and/or safety issues that require approval from the relevant committees?
4. How will you analyse your data?
5. How will you validate your findings?
6. Identify potential problems and alternative approaches.

Include a research timetable and/or milestones, as well as predicted outcomes.

References

List all publications cited in your proposal.

Due Date

The thesis proposal (4 copies) should be handed in to your supervisor anytime during your first semester with the absolute deadline being **June 30th** (for students enrolling in semester I) or **November 30th** (semester II students). It will be reviewed by your supervisors and an assessor appointed by the Kolling Postgraduate Committee and returned to you with constructive comments.

Students will be asked to give a brief (20min) **oral presentation** of their thesis proposal to members of the Kolling Institute after the end of their first semester. You may use overheads or Powerpoint for the presentation.