

Research at MonaLaw

Minimum Entry Requirements:

MPhil:

- a. Minimum GPA of 3.0 or Upper Second Class Honours Degree or its equivalent

PhD:

- b. Approved graduate degrees awarded primarily for research
- c. Taught Master's degree from the UWI or another approved University; provided that the Master's programme included a research component of at least 25% of the total credit rating and the applicant achieved at least a B+ average or its equivalent
- d. Approval of upgrade application
- e. Such other qualifications and experience as the Board for Graduate Studies and Research may approve

Writing Research Proposals

Important notes:

- Please include your full name on the first page of your research proposal.
- Ensure your proposal is saved as a PDF document before submission.
- The citation style used by the Faculty is OSCOLA which can be accessed on Oxford's website at https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxlaw/oscola_4th_edn_hart_2012.pdf.

Proposal content

Your proposal should be approximately 1000 words and should include:

A working title of the topic area

This is required solely for the purposes of your proposal. As you further develop your research, you may revise the title.

The research context

This is the background against which your research will be carried out. It should be a brief introduction outlining the general area of study and identifying the subject area within which your study falls. You should summarise the current state of knowledge and any recent debates on the subject. You need to reference this in the same way as you would do if you were writing an essay, for example any articles or books you refer to should be footnoted with the full details of author, title, publication date and so on.

This will allow you to demonstrate a familiarity with the relevant field as well as the ability to communicate clearly and concisely.

The research issue, aims or questions you intend to address

Against the background provided in the research content above, you need to set out the contribution that your research will make. It is normally best to do this in the form of specific aims or research questions/issues.

Before writing your proposal, you should take time to reflect on the key questions that you are seeking to answer. Many research proposals are too broad, so reflecting on your key research questions is a good way to make sure that your project is sufficiently narrow and feasible (i.e. one that is likely to be completed with the normal period for an MPhil or PhD degree).

You might find it helpful to prioritise one or two main questions, from which you can then derive a number of secondary research questions. The proposal should also explain your intended approach to answering the questions: will your approach be empirical, doctrinal or theoretical or a mixture of these.

The importance of your proposed research

This section should:

- i. Demonstrate how your research 'fills a gap' in existing research i.e. the originality of your intended research
- ii. Explain why your research is important – it is not enough to say that this has not been studied previously, you need to explain why it should be studied, that how your research builds on and adds to the current state of knowledge in the field or by setting out reasons why it is timely to research your proposed topic

This should be the longest section of your proposal.

Research Methods

This section should:

- i. Explain whether your research will be library-based and/or will involve fieldwork/empirical data.
- ii. Give some detail on exactly how you will obtain your information.

Most legal research is library-based, relying on information that already exists; such as journal articles, case reports, legislation, treaties, historical records. Some studies, however, might require the use of fieldwork or empirical data – that is, gathering information through direct interaction with people and processes, such as interviews, questionnaires or court observation.

Assuming you plan to rely on library-based research, you need to explain where your sources are located and how they will be accessed, for example via the library, internet, Lexis or Westlaw. If your research is a comparative or international study, you will need to explain how you will obtain the relevant international materials and whether or not this will involve travel.

If you plan to undertake fieldwork or collect empirical data, you need to provide details about why this is an appropriate research method, who you plan to interview, how many interviews you will carry out, and so on.

In this section, you should also explain any special skills you have that will assist you in obtaining information, for example, if you plan to look at French law and you can read/speak French.

Timetable

The length of the MPhil programme full-time is 3 years with a minimum registration period of 2 years (that is, it is possible to start and finish a programme in less time than it normally takes but you must be registered for at least two years). The length of the PhD programme is 5 years with a minimum registration period of 3 years.

You should provide a very approximate timetable for the research with these time limits in mind.

References

Applicants must also submit a bibliography of texts/source literature on the proposed research topic.