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Guide to Writing a Doctoral Research Proposal with the Music Studies Department

We are very glad that you are considering joining us at the University of Malta on one of our Doctoral degree programmes. In the Department of Music Studies at the School of Performing Arts (UM), research students have their applications appraised by the staff.

One of the most important parts of your application is your research proposal, which will be the main item we use to determine your suitability for joining us. If you write a strong and persuasive research proposal it will make it easier for us to see to where your interests lie, and help indicate the supervisor/s best adapted for your research.

We appreciate that research proposals are tentative and subject to change, but they need to have a level of articulation even at application level. Typically, a postgraduate proposal starts with a statement of intent in terms of aims & objectives of the research, followed by a brief contextualisation of the proposed project in the existing scholarship, possibly an envisaged breakdown of chapters, a clear statement on methodology, and the envisaged trajectory of the work. It should also contain a preliminary bibliography and, preferably, a schedule of work (e.g. Year 1: research on XYZ, Year 2: write Chapter 1 etc.).

Below please find some further guidance on what to include in your proposal.

- Your proposal should describe briefly how the idea for your project situates itself in relation to previous research and theory
- The proposal should outline a specific programme of research that addresses open research questions based on the research and theory you cite
- Consider how your research might address particular issues that could be formulated as questions
- You should explain how you intend to investigate the research questions, and indicate where possible what methodologies you will be using
- Please include information on some specific texts, authors or theorists that you intend to analyse or invoke in your study

A sample copy of a **PhD proposal** is provided [here](#). See also the UM [PhD](#) and [DMus](#) Regulations.

We recommend that you also investigate the research interests of our staff on the Department of Music Studies website; mention one or more supervisors with related interests by name in your proposal, and explain how your ideas could connect with theirs.
