**Department of Preventive and Social Medicine**

**Te Tari Hauora Tūmatanui**

**Research Advisory Committee**

**RESEARCH PROPOSALS**

Students seeking approval for dissertation or thesis research projects (including Masters and Doctoral degrees), that involve a supervisor in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, are required to submit a research proposal[[1]](#footnote-1) and [coversheet](https://www.otago.ac.nz/dsm-psm/otago039910.docx) to the Research Advisory Committee (RAC). Students whose primary supervisor is in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine need to submit a proposal containing all Proposal Template sections described below.

The RAC needs to be satisfied that: 1) the project’s scale and focus is appropriate for the degree in question, 2) it is achievable, and 3) that the supervisory team is suited to the proposed research.

Masters students need RAC approval before they enrol. For Doctoral students, it is expected that RAC approval will be achieved in the first 6 months of study and form part of the Confirmation process – but approval can also be obtained prior to enrolment.

Proposals should be structured and concise – usually 3-5 single-spaced pages.

Proposals must be submitted before midday on the Monday of the week the Committee meets. Proposals need to be submitted to researchstudentadmin-psm@otago.ac.nz

**PROPOSAL TEMPLATE**

**1.** [**Proposal Coversheet**](https://www.otago.ac.nz/dsm-psm/otago039910.docx)

Title of research project, name of candidate, degree sought, proposed supervisors, and the proposed date of submission of the thesis. The submitted proposal must be approved by the named supervisors who need to sign the Coversheet.

Scientific peer review is required before Ethical Approval can be sought. Scientific peer review by RAC is available to research students whose primary supervisor is in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine. If you wish RAC to conduct this scientific review, you must indicate this on the coversheet, and provide sufficient detail for this to occur. Please refer to the requirements for [Scientific Peer Review.](https://www.otago.ac.nz/dsm-psm/research/peer-review/index.html)

**2. Abstract (≤150 words)**

Summarising the proposal.

**3. Introduction or Background (≤500 words)**

The background section should provide the context for the project, but need not be lengthy. It should contain a brief review of background factors, problems and/or issues the project will address; include a summary of previous relevant research on the problem; and identify the gap in knowledge that the research aims to address.

**4. Research Purpose**

One or more concise, clear, and specific statements on what the research seeks to achieve. These can be framed as research questions, aims and objectives, or hypotheses you intend to address.

**5. Health Significance**

Statements conveying why the proposed research is important, the nature and extent of the problem being addressed, and how this research will help. Please also describe the public health significance of your proposed research.

**6. Māori Health Advancement**

Describe how your project will contribute [Māori Health Advancement](https://www.hrc.govt.nz/maori-health/maori-health-advancement). Indicate the level of Māori input/advice you have sought for this study, and describe how this has shaped the development of the project and this proposal. If you consider that your research is not relevant to Māori, please explain why.

**7. Methods**

This section should demonstrate that the study design and methods are appropriate for your stated research purpose. For all proposals this is likely to include (as relevant): potential participants, recruitment strategy, what data will be collected and how, and an analysis plan.

If your research is part of a larger project involving other researchers, please clearly describe any areas of overlap; importantly, your proposal should focus on your own research methods (not those of the larger project).

1. For quantitative research, define the primary outcomes and secondary outcomes clearly. Provide details on the statistical approaches for answering each of the research questions. If appropriate, describe how you will control for confounding, deal with missing data, and include a sample size calculation.
2. For qualitative research, provide details on the methodological approach. If transcription of audio-recordings is required, who will do this?
3. For mixed methods research, both (a) and (b) should be addressed as relevant.

**8. Timeline**

Provide an approximate timeline for key tasks during the project e.g. literature review, data collection, analysis, writing up, and dissemination of results.

**9. Expected Outcome or Impact**

A concise description of the effects of the completed project. How might the findings be disseminated and/or implemented and who would be involved in this?

**10. Resources/Budget**

What will be required to conduct and complete the research (e.g. participants’ reimbursement/ travel/transcription costs/data provision costs)? Outline the proposed funding sources, and whether these have been confirmed.

If you intend to apply to the PSM Research Student Contribution Fund for financial support, please itemise the likely expenses and the timing of that expenditure. Separate, formal application to this fund is required. Please be aware that this fund is unlikely to be able to fund student research fully.

**11. Organisation of the Project**

Please describe who will be involved in the project, anticipated ethical issues, and any other consultation that is required or planned. Describe any relevant experience you have that will contribute to the research, and describe the experience, and contributions, your supervisors will bring to the research. It is expected that your supervisor(s) are experienced in the methods chosen for this study.

If your research proposal is part of a larger project – please describe (specifically) the focus of your proposed research.

**12. References**

1. Students whose primary supervisor is from another department may submit a copy of the proposal used in their primary department. The Research Advisory Committee does not approve (or decline) these proposals but will provide feedback to the PSM Departmental supervisor(s) and approve of their involvement. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)