

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION - TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

### Guidelines for Writing a Research Proposal

As part of the application process it is useful to provide an outline of what you are intending to undertake your research in. At this stage the outline is provisional as they can and do change when research work begins. However, we are asking you to provide this to enable us to: 1) help us assess your potential as a doctoral research student and 2) assign potential supervisors. Listed below are some of the areas that you might want to include whilst writing this proposal. You do not have to strictly adhere to the following list, but you may find them useful to structure your thinking and mapping out your proposal. As such you should treat them more as areas for discussion and are more than welcome to construct your own headings within the context of your proposal. We do not expect the proposal to be a 'model essay' (i.e. demonstrate a high level of understanding of research methodology, as this is what the programme is intended to develop), but indicative of your thinking around some of these areas.

1. Title.
2. A brief description of the area in which you are planning to conduct your research (e.g. management, curriculum, inclusion, policy analysis etc) and where appropriate your disciplinary or multidisciplinary focus (e.g. sociology, history, psychology, drama etc.).
3. The question or issues to be explored and why it is relevant and/or significant to you. You might want to make reference, where appropriate, to prior research or aspects of the literature which has contributed to your thinking around this. It is also useful to try and be as specific as possible at this stage, as questions which are vaguely formulated or pitched at a too general level do not allow us much of an insight into what you are intending to do.
4. How you plan to undertake the exploration of your questions and/or issues as a research project. Again this is intended to be indicative rather than definitive, but it is useful for us if we have an awareness of possible:
  - theoretical tradition and/or perspective you intend to work in e.g. critical theory, neo-Marxism, Feminism etc.
  - research approaches - e.g. case study, action research, survey, life history etc.
  - research methods – interviews, observation, document analysis, still and/or moving images etc.
  - participants – who or whom your sample or samples might include;
  - the location – where you might intend to undertake your study (e.g. your own workplace only, a number of different research sites for comparative purposes etc) and the;
  - the role of the researcher – how you envisage the relationship between the 'researcher' and the 'researched' for example what might be the ethical implications stemming from the way you undertake your study.
5. An indicative bibliography.