

Preparing to do an Honours Project

✳ If you are thinking about undertaking an Honours project, there are a number of preliminary questions that you should be able to answer.

1. *What is your proposed topic, or area of investigation?*
2. *What do you hope to find out by carrying out this study?*
3. *What theoretical perspectives will you need to consider? Can you name any relevant theoretical sources?*
4. *What methodology will you be using? e.g. archival research, analysis of written materials, analysis of visual materials, survey, questionnaire, interview, etc. What specific skills will you need? e.g. computing, interviewing, statistics, linguistic skills, specific cultural knowledge, etc.*
5. *Do you anticipate any problems in locating archival materials or other information? Is there enough information available to tackle this topic?*
6. *If you will be carrying out interviews, do you anticipate any problems in locating suitable subjects for interviews?*
7. *Have you considered the ethical implications of your research? Do you anticipate any problems?*
8. *Can the topic be tackled in the required time limit and within the word limit? If not, how do you propose to narrow the focus of your topic?*
9. *Does the topic reflect your own interests and preferred method of research?*

✳ If you can answer the above questions, you may be ready to begin working on your Dissertation Intention Statement with a possible supervisor. Please see the following guidelines on how to prepare this Statement.

Guidelines for Writing your 'Dissertation Intention Statement'

Please Read Carefully:

- ✳ The Dissertation Intention Statement is an important step in the process of applying for admission to Honours.
- ✳ This statement should indicate that you have a fairly focused idea of what you will research and how you will go about researching it. Please consult with your research supervisor to assist you.
- ✳ Use the following subheadings to structure your proposal. It should comprise 4 short paragraphs, and be no more than 1 page in length (excluding references). If you are accepted into the program, you will later refine your project as you work with a supervisor.

Title of the Study

The title of the study should clearly communicate to readers the topic and focus of the proposed research. It should be no more than 20 words (10 is better).

1. The Research Topic and Question

In this paragraph, you should explain your research focus.

- ✳ Identify the topic of the study.
- ✳ Indicate *briefly* what you know about work already done in this area.
- ✳ State your central research question.

2. Broad Research Objectives

In this paragraph, you should provisionally identify some of the research objectives that flow from your question.

- ✳ Identify 2 or 3 research tasks (objectives) you think your research question entails.
- ✳ Identify other secondary questions that may be important, but which will not be the focus of your research.

3. Research Methods

In this paragraph, you should indicate how you think you might set about investigating the research tasks or objectives you have identified.

- ✳ Indicate what kinds of information you think will need to be collected.
- ✳ Indicate from whom, and/or from where you think you might obtain this data.
- ✳ Indicate how this information might be analysed or interpreted — what theoretical perspectives do you think you will use; what research techniques will you use.

4. Significance of the Research

In this paragraph, you should briefly describe the relevance of your study. You might talk about one or another of the following dimensions of the project:

- ✳ How does this research contribute to a particular discipline and/or community?
- ✳ How might practice in your area be improved/changed because of your study?

References

Your research proposal doesn't need to have an extensive bibliography. But it will be helpful to the panel assessing your proposal if you include a very short bibliography (in an accepted format) that lists any works you cite, plus 2 or 3 texts that you think are central to the project.

Adapted from Curtin University, Faculty of Humanities, 'Application For Admission To Higher Degree By Research'