**Pitching your PhD for your Confirmation Report**

**Confirmation Report Instructions**

The Confirmation Report is a fully-illustrated and referenced written report. The maximum length 10,000 words, which is quite long. I would aim for around 6000 words for the main body of the report. You may want to have an appendix. Students should consult with supervisor on the structure and length of this report.

The Confirmation Report generally should contain:

1. A statement of the research topic and the research question(s).
2. An account of the research context, including background to the topic, a rationale for its relevance to contemporary scholarship, and a brief review of relevant literatures.
3. An account of the proposed research design, methods of data collection and analysis (including a statement on ethics) and, where appropriate, any results obtained from the PhD research so far (results are not expected for all students). This is usually broken down by chapter after a general introduction.
4. Preliminary identification of the key thesis chapters and/or publications arising from the research (as appropriate). This is usually indicated by the chapter sections of the report. Sometimes students indicate potential journals to which they might submit the manuscripts.
5. A detailed plan for the next 6 months and an outline plan for the next 18 months. Gantt chart or timeline might be useful here. This is a first draft of the PhD timeline that you may want to revisit and update across your PhD.
6. A data management plan (don't forget this!). What are the requirements of your funding agency, etc.? How will you follow open science best practice (see <https://osf.io/>)? Where will you store your data and code? Are there available public data repositories? How will you version control your work? What will you do about privacy concerns with your data?
7. An brief overview of the supervisory arrangements. Who are your supervisors and co-supervisors? What support will different members of your supervisory team provide?
8. An assessment of resources needed to complete the project. What funding, laboratory, computing and training resources do you require? How will you acquire those resources during your PhD?
9. The Ethics Determination Form – Needs to be filled out and approved before fulfilling the confirmation process.
10. Confirmation presentation:

* A short (normally 10-15 minutes) illustrated presentation outlining the research proposed, followed by 5 minutes of questions.
* Normally delivered at the Annual PGR Conference in spring. Can also be held in a department seminar or lab group meeting.
* Attended by the student’s supervisor(s), Advisor and preferably all academic members on the student’s Confirmation Panel.
* The presentation content should include: the research question/s, the rationale for the research, relevant theoretical and methodological issues, technical and procedural aspects of data collection and analysis. If appropriate, it may report on initial findings.

**Developing your PhD Plan**

*Coming up with a title can help communicate what your work is all about. It also makes your PhD plan feel more concrete. Have a think, but don’t worry about coming up with something perfect right away!*

**The working title** *Just list keywords if you can’t come up with a title:*

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**Your name and your supervisory team**

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**Overall Aims**

*Coming up with the overall pitch for a PhD can be daunting. But knowing why you are doing the research you are planning to do can really help figuring out the more specific goals of your research. Keep revisiting this pitch and refining it as you progress throughout your PhD it might change quite a lot or it might not, but it should be the anchor to the work that you do.*

**The hook** *Here is what is known about your general field – the big picture of your research*:

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**The knowledge gap** *Here is what is not known about your general field – the gap you will fill:*

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**The PhD motivation** *Here is how you are going to fill this knowledge gap – your methods plans*:

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**The take-home message** *Here is why this research matters to the bigger picture of the field:*

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**Plans for specific chapters**

*A PhD is generally made up of three or four chapters. When you are developing your PhD plan it is a good idea to draft out those chapter ideas at an early stage and to build the literature review around both the bigger picture motivation for your research and the specific themes of your planned chapters. The chapters are usually ranked from least to most risky. Start with the chapters that are most well developed, that the datasets are already in place, etc. and then work towards the chapters that are most fuzzy in your mind that are more likely to get changed later. Include a fourth chapter if you think there is one chapter you might drop or if you want to choose between two different chapter ideas. Consider including a literature review chapter in your PhD if appropriate. Set up a meeting with your supervisor(s) to discuss your draft PhD plan once you have one together before you start writing.*

**Chapter 1**

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| --- |
| *Specific ‘what we know’ hook:*  *Specific knowledge gap:*  *Research question:*  *Hypothesis:*  H1:  H0:  etc.  *Methods (bullet points):*  *Anticipated results (what you anticipate finding out your hypothesis and null and/or alternative hypotheses spelled out in words):*  If we find this … this will mean …  If we find that … that will mean… |

**Chapter 2**

|  |
| --- |
| *Specific ‘what we know’ hook:*  *Specific knowledge gap:*  *Research question:*  *Hypothesis:*  H1:  H0:  etc.  *Methods (bullet points):*  *Anticipated results (what you anticipate finding out your hypothesis and null and/or alternative hypotheses spelled out in words):*  If we find this … this will mean …  If we find that … that will mean… |

**Chapter 3**

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| *Specific ‘what we know’ hook:*  *Specific knowledge gap:*  *Research question:*  *Hypothesis:*  H1:  H0:  etc.  *Methods (bullet points):*  *Anticipated results (what you anticipate finding out your hypothesis and null and/or alternative hypotheses spelled out in words):*  If we find this … this will mean …  If we find that … that will mean… |

**Chapter 4 (optional)**

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| *Specific ‘what we know’ hook:*  *Specific knowledge gap:*  *Research question:*  *Hypothesis:*  H1:  H0:  etc.  *Methods (bullet points):*  *Anticipated results (what you anticipate finding out your hypothesis and null and/or alternative hypotheses spelled out in words):*  If we find this … this will mean …  If we find that … that will mean… |

**Timeline**

What is your timeline for your research plans? *These notes can turn into a Gantt chart or similar to illustrate your timeline.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Activities** |
| 2019 | * Write PhD plan * Complete RPMG training course * etc. |
| 2020 winter/spring |  |
| 2020 summer |  |
| 2020 autumn |  |
| 2021 winter/spring |  |
| 2021 summer |  |
| 2021  autumn |  |
| 2022 winter/spring |  |
| 2022 summer |  |
| 2022  autumn |  |

**Data management plans**

Describe your data, code and version control management plan.

**Supervisory arrangements**

Brief description of your supervisory team.

**Required resources**

* Funding (budget)
* Training
* Fieldwork
* Computing needs
* Lab work
* Etc.

**Ethical considerations**

What are the ethical considerations for your research?

**Health and safety considerations**

What are the health and safety concerns/procedures for your research?

**References**

A full reference list.

**Appendix**

Any additional information that should be included in an appendix.