

Session 1

**Research away?!
OR**

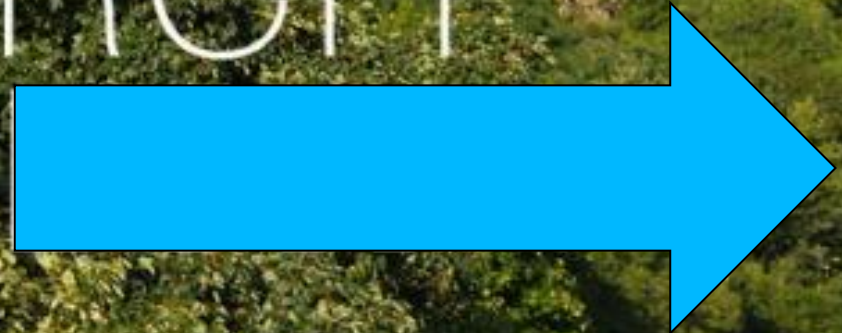
What is a research proposal

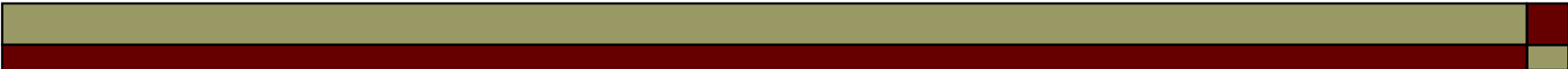
HPHE7008 Preparing the Project

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RESEARCH
AWAY

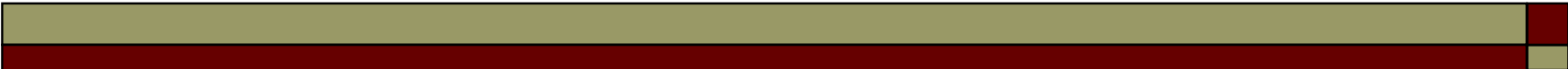




At the beginning there was ...

THE PROPOSAL

- ❑ As the most important document that you submit as part of the transfer from the taught into research part
- ❑ It gives you an opportunity to demonstrate that you have the aptitude for graduate level research (level 8 as opposed to taught part on level 7).
 - demonstrate that you have the ability to communicate complex ideas clearly
 - work concisely
 - be critically
- ❑ The proposal also helps us to match your research interest with an appropriate supervisor.

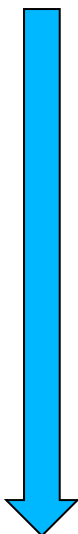


Your research proposal should ...

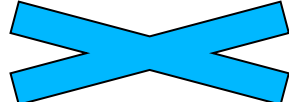
- ❑ Be a concise and coherent summary of your proposed research
- ❑ Set out the central issues or questions that you intend to address
- ❑ Outline the general area of study within which your research falls
- ❑ Present the current state of knowledge including recent debates on the topic
- ❑ Demonstrates the originality of your proposed research (= contribution to knowledge)

Differences in application for doctoral research at UWTSD

PhD, MPhil

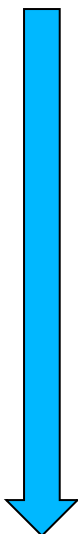
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- Application to research committee with application proposal, highlighting
 - Topic/title
 - Research question
 - Aims/objectives
 - Methodology
 - Time plan / overview
 - Indicative bibliography
 - Followed by PG1 = Full Research Proposal (deadline 3/6 months after start)

ProfDoc

- Application to PGT team with only a statement, followed by interview
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- Exam board progression
 - First idea, search supervisory team, develop proposal, maybe find a new team once idea changes...
 - PG1 = Full Research proposal (deadline 3/6 months after progression decision at exam board)

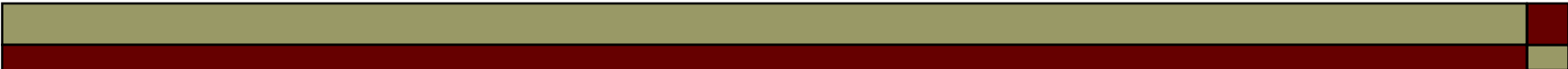
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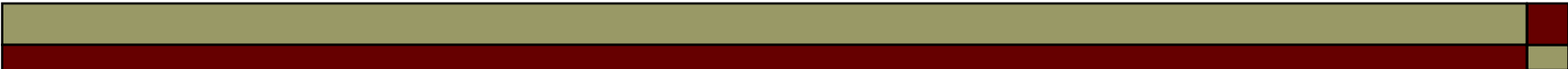
ProfDoc

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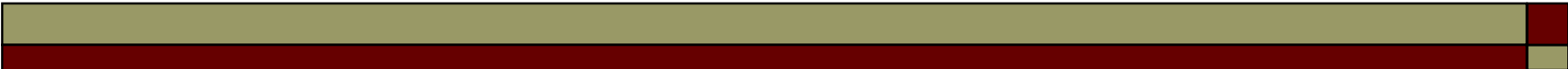
A research proposal aims should be focussing on

- Relevance
- Context
- Approach
- Feasibility



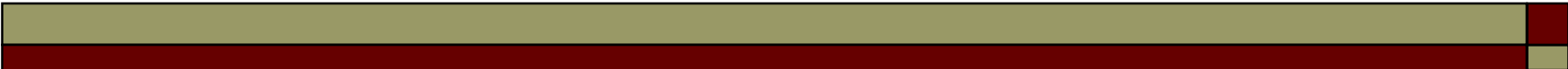
A research proposal aims should be focussing on

- Relevance
 - convince the reader how and why your research is relevant / significant to your field
 - how is it original?
- Context
- Approach
- Feasibility



A research proposal aims should be focussing on

- Relevance
- Context
 - demonstrate that you are familiar with the field + understand the current state of research on the topic
 - your ideas need to have a strong academic basis (i.e., not simply based on your instincts or personal views)
- Approach
- Feasibility

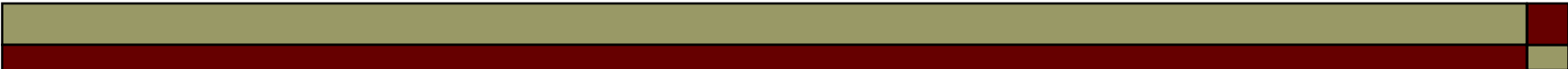


A research proposal aims should be focussing on

- ❑ Relevance
- ❑ Context
- ❑ Approach
- ❑ Feasibility
 - demonstrate that your project is both reasonable and feasible within the practical constraints of a ProfDoc and its timescales
 - think about access to resources to complete the project in a reasonable period

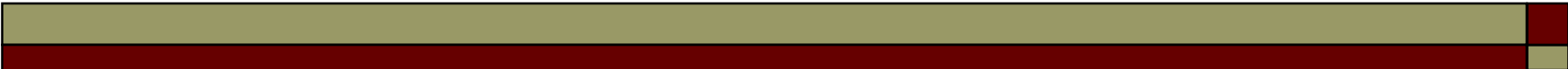
Proposal format

- ❑ varies between fields and different doctoral degrees
- ❑ also differs from institution to institution
- ❑ Can be very structured (form) or free-flow narrative
- ❑ BUT – most proposals should contain: introduction, literature review (background / debates / existing discussions), research design, reference list
- ❑ Length ranges from 500-1500 words or one to a few pages long.
- ❑ Needs to be clear and concise
 - What (is your research)
 - How (it will be conducted)
 - Why (is it important)



Introduction and literature review (background and context)

- initial pitch → succinctly explains what you want to do and why
 - introducing the topic
 - outlining your problem statement and research question(s)
 - giving background and context
- show that you are familiar with the most important research on your topic = solid foundation in existing knowledge or theory, relates to established research in the field
- Evidence that you are not simply repeating what other people have already done or said → originality of your research



Potentially interesting to ask:

- ❑ Who has an interest in the topic (scientists, practitioners, policy)?
- ❑ How much is already known about the problem and why is it important?
- ❑ What is missing from current knowledge and why?
- ❑ What new insights will your research contribute?
- ❑ Why is this research worth doing?
- ❑ Comparing and contrasting: what are the main theories, methods, debates and controversies?
- ❑ Being critical: what are the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches?
- ❑ Showing how your research fits in: how will you build on, challenge or synthesise the work of others?
- ❑ Filling a gap in the existing body of research: why is your idea innovative?

Aims and Objectives in research

□ AIM(s)

- = statements of intent
- Declarations of what you hope to achieve at the end of the project
- **What?**
- Usually 1-2

□ OBJECTIVES

- specific statements that define measurable outcomes
- what steps will be taken to achieve the desired outcome
- **How?**
- Can be more than 4-6

Methods/Methodology (research design and tool kit)

- ❑ Methods / methodology as part of the research design
- ❑ describe the overall approach and practical steps you will take to answer your research questions. You also need to demonstrate the feasibility of the project keeping in mind time and other constraints.

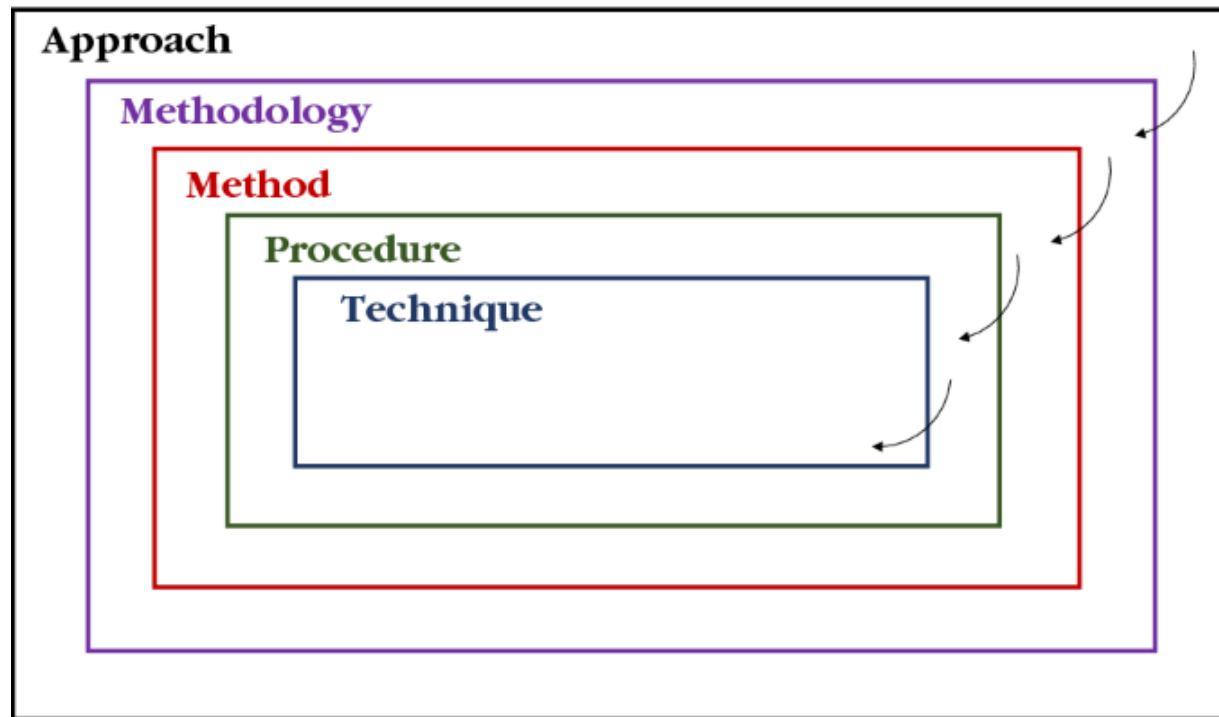
Methods vs methodology

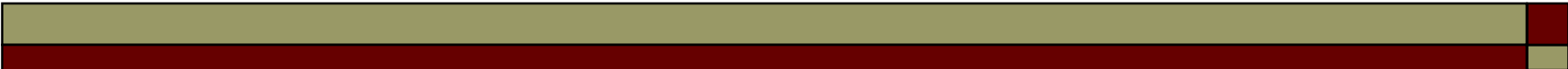
METHODS

- ❑ Behaviour/tools actually used to select a research technique
- ❑ applied during the later stage of the research study

METHODOLOGY

- ❑ analysis of all the methods and procedures of the investigation
- ❑ applied during the initial stage of the research process

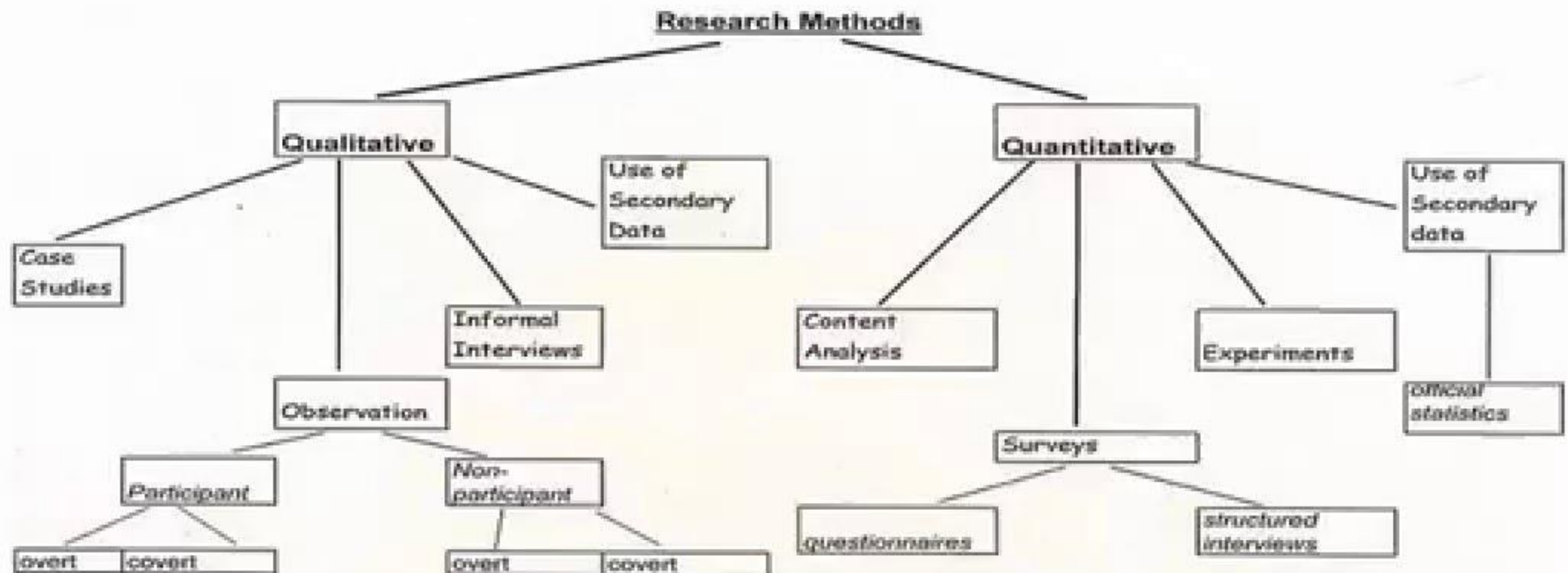




What is methodology?

- ❑ discusses and explains the data collection and analysis methods used in your research
- ❑ explains what you did + how you did it, allowing readers to evaluate the reliability and validity of your research
- ❑ Key part of research
- ❑ includes:
 - The type of research you conducted
 - How you collected and analysed your data
 - Any tools or materials you used in the research
 - Why you chose these methods

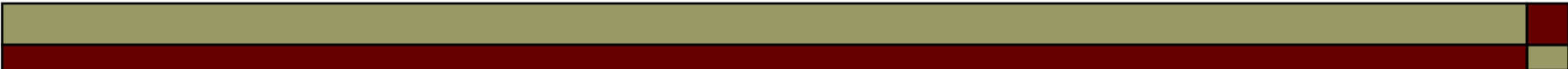
What is Method?





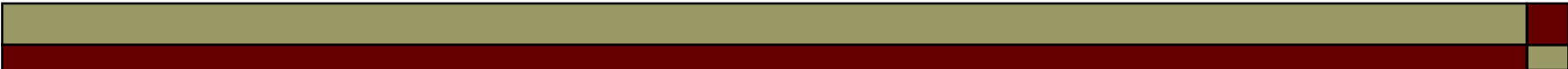
Research type

- ❑ Qualitative vs quantitative research? Or a combination (in most cases – mixed method)?
- ❑ Will you collect original data or work with primary/secondary sources?
- ❑ Is your research design descriptive, correlational or experimental? Something completely different?
- ❑ If you are undertaking your own study, when and where will you collect the data? How will you select subjects or sources? Ethics review? Exactly what or who will you study?



Research Methods

- ❑ What tools and procedures will you use (e.g. systematic reviews, surveys, interviews, observation, experiments, bibliographic data) to collect your data?
- ❑ What tools/methods will you use to analyse your data?
- ❑ Why are these the best methods to answer your research question(s)? This is where you should justify your choices.



Practicalities

- ❑ How much time needed to collect data / find sources?
- ❑ How to gain access to participants and sources?
- ❑ Any potential obstacles to be foreseen? If so, how will you address them?
- ❑ Not enough to simply compiling a list of methods. Make an argument for why this is the most appropriate, valid and reliable way to approach answering the research question(s).
- ❑ Defend your choices!