

Developing your EdD personal statement and research proposal

Overview

To be considered for the EdD programme at the University of Reading, you will normally need a master's degree (or equivalent) in a subject related to your proposed doctoral research topic as well as having at least three years professional experience.

In addition, all applicants must submit:

- 1) A 500-word statement outlining:
 - a) Why they would like to undertake a professional doctorate, and
 - b) How the programme fits with their future career plans.
- 2) A research proposal of no more than 1000 words.

We suggest that you use headings to structure your application. So, a basic outline might look like this:

- Personal Statement (500 words)
 - Why I would like to undertake a professional doctorate.
 - How the programme fits with my future career plans.
- Research Proposal (1000 words)
 - Title
 - Rationale
 - Literature Review
 - Research Question
 - Research Design and Data Collection
 - Significance
 - Timetable
 - References (not included in word count)

Personal Statement

As professional development and growth are key aims of the programme, in the personal statement we want to know why you have decided to undertake an EdD, and how undertaking the programme will fit with your career plans. Please give as much detail as you can here, so that we can make a judgement on your suitability for the programme.

Research Proposal

Your research proposal is often the first opportunity for you to communicate your ideas and allow us to make a judgement on your academic writing, therefore it is important that you demonstrate your ability to convey your thoughts clearly and concisely.

Although we are not expecting your proposal to be final - your ideas and thinking will develop significantly during the course - your overall aim is to produce a submission that is clear and coherent so that we can see the *potential* in your application.

For most projects, there is usually one main question that you would like to address (based around a problem arising from your professional experience or context), which can sometimes be broken down

into several sub-questions. Through your proposal, you need to state your main research question(s), explain its significance, and locate it within the relevant literature. You also need to explain how you intend to go about the research in relation to design and data collection. Finally, you need to show how you intend to complete the work within a specified time-frame. So, within your proposal, you will need to address some questions that the reader will be asking themselves such as:

- What is the general area that you are interested in and what specific aspect(s) of that area will be your focus on inquiry?
- What is the problem, shortcoming, or gap in this area that you would like to address?
- What is already known about this problem and who else has written about it?
- What is the main research question or specific aim that you want to address?
- How will you collect the necessary data required to address your research question or aim?
- Why is the proposed research important? Why does it matter?
- How will you complete the research within the specified time frame?

To achieve these aims, a typical EdD proposal should normally consist of the following sections:

Title

Give your proposed project a working title

Focus of Research

Here, you need to include a general discussion of the problem or issue that you are interested in researching (which has arisen in your professional work and/or in your reading of academic research). In other words, what is your chosen topic and why is it important to you and to your profession?

Literature Review

Give a brief review of relevant literature and theories relating to your proposed research area that shows you understand the major lines of argument that have been developed and the ideas and findings of key researchers working on your topic. Obviously, this is not a full bibliography or review, but a very brief outline of the main conceptual areas and theories which are relevant to your study. You need to show how your proposed study fits into the current literature, and how it is designed to fill gaps in our knowledge and/or improve on previous work.

Research Question

What is the main research question/s that your proposed research will address? You need to demonstrate that you have a clear question in mind, acknowledging that it will almost certainly change as you progress through Part A of the programme.

Research Design and Data Collection

You need to include information on whether this is a qualitative, quantitative or a mixed methods study, with key information about the proposed design. For example, include information about:

- Participants – proposed numbers and sample description.
- Data collection tools – e.g. questionnaires, interviews, observations, tests, focus groups.
- Data collection procedures - how you will go about collecting the data, where will the data collection take place, how long it will take etc.

Significance

Here, you need to say something about what the expected outcomes of your project might be and why these are important. How, for example, will it contribute to knowledge and how might it contribute to policy or practice?

Timetable

You will need to provide a rough time line for the completion of your research to show that the project is achievable (given the facilities and resources required) in three years of part-time study.

References

You will need to provide a list of any key articles or texts that you have referred to in your proposal. Please only include those which you have referred to.

Other considerations

Proof reading

It is important that you carefully check your proposal for typographical and spelling errors, consistency of style, and accuracy of references before submitting it.

Length

The proposal should be no longer than 1000 words in length (excluding reference list).

Feedback

We are more than happy to provide feedback on draft proposals or initial ideas – please contact the programme director, Dr Alan Floyd, in the first instance: Alan.Floyd@reading.ac.uk.

Adapted from the IoE and Graduate School proposal guidelines for PhDs