

MSc Psychological Therapies Practice and Research Application:

Guidelines for writing your research outline

As part of the application process you are asked to present an outline of your proposed service evaluation or research project. The purpose of these notes is to give you some guidance as you prepare your outline.

The research outline

The purpose of the research outline is to enable the programme to understand your research interests and to assess your readiness to undertake masters level research. Your outline should demonstrate that you are capable of independent critical thinking and analysis and of communicating your ideas clearly. Secondly, it will enable the programme to be sure that it can provide appropriate supervisory support to help you to complete your research.

Your research outline will not be a fully worked-out proposal. The purpose of the first few months of your programme is to help you to refine your ideas for research. Your aims and research questions might change as you progress through the first part of the programme and your final research or service evaluation project could be different than the one outlined in your application.

Format for the research outline

The research outline will be a written document of maximum 500 words (excluding tables and references), and should be written in an appropriate academic style (e.g. APA). It should address the following key areas:

The research area and research question

This section should identify what you want to research with specific reference to the research or evaluation question you will address. You should seek to be as clear and as specific as possible in stating your research aim(s) and answerable research question(s). For example a researcher interested in understand whether a treatment would work, might ask: Does intervention X work with population Y, delivered with Z frequency.

Significant prior research

You are not expected to have completed a full literature review but you should identify a couple of major research and/or important theoretical contributions, themes or issues in the area.

The importance of the research for theory and/or practice

This section addresses the question of whether the research is worth doing and has potential clinical implications. Accordingly, you should indicate concisely why there is a need for the research either from an academic perspective or a professional/practice perspective.

Possible research methodology and feasibility

This section relates to how you intend to conduct the research. What might your ideas be about methodology for your proposed service evaluation or research study? For example, will a small N design or a correlational design be appropriate? Will data be obtained using questionnaires, interviews, or will you use existing data? Your research supervisor will help you to make decisions about the appropriate methodological approach for the study. In addition, you are asked to comment on the feasibility of the proposed study.

Ethical Issues

Are there likely to be any ethical issues associated with your research? If so, how will you address these? Consider issues of consent and engaging participants, considered in terms of the population you would like to do research with.