Thesis Requirements

**Requirement:** Research Plan (MSc and PhD)

**When:** Within the first three months of full-time equivalent enrolment

**Sign-off:** Supervisor, Auxiliary Supervisor, Third Reader

**Forms:** Research Plan and completed Research Plan Review form to be submitted to PG Coordinator

http://sydney.edu.au/science/psychology/current_students/msc_phd/postgrad_forms_faq.shtml

The research plan (not more than 2,000 words), written in consultation with your supervisor should:

1. Define your proposed area of research and central research question.
2. Describe and justify the goals and aims of your research.
3. Summarise relevant background literature.
4. Describe any research that you have done so far and explicitly set out what you intend to achieve in the rest of your first year of study. This will vary between areas of study and specific projects. For example, in some areas a student may be expected to complete multiple experiments in first year, while in other areas the major goals of first year may be mastering, or systematically reviewing, a body literature and securing ethics approval for your research.
5. Give as much detail as you can of your plan leading to the completion of your thesis (though there is likely to be less certain the further into the future you look)
6. Specify exactly what resources you anticipate needing, such as equipment, money, and participants.

**Objectives:**

We expect that your plan will evolve over time, so you are not expected to detail a 3 year research programme. However you need to have a clear idea of your overall direction and specific plans for the first year. The primary aim of the research plan is to ensure that you make good progress from early in your degree, and that you and your supervisors are in agreement about the proposed research. Note that at the end of each year your supervisor has to indicate whether your progress has been satisfactory, so it is important that you and your supervisor are in agreement with regard to what constitutes satisfactory progress.

**Submission and Review:**

You should submit a PDF copy of your plan to the PG Coordinator, your primary and auxiliary supervisor, and a third reader. In consultation with your supervisor, you should ask someone to be a third reader who you think can give meaningful feedback on your research, but who has not been extensively involved in the planning of it, since the aim is to have someone look at your plan with fresh eyes. After you have given your readers your plan, you arrange a meeting between yourself and your readers to discuss it within one month of submission (preferably sooner). There is a feedback form available from the PG website that should be signed by all the readers indicating that your plan is satisfactory. This form should be submitted to the PG Coordinator for Progress.

**Outcomes:**

The Research Plan Review form should be submitted with the Annual Progress Review form. If one or more readers think your plan is unsatisfactory, then you should identify the basis of the reader’s concerns and what could be done to remedy it. This may involve some revisions to the plan and/or another meeting. If the reader is still unsatisfied, you should submit the feedback form indicating that to be the case and arrange to meet with the PG Coordinator.