# Thesis Proposal and Protocol

This document is intended to be completed in two parts.

Part 1 contains the scientific justification for your research, along with a clear statement of the aims, research question and methodological approach you will be taking. It also includes a plan for public and patient involvement, as this is important in ensuring your research is meaningful and well-designed. Once completed, it should be submitted on Moodle by the deadline given (April of Year 1 if you are full-time or July of Year 2 if you are part-time). You will then be provided with formative feedback on the proposal, usually by your research supervisor(s).

Once you have received this feedback, you will revise Part 1 as necessary to incorporate the feedback you have received and complete Part 2 of the form in discussion with your research supervisor(s). Part 2 of the form is where you describe in more detail how you will carry out your research, including the steps you will follow to recruit participants, collect, analyse, and manage your data. This then becomes your thesis protocol. The full form should be submitted on Moodle by the deadline given (July of Year 1 if you are full-time or October of Year 2 if you are part-time).

The full document will be reviewed as a thesis protocol by a member of staff who is not your research supervisor. You will receive feedback on this protocol and an outcome of approved or revise and resubmit. If asked to revise and resubmit, you will address the reviewer’s feedback with your supervisor(s) and resubmit the form directly to the reviewer. Once approved, you will start work on preparing your ethics application. The approved thesis protocol will be submitted as part of your ethics application if submitting to FHM Research Ethics Committee (REC). If the NHS REC/HRA approval is required, the protocol might need to be modified to meet the requirements of the NHS system.

The completed version of the form should be no more than 3,750 words (excluding the text on the form and the reference section). Please see the Thesis Proposal and Protocol – Trainee Guide 2024-2025 for further information and instructions.

## Title

*This should be a concise description of the study (max 15 words).*

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## Trainee Name

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## Dates of proposal submission

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| Part 1 submission: |
| Part 1 resubmission: |
| Full proposal submission: |
| Full proposal resubmission: |

## Research Supervisor(s)

*At least one of whom must be an academic member of staff at Lancaster University (add more rows if you have more than two supervisors).*

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| Name | Job role | Organisation/Address | **Supervisory role** e.g., indicate whether theoretical, methodological, clinical expertise, practical/service interface |
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# Part 1: Overview of the research

*Maximum 2,000 words in total (minus the text on the form and references).*

## Introduction

*This should be an introduction to your research project that provides a clear rationale for your main research question, the general methodological approach you will use and the relevance of the study to clinical psychology. It should explain key concepts, inform about the scale of the problem, summarise what is already known about the topic, and establish the gap in knowledge that you aim to fill by conducting the research. (1,000-1,500 words. References should be included in the reference section at the end of the form.)*

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## Research aim(s) and question(s)

*This should be a brief statement of your main research aim(s) and research question(s), including hypotheses as appropriate. (100 words max)*

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## Public and patient involvement and engagement

*Engagement with diverse stakeholders (e.g., community members, service users, policy makers, care providers) is essential for well-designed and practice-informed research in mental health. In this section, we would like to hear who you will engage with, how, and when to inform your thesis plans. If you have already engaged with stakeholders, please briefly outline what has been done and how your learning from the process has informed your research design and plans. (200 words max)*

* *Please refer to this* [*guidance*](https://www.rds-nw.nihr.ac.uk/public-involvement/) *on public engagement to inform your approach.*
* *The*[*UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research*](https://sites.google.com/nihr.ac.uk/pi-standards/home)*will also help develop your plans.*
* *You can find guidance on how to cost your plans with the* [*public participation in research.docx (live.com)*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fview.officeapps.live.com%2Fop%2Fview.aspx%3Fsrc%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.lancaster.ac.uk%252Fshm%252Fstudy%252Fdoctoral_study%252Fdclinpsy%252Fonlinehandbook%252Fappendices%252Fpublic%252520participation%252520in%252520research.docx%26wdOrigin%3DBROWSELINK&data=05%7C01%7Cs.l.parry%40lancaster.ac.uk%7C50281c4513f844f6b10508db3cf22d03%7C9c9bcd11977a4e9ca9a0bc734090164a%7C0%7C0%7C638170783047013043%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=XmZ8fmNeBkHVJXcgXlL%2F9d0ErBGijwUIWApwPh%2BWdT4%3D&reserved=0) *guide in the DClinPsy programme handbook.*
* *When considering your plans for stakeholder engagement/Public and Patient Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), consider the organisational, experience-focused, and practical implications of your plans, and refer to the resources in the PPIE teaching on Moodle.*

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## Study design

*Please summarise the study design you intend to use. This should refer to any overarching epistemological, philosophical and methodological decisions about your study which will determine the specific choice of methods you intend to use. (200 words max)*

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# Part 2: Research methods

*Maximum 1,750 words in total (minus the text on the form and references).*

## Participants

*Who will your participants be? What inclusion/exclusion criteria will be applied? How many participants will you need? Include justification of numbers and power calculation as appropriate, with reference to methodological considerations. (150 words approx.)*

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## Recruitment plans

*Where will you recruit participants from? How many recruitment sites will there be? Sampling technique? Recruitment methods? If you will be using a staged recruitment process, please give details. (200 words approx.)*

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## Data collection process

*What will be the process through which people participate in your study? What will be the steps? What materials will be used? E.g., interviews, questionnaires, specific measures to be used etc., with a brief rationale. (200 words approx.)*

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## Data analysis plan

*Please state what methods of analysis you intend to use, with a brief rationale. State the analytic steps you will follow in this section. (150 words approx.)*

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## Research governance approvals

*What ethical and other research governance approvals will the study need e.g. NHS/HRA, University Ethics, other (e.g., school headteachers)? (50 words approx.)*

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## Particular ethical/practical/design issues

*Please mention here any issues specific to the project that are likely to need particular consideration (e.g., risk or safeguarding issues, potential recruitment difficulties) and say how you plan to address them (e.g., developing a distress protocol). Outline likely inclusivity and equality considerations and technology required (e.g., use of Teams, research specific social media accounts). The following resources may be helpful to review to inform your plans:*

* [*Research integrity, ethics, and governance*](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/research-services/research-integrity-ethics--governance/)
* [*Data storage, information governance and ethics – DClinPsy Handbook*](https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/dclinpsy/data-storage-information-governance-and-ethics/)
* [*For Equity*](https://forequity.uk/)
* [*The Manchester Community Engagement Toolkit*](https://www.northerncanceralliance.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ManchesterCommunityEngagementToolkit.pdf)

*(400 words approx.)*

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## Research expenses

*Outline likely research costs (e.g., postage, stationery, travel, “thank you” gifts to participants). Please refer to guidance provided here:* [*Research expenses – DClinPsy Handbook*](https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/dclinpsy/research-expenses/)*. (100 words approx.)*

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## Data management plan

*How will you store the research data? How long? Please state your plans for data management. Please refer to guidance provided here*: [*Data storage, information governance and ethics – DClinPsy Handbook*](https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/dclinpsy/data-storage-information-governance-and-ethics/)*. (150 words approx.)*

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## Dissemination plans

*How will the findings be communicated and to whom?* *How will you use different platforms and disseminate information in a range of accessible formats for key audiences? Including plans to publish in thesis, academic journals, sharing summaries with participants, presentations, etc. (100 words approx.)*

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## Timetable for completing the study

*(100 words approx.)*

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## Plain English summary

*Guidance on how to write a Plain English Summary of a research project can be found* [*here*](https://arc-nenc.nihr.ac.uk/news/tips-for-writing-a-plain-english-summary/)*. This section should not contain technical language, acronyms, or references. The development of this section at the end of your protocol will help you synthesis your ideas. An accessible summary is also helpful to share with stakeholders associated with your project and to inform your participant facing documents, including recruitment media. (150 words max)*

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# References