School of Physical and Occupational Therapy

EXCELLENCE THROUGH GROWTH

# RESEARCH PROTOCOL PRESENTATION & APPROVAL

## Overview

As part of the fulfilment for the Master's and Ph.D. thesis, all students are required to present their Research Protocol for approval to the Supervisory Committee and a larger group of faculty and students within the School. Presentation of the protocol for approval should occur at the beginning of their second full-time year in order to meet the milestones of the M.Sc. and Ph.D. study programs. A deferral can be obtained ONLY upon written approval from the Graduate Program Director (GPD).

The goal of the presentation and approval process is to provide an opportunity for the student and committee to receive constructive feedback on the protocol and ensure: 1) the project is feasible and appropriate for an M.Sc. or Ph.D. thesis; 2) the student has the opportunity to review the thesis work and receive feedback at an early stage of protocol development; 3) the timeline for the project is reasonable for an M.Sc. or Ph.D. thesis; 4) the student has an opportunity to gain experience in developing and presenting a research protocol.

The presentation is attended by the student, all members of the Supervisory Committee, the GPD (or designate) who serves as Chair, and at least one other member of the Graduate Committee. Ph.D. presentations are also evaluated by an external evaluator “external to the Supervisory Committee”. The presentation is advertised and all faculty and students in the School are invited to attend. Students and supervisors in the Graduate Program are strongly encouraged to attend all protocol presentations as this is an ideal opportunity to learn about the research interests and activities of colleagues and other students.

The optimal preparation for the Research Proposal Presentation is POTH 610: Research Methods; EPIB 507: Intro to Biostatistics for Health Professionals and POTH 631: Research Proposal. Students are encouraged to identify a research topic and question prior to taking POTH 631. The topic can then be developed into the written research protocol in partial fulfilment of the Research Proposal class.

With permission of the GPD, collection of initial pilot data for the project to assess feasibility may be undertaken before the proposal is formally accepted by the Committee. These results should be included in the oral presentation.

The presentation is chaired by the GPD or designate. (When the GPD is a member of the Supervisory Committee, another member of the Graduate Committee will serve as Chair.)

M.Sc. students are evaluated on their performance during the oral presentation and question period, as well as their power point slides. Ph.D. students are also evaluated on the written thesis research proposal (submitted three weeks in advance of presentation).

## Format of Presentation

The oral presentation must be between 20-30 minutes. The presentation (and suggested times) should include the following:

Brief review of relevant literature (5 min)
Research question, objectives of project, hypotheses (2 min)
Study design, methods for data collection, measures (10 min)
Sample size estimates, proposed analysis (5 min)
Timetable for completion and potential problems (3 min).

The talk is followed by a 30-45 min. question period. Experience has shown that it is important to allow adequate time to prepare the slide presentation, receive feedback. Supervisors should make plans to allow students the opportunity to make practice presentations in front of friends and colleagues to ensure the talk can be completed in less than 30 minutes.

After the question period, the Chair will request that everyone except the Graduate and Supervisory Committee Members leave the room. Evaluators will then have a general discussion about the quality of the oral presentation and question period; for Ph.D. students, a discussion of the written proposal will also be included. The purpose of this meeting is to grade each component of the protocol and to provide detailed constructive feedback to the student and the committee. Feedback is generally provided orally by the GPD to the student immediately after this meeting. A written summary of comments and recommendations will be emailed to the student and supervisor(s) and GPD of the School within the next few weeks. A copy of the written summary is retained in the student file.

If the oral presentation is unsatisfactory or the thesis research proposal is judged to be problematic, the protocol is not approved. The student must submit a revised version and schedule another protocol presentation within 60 days. If the performance is again unsatisfactory, the student will be asked to withdraw from the program.

## Scheduling the Research Proposal Presentation

The written research protocol must first be reviewed by all members of the Supervisory Committee and approved by the supervisor(s) before the presentation can be scheduled.

If the research proposal is the same as that submitted in POTH 631, it is not necessary to create another proposal prior to presenting the proposal for approval. If the proposal has changed, the student must develop the new written research protocol and have it reviewed by the Supervisory Committee and approved by the supervisor(s).

Students are strongly encouraged to make the Graduate Student Affairs Coordinator (GSAC) aware of their desire to schedule a presentation at the earliest opportunity and provide a requested timeframe for scheduling. ***At least 3 weeks prior to the anticipated date of the presentation***, the student must contact the GSAC. All students must submit a written statement to the GPD indicating whether the proposal is the same as that submitted in POTH 631. If changes have been made, a complete and detailed list of all changes (including the rationale for change) must be submitted with the copy of the written proposal. Ph.D. students also must provide a written copy of the protocol to GPD and GSAC for the student file at this time, and copies to all members of the Supervisory Committee.

The supervisor and student should identify several potential dates and times when all other members of the Supervisory Committee are available. A list of these dates and times must be given to the GSAC with complete contact information for all members. The GSAC will finalize arrangements with the GPD and other Graduate Committee members and notify all parties concerned.

A notice of the presentation will be prepared and posted by the Graduate Program office and an email will be sent to all faculty and students in the School, inviting them to attend.

All research proposal presentations are held in Davis House, Room D3. The GSAC will ensure the room is booked. The student must assure the condition of the room is suitable, before the presentation. If the student and/or supervisor wish to serve refreshments, they should make their own arrangements to do so prior to the presentation.

On the day of the presentation, students must provide the GSAC with a copy of their Powerpoint slide presentation. A copy of the proposal is kept in the student file.

## Written Research Protocol Format

The main body of the proposal is recommended to be 25 double-spaced pages (30 pages if it is written in French) excluding table of contents, abstract, references and appendices.

**Title Page**

Title of the research proposal; should be precise and succinct
Name of student, supervisor(s) and Supervisory Committee Members
Study sponsor, if applicable
Study site
Date of submission
Protocol version number

**Table of Contents**

**Abstract**
Provide a precise outline of no more than 250 words, including the rationale, objectives of the project, hypotheses, design and brief description of methods.

**Objectives**
State the overall objective(s) of the work, then specific aims of the project.

**Background**
Provide a review of only the MOST significant and relevant literature in this area of work. Describe the current status of research (including your own, if applicable) and synthesize findings using critical judgement.

**Rationale**
The above résumé should set the stage for your research question. Begin with a statement of the problem (and its effects). Present your research question. Explain the potential benefits of your study if hypothesized results are observed and how your research will add to the scientific evidence already available. Conclude with a statement of the feasibility of your proposed research in terms of access to subjects, as well as overall timeframe allotted to complete study.

**Hypothesis(es)**
Hypothesis(es) should flow logically from the prior formulation of the problem. If possible, each hypothesis should be stated in the form of a quantitative relationship between at least one independent and one dependent variable.

**Study Design and Methods**
**Provide An Overview Of The Research Design**.

- Cross-sectional, cohort study, randomized clinical trial, etc.

- Distinguish between "quantitative" and "qualitative" approaches

**Study Participants**

- Characteristics (demographic, medical, geographic)
- Inclusion / exclusion criteria
- Describe your access to participants and anticipated number potentially available
- Proposed recruitment strategies (methods, payment, obtaining consent)

**Method and Procedures**

- Detailed list of all measures to be collected including (helpful to include a table):
- Source (questionnaires, instruments, medical chart)
- Type (continuous, ordinal, nominal)
- Standardized measures
- Reliability, validity and responsiveness
- Data recording procedures or measurement techniques
- Specific timeline for data collection
- Who will collect data, blinding
- Ensuring completeness of data

**Data Analysis**

- Sample size calculation
- Include assumptions, estimates of difference to be detected and justification, details of methods used in calculation
- Discuss how the data may be interpreted.
- Analytic plan
- How will variables be reported and used in statistical plan
- Description of primary and secondary analyses including use of summary methods, methods of analysis (e.g., t-tests, regression) and how results will be reported (e.g., odds ratio with 95% confidence intervals)
- Missing data
- Who will do analysis
- Subgroup analyses?

**Timetable for study**

- Include recruitment, measurement, coding, analysis, write-up

**Ethical Considerations**

- Overview of potential issues
- Approvals to be obtained/already obtained

**Potential problems and solutions**

**Significance**

Discuss the potential importance of the proposed work, e.g. what is its contribution to existing knowledge? What is its relevance to Rehabilitative Science?

**References**

Students may use any scholarly style appropriate to the discipline of rehabilitation.

*NOTES ON PLAGIARISM: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/ for more information).*

**McGill University**
**School of Physical and Occupational Therapy**
**RESEARCH PROPOSAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**STUDENT NAME:**

**TITLE OF PROJECT:**

**WRITTEN PROPOSAL** (Ph.D. only ) **Overall Evaluation**: E VG G S U

**ORAL PRESENTATION** (to be completed at time of presentation) **Overall Evaluation**: E VG G S U

**QUESTION PERIOD** **Overall Evaluation**: E VG G S U **Detailed Comments**

**SPECIFIC NOTES/ RECOMMENDATIONS: (use back if more room is required)**

**PRINT NAME:** _____**SIGNATURE:** _____ **DATE:**_____
**Note** E - excellent, VG - very good, G - good, S - satisfactory, U - unsatisfactory (i.e., fail)