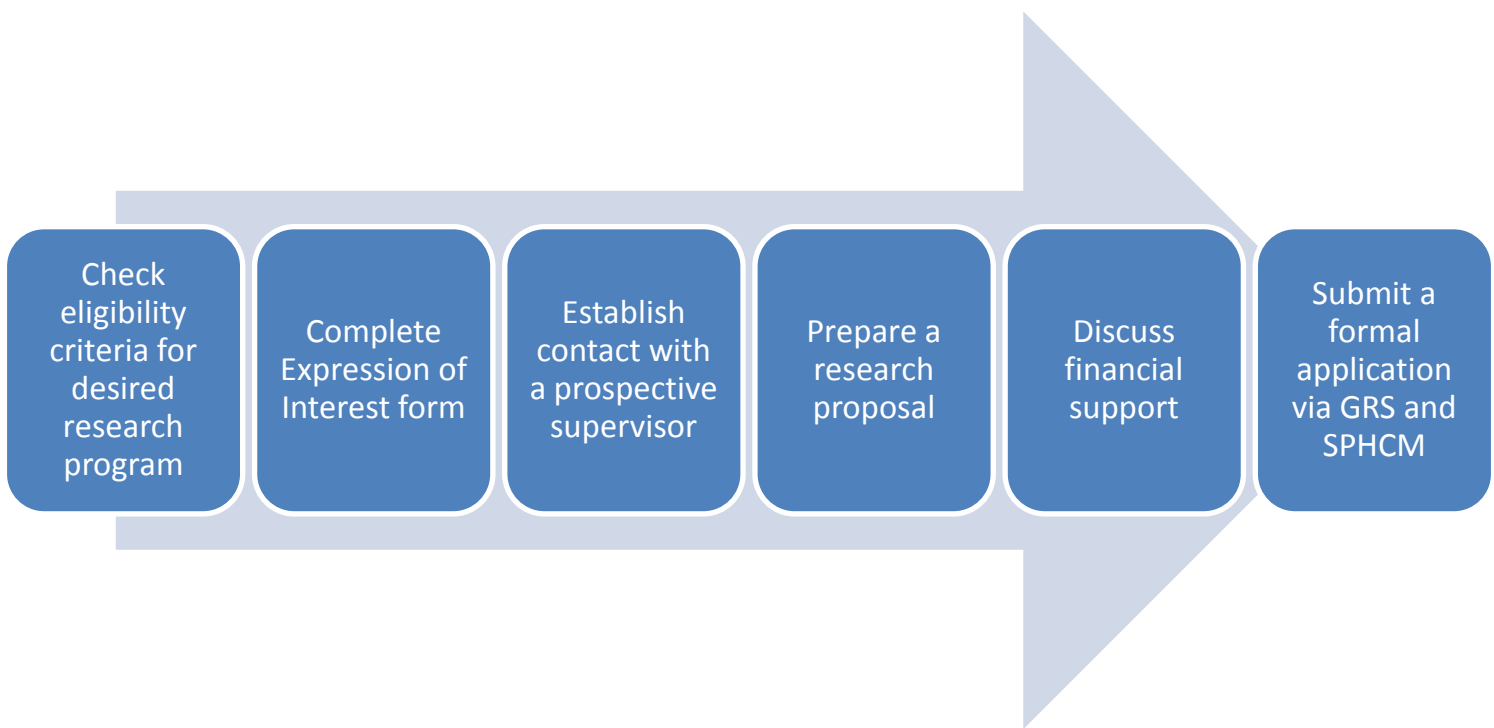


Applying to do a postgraduate research degree through the School of Public Health and Community Medicine (SPHCM), UNSW



All prospective students must visit the UNSW Graduate Research School website:

<http://www.grs.unsw.edu.au/homepage.html>

Application requirements for the School of Public Health and Community Medicine (SPHCM) differ from those of the Graduate Research School (GRS). Prospective students must submit an application to both (the Graduate Research School and School of Public Health & Community Medicine).

Step 1 – Check eligibility criteria for desired HDR program

The first step is to assess whether you satisfy the eligibility requirements for the research programs. Please refer to the [preliminary self-assessment table](#). (Also found on the [School website](#))

Further information regarding eligibility requirements and research programs can be found at: <http://med.unsw.edu.au/entry-requirements>

The School of Public Health and Community Medicine offers 3 different post-graduate research programs:

➤ **Masters of Philosophy (MPhil)**

[Program Code – 2713]

The MPhil program is an excellent option for students who have no previous research experience or for students who do not meet the eligibility criteria for a Masters by Research or PhD. It is a research degree designed to provide research training for candidates who wish to develop competence in research in Public Health, or who wish to progress to a PhD. It comprises one-third coursework (24 units of credit) and two-thirds research (a thesis of less than 40,000 words) and is usually completed in 1.5 years. The thesis can be submitted in a minimum time of 2 semester's full-time equivalent, or a maximum of 4 semester's full-time equivalent.

Candidates can apply to upgrade during their MPhil to a PhD program, subject to School and Faculty approval.

Advanced standing may be given for courses completed as part of a Master of Public Health or relevant equivalent, subject to approval.

Eligibility Requirements for SPHCM:

1. The candidate for the degree shall have been awarded a Bachelor's degree in a relevant discipline from the University of New South Wales, or equivalent program from another university.
2. In exceptional cases, an applicant who submits evidence of such other academic and professional qualifications approved by the Committee may be permitted to enrol in the degree.
3. If the Committee is not satisfied with the qualifications submitted by an applicant the Committee may require the applicant to undergo such assessment or carry out such work as the Committee may prescribe, before permitting enrolment.

If you have completed an MPH or similar, you may be eligible to apply for advanced standing (credit) for either part or the entire 24UOC coursework component.

For more information see:

<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/research/programs/current/2713.html>

<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/general/current/SSAPO/AwardRulesMPhil.html>

➤ **Masters by Research in Public Health (MRes):**

[Program Code - 2845, 2960, 2885 or 2810]

The Masters by Research program is designed primarily as training in advanced work and comprises 100% research. A thesis embodying the results of an original investigation or design must be submitted between 1.5 and 2 years full-time equivalent, comprising 40,000 to 70,000 words.

Candidates can apply to upgrade during their MRes to a PhD program, subject to School and Faculty approval.

The School offers 4 Masters by Research specialisations:

- [Public Health \(2845\)](#)
- [Health Administration \(2960\)](#)
- [Health Professions Education \(2885\)](#)
- [Community Medicine \(2810\)](#)

Eligibility Requirements for SPHCM:

<http://med.unsw.edu.au/entry-requirements>

For more information see:

<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/general/current/SSAPO/MedicineMRes.html>

➤ **Doctor of Philosophy in Public Health (PhD):**

[Program Code 1835 or 1841]

Applicants to the PhD program would normally be expected to have prior research experience. The PhD is designed as advanced research in a specialised area and comprises 100% research. Candidates are expected to submit an original thesis which substantially contributes to knowledge in the field. The thesis is usually expected to be between 75,000 and 100,000 words and submission is usually expected after 3 years full-time equivalent.

Eligibility Requirements for SPHCM can be found at the Faculty of Medicine link below:

<http://med.unsw.edu.au/doctor-philosophy-phd>

Articulation from Masters by Coursework to PhD program

In addition to a suitable research proposal and the agreement of two potential supervisors, students with a coursework Master's degree from the SPHCM will be considered for entry to the PhD program if they have:

1. Successfully undertaken at least 12 UOC as research. This should include a 6 UOC Major Project and a 6 UOC Independent Study, or the 6 UOC Major Project and a research-related course, such as Qualitative Research Methods, Advanced Biostatistics, Advanced Epidemiology or Applied Research Methods.
2. Average Credit or above for Masters Coursework and project.
3. A letter of support from the Head of School or delegate

For more information see:

<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/research/programs/current/1835.html>

<http://www.handbook.unsw.edu.au/general/current/SSAPO/AwardRulesPhD.html>

Please note: Under GRS guidelines, the enrolment of PhD students is subject to confirmation.

In order for your candidature to be confirmed, your progress must be assessed as satisfactory. This will take place at your first progress review between 6 and 9 months (FTE) after enrolment. If you are a PhD candidate and your candidature is not confirmed, your candidature may be transferred to a Masters by Research degree.

For full details please see:

<https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/aprprocedure.pdf>

Where applicable: Students should check their scholarship conditions to see if payment will be continued in the event of a downgrade to Masters by Research.

Step 2 – Complete the Expression of Interest form

The next step is to complete the [Expression of Interest Form](#), (also found on the [School website](#)) and collate the following before contacting a prospective supervisor:

- CV (including all qualifications, research outputs (peer reviewed publications, book chapters, conference proceedings etc written using APA or Harvard referencing style), relevant experience and employment)
- A clear research proposal (keeping in line with the criteria in step 4)
- Any other supporting documentation as required

Step 3 – Establish contact with a prospective supervisor

The next step for you is to establish contact with a prospective supervisor by forwarding the [Expression of Interest Form](#) along with the supporting documentation. **The responsibility to explore supervision possibilities rests with the prospective students.**

Please note: The supervisor's details and a research proposal will be required for **both** SPHCM and GRS admission applications.

There are a number of links which may help you establish contact:

1. <http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/research/research-expertise>
2. <http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/centres-units>
3. <http://med.unsw.edu.au/research>
4. <https://research.unsw.edu.au/researcher>
5. <http://med.unsw.edu.au/find-a-person>

These websites will help you identify if a prospective supervisor exists in your area of interest within the school or research centres. Usually you should develop an abstract BEFORE you contact a potential supervisor.

A guide to preparing an abstract can be found at the below link:

<https://student.unsw.edu.au/writing-abstracts-honours-theses>

Once a prospective supervisor is identified you will need to contact them personally to ask if they would be willing to consider supervising you. **All research students require 2 supervisors (can be a primary and co-supervisor, or 2 joint supervisors).** Once you have one supervisor who is willing to consider supervising you, you should discuss an appropriate second supervisor with them.

Your supervisor will also be required to use the eligibility self-assessment table to ensure you are eligible for your prospective program.

Finding a prospective supervisor does not guarantee entry to a research program. There is a separate University process for consideration of ability to undertake a postgraduate research degree. However, this consideration occurs once a prospective supervisor is identified and a detailed proposal is prepared.

Please note: For students contemplating a period of overseas study:

- i) If the duration of the student overseas is more than 3 months, then in-country supervision from a qualified staff member at a reputable institution must be arranged, as well as infrastructure support

- ii) Regular contact with the primary supervisor and co-supervisor in Australia must be undertaken (at least once a month by Skype or phone)
- iii) In person attendance at confirmation review (first progress review of candidature for PhD students).

Should you be experiencing difficulty sourcing appropriate supervision, please complete the [Expression of Interest Form](#), (also found on the [School website](#)) and provide the supporting documentation listed on in the EOI form and send to resdegree-sphcm@unsw.edu.au to be circulated to all academics within the school and affiliated centres (if applicable).

Step 4 – Prepare a research proposal

For MPhil:

The School of Public Health & Community Medicine requires a brief proposal. Your proposal must be approved by your primary supervisor.

If you are planning on doing the coursework component, your proposal should be approximately ½ a page long and include:

- The proposed project title and a brief description of the background, research objectives and main methods planned.

For candidates who apply for advanced standing for the full 24 UOC of coursework, a more detailed research proposal will be required of approximately 2 pages in length which will include:

- The proposed project title, background, research objectives, proposed methods, anticipated benefits and 2-3 key references.

Note: as part of the application process, your proposal will be reviewed by an academic from the School to see if it is a viable MPhil proposal

For Masters by Research & PhD:

The School of Public Health & Community Medicine requires a detailed proposal (3-5 pages) which includes a time line. You should **finalise this proposal with the input of your proposed supervisor.**

Both a PhD and a Masters by research are awarded on the basis of a thesis alone. Although students may take preparatory course-work, this is not counted as part of the award (this is quite different to USA Universities). This means that demonstrating a capacity for independent research, and a readiness to begin working on your chosen topic is an important part of the application.

Note: as part of the application process, your proposal will be peer reviewed to see if it is a viable PhD/Masters proposal.

Please use the following headings for the proposal:

1. Abstract (max: 250 words)
2. Project title

3. Background and rationale
 - Establish what the problem is drawing on evidence from peer reviewed references. A comprehensive literature review is not required. But must draw on a few key references to clearly explain and justify the problem that the research will address.
 - Identify clearly the gap in the literature that the proposed research will address
 - Should include research purpose/aim, and research question(s) and/or hypotheses all of which are well aligned. These should also align well with the proposed research design.

4. Sub-questions/objectives (if relevant)
 - These should align well with the main research questions

5. Research design
 - Brief description of the broad research approach (qualitative or quantitative or mixed method) drawing on some evidence to justify the appropriateness of the proposed research approach.
 - Brief outline of the research setting, methods of data collection (example survey, qualitative interviews etc), who the participants would be and a brief explanation of how participants will be accessed.
 - In this section you are not required to provide details of sample size calculation. Identifying minimum sample size required would be helpful.
 - Not required to include details of how data will be analysed.
 - Most important aspect for this section is the alignment and appropriateness of the research approach. Research approach and data collection methods must align well with the problem, the research aim and research hypothesis/question. Proposed research approach and methods of data collection must be appropriate to the research aim.
 - If this research is a part of a bigger research project, provide a brief description of the overall research project and a brief explanation of how this proposed research fits into the bigger research project.

6. Anticipated outcomes/significance (point form)
 - Indicate the novelty of the proposed research in terms of contribution to either the global body of knowledge, or existing theory, and practice of the relevant discipline.

7. Timeframe

8. Anticipated budget

*Please also refer to the criteria used by peer reviewers for reviewing research proposals, below.

Criteria for reviewing Research Proposal (as used by peer reviewers):

Broad Criteria	Specific Criteria
<p><u>Background and rationale</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the proposal convincingly articulate the research problem as important to public health? • Is a clear and significant gap in the literature identified? • Is there a clearly articulated research question/ hypothesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses evidence from peer reviewed literature to establish the research problem. Or uses theory to justify the significance of the problem and the significance of the contribution to the field. (May draw on key pieces of work, seminal articles or key work in the area but is not expected to provide a comprehensive literature review. Rather just a few key references.) • Gap in the literature clearly identified and the research aim and purpose addresses this gap. • Focuses on a significant public health and/or medical education topic. • Is appropriate in scope for a PhD • Proposed research is doable • Research question/hypothesis clearly articulated and

	aligns well with the research problem, and research aim.
<u>Research Design</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the overall research approach pertinent and relevant to the research problem/phenomenon to be studied? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall approach is appropriate to the research problem, research question/hypothesis and research goal/aim. Methods of data collection briefly described. (No details required but should identify if it is survey research, RCT, in depth interviews, focus group discussions etc.) Brief description of the research context provided. Proposed methods of data collection doable, appropriate to the context and participants. Participants feasible and accessible Minimum sample size suggested
<u>Anticipated outcomes/significance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear identification of the output of the research. Output fits into the relevant discipline and practice. Contributes to the global body of knowledge, or existing theory and/or public health/medical education practice.
<u>Timeframe</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the case of qualitative research design time adequate for establishing rapport with participants, reflection during analysis, returning to literature and allows for needed flexibility. In the case of quantitative research design, time adequate to access the required sample size.
<u>Anticipated Budget</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate

Reference: Morse, J.M. (2003) A review Committee's Guide for Evaluating Qualitative Proposals, *Qualitative Health Research*, 13 (6), 833-851



Step 5 – Discuss financial support

For information about some of the scholarships (University and other) available through competitive sources, please refer to the UNSW Scholarship website at:

<http://www.scholarships.unsw.edu.au/>

This website is updated regularly and contains relevant contact details and dates. There are also a wide range of scholarships from alternative sources available

Please note: You will need to ensure that you have access to funding for your research and MPhil/PhD/Masters-related expenses from other sources (this may include self-funding, scholarships, joint grants with supervisors through a Centre, etc).

The School's funding opportunities can be viewed at the below link:

<http://www.sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/current-students/postgraduate-research/funding-opportunities>

<http://sphcm.med.unsw.edu.au/future-students/postgraduate-research/scholarships>

Postgraduate Research Student - Funding agreement

Each applicant is required to complete the Funding Agreement (on Page 10) clearly and comprehensively outlining funding sources, for both the research project and living expenses.

The role of the supervisor is to be the University's agent in advising and assisting the candidate to complete an original and feasible research program. The supervisor carries the **principal responsibility** in overseeing the candidate's progress.

A core responsibility of the supervisor is advising the candidate to ensure he/she has appropriate resources and support for the research program agreed.

Please discuss the questions on the Funding Agreement (Page 10) with your supervisor, fill it out and email the form (along with your contact details) to: resdegree-sphcm@unsw.edu.au

Step 6 – Submit application

GRS Application

The UNSW Graduate Research School is the central administrative and support unit for all higher degree research (HDR) students and their supervisors at UNSW.

All prospective students must visit the UNSW Graduate Research School website and apply online through the GRS before applications can be processed by the School.

<http://www.grs.unsw.edu.au/homepage.html>

You should seek your prospective supervisor's agreement with your research proposal before you make your formal application to the Graduate Research School to enrol in a higher degree research program.

For submission deadlines, please see: <http://www.grs.unsw.edu.au/futurestudents/apply.html>

VERY IMPORTANT - The online application form for postgraduate studies is on the UNSW Graduate Research School website (applications are only assessed by the School of Public Health & Community Medicine's PG Research Officer once the applicant has lodged their online application on the below GRS website):

<http://research.unsw.edu.au/future-students>

SPHCM Application

The School of Public Health and Community Medicine requires the following information so that we can process your application. Please ensure you have collated the following documents before you submit your application. An application will not be processed if sections are missing.

Section	Completed
<p>A research proposal: To be blinded and peer reviewed by an academic within the proposed field MPhil: ½ a page OR 2 pages if you are applying for advanced standing for coursework. Masters by Research/PhD: 3-5 pages (with headings as specified on Page 6).</p>	
<p>Evidence of having made contact with your proposed supervisors, including their willingness to act as your supervisors throughout the duration of your research. The SPHCM requires either an email or letter from both your primary and secondary supervisors</p>	
<p>A CV outlining your work and research experience, including academic qualifications and publications (peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters), conference proceedings and reports. Publications, conference proceedings and reports must be written using APA or author-date referencing style and citation.</p>	
<p>Original or certified copies of academic transcripts of previous degrees</p>	
<p>MPhil only: If you wish to apply for advanced standing for coursework, please state this and nominate how many units of credit you wish to apply for (max. 24UOC), names of courses and name of degree (eg. MPH), institute which awarded the degree</p>	
<p>Evidence of english proficiency for International applicants such as an IELTS test completed in the last two years. For alternative evidence considered acceptable, please visit: http://www.unsw.edu.au/futureStudents/postgradCourse/sad/fspgengregpol.html</p>	
<p>Evidence of Australian citizenship/permanent residency if you wish to apply as a local applicant (birth certificate or passport) Evidence of citizenship for international applicants (birth certificate or passport)</p>	
<p>Expression of Interest form Can be downloaded here</p>	
<p>Funding Agreement (see below) *Must be signed by primary supervisor.</p>	

Please send all of the documents (as well as a copy of your GRS application) in one email to: resdegree-sphcm@unsw.edu.au

PART ONE

Is there adequate funding, equipment and infrastructure currently available to support the proposed research project? (This includes indirect costs such as travel, additional training, etc.) **Yes** **No**

If yes, please outline the nature of the funding (if applying for a scholarship, please list which scholarship(s) applied for and date of notification of outcome*)

***Scholarship Applicants** – Please advise how you plan to support the proposed research project should your scholarship application be unsuccessful

If no, please outline the steps that have been/will be taken to ensure the project is financially feasible?

PART TWO

Is there adequate funding to support the prospective student's living expenses? **Yes** **No**

If yes, what is the nature of the support (e.g. employment, spousal support, etc.)?

If no, what steps have been taken to ensure the student is able to support their candidature?

PART THREE – FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ONLY

Is there adequate funding to support the prospective student's tuition fees? **Yes** **No**

If yes, What is the nature of the support?

If no, what steps have been taken to ensure the student is able to support their candidature?

The supervisors and I have discussed the financial implications of the proposed research project. We are seeking, and/or have sought, and/or acquired funds required to conduct the research and to cover any indirect costs related to the research (such as living expenses, tuition fees, travel costs, additional training, etc.).

We understand that we may need to alter the scope of the project should we be unsuccessful in obtaining adequate funds. We understand that research funding requirements will be reviewed during the course of the degree and that some modification to the scale/scope of the project may be advised or required.

We understand that the School is not responsible for research costs associated with the proposed research project.

Applicant Signature:

Sign: Print: Date:

Primary Supervisor Signature:

Sign: Print: Date: