**School of Criminology Practice-Based PhD Proposal Form**

Please fully complete all sections as requested.

The proposal will be reviewed by members of academic staff. Assessors wish to gain a clear understanding of your proposed research topic and existing knowledge. We will also consider the suitability of the project in relation to supervisory expertise and capacity within the School. We recognise that your research questions and methods may change when you begin your research.

***Discovering Your PhD Potential: Writing a Research Proposal - 5 week online course***

*If you want to learn how to write an excellent research proposal for a postgraduate application, this*[***online course***](https://le.ac.uk/courses/mooc-preparing-a-phd-proposal)*will give you the awareness, skills and tools to write a well thought-out and achievable research proposal, helping you improve the quality of your application. It will also give you a taste of the self-study required in postgraduate doctoral research.*

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| **Your name:**  |
| **Please refer to the staff research interest pages (**[**https://le.ac.uk/criminology/people/our-staff**](https://le.ac.uk/criminology/people/our-staff)**) and name at least two academics in the School who might support your research as supervisors.** |
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| **1. Working Title**This should be as precise as possible - broad subject areas are too large for the scope of a PhD |
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| **2. Abstract**This is a short summary of the proposal. It should state the research problem, its context, and its significance. (Suggested word count: 150) |
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| **3. Background context**Together, sections 3i and 3ii should explain the professional context and academic theory/research that underpins your proposed project.(Suggested word count for section 3i and 3ii combined: 1000) |
| 1. **Professional context**

Describe the area of professional practice that your project will be focused on, including any policy or practice information that is relevant. In this section, ensure that you explain the following in a way that would be understandable to a lay person: what is the area of professional practice that you propose to focus on, what is the challenge/problem/gap you hope to address, and why is it important that this gap be addressed? |
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| 1. **Academic context**

Describe how existing academic theory and research relates to your proposed area of professional practice, including a review of what research (if any) exists on the topic, the strengths and limitations of that existing work and how your project will improve/extend/add to existing knowledge. Within this section, please explain how your professional practice and knowledge will inform the research and, vice versa, how the knowledge generated by the research will inform your professional practice. |
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| **4. Project Questions**You should identify the academic and professional practice questions which you will be seeking to answer and summarise why they are significant. What is the rationale of your proposed study, and what will be its original contribution to knowledge and practice?Your research questions/aims can appear in any form, and certainly do not need to be expressed in the form of testable hypotheses. Do ensure however that they are sufficiently narrow – one of the reasons why many research degree applications are not successful is because the terrain outlined in the relevant proposal is simply too broad for a doctoral project.(Suggested word count: 250) |
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| **5. Project Overview**Please provide an overview of the proposed project, including an overview of the research and practice-focused components of your project. Please include the following:* A description of the research component, which may consist of small empirical research studies, a literature review, methodological review, and/or an implications for practice paper.
* A description of the practice-focused component, this typically involves developing, implementing and evaluating a practice-focused initiative (e.g. a training programme for staff in a criminal justice organisation).
* A short discussion of how the research and practice-focused components complement/feed into each other.

(Suggested word count: 1000) |
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| **6. Timescale**You should sketch what you hope to achieve in each year of your research - three years for a full-time PhD or six years for a part-time/distance learning PhD.(suggested word count: 300) |
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| **7. Ethical and organisational challenges****Do you foresee any ethical and/or organisational issues with your research?**Ethical approval will be needed for your research, which may include not only approval from the University of Leicester but from other agencies external to the University. In this section, please explain what approvals are likely to be required to facilitate your research and from whom they would need to be obtained, what challenges you may face in terms of gaining these approvals, and any ethical or organisational issues raised by your proposed project (e.g. accessing sensitive data, working with vulnerable populations etc.). Where possible, explain what you will do to mitigate these risks/challenges. Please also briefly discuss how your current professional role may impact on the research process (e.g. does it give you unique insight into the topic, is there a risk it may bias your research- how could this risk of bias be mitigated?).**Note: you are required to submit as part of your application evidence demonstrating you have the explicit agreement of a criminal justice (or related) agency/organisation to support your proposed project.**(suggested word count: 500) |
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| **8. Bibliography**This should be a short list of the key articles and books mentioned in your application. Quality is more important than quantity - demonstrating engagement with the literatures both subject-specific and methodological as appropriate.(suggested word count: 300) |
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| **9. Please confirm that you have discussed your proposal with your employer/the criminal justice agency you propose to work with and that you have their approval to pursue the project. Place an X in the appropriate box.** | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Date proposal submitted:** |