



RESEARCH CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP SERIES



Applying for MA, PhD, and Postdoctoral Overseas
Fellowships: Essential Requirements, Effective
Preparations, and Tips

Royal University of Phnom Penh

20 December 2024

How many Bachelor of Arts (BA) students/graduates are here?

How many Master of Arts (MA) students/graduates are here?

How many Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) students/graduates are here?

Have any of you received scholarships or fellowships to study overseas before?

Housekeeping

- Three hours
- Learning from one another
- Participants: in person (30+) and online (140+)
- The audience ranges from BA students to PhD graduates (+professors)
- Languages: English + Khmer

Part I (40 minutes):

- A personal reflection
- Q&A

Part II (45 minutes):

- Scholarships/fellowships: availabilities, expectations, requirements
- Q&A

Part III (60-70 minutes)

- Preparations: language, research proposal, and other materials
- Q&A

Part I: A Personal Reflection

ធុន ធារ៉ា - *Thun Theara*

- From a humble family background, born and raised in a remote countryside
- BA in History at RUPP under a government scholarship
- MA in Southeast Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University under the Rockefeller scholarship
- PhD in History through a joint scholarship between National University of Singapore and Harvard-Yenching Institute (Harvard University)

ធុន ធារ៉ា - *Thun Theara*

- Postdoctoral fellowship at the International Institute of Asian Studies, the Netherlands
- Postdoctoral fellowship at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- Research Assistant Professor at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- Research Fellow at The University of Hong Kong
- Lee Kong Chian NUS-Stanford Fellowship on Southeast Asia: Stanford University and National University of Singapore (2025-26)

Awards





Faculty of Arts
& Social Sciences

This is to certify that

Theara Thun

has been awarded the

Wang Gungwu Medal and Prize

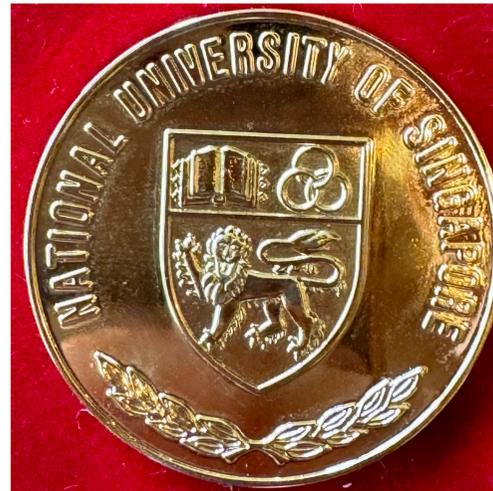
for the Best PhD thesis in the Social Sciences/Humanities

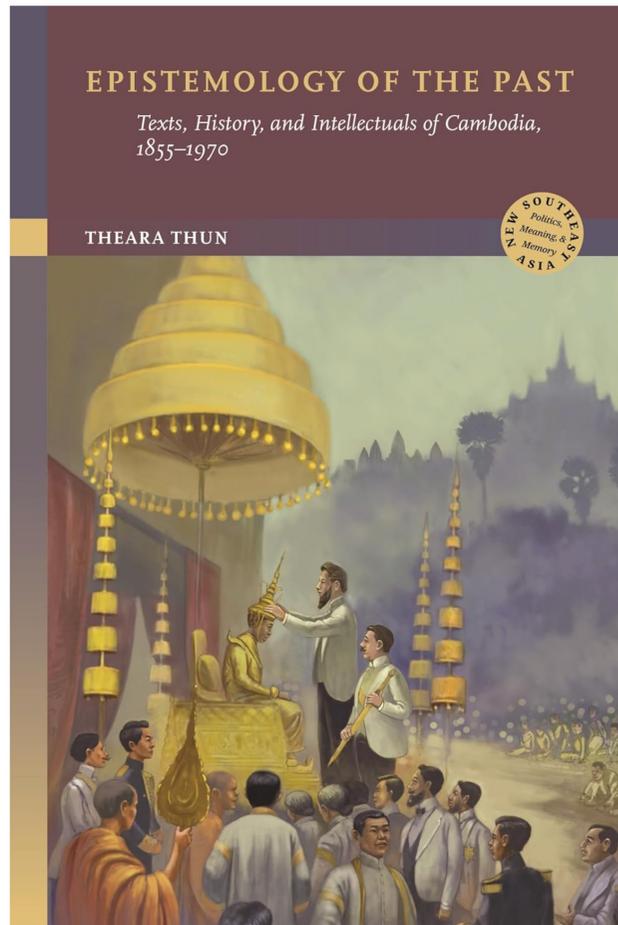
for Academic Year 2018-2019

Dean

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

24 August 2019





University of Hawaii Press, August 2024

Refereed Journal Articles Published

1. Thun, T. (2024). "Embodied National History: Leaders, Regime Change, and Regional Historiographical Trends of Independent Cambodia." *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479591424000184>
2. Thun, T. & Keo, D. (2024). "Ethnocentrism of Victimhood: Tracing the Discourses of Khmer Ethnicity in Precolonial and Colonial Cambodia." *Asian Studies Review*, 1-20. DOI: [10.1080/10357823.2024.2329085](https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2024.2329085).
3. Thun, T. (2023). "Post-Conflict Higher Education and Transnational Politics at a Crossroads: A New Vietnamese Language Studies Program Faces Protests in Cambodia." *Studies in Higher Education*, 49 (7), 1225-1240. DOI: [10.1080/03075079.2023.2261978](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2023.2261978).
4. Thun, T. & Keo, D. (2021). "Ethnic Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge: The Genocide and Race Debate." *Critical Asian Studies*, 53(3), 325-341. DOI: [10.1080/14672715.2021.1894959](https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2021.1894959)
5. Thun, T. (2021). "Invasion or Liberation?: Contested Commemoration in Cambodia and within ASEAN." *TRANS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia*, 9(2), 219-235. DOI: [10.1017/trn.2020.17](https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2020.17)
6. Thun, T. (2021). "Treason and Loyalty to the Royal Court: The Kan Narrative in Nineteenth- and Early-Twentieth-Century Khmer Chronicle Manuscripts." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 31(2), 343-362. DOI: [10.1017/S1356186320000632](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186320000632)
7. Thun, T. (2021). "Ph.D. Inflation and the Lack of PhDs in Higher Education in Post-Civil War Cambodia." *Universities & Intellectuals*, 1(1), 43-48. [https://cerc.edu.hku.hk/universities-and-intellectuals/1-1/phd-inflation-and-the-lack-of-phds-in-higher-education-in-post-civil-war-cambodia/#:~:text=Given%20the%20lack%20of%20qualified,Neou%20%26%20Wallace%2C%202011a\).](https://cerc.edu.hku.hk/universities-and-intellectuals/1-1/phd-inflation-and-the-lack-of-phds-in-higher-education-in-post-civil-war-cambodia/#:~:text=Given%20the%20lack%20of%20qualified,Neou%20%26%20Wallace%2C%202011a).)
8. Thun, T. (2020). "An Epistemological Shift from Palace Chronicles to Scholarly Khmer Historiography under French Colonial Rule." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 51(1-2), 132-153. DOI: [10.1017/S0022463420000235](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022463420000235).
9. Thun, T. (2008). "Khmer Rouge Children's Songs." *ASIAN REVIEW*, 21, 69-87. [https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv/vol21/iss1/5/.](https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv/vol21/iss1/5/)

A Personal Reflection -1

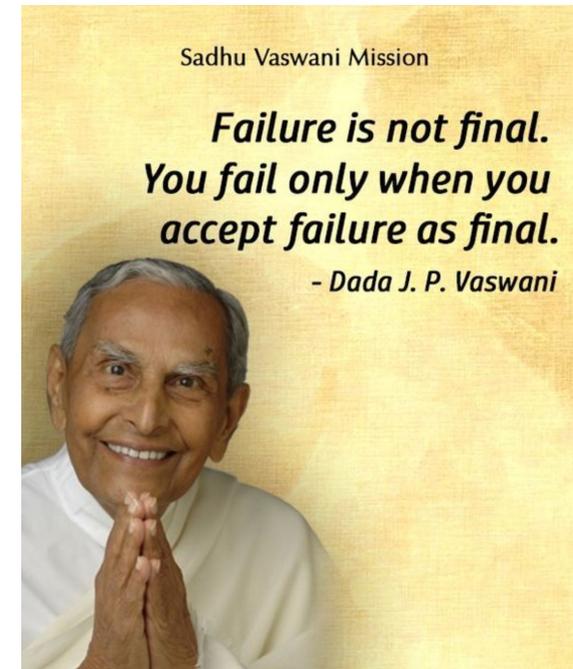
- Rejections and failures (since BA until now)
- Learn to handle rejections and failures
 - Rejection is **PART** of our everyday life
 - Failure is **NOT** the end of the world
- A Khmer Rouge leader (2009):
“If you don’t try at all, the only outcome is **failure**. However, if you give it a try, you open yourself up to the possibilities of **failure** and **success**.”



Documentation Center of Cambodia Archives via EPA

A Personal Reflection -1 (cont.)

- Learn from rejections and failures to strive for a *better goal*
- Engage in learning, writing, publication, and teaching can be some of the most challenging career paths.
 - Dedication
 - Patience



A Personal Reflection -2

- Numerous challenges:
 - Career stability
 - Family
 - Teaching (so tiring!)
 - Publications
 - Deadlines
 - ...
 - Learn: resilience, problem-solving skills, adaptability, and good time management

A Personal Reflection -3

- **Broader opportunities:** intellectually and financially
- Build extensive national and international scholarly connections
- Research collaborations
- Visit many places: (2024: over ten international trips)



A Personal Reflection

1-Rejections and failures

2-Challenges

3-Opportunities

A Personal Reflection

Applying for MA, PhD, and Postdoctoral Overseas Fellowships

- Rejections and failures, challenges, and opportunities
- Learn from failures

A Personal Reflection (cont.)

- Make the best use of each opportunity
 - BA => had a short-sighted approach but I was LUCKY!
 - MA => prepared and looked for opportunities for a good PhD program
 - PhD => prepared and sought opportunities for post-doctoral fellowships
 - Postdoctoral fellowships => pursue a tenured professorship

Q & A

Part II: Scholarships/fellowships

Scholarships/fellowships

Scholarships:

- generally awarded for academic achievement and help cover educational expense
- used to help students pay for tuition, fees, and other educational expenses
- a wide range of academic disciplines or areas of study

Fellowships:

- more specialized, often for advanced study or research, and provide support for a specific project or program
- awarded to support advanced study, research, or professional development in a specific field

Scholarships: more commonly awarded to support Master's and PhD studies

Fellowships: more frequent found in PhD and Postdoctoral programs

Scholarships

CUHK-MACUM Belt and Road Scholarship

The CUHK-MACUM Belt and Road Scholarship provides an opportunity for citizens from Belt and Road countries, who are leaders or trailblazers in the fields of arts and cultural management, to pursue a taught postgraduate Master's degree in Cultural Management.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be citizens of countries within the Belt & Road Initiative. For the full list of eligible countries, visit: [Belt and Road Initiative Countries](#).
- Preference will be given to applicants whose race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or nationality is underrepresented within the student body.

Scholarship Amount

- The scholarship covers full tuition, amounting to HK\$155,000 for the academic year 2025-26.

Application and Review Process

- Applicants must submit their admission application materials by 15 January 2025.
- **A cover letter indicating interest in this scholarship must also be included.**
- Applications will be evaluated based on academic qualifications, CGPA, work experience, and potential contributions to the field.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited for a panel interview.

Announcement of Selection Results

- Scholarship recipients will be notified by March 2025.

The programme may choose not to award the scholarship if no suitable candidates are found.

<https://www2.crs.cuhk.edu.hk/macum/scholarships>

KU Leuven ASEAN Scholarship

Scholarship summary

This KU Leuven ASEAN Scholarship is awarded to an **outstanding student from Southeast Asia who wishes to pursue a master's or advanced master's degree at KU Leuven**. KU Leuven is committed to making higher education accessible to students from all backgrounds, regardless of their financial circumstances. Therefore, the university has established a fund for donations from the global KU Leuven community to award scholarships to outstanding students who wish to pursue one of our programmes

By establishing this scholarship, the university hopes to support and inspire talented students so it may become the start of their quest to change the world as we know it today.

- > [Type, coverage and duration](#)
- > [Eligibility](#)
- > [How to apply](#)
- > [Selection](#)



Sponsor

This scholarship is financed by the [KU Leuven International Scholarship Fund](#).

Deadline:
15 January 2025, 23.59 CET

https://www.kuleuven.be/scholarships/year/2025-2026/ku-leuven-asean-scholarship?fbclid=IwY2xjawHOaaZleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHfGML8ImUu2zj-rcGviCxP6E3j_mkKqiBpxDM5pdDE3T0UaMIW0flSdJKQ_aem_ofF6Rcb0uwMcQ-FNsFq_1Q

Asian Development Bank-Japan Scholarship Program (ADB-JSP)

Scholarship Details

The ADB-JSP provides

- Full Tuition Fees
- Monthly Stipend (Subsistence Allowance including Housing Cost)
147,000 JPY / per month (based on 2024 figures. The amount is subject to change)
- Book/Instructional Material Allowance 1000 USD / per 2 years (based on 2024 figures.)
- Medical Insurance
- Round-trip Economy Airfare
- Related Travel Fees (i.e. travel to/from airport, VISA application fees, etc.)
- Research Allowance 1000 USD / per 2 years (based on 2024 figures.)

*The Book/Instructional Material Allowance and Research Allowance, respectively, are issued in JPY, and thus the actual amount issued for each depends on the USD/JPY exchange rate at the time.

<https://en.ritsumeai.ac.jp/admissions/file/ADB.ApplicationGuidelines.pdf>

<https://unu.edu/merit/course/full-time-phd-programme#TuitionandFellowships>



Join our international
community of PhD
fellows!

APPLICATIONS OPEN

DEADLINE: 15 February



<https://unu.edu/merit>



Australia Awards Cambodia

Postgraduate learning opportunities for
Cambodia's current and emerging leaders

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Australia Awards Scholarships support Cambodia's socio-economic growth through development opportunities for talented Cambodians to lead change and build careers.

Australia Awards is part of the Australian Government's development assistance program and is intended to support Cambodia's increasing economic growth, while encouraging people-to-people links between the two countries. Australia Awards offers development opportunities to talented Cambodians who wish to lead change in their country and build careers that contribute to Cambodia's future development needs. Since 1994, the Australia Awards has supported over 1,000 Cambodians to undertake postgraduate academic studies in Australia.

<https://www.australiaawardscambodia.org>



2 PhD positions in Sustainability Research, focus on sustainable agri-food system governance 100%

01.03.2025

The Sustainability Research Group at the University of Basel, led by Prof. Dr. Janina Grabs, is looking for two PhD researchers to investigate the governance of sustainable agri-food systems, with a particular focus on the implementation of mandatory sustainability legislation in tropical agri-food commodity chains, in the framework of the SNF-funded Starting Grant Project EXPECT-AGRI.

The project EXPECT-AGRI

The production of agricultural commodities such as coffee, cocoa, or palm oil is associated with deforestation, forced and child labor, and smallholder poverty. European governments currently aim to address these challenges via the introduction of mandatory supply chain sustainability legislation such as due diligence regulations and import restrictions.

This five-year research project aims to examine the impact of such sustainability laws in the supply chains of coffee, cocoa and palm oil. What expectations do these laws create between the regulatory authorities and the companies that trade in these commodities? And how do these expectations in turn influence the shift towards more sustainable agriculture? The project will examine these questions via a combination of qualitative (e.g. expert interviews, Q-methodology, case study analysis) and quantitative (e.g. company surveys) research, including fieldwork in commodity-producing countries.

Your position

As part of EXPECT-AGRI, the successful candidates will conduct longitudinal, qualitative research on policy implementation in three tropical agri-food commodity sectors (coffee, cocoa, and palm oil). One PhD candidate will focus on fieldwork in Colombia, and the other one will work in Côte d'Ivoire. You will further collaborate with postdoctoral researchers and mentor Master's students in the context of the project. The candidates will pursue a PhD degree in Sustainability Research and be enrolled in the University of Basel's Graduate School of Social Sciences. Place of work will be Basel, Switzerland.

Both appointments are scheduled to begin on March 1, 2025, or at the earliest convenience of the successful candidates.

Your profile

Applicants should have completed a Master's degree in a relevant field such as political science, political economy, public policy/administration, global governance, sustainability research, sociology, development studies, or another social science discipline, and achieved a minimum grade equivalent to 5 (out of 6) in the Swiss system. The candidates should have demonstrated experience in the use of qualitative research methods, and ideally have experience in living and/or working in the case study countries (Colombia or Côte d'Ivoire), or more broadly have experience in Latin America or West Africa.

We are looking for candidates with a proficient level in English and a second language (Spanish or French), excellent interpersonal and communication skills, a strong work ethic, the ability to work independently, and a high willingness to collaborate.

We offer you

Both positions are for an initial period of one year, renewable for another three years after positive evaluation.

As part of the very interdisciplinary Sustainability Research Group of the University of Basel, you will be able to work in a scientifically highly

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Gosling-Lim
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP
in Southeast
Asian Studies

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 3, 2025

Apply at <https://bit.ly/AASGL>



Association for
Asian Studies



<https://www.asianstudies.org/grants-awards/gosling-lim-postdoctoral-fellowship-in-southeast-asian-studies/>



Initiatives > Fellowships

Fellowships

Would you like to join the IIAS researchers community?

We invite preferably young or mid-career researchers in the Social Sciences and Humanities to apply for a 12-month **IIAS fellowship**. We also welcome **visiting senior researchers and strategic collaborators**. Indologists may apply for a **Gonda Fund fellowship**. In addition, IIAS supports a Professorial Fellowship for the **Chair of Taiwan Studies at Leiden University and IIAS**.

Read more about [what it means to be a fellow at IIAS](#)
(The Newsletter 94 Spring 2023)

<https://www.ias.asia/fellowships>

RGC Research Fellow Scheme/RGC Senior Research Fellow Scheme

IMPORTANT DATES

2024 12/09 Call for Nominations (2025/26 Exercise)

29/11 Nomination Deadline (2025/26 Exercise)

Overview Call Circular How to Apply Awardees Contact Us

What Is It?   

What Makes It Special?   

Who Is Eligible?   

Assessment Criteria   

Nomination Procedures   

FAQ   

https://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/funding_opport/rrfs/index.html



Postdoctoral Fellowships for Research in Japan

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) provides opportunities for pre-/post-doctoral researchers from other countries to conduct cooperative research under the guidance of their hosts with leading research groups in universities and other Japanese institutions. JSPS has several types of program to accommodate researchers in every stage of their career.

Pre/Postdocs

[Summer Program](#)

Young pre-/post-doctoral researchers from the US, the UK, France, Germany, Canada, and Sweden are invited to Japan over a period of two months during the summer to pursue research under the guidance of host researchers in universities and research institutions in Japan.

[Strategic Program](#) **Offering was ended**

Young and excellent pre-/post-doctoral researchers with high future potential from selected countries are strategically invited to Japan for the period of two to twelve months in order to build collaborative research relationships with Japanese colleagues.

[Short-term Program \(PE\)](#)

To provide opportunities for pre-/post-doctoral researchers from the US, Canada and Europe to conduct, under the guidance of their hosts, cooperative research with leading research groups in universities and other Japanese institutions.

[Short-term Program \(PA\)](#)

To provide opportunities for pre-/post-doctoral researchers from ASEAN and Africa to conduct, under the guidance of their hosts, cooperative research with leading research groups in universities and other Japanese institutions.

<https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-fellow/>

Various types of scholarships available for Master's (MA) and Doctoral (PhD) program

- Merit-based Scholarships
- Need-based Scholarships (financial need)
- Research scholarships (funding their projects, fieldwork, or lab expenses)
- Diversity scholarships (students from underrepresented backgrounds or marginalized communities)
- Program-specific scholarships (specific programs)
- Country-specific scholarships
- Fully and partly funded scholarships

Expectations

MA / PhD

- Maintain a high level of academic performance throughout their studies
- Professional development by enhancing the recipient's skills and knowledge in their field of study or career
- Make a meaningful contribution to their academic field through research, projects or other scholarly activities.
- Commitment to return to their home country upon completion of their studies

Expectations (cont.)

Postdoctoral fellowship

- Contribute new knowledge and insights to the academic community
- Publishing research findings in reputable journals/book presses
- Collaborating with supervisors, colleagues, and students
- Developing grant proposals to secure funding
- Teaching
- Handling specific research projects within their area of expertise
- ...

Requirements

MA and PhD

1. Academic Excellence (a strong academic record, including a high GPA or equivalent academic achievements)
2. Bachelor's Degree for MA level and Master's degree for PhD level
3. Language Proficiency (TOEFL or IELTS)
 - MA: 6 - 6.5 of IELTS
 - PhD: 6.5 - 7.5 of IELTS
4. Letters of Recommendation
5. Statement of Purpose (career goals, research interests, and reasons for pursuing the MA program)
6. Resume/CV
7. Research Proposal (outlining their intended research project or thesis topic)
8. Application Form

Requirements

Postdoctoral Fellowships

- Academic Excellence (publications, an influential PhD thesis)
- ~~Bachelor's Degree for MA level and Master's degree for PhD level~~
- PhD conferment letter
- ~~Language Proficiency (TOEFL or IELTS)~~
- Letters of Recommendation
- Cover letter (career goals, research interests, and reasons for applying)
- Resume/CV
- Research Proposal or research statement (outlining their intended research project, insignificance, and publication goals)
- Application Form

Q & A

Break for 15 minutes

*Part III: Preparations (MA,
PhD, and Post-doctor)*

Postdoctoral Fellowships

1. Build a strong research background during your doctoral studies

- Publishing papers, presenting at conferences, some awards
- Co-authoring with your mentors/supervisors

2. A compelling research proposal

- Building of your PhD thesis
- Outlining your proposed project and its significance
- Deliverable outcomes

3. Connect with potential advisors and collaborators

- Strong letters of recommendation
- Practice for interviews



**Deliver on Your
Promises**

Postdoctoral Fellowships (cont.)

Things to avoid:

1. Lack of research fit
2. Poorly written application materials
3. Ignoring application instructions
4. Lack of clear research goals
5. Make overpromises

PhD

- Maintain a high GPA (BA and MA)
- Fulfil language requirement
- Attend international MA programs
- Write an MA thesis
- Build your CV on your academic achievements, research experience, publications, presentations, awards, and relevant skills.
 - Being a research assistant helps a lot

PhD (cont.)

- Explore different scholarships, grants, and fellowships available for Ph.D. students in your field of study and geographic region.
- Research potential Ph.D. advisors/supervisors whose research aligns with your interests and goals.
 - Not harmful to write to them to express your passion, qualifications, and research goals (remember the advice from the KR leader)
 - Just be ready for rejections or NO response!

PhD (cont.)

Craft a compelling research proposal

- A good research topic requires a lot of time to develop
- Feedback from mentors, advisors, or colleagues
- Do not be afraid of someone stealing your research topic

MA

- Maintain a high GPA (3-3.5) for BA
- Fulfil language requirement
- Attend international BA programs
- Writing an BA thesis is an advantage
- Build your CV on your academic achievements, presentations, awards, and relevant skills.
-Being a research assistant helps a lot

MA (cont.)

- Explore different scholarships, grants, and fellowships available for MA students in your field of study and geographic region.
- Research potential advisors/supervisors whose research aligns with your interests and goals.
 - Not harmful to write to them
 - Just be ready for rejections or NO response!
- Craft a compelling research proposal

Comparing MA and PhD research proposals

MA research proposal

- Shorter in length and duration
- Demonstrate a certain level of understanding of the relevant literature
- Basis ideas on research methodology and significance
- Scope of the research is narrower

PhD research proposal

- Longer in length, scope, and duration
- A literature review that demonstrates a deep understanding of your research area (identify gaps in knowledge and justify the significance of your proposed research)
- A detailed plan for data collection, analysis, and interpretation
- Clearly articulate how the proposed research will advance knowledge in the field

Q & A

Thank you!

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