

Research Design Plan (RDP)

Doctoral Programme in Pedagogical, Educational and Training Sciences (SPEF)
University of Padua

Purpose of the Document

This Research Design Plan (RDP) supports the evaluation of first-year PhD candidates for admission to the second year of the doctoral programme.

The document demonstrates the scientific soundness, feasibility, ethical integrity, and data governance of the proposed research.

It is expected that this document reflects a mature transition from an initial research idea to a coherent and justified research design, aligned with disciplinary standards and institutional regulations.

Section 1. Candidate and Project Information

- **PhD Candidate:**
 - **Cycle and Year:**
 - **Curriculum:**
 - **Supervisor(s):**
 - **Working Title of the Research Project:**
 - **Keywords (3–5):**
 - **Annex:** [Record of Training activities](#) that the candidate want to get acknowledged as part of the Training Plan (up to 20 CFU - First year: 14 CFU is compulsory)
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Section 2. Research Problem and Rationale -5000 words-

2.1 Research Context

- Description of the educational, social, institutional, or policy context in which the research is situated.
- Identification of relevant actors, settings, and levels (micro, meso, macro).

2.2 Problem Statement

- Clear articulation of the research problem.
- Explanation of why this problem is theoretically, empirically, and socially relevant.

2.3 Scientific and Societal Relevance

- Contribution to existing research debates.
 - Potential relevance for educational practice, policy, or professional development.
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Section 3. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

- Key theoretical perspectives guiding the study.
 - Positioning of the research within relevant scholarly traditions.
 - Critical synthesis (not a list) of core literature.
 - Explicit links between theory and the research problem.
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Section 4. Research Questions and/or Hypotheses

- Main research question(s).
 - Sub-questions or hypotheses (if applicable).
 - Coherence between questions, theory, and methods.
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Section 5. Research Design and Methodology -5000 words-

5.1 Overall Research Design

- Qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, design-based, participatory, etc.
- Justification of the chosen approach.

5.2 Participants & Methods (Table)

Build a table including

Participants / Data Sources

- Description of participants, documents, datasets, or digital traces.
- Inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Estimated sample size (if applicable).

Data Collection Methods

- Instruments and procedures (e.g., interviews, observations, surveys, document analysis, learning analytics).

Data Analysis Strategy

- Analytical methods and techniques.
- Software tools (if relevant).
- Alignment with research questions.

5.5 Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

- Strategies to ensure rigor (e.g., triangulation, reflexivity, transparency).
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Section 6. Data Management Plan (DMP)

6.1 Types of Data

- Description of data to be collected or generated.
- Formats and estimated volume.

6.2 Data Storage and Security

- Secure storage solutions during the project.
- Access control and data protection measures.

6.3 Anonymisation and Confidentiality

- Procedures for anonymisation or pseudonymisation.
- Management of sensitive or personal data.

6.4 Data Sharing and Reuse

- Plans for data sharing, if applicable.
- Conditions under which data may be reused.
- Compliance with FAIR principles where appropriate.

6.5 Data Retention and Archiving

- Duration of data retention.
 - Long-term archiving solutions.
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Section 7. Ethical Considerations and Approval

7.1 Ethical Issues Identified

- Potential risks for participants or institutions.
- Power relations, vulnerability, and consent.

7.2 Informed Consent

- Procedures for obtaining informed consent.
- Information provided to participants.

7.3 Risk Mitigation

- Strategies to minimise harm or discomfort.
- Right to withdraw and support mechanisms.

7.4 Ethical Approval Status

The ethical approval is a procedure that requires [completing and submitting](#) a form to the Advisory Board. Please indicate:

- Status (submitted / approved / pending):
Reference number if approved (date of the Advisory Board Approval)
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Section 8. Timeline and Feasibility -2000 words-

- Overview of activities completed during the first year.
 - Planned activities for the second year.
 - Feasibility assessment in relation to time, access, and resources.
 - GANTT CHART (over the basis of 5.2.)
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Section 9. Expected Contributions -1000 words-

- Expected theoretical contributions.
 - Expected methodological contributions.
 - Expected implications for practice or policy.
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Section 10. PhD Activities supporting the quality of Research -2000 words or Annex-

- Congress Participation (as presenter and/or audience)
 - Training and Dissemination (as trainer/presenter)
 - Other activities of Public Engagement
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Section 11. Highlights/Masterpiece -1000 words-

- Narrative Description of key achievements
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Section 12. References

- List of PhD Candidate Publications
 - Key references cited in the document (APA style).
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Supervisor's Statement

I confirm that the research design presented is coherent, feasible, and ethically sound, and that it provides an adequate basis for the continuation of the doctoral project.

I also highlight that the following areas of the research competence are being developed:

(please consider the [researchcomp framework here](#))

- **Supervisor Name:**
- **Date:**
- **Signature:**