

A Research Agreement for Students in Exercise and Sport Science

Will G Hopkins

Department of Physiology and School of Physical Education, University of Otago, Dunedin 9001, New Zealand. Email: will.hopkins@otago.ac.nz

Sportscience 5(1), sportsci.org/jour/0101/wgh.htm, 2001 (2200 words)

Reviewed by Ronald W Deitrick, Exercise Science, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA 18510

A research agreement is a valuable resource for planning a research student's project and for monitoring its progress. In this article I include a link to a template for an agreement that includes items on research design, responsibilities, resources, thesis format, and times for completion.

KEYWORDS: contract, graduate, independent study, planning, research design, supervisor, tertiary education

[Download](#) the template in rich-text format.

Several years ago my university adopted a policy requiring each research student and supervisor to develop and sign an informal agreement that identifies the scientific and administrative essentials of the student's project. At that time, a few departmental colleagues and I devised a template for such an agreement, using a simpler version from another department. The agreement dealt with responsibilities, resources, thesis format, and times for completion. I subsequently elaborated some items and added others for planning the design of studies in exercise and sport science. The reviewer of this article, Ron Deitrick, also made valuable suggestions for improvement. You may find the agreement useful for all research projects, not just those of your research students. [Download](#) the template for the agreement and modify it to suit your needs, but please retain the acknowledgements on the first page.

I have based some of the modifications on my experience with research students. I also used google.com to search the Web for student research contracts or agreements that would help me improve the template, but I found only a few rudimentary templates or short descriptions of contracts. I would therefore be grateful for copies of contracts or agreements, and for suggestions for improvement, which I will use to update the template here.

On the first page of the template, I emphasize that you should regard the agreement as an aid to planning rather than an administrative imposition. I include a disclaimer about the legal status of the document, but I suspect that any such agreement ultimately will count as evidence, if a student tries to sue the host institution for inadequate supervision. The supervisor and student should therefore attempt to fulfill the intentions stated in the agreement.

I get the student to complete a first draft of the agreement. Several rewrites are usually necessary before the student and I are satisfied. The graduate research coordinator or head of department sometimes requires amendments. Give all signatories a copy, and peruse the agreement occasionally to check that everyone is honoring their obligations.

Webmastered by Will Hopkins

Published April 2001.

©2001