

Pitching Research®

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Pitching Research®

Abstract

In this paper I build on Faff's (2015) pitching template framework that provides a succinct and methodical approach to pitching a new research proposal to an academic expert. Notably, I argue that the pitching tool can be used as (a) a research **planning** tool (e.g. Chang and Wee, 2016; Menzies, Dixon and Rimmer, 2016); (b) a research **skills development** tool (Faff, 2016b); (c) a research **learning** tool (Faff, Ali, et al., 2016; Faff, Wallin, et al., 2016 and Ratiu, 2016); (d) a research **agenda setting** tool (Maxwell, 2017; Nguyen, Faff and Haq, 2017); (e) a research **mentoring** tool (Faff, Godfrey and Teng, 2016); (f) a research **collaboration** tool (Wallin and Spry, 2016); (g) research **engagement & impact** tool (Faff & Kastle, 2016); (h) **research led teaching** tool (Faff, Li, Nguyen & Ye, 2016); (i) research **"discoverability"** tool (Faff, Alqahtani, et al., 2017). Moreover, the current paper provides an update on an extensive array of supplementary online resources. Most notably, to demonstrate that the pitch template is readily adaptable to many fields, a library of completed examples currently spans over **ONE HUNDRED and FIFTY** alternative research areas. Other online materials and support include: web portal (PitchMyResearch.com); YouTube videos; themed pitch days; pitching competitions. Also, this project has been identified as one of 30 Innovations that Inspire across the AACSB network worldwide Business Schools.

Keywords: new research ideas; pitching; template; research proposal; novice researcher advice; supervisor advice; research mentor advice; PhD coordinator advice; innovations that inspire

JEL classifications: G00; M00; B40; A20; B00; C00; D00; E00; F00; H00; I00; J00; L00; Q00; R00; Z00

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1. Introduction

Building on Faff's (2015) pitching research[®] template,¹ in the current paper I give an update and further explore this succinct and methodical approach to pitching a new scholarly research proposal to an academic expert.² At the heart of this effort is a simple, succinct and methodical tool – the 2-page pitching template.³ Notably, the tool is simultaneously a research planning tool (various recent published articles acknowledge Faff's, 2015 template as a critical research planning tool, e.g. Chang and Wee, 2016; Menzies, Dixon and Rimmer, 2016; Dang and Henry, 2016; Mathuva, 2016; Sivathaasan, Ali, Liu and Haung, 2017); a research skills development tool (Faff, 2016b); a research learning tool (Faff, Ali, et al., 2016; Faff, Wallin, et al., 2016 and Ratiu, 2016); a research mentoring tool (Faff, Godfrey and Teng, 2016; Ratiu, Faff and Ratiu, 2016); a research collaboration tool (Wallin and Spry, 2016); a research engagement & impact tool (Faff & Kastle, 2016); research-led teaching tool (Faff, Li, Nguyen & Ye, 2016); research “discoverability” tool (Faff, Alqahtani, et al., 2017).⁴

The broad motivation for “Pitching Research[®]” is as follows. In my experience the TWO biggest obstacles impeding any research project are, quite simply – starting it and finishing it.⁵ Moreover, by definition, the latter is only an issue if you manage to successfully

¹ The Pitching Research[®] logo is a registered Trademark in Australia, trade mark number 1694403.

² Following a regularly updated revision process, the current paper should be viewed as a “dynamic” companion to the “static” Faff (2015). As such, certain parts of the current paper borrow from Faff (2015).

³ This project and its core tool, has been recently identified as one of 30 “Innovations that Inspire” across the AACSB network worldwide Business Schools. These projects were heralded at the 2016 ICAM conference in Boston. See online: <http://bit.ly/29EUbX7>

Also, for a 70-second video related to the AACSB accolade, see: <http://bit.ly/1T1HggK>

⁴ The pitching research framework can also be viewed as a tool for dealing with “threshold concepts” in research education (Kiley and Wisker, 2009). A “threshold concept” is: “something distinct within what would typically be described as ‘core concepts’; that is, more than a building block. A threshold concept is one that, once grasped, leads to a qualitatively different view of the subject matter and/or learning experience and of oneself as a learner.” (Kiley and Wisker, 2009, p. 432). These authors further argue that threshold concepts are transformative, often “liminal”, irreversible, integrative, bounded and likely represent “troublesome” knowledge. “Liminality” refers to a protracted period that precedes actual crossing of the threshold – a period in which “... students may mimic the language and behaviours that they perceive are required of them, prior to full understanding. It is while in this state that doctoral students are often likely to feel ‘stuck’, depressed, unable to continue, challenged and confused.” [Kiley and Wisker (2009, p. 432)].

⁵ Once started on a project, a typical researcher will ... “love” the programming ... “love” poring over masses of regression output ... love seeing statistically significant results ... love being in the “middle”. After a time, the love affair wanes – especially, when it comes time not just to write up, but to write with purpose, to craft with the reader in mind ... but we all hate writing. This latter challenge I equate to the “85% rule” – i.e. we can

negotiate the former. Hence, Pitching Research[®] is all about making a sound start. But, to start a research project “with purpose”, you need to have a good grasp of where it is you are heading! So, how can you know with any confidence that you have identified a good/worthwhile research topic? More to the point, how can you figure this out very early in the planning process so that you avoid unduly wasting precious time and resources on something that (sadly) might ultimately be a “flimsy” addition to the relevant literature?

Accordingly, the core objective of the current paper is to give tangible advice in this regard.⁶ My primary target audience is novice researchers engaged in empirical work – whether they are current doctoral students or (post-PhD) junior academics, with only limited publication experience in the very early phases of an academic career. My secondary, but equally important target audience comprises PhD supervisors, research mentors and senior research collaborators, since they should seek out all legitimate means to help fulfil their important leading role in any such research relationship.

To this end, I propose some key guidelines to creating a sound research proposal. Specifically, using Faff’s (2015) pitching template, you (the “pitching” researcher) are challenged to concisely “populate” each section of the template with relevant material. Emphasizing the notion that “less is more”, the task is to confine your efforts to just 2 pages (or 1,000 words).⁷ How would you go about meeting this daunting challenge? What

usually get a project “85%” done and written up without excessive torture, but then our enthusiasm is fully exhausted. At this stage, our attention is then easily captured by the next “big idea” – which then provides a convenient excuse for dragging out the “endgame”. Or, worse still, for never finishing, especially for those who display tendencies of “perfectionism”. While the challenge of finishing is all very interesting and important, it goes far beyond the scope of the current paper.

⁶ In feedback on a previous version of this paper, it was quite reasonably suggested to me that while the template is helpful, even it can allow/encourage a considerable investment of “wasted” time if the core idea is “dumb”. To an extent I agree, though I would argue that implicit in prior versions of this paper was the existence of some preliminary informal discussions between pitcher/pitchee regarding “deal breaker” issues on any given pitch. I now acknowledge and discuss these concerns explicitly in Sub-section 2.2.4. Also, I refer readers to existing papers like Stokes (2013), who provides good advice/strategies on how to generate innovative research ideas. Stokes (2013) is freely available at: <http://bit.ly/2jqpTKY>

⁷ In private conversations, Devraj Basu canvassed the view that in some circumstances, and particularly in the first instance when we are trying to capture initial attention, the time constraint might be much more severe than the “luxury” implied by my suggested 30 minutes. The most extreme version involves the so-called “elevator pitch” i.e. the pitcher has to elucidate the “value proposition” in about the time it takes for an elevator ride (30 seconds). This is more akin to the initial “selling” or “thinking” device, which might simply capture the key idea/motivation underlying the proposed research. Alternatively, this hyper-short pitch might be thought of as

areas/aspects should you cover? In what detail? How can you best package this information for efficient consumption and assessment?

The basic logic is to provide essential, brief information across a broad range of essential dimensions that any collaborator would need, to make a reliable assessment of the quality of and potential for the proposal. Notably, it is assumed that the goal of this exercise is to produce a solid plan which, once executed, would eventually lead to a quality research paper – published as a fully refereed article in a highly reputable international academic journal.

There are numerous extant articles/books that give researchers general advice and valuable insights on how to get their research published and so such a perspective will not be repeated in any detail here. A critical distinction exists between the objective/context of such “advice” papers versus the current paper. Most notably, they assume that researchers already have a well-developed product (i.e. that they have a paper that is considerably beyond the first-draft stage), and the advice they then give is how to enhance and improve from this relatively advanced base. In contrast, in my paper, I am speaking to researchers who have embryonic notions which are yet to be formally explored, and for which the researcher is genuinely unsure of the underlying academic merit.

The remainder of the current paper evolves as follows. In Section 2, I outline Faff’s (2015) pitching template and briefly guide the reader as to the underlying thinking behind each piece and how it might be completed. Section 3 provides some advice directed at the two main pitch stakeholders: the “pitcher” and the “pitchee”, for completing/using the template. Section 4 provides a review of exemplar pitch templates illustrating its use across a diversity of discipline areas that are available in an Internet library. Section 5 briefly outlines a range of online supplementary material and an update on the ever-growing extensive support and initiatives (as detailed in the appendix). The final section concludes.

identifying the “irreducible contribution”. Such shorter versions can be viewed as compatible with and subsets of my longer style pitch.

2. The Pitch Template

2.1 Preliminaries

Faff's (2015) pitching template is shown in Figure 1 in blank format, Figure 2 presents a completed example of the pitch template for the pitching research[®] proposal itself, while Figure 3 repeats the template but now provides a series of prompting questions, as cues to induce the "pitcher" to think about a range of possible considerations under each heading.⁸ I begin by discussing the components of the template and the basic philosophy/purpose behind each element. I also give some general guidance on how to populate each segment of the template. For ease of reference, the key elements of the pitch template are labeled "Item (A) - (K)".

The first thing to understand about the design of the template is a need to be concise and to the point. It is very safe to assume that the "pitchee" (e.g. potential research collaborator, Honours/PhD supervisor, research mentor) is a very busy person. He/she is time poor and in the first instance simply wants to know the essential ideas, without being bogged down by the details. With this in mind, my strong advice is to keep the completed pitch to a maximum of 2 pages. For a knowledgeable "pitchee", this limit will provide ample material to induce probing questions, leading to an informed judgment – and more detail can be called for once the pitch is deemed "successful"!⁹

Indeed, the pitch can evolve. The very first version will very likely be rough and raw – and possibly incomplete. This is expected. There is no shame in this. Rather, the shame will be if the "pitcher" is always too "scared" to share their pitch with their potential "pitchee" because they fear embarrassment. Air your ideas early, so that they might flourish or die –

⁸ A softcopy WORD file of the pitcher's cued version of the template is available from the authors webpage: <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/staff/details/robert-faff> (please scroll down the webpage until you find the download prompt).

⁹ There is no unique definition of "success" in this context. At one extreme, for a very early version of the pitch, success could simply mean that the senior collaborator wants to see a revised pitch that addresses some key areas in more detail. For an already heavily revised pitch, success would be indicated by the senior researcher agreeing to collaborate on the project, with an agreed division of duties on, for example, generating a detailed literature review and hypothesis development versus initial data collection and sampling – perhaps even staged via a "pilot" exercise.

whichever is appropriate. Lost time is a lost opportunity. Should your early ideas flourish, the pitch template can form a useful framework for development across several iterations, until that moment of metamorphosis is reached – when it is no longer a “pitch” – it becomes a fledgling project!

The template begins with stating the pitcher’s identity – “ownership” is important.¹⁰ Also a “field of research” (FoR) category clarifies the relevant “domain” and a date of completion of the pitch is provided – so that a clear time context can be given – especially useful in situations when the pitch is (re-)viewed/assessed with any significant delay. The template then covers several broad essential ingredients of which the reader wants immediate knowledge: (A) working title; (B) the basic research question; (C) the key paper(s) and (D) motivation/puzzle.

2.1.1 Template Item (A): Working Title

The “first” challenge is to decide on a working title. While stated as the “first” challenge, in most cases the “working title” evolves over time. As such, the title can be refined several times during the process of completing the template and it becomes more clearly shaped as more information is gathered and cognitively processed. Indeed, you do not necessarily have to begin at the top of the template and work systematically down. The task is best thought of as a dynamic and iterative process, in which the “path” to a completed pitch is non-linear and unpredictable.¹¹ The ultimate title (of the paper that hopefully comes as a successful output

¹⁰ When it comes to “intellectual property” linked to research, a definitive statement of ownership is often problematic. Similar research ideas can be developed independently by different researchers – and it is quite possible that multiple “leaders” will be acknowledged in the literature. One way to stake an early claim to an idea is to make “public” your work in various forms as soon as possible e.g. by creating a working paper on SSRN; by delivering a research workshop at a university seminar program; or by presenting a paper at a recognised conference. Of course, if the idea is meritorious and potentially developed contemporaneously by several researchers, those who are too slow developing it to a mature state, risk being relegated as secondary players on the given issue.

¹¹ Indeed, we have captured some accumulated pitch completion data from our web portal (PitchMyResearch.com), that confirms this to some extent – though there is a significant degree of linearity too. See Figure 4, which characterises the 11 elements of the pitch template as a pitch completion “clock”. Linear behaviour in using the web portal, is reflected by the thick black lines joining the items (presumably, travelling clockwise) around the outer edge of the clock. However, the prevalence of many “cross lines” in the figure, reflect a nontrivial incidence of iterative behaviour. The size of the dark outer edge circles denote average time spent on template items – the idea, motivation and data, seemingly occupy the three most time consuming elements.

from this pitching process) should be an appropriate balance between being informative, catchy and concise.¹²

2.1.2 Template Item (B): Basic Research Question

The next challenge¹³ is to capture in one sentence, the key features of the chosen research question. It is often said that you should have passion about your research – here I say, be passionate about the question, but as a good scientist, be open-minded about the answer! It is very likely that the research question will be very similar to the working title (Item (A)) – but in most cases it will be more than subtly different, and slightly more expansive. While the question can take almost any form, it is typically “neutral” in its expression. Indeed it might not even be a question, in the literal sense. For example, it might be something like: *What are the (e.g. economic) determinants of “variable Y”?* or *To explore the empirical determinants of “variable Y”*. While such a research question does not identify any prediction(s) or hypothesis(es), it is readily connectable to the expression of such. Following on from the above example, the related hypothesis might be expressed as: *“Variable X” is a positive determinant of “variable Y”* (the opportunity to state a prediction/hypothesis comes later in the template under the Idea). In many contexts, such a statement will clarify the identity of the key dependent (“explained”) variable and the key test/independent (“explanatory”) variable(s).

2.1.3 Template Item (C): The Key Papers

A sufficiently deep immersion within the relevant literature is essential to coming up with and confirming a good research topic. I use a light-hearted metaphor to explain how to attack the literature challenge – what I term the “cocktail glass” approach. Imagine a fancy cocktail glass that is very broad at the top, narrows down to a small diameter – say, a third the way from the bottom and then fans out at the base – but much less so than the top. Such a glass is

¹² Other things equal, having a short title can attract initial attention. For example, while Benson and Faff (2013), titled “ β ”, and Faff (2014) “a” hold the unofficial world record for the shortest title possible and thus has some “curiosity” value, ultimately, papers like these with similarly curt titles, can only sustain attention based on their real academic content.

¹³ Similarly, the “research question” evolves over time. The initial view is often rudimentary and overly simplistic, and it too becomes more clearly shaped as more of the plan comes together.

depicted in Figure 5. Symbolically, drinking from the full cocktail glass is like beginning the literature search on a broad topic – there is typically a big literature to traverse, characterized by the big diameter at the top of the glass. As you spend time reading, filtering of the papers takes place, coincident with the refinement of the potential topic – quite likely an iterative process. Like the slow consumption of the cocktail (savoring the taste), the drink level descends toward the narrow part of glass – analogous to the narrowing in ones thinking about which papers within the relevant literature are the most important and critical foundation stones for your research topic. When you get to the narrow part of the glass, you have identified the small set of papers that really help you focus your attention on what is currently “known” and what is still unknown. These are the “key” papers. Later, should the project advance, an expanded set of the most relevant papers is identified as your reference list – like the cocktail glass, these represent the foundation upon which the paper (glass) rests.

I suggest that in answering the question posed in item (C) of the template – namely, what are the “key” foundational papers for your proposal, limit your answer here to just three papers. Indeed, if possible nominate the most critical single paper to your work. You might ask: what “characteristics” should these critical paper(s) possess? Absent any specific considerations to the contrary, I suggest three rules of thumb. First, the key papers should be quite recent – say, no older than 3 years.¹⁴ Ideally, they should be published in the Top Tier journals in the relevant field, or if they are not, then they should be very recent unpublished papers available on SSRN and preferably authored by “gurus” in the relevant field. Collectively, all these conditions serve as heuristics for “currency” and quality.¹⁵ Ideally, we should also see some diversity in terms of the “guru” authors and journals e.g. we should

¹⁴ An obvious (seeming) concern with this “currency” advice, is that it excludes choosing a seminal paper. The counterargument is that we can take the seminal paper as “given” and, moreover, that well-chosen recent papers will explicitly and critically build on such seminal work. Nevertheless, a simple adaptation of the advice on key papers is e.g. to allow the seminal paper plus three others.

¹⁵ Of course, any other objective means of telling that an unpublished paper will soon be an influential one in the Top Tier journals can be used – but the rules of thumb stated in the main text seem reasonably “safe” suggestions.

avoid the extreme case of choosing three papers written by the same author, published in the same journal.

2.1.4 Template Item (D): The Motivation

The final “preliminary” consideration in the pitch template is the motivation (at item (D)). All high quality papers come with impressive motivation(s). This should emanate from the academic literature itself, but in the social sciences is often also linked to observed (e.g. agent) behavior or actual (e.g. industry) patterns or real market imperatives or current regulation/policy debates. One really good strategy for motivating a paper is isolating a meaningful and relevant “puzzle” – which, for example, might be observed in recent (e.g. market) trends that show curious patterns or actual decision-making that defies conventional wisdom.¹⁶

The core of the template is built around a “3-2-1” design – a useful “gimmick” because it is easily memorable. “Three” represents the three essential ingredients of the Idea, the Data and the Tools. “Two” represents the two basic questions that a successful researcher always convincingly answers: “What’s new?” and “So what?”¹⁷ “One” represents the “holy grail” – the Contribution! Ultimately the merits of any paper must stand on both its actual and perceived contribution to the literature. Each element of the “3-2-1” design is discussed in the following sections.¹⁸

¹⁶ It is worth noting that many research papers do not identify a “puzzle” in the sense that I have in mind here – there is really a puzzling phenomenon that is observed in “real world” settings, which is not readily explained by the conventional theory/models in a given relevant discipline.

¹⁷ We should always remind ourselves of “cultural sensitivities” – and this is one such case. I have on good authority that from a Chinese perspective, the question “so what?” can be seen as quite offensive. Of course, while I want to challenge the “pitcher”, I do not wish to cause offence! An alternative way of expressing the question is to ask: “who cares?” I thank Yong Li for bringing this issue to my attention and for suggesting the alternative form of the question.

¹⁸ These sections are strongly inspired by and very closely aligned to Section 2 of Faff (2013). Interestingly, in Faff (2013), the purpose at hand – namely, to assess a well-developed paper – is naturally compatible with the reverse order of attack – “1-2-3”. Ultimately, this reversal is innocuous – the essential elements and message remain robust.

2.2 Three Dimensions – Idea, Data and Tools

Any empirical paper has three critical dimensions: (1) the Idea; (2) the Data; and (3) the Tools. Faff (2013) proposes a “cheeky” acronym based on the first letters of Idea, Data and Tools – the so-called “IDioTs” guide to empirical research.¹⁹ These are the “building blocks” of the research plan. While the three elements are, for expositional convenience, presented here as being independent considerations, in practice they are often interrelated.

2.2.1 Template Item (E): The Idea

Absent a good idea, irrespective of how impressive everything else is, it is hard to imagine how a worthwhile paper can be created. As stated in Figure 3, against item (E) the main cue asks you to identify the core idea – the essential concept/notion/proposition that drives the intellectual content of your chosen research topic. Moreover, the template prompts for a brief articulation of the central hypothesis and also asks is there any theoretical tension involved? “Theoretical tension” reflects the situation in which there are meaningful contrasting predictions from two (or more) pockets of theory relevant to the research question.

While a critical aspect of a good research idea might very likely come from theory, the motivating idea might not necessarily be exclusively theoretical. As argued by Faff (2013, p. 952), “... the idea might involve an innovative blending of existing theory, or it might actually relate to a clever way of exploiting institutional differences or recognising unique exogenous events that allow reliable identification of causality. The idea might relate to the identification of a “gap”, for which we can’t reliably deduce the answer from the existing literature.”

¹⁹ In anonymous feedback received on an earlier version of the current paper, the reasonable point was made that these three labels (“idea”, “data”, “tools”) don’t work across all areas of research. For example, in psychology a more accepted labelling might be “hypothesis/research question”, “sample” and “statistical analysis” (HSS). As another example, you might substitute “design” for “data”. In such a case, (research) design would in part capture “data”, but in a broader setting (e.g. qualitative research) allow the thinking to usefully extend beyond this narrower focus. Whatever the case, in my mind, these variations are more about semantics than content. My attraction to “IDioT” is the broad scope that each element conveys, as well as the ease with which we can (collectively) remember them via the light-hearted acronym. It should further be acknowledged that the alternatively suggested labels are also widely used in finance research and elsewhere, though different disciplines might exhibit varying degrees of relaxation with which they are interpreted/applied. Finally, the other positive thing to note here is – whatever the concepts are labelled, it seems that a similarly motivated “triad” is all purposeful. Rather than dismissing on these grounds, a simple mapping from “IDioT” to “HSS” is encouraged!

2.2.2 *Template Item (F): Data*

A research paper cannot claim to be truly empirical without data – data can be either quantitative or qualitative. Item (F) in the template aims to expose key questions around the data and sampling, with a key focus on establishing feasibility of the project – both in terms of an adequate sample size (“quantity”) and veracity of the data source/compilation (“quality”). By challenging the “2 Qs”, the current focus is centred on giving confidence that reliable inferences regarding the question at hand are ultimately deliverable. Item (F) of the template poses a (non-exhaustive) series of data-related questions. Question 1 largely prompts consideration of the chosen unit of analysis – either or both in a longitudinal/time series and a cross-sectional sense. Question 2 can in part be viewed as making us think about statistical validity, since sample size is a key factor.²⁰ Question 3, probes more on any likely (non-random) structure in the data – e.g. if the data have so-called “panel” properties, the effective degree of independent observations is diminished from the “headline” pooled sample size. Question 4 is strongly asking us to confront feasibility – sources of data whether commercial or hand collected or created by survey methods, pose potentially “deal breaking” issues in terms of prohibitive costs (either monetary or time). Questions 5 and 6 both connect to the veracity issue – missing data, or ambiguous data or “unclean” data. All data are an unknown weighting of signal/information versus “noise”, and concerns reflected in these questions can push the perceived noise/signal ratio beyond levels too high for comfort. As the old saying goes: “garbage in garbage out”. Question (7) in this template item, asks us to contemplate any “other data obstacles?” While this could relate to anything of relevance, it helps prompt thoughts of other validity issues – e.g. external validity: does the sample of data provide a representative and meaningful view of the underlying (and relevant) population?, or

²⁰ Clarkson (2012) argues that four dimensions of validity constitute the “cornerstone of scientific rigor”: (a) internal validity – do we have a fully-specified model?; (b) construct validity – do we have compelling linkage between empirical proxies and economic variables?; (c) statistical validity – do we have appropriate data, sampling and tests?; and (d) external validity – will our results be generalizable?

construct validity: are the feasible proxies compelling constructs for the underlying theoretical variables in question?

2.2.3 *Template Item (G): Tools*

Item (G) reminds us that without adequate tools/techniques, data and ideas are useless. A critical part of academic rigour is having systematic and formally designed statistical analysis that gives reliability/credibility to any/all inferences drawn. An empirical study that is purely descriptive or one that is based on univariate tests, will find little favour in the mainstream literature. In essence, the “toolkit” comprises the techniques, econometric models, software and so on, that collectively allows us to objectively “ask” the data for answers to the key research question and its related predictions/hypotheses. For example, Item (G) asks the very basic question of whether a regression approach will be used. Or will it require survey-based tools (e.g. survey/questionnaire instrument design) or involve interviewing design/techniques? Further, questioning which software (e.g. econometric, text analytics, qualitative) are fit for purpose, prompts the related questions of software availability and training. There is also a question of “connectivity” between tools and all other aspects of the proposed framework – indeed, an overall consideration is that a common thread runs right through the pitch.²¹

As emphasised by Faff (2013, p. 953) novel tools “... can provide added “leverage” to a research question, that helps create new insights not possible with standard techniques that are well-worn in a given literature. One example of such potential leverage is when a researcher transports an established technique from another discipline, and shows how it can give new insights, that for whatever reason are obscured by the existing “old” approaches.”

2.2.4 *The “Deal-breakers”*

As foreshadowed in the Introduction, a critique of my advocated approach is that it, too, can allow/encourage a considerable investment of “wasted” time and effort. To minimise this

²¹ I enjoyed discussions with Marc De Ceuster along these lines in which he always asks his students “... what is the *story*?”

concern, I assume (indeed, advocate that) there (should) be an “sufficient” level of preliminary discussion between pitcher/pitcher regarding the possible existence of any “deal breaker” issues relating to any potential research question before it is fully “embraced” by the template. In the current context, this can most simply be linked back to the “IDioT” principle.

Regarding the Idea, informal “due diligence” should be directed (based on “within reason” efforts) to ruling out: (a) “replication” risk – that you will avoid effectively replicating an existing study; (b) that the answer is already known (directly or indirectly); or (c) that it is a “dumb” idea. Regarding Data, the most common and obvious “deal breaker” to be ruled out is that you do not have access to (or, simply, there do not exist) sufficient quantity/quality data for a reliable and representative sample, relevant to the question. Regarding Tools, it is a question of knowing that the necessary tools are available to do the job. Very likely, it is the Idea and/or the Data which will give most anxiety at this “deal breaker” stage, as modern tools are in abundance. While it is true that all of these “deal-breaker” aspects are relevant to the full pitch template exercise itself, in that context we are interested very much more in specific details for developing the pitch.

2.3 Two Questions – What’s New? and So What?

Yes, any “IDioT” can tell you that empirical papers are characterised by three critical dimensions: Idea; Data; and Tools. But, you can use these dimensions either well or poorly – how can you plan to achieve the former and avoid the latter? I suggest the answer lies in two questions! First, ask yourself, what is new? Second, ask so what?

2.3.1 Template Item (H): What is New?

Faff (2013, p. 951-2) argues that a meaningful contribution should tell us something new, “... something that we did not already know based on an informed reading of the extant literature. If there is no novelty in the empirical work – for example, a straight replication of an existing paper, then it seems straightforward to conclude that there is no contribution.” Moreover, Faff

(2013) highlights that novice researchers often fall for the “trap” of taking a very literal interpretation of the word “new”.

Consider a hypothetical illustration, in which a series of single country studies are historically common across a given literature. Viewing this situation, novice researchers can naively fall for the trap of excitedly targeting the “missing” country as a new study. That is, while the relevant literature already documents clear and consistent evidence for country “X”, country “Y” and country “Z”, a perceived “gap” is identified because nothing has been published in the author’s chosen setting of country “A”. Yes, in the narrow (literal) sense, generating a test for country A is “new”. However, the novelty is likely to be deemed trivial – the fallacy here is that an informed reader of this literature (with minimal effort) might be able to take a synthesised view of the collective extant research and reasonably infer what will be applicable to country “A” (and, indeed, to a range of other similar countries). Thus, to establish meaningful novelty in such a single country study, the researcher needs to make a compelling case as to why it is “dangerous” to extrapolate the distilled evidence from X, Y and Z to country A (or to other similar jurisdictions).

Faff (2013, pp. 954-5) emphasises a simple device to help assess research novelty – the so-called “Mickey Mouse” diagram (i.e. Venn diagram). The idea is that based on a characterisation of the relevant literature, you define (e.g. three) circles of research attention that meaningfully overlap,²² in ways that have not been completely explored in the extant literature. Figure 6 depicts a generic version of Mickey Mouse, in which two circles are at the top (i.e. “considerations” A and B) representing Mickey’s ears and one circle is at the bottom (i.e. “consideration” C) representing his head. Typically, for projects in which such a

²² There is no fixed requirement for what these circles might represent – they might be any combination of idea(s); data; tools; or relate to market features, regulation, ... anything that makes sense. There is no right or wrong answer here – it is simply a matter of whatever works.

characterisation makes sense, the area of novelty is defined by the triple intersection zone i.e. “X marks the spot”.²³

2.3.2 *Template Item (I): So What?*

Simply being new or novel is not enough! Many “new” things have no special consequence – they are unimportant. Accordingly, Item (I) in the pitch template poses the question, “so what”? Yes, so let’s assume that you have posed a novel research question. But, then the critical follow-up question is – why is it important to know the answer? Is it likely to have “first order” or only “second order” effects? How will major decisions/behaviour/activity and or other relevant phenomenon, be influenced by the outcome of this research? If it is not sufficiently important, then no one will care. To express this concern differently – we should never embark on a research project that is effectively targeting a journal of “irrelevant results”.

Building on the previous discussion, one potentially fruitful way of successfully invoking a “novelty” dimension into a single country study is to identify some unusual (e.g. financial) market behaviour or unusual relevant phenomenon or unique institutional feature or regulatory event(s) that would meaningfully distinguish the chosen new country setting from prior research. But, simply being different to e.g. the US (being the world’s dominant market) does not guarantee a fertile ground for new research. The critical reader (e.g. dissertation examiner or journal referee) will need to be convinced of the importance and relevance of any identified unique features to advancing knowledge in the discipline area. In other words, they will ask the “so what” question.

²³ In a sense, the Venn diagram device helps stimulate our thinking toward “innovation” rather than “invention”. While few would argue that “inventing” something very new and path-breaking is not highly valued, for most researchers major “inventions” are purely aspirational and beyond reach. In contrast, innovating with guidance from our friend Mickey is very broadly attainable – and can still deliver fantastic and highly influential outcomes. In the context of doctoral study, the sentiment I convey here is consistent with Mullins and Kiley (2002) – it’s a PhD, not a Nobel prize!

2.4 Template Item (J): One Contribution

The “holy grail” for any research topic is to make a contribution – this is the **NUMBER ONE** goal. Thus, while few researchers would have trouble agreeing with this statement, no matter how experienced we become at doing research, the challenge of establishing contribution seemingly never becomes any easier. One reason for this is that as we become more experienced, we become more ambitious with our targeted journal – the higher the quality of the journal, the higher is the threshold standard for the required incremental contribution.

Thus, completing the penultimate section of the pitch template is bound to leave us all feeling unsatisfied or even a little disillusioned – but these are not good reasons to leave this item blank or for it to create a “road block”. One comforting thought is that good responses to all of the previous parts of the pitch template, help to define the contribution. In other words, by the time you end up at Item (J), you have thought seriously about all the constituent parts needed for contribution. Now you are faced with the challenge of distilling this into a short statement about the primary force. Often times, it will be inextricably linked to the Idea. But, the Data and the Tools will also play their part. Where is the essence of the novelty? Again, is the Idea new? Is there any novelty in the Data? Is it in the Tools? But, beyond novelty in any of these dimensions, what is the importance? Why should we care? This latter consideration can often invoke thinking around likely economic significance of possible findings. The prospect of finding statistical significance, absent economic significance, is a hollow victory.

Another important angle on the contribution, is to recognise the uncertainty of the research process – as true scientists, we never really know what we will find until the research is actually executed. So, at the time of conceiving the plan, we should try and think about reasonable scenarios – and, if possible, aim to express our contribution message in terms of the (hoped for) “upside” scenario versus the (dreaded) “downside” scenario. While the likely outcome is somewhere in between these two, our decision-making around research

priorities could very well be influenced by a subjective balancing of how *dire* is the perceived “downside” contribution versus how *alluring* is the potential “upside” contribution.

2.5 Template Item (K): Other Considerations?

Item (K) in Faff’s (2015) template is a residual or “catchall” – it presents a time for posing any other relevant final reflections. Various suggestions are offered in the template. Is collaboration needed/desirable? For doctoral students such a question will be a sensitive one – in many cases only limited collaboration will be permitted. Also, the issue of collaboration will give rise to a discussion of roles, expectations and timelines.

What are your target audience or target output or target journal(s)? Are these targets realistic? Are they relevant? Sufficiently ambitious? Or, too ambitious? Linking back to Item (C), “key papers”, I would argue that there is what I would label a “ceiling effect” in play here. That is, in many cases the journal quality in which the key papers are published represents a “ceiling” for the target journal of your planned research. For example, if you choose key papers that are all “A” journals, then it seems illogical to then have an “A*” journal as your target. Moreover, it would be quite likely that your target journal is a journal in which one of your key papers is published. However, in the counter case, while all your key papers might be published in Tier 1 journals, your realistic target might well be a lesser quality outlet.

Also, what about a “risk” assessment? While totally subjective, can you make a judgment on whether the proposed project has “low” vs. “moderate” vs. “high” risk, in certain respects? For example, the risk of “insignificant results”?²⁴ Or that of “competitor” risk (i.e. being beaten to publication by a strong competitor)? Or the risk of “obsolescence”? Or is there a “personal agenda” or “independence” risk – the risk that one becomes an

²⁴ In conversations with Devraj Basu, I was reminded of a strategy that many of us have used to circumvent the “no results” risk, that might also be seen as a “deal-breaker” consideration. Specifically, we can ask for a “proof of concept” analysis in which just one basic table and/or graph of basic results is required – often within a challenging but feasible timeframe (e.g. delivery required within 4 weeks or else the collaboration offer dissolves).

advocate, rather than an objective “scientist”.²⁵ Or is there “political enemy” risk?²⁶ Is there any other major (research) risk exposure? Also, are there any serious challenge(s) that you face in executing this plan? If so, what are they? Are they related to the Idea? The Data? The Tools?

Finally, what about the implied scope of proposed analysis? Is the scope appropriate for the purpose or goal? Should it be narrower thereby allowing a deeper examination versus being broader and more shallow? These considerations of scope are often at issue in “conversations” between Honours/PhD students and their supervisors.²⁷

3. General Advice on Using the Template

3.1 Advice to the “Pitcher” – PhD students and Novice Researchers

To this point, since the current paper has predominantly been written with the pitcher in mind, further detailed commentary under this heading is unnecessary. As already stated above, I plead with the pitcher – don’t be scared! Treat the pitch template as your “friend”, here to help you start a “conversation” with a relevant expert – a supervisor, a mentor, a potential collaborator. Among other things, I argue that this offers a big advantage in inducing better, more targeted feedback on your ideas. But, please take early and serious notice of the potential “deal breakers” (see Sub-section 2.2.4). Be concise and focused – “less is more”, until “more” is requested. Think of it from the pitcher’s point of view – what would you like to know if you were on the “other side”? View the pitch as a starting point only –

²⁵ Putting it another way, if you think that you already “know” the answer before you even start – that your task is simply to find the set of tests that confirm your firmly held beliefs, then you should not embark upon this path at all. Research is not a “religion”. The reason is simple – you have no (actual and/or perceived) objectivity and, thus, your research (though very passionate) will not be “truly” independent or “scientific”. This is what you might call “bad” passion. We should strive to harness “good” passion – the passion *simpatico* with objectivity and true science.

²⁶ I do agree with Eliza Wu who, in a private communication, warned that the focus on “tension” in Item (E) of the template can bring the real risk of naively “picking a fight” against a strong and established researcher or research group in which there is little chance of “success”. Experienced mentors are well placed to assess this risk early on, and particularly whether it might be so significant that it becomes a “deal breaker”.

²⁷ Of course, there is an important distinction between the appropriate scope of an Honours thesis versus a PhD – most simply thought of in terms of the differential timeframe constraint, 9 months versus 36 months. For example, it is not uncommon for an Honours student to be advised that their topic is too broad – “... hey, that’s a PhD – you won’t have time to do justice to that topic ... we need to cut this down.”

don't suffer from the pitfall of "perfectionism" – particularly at such an early stage of the research process, just get your core ideas down. Appreciate the benefit that the template gives in terms of organizing your thoughts in a concise/structured way.

3.2 Advice to the "Pitcher" – Supervisors/Research Mentors

Hey! It's a two-way street! As a "pitcher" you need to know how to help the pitcher get the best from the exercise. Above all be supportive and encouraging. But, please be vigilant and pro-active on the question of potential "deal breakers" (see Sub-section 2.2.4) – this is where your experience and expertise are vitally important! Any *bona fide* effort – that produces a seriously completed pitch, however "flawed" it may be, is a success! In the embryonic stages, these exercises help us more quickly and efficiently move on a positive research trajectory. As such, the pitch template offers big advantages to you, the pitcher. Used wisely, if nothing else, it can help save you a lot of time and avoid much frustration. To assist even further in this regard, in the online material I provide a counterpart pitcher's version of the (pitcher's) cued template in Figure 3.²⁸

As a pitcher, you have a "duty of care" to the potential pitcher.²⁹ As such, you should devise a "pre-pitch" strategy in which you aim to help minimise the chance of an early/any repeated "dead end(s)" for your protégé. To this end, they will want early guidance on what ideas are worth thinking more about and which ones are not? They will want guidance on how to efficiently generate a "pool" of potential research directions. In this regard, there are several strands of advice I can offer.

First, emphasize very early on to the pitcher the need to follow a "smart" (cocktail glass) approach to reading the literature and to quickly run ideas past you. Second, advise

²⁸ A softcopy WORD file of the pitcher's cued version of the template is available from the authors webpage: <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/staff/details/robert-faff> (please scroll down the webpage until you find the download prompt).

²⁹ Not everyone agrees with the implied "risk averse" stance that I take here as a supervisor/mentor. Some argue that such an approach could easily stifle a brilliant student/brilliant topic that could lead to a major seminal work in a given field. There is no right or wrong answer here – it is a judgment call that we all need to make for ourselves, in terms of how we execute our "duty of care".

your pitcher to read works like Stokes (2013) to gain a strategic mindset that can enhance their ability e.g. to scan the literature. Third, recommend that the pitcher seek out recent survey articles written by “gurus” in the field relating to their broad topic areas of interest.³⁰ Finally, particularly with Honours or MSc students in mind, you could apply the “four-eyes” (4 x “i”s) principle, where “i” here prompts layered questioning around the student’s academic discipline-related “interests”.³¹ The first “i” asks the student what Major in their coursework study do they find most *interesting*? Second, within that major what subject is most *interesting*? Third, within that subject what topic is most *interesting*? And fourth, within that topic what subtopic or vexing issue is most *interesting*? This simple, “drill down” approach can help usefully narrow the field, which can further be filtered by questions of their current/potential skillset (e.g. which areas did the student get their best marks) and their “confidence/comfort” (e.g. which area does the student feel most confident about studying in great depth from a research perspective).

A few further words of advice, particularly to novice/junior pitchers. Try and think of it from the pitcher’s point of view – in particular, from a position of: perceived/actual ignorance about the technical aspects of the topic, a fear of being foolish and not knowing what is really important at the beginning. Once a completed pitch is in hand, identify the strengths/weaknesses. Applaud the strengths! Make it clear why such aspects are deemed strengths. Offer guidance on the weaknesses – specific or general. Aim to help develop the pitch to be uniformly strong.

³⁰ An excellent source of such review articles spanning a broad range of discipline areas is *Annual Reviews* [<http://www.annualreviews.org/>], for example, including (a) biomedical/life sciences: biochemistry, biophysics, clinical psychology, genetics, marine science, medicine, physiology, virology; (b) physical sciences: biophysics, computer science, fluid mechanics, physical chemistry; (c) social sciences: anthropology, economics, financial economics, political science, psychology, sociology, to name but a few. As stated on their website, the “... mission of Annual Reviews is to provide systematic, periodic examinations of scholarly advances in a number of fields of science through critical authoritative reviews. The comprehensive critical review not only summarizes a topic but also roots out errors of fact or concept and provokes discussion that will lead to new research activity.”

³¹ I thank my colleague, Barry Oliver, for suggesting (and naming) this simple but effective approach.

4. Exemplar Completed Pitch Templates across a Diverse Range of Discipline Areas

Table 1 summarizes a growing library of completed pitch templates across a broad range of academic disciplines which are all available in online Internet Appendix A.^{32, 33} In Appendix A1, two examples in the corporate finance area are provided. Example 1 is a pitch relating to capital structure and comes with a detailed commentary of how the pitch is constructed. Corporate finance pitch example 2 relates to financial flexibility, credit re-ratings and corporate decisions and is a “reverse engineering” exercise relating to the existing paper by Agha and Faff (2014).

Internet Appendix A2 provides two illustrative examples of completed pitch templates on accounting topics, namely, on: (a) financial reporting and the GFC (EG1);³⁴ and (b) executive remuneration and firm financial performance (EG2). In both cases I have given the pitchers feedback on their efforts – in the former case using Word “balloons”, while in the latter case I have highlighted in yellow the words/phrases that “stuck out” to me when reading the pitch. In either case the goal is to start a “conversation” – for example, in EG2 my opening question to the pitchers would simply be: as a package, do the highlighted words represent the most important messages in your pitch? And, following this a more targeted discussion can home in on individual aspects of the pitch that stand out – but, with an open mind that other issues will naturally arise as a result of the interactive discussion.

In Internet Appendix A3, I present a short “evolutionary” example relating to a CSR-focused pitch. As was the case with the EG1 accounting example above, I present (a) the original version; (b) original plus feedback (via “balloon” e-comments); and (c) the revised pitch taking account of the comments (highlighted yellow sections indicate the main changes). In Internet Appendix A4, I present an illustrative example of completed pitch template in an inter-disciplinary setting, namely, sustainable systems/consumer behavior. In

³² Online Internet Appendix A can be accessed at (please scroll down the webpage until you find the relevant weblink prompt): <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/supplementary-material-pitching-research>

³³ Please refer to general acknowledgments, thanking the various pitchers responsible for creating these examples.

³⁴ In this case, the pitcher has actually written up a short “letters” type paper that gives a brief commentary on the pitch and then offers a few key personal reflections on the pitch exercise itself – see Ratiu (2014 & 2015).

Internet Appendix A5, I present two illustrative pitch examples of qualitative projects. The first pitch (A5.1) ironically proposes analysis of whether and to what extent qualitative projects are suited to the structured template approach. While containing an element of “tongue in cheek”, this example of the template aims to rebut the claim in earlier versions of the current paper that the template is ill-suited to the qualitative research domain. The second example (A5.2) is an “interpretive” qualitative pitch looking at the legitimacy of current corporate tax practices in Australia.

In Internet Appendix A6, I present an illustrative example of completed pitch template in management, proposing to examine how universities engage with controversial industries using a case study approach. In Internet Appendix A7 we have an illustrative example of completed pitch template in chemistry – specifically, Paleobiogeochemistry /Geochemistry looking at the change in temperature of Australia’s oceans using biomarker records. It should be noted that this particular pitch is a “reverse engineered” example based on the pitcher’s completed Honours thesis at the Australian National University in 2011.

In Internet Appendix A8 specific advice is given about using the template in a Mechanical Engineering setting from the perspective of an Honours student in this field (A8.1), in addition to an actual mechanical engineering pitch example (A8.2). Internet Appendix A9 shows an example in the broad area of computer science, focusing on a pitch for a “robotics” topic. Internet Appendix A10 provides an example for mathematics asking do football teams in the Australian National Rugby League play up to their potential.

Finally, Internet Appendices A11-A155 show examples for: physics (A11); healthcare (A12); psychology (A13); strategy (A14); governance (A15); sport (A16); energy policy (A17); climate change (A18); research policy (A19); taxation (A20); banking (A21); behavioural finance (A22); public policy and regulation (A23), education (A24); market microstructure (A25); information systems (A26); immunology (A27); biology (A28); management accounting (A29); multidisciplinary (climate science) (A30); accounting theory (A31); accounting history (A32); archaeology (A33); behavioural economics (A34); humour

(A35); phytology (A36); organic chemistry (A37); public sector accounting (A38); Islamic finance (A39); consumer marketing (A40); tourism (A41); philosophy (A42); research advice (A43); research student creativity (A44); pharmacy (A45); mining engineering (A46); education for sustainability (A47); public health (A48); corporate tourism (A49); sociology (A50).

As further indicative examples, the online library hosts pitch examples on: orthopaedic medicine (A55); financial literacy (A65); aviation (A75); computer games (A84); shareholder activism (A100); consumer research (A103); ecological economics (A119); sustainable tourism (A129); innovation/collaboration (A132); church architecture (A145).

5. Supplementary Material, Support and Initiatives

5.1 Visibility, Impact and Feedback

The original version of the “pitching research[®]” paper was lodged on SSRN on 3 July, 2014. By 22 April, 2017 the first through eleventh versions of the paper (combined) have logged **9,427** downloads. As a result, quite a flow of email traffic has been received regarding the paper and the responses so far have been universally positive and encouraging. Online Internet Appendix C documents a range of anonymous feedback.³⁵

In terms of the more challenging feedback, three types are worthy of specific mention. First, there is the “... thanks, but I/we already to this” response. The strongest example of this was received September 1, 2015:

“... I had a look at the piece. Since I think a frank reply might be of more use to you than a polite one, my impression is that what you describe here is already common practice in a world where we are forced to continuously apply for grants to perform research. Every research proposal that I have seen in the past two decades essentially does already what you describe here. And if it didn't, it would have had no chance of being successful.”

My polite email reply the next day, after careful thought and filtering, acted like a piece of relieving therapy:

³⁵ Online Internet Appendix C can be accessed at (please scroll down the webpage until you find the relevant weblink prompt): <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/supplementary-material-pitching-research>

“... Thank you for your prompt reply and honesty. Perversely I take great heart from your comments - because it is reassuring to know that I have captured the essential elements of successful research. My point is that when you are starting out in research and especially when you do not have any research mentors, or the process that you follow is very "haphazard" you will be lost. You might disagree with me but I believe this describes the majority of people. My goal is to help them get moving in a positive direction more quickly - saving time is important. Regards”

A second type of challenging feedback is that the template and advice is too definitive and might be viewed by some as a heavily “prescriptive” approach – which, if taken to an extreme, stifles creativity and thinking “out of the box”.³⁶ Interestingly, this view to some extent contradicts the first type of criticism above. While it is true that I am naturally a very risk averse person, I am at pains to stress that the advice is meant to be indicative only. Upon reflection, I believe that the overly “prescriptive” feel to the advice is largely a product of my preoccupation to give tangible examples that make the template’s utility as clear as possible for potential users. Of course, everyone is strongly encouraged to adapt the template to best serve their own needs and agenda. The third, and final, type of feedback that is worthy of highlight here is that the original template ignores broader “impact” considerations. Faff and Kastle (2016) focusing on pitching research[®] for engagement and impact is, in part, a response to this concern.

The current version of the paper has taken on board many elements of the above (and other) feedback. Moreover, this feedback has helped to motivate the development of a range of supplementary material, support and initiatives, some of which is captured by **eighteen** companion papers: Faff (2016a); Faff (2016b); Faff (2017); Faff, Alqahtani, et al., (2017); Faff, Godfrey and Teng (2016); Faff, Ali, et al. (2016); Faff, Babakhani, et al, (2017); Faff, Baladi, et al, (2017); Faff and Kastle (2016); Faff, Li, Nguyen and Ye (2016); Faff, Wallin, et al. (2016); Faff (2016c); Faff, Lay and Smith (2017); Faff, Carrick, et al. (2017a); Faff,

³⁶ Thanks for the lively debate Don and Dusan! Given the extensive diversity of views across academics, consensus is impossible – hence, my goal is to provide something “imperfectly” useful, rather than chase unreachable “perfection”.

Carrick, et al. (2017b); Faff, Carrick, et al. (2017c); Nguyen, Faff and Haq (2017); Teng and Faff (2017). A brief summary of these initiatives is provided in the following subsections.

5.2 A Year in Review – 2015

Faff (2016a) reviews experiences and draws insights from a series of workshops, pitch days, competitions and other events based on the “pitching research[®]” template tool. With, in excess of 80, unique events primarily conducted throughout the calendar year 2015, this intense program of activity culminated in the Final of a “pitching” competition at the University of Queensland sponsored by the UQ Association of Postgraduate Students (UQAPS). The UQAPS 2015 event captured the full spectrum of academic discipline areas: from mechanical engineering to ... tourism to ... virology and more. A follow on event, again co-sponsored by UQAPS, is currently in progress – with the final scheduled for November 2016. Other similar major events held in 2015 include: the SIRCA “pitch day”, the CIFR “public policy and regulation” day and the AMIS conference pitching stream.

5.3 Pitching Research[®] as a Research Skills Development Tool

Faff (2016b) maps versions of the pitching research[®] template designed for student tasks/assessment into the research skill development (RSD) framework of Willison and O'Regan (2007). Moreover, using the 7-level RSD7 version, Faff (2016b) explains how meaningfully layered pitching tasks can be designed to give a wide range of students an appropriately calibrated research challenge – from elite year 12 students at high school, all the way through to early-stage PhD students at university. This is built around four key dimensions of the pitching research[®] setting that enables a clear and easily implementable pedagogic strategy. Specifically, the four dimensions relate to whether the pitch/pitch task: (a) is a partial vs. a full exercise; (b) is reverse-engineered on an existing paper vs. a “real” pitch on a yet to be executed study; (c) is totally prescribed by the “pitchee” (educator/supervisor) vs. full choice pitch; (d) is a “third-party” exercise vs. totally “owned” by the pitcher.

5.4 Pitch Template Variations

As argued above, everyone is strongly encouraged to adapt the template to make it fit for purpose – either through a more liberal interpretation of template labels or through changing (a) label(s). Along these lines, there now exist several template variations and three cases are discussed below.³⁷

First, in the case of a third-party reverse-engineered pitch, it makes sense that the two “bookend” elements of the pitching template – namely, Item (A) Working Title and Item (K) Other Considerations, be modified. Specifically, first, (A) should become “**Title**” since it is known and unchangeable by the pitcher. Moreover, where the chosen paper is already published Item (A) should simply become the “**Full Reference**”. Second, (K) is better used as “**Three Key Findings**” – that is, based on the package of analysis presented in the paper, briefly identify its three salient messages.

Second, Faff and Kastle (2016) present and outline a research pitch tool targeting non-academic external stakeholders in which engagement and impact (E&I) is deemed to be an important objective. Using Faff’s (2015) pitching research[®] template as a base (first phase pitch), the E&I (second phase) pitch retains the underlying philosophy of the original academic tool. The main purpose of the original pitch template is “starting a conversation” with an academic expert and to make the initial research proposal as “future proof” as it can be. Faff and Kastle (2016) makes a first stab at extending the pitching concept to the often more challenging (concomitant) goal of orientating one's research toward relevant non-academic stakeholders - i.e. to think about the non-academic engagement and impact of a proposed new research project, while maintaining its goal to achieve quality academic output.

Third, a cued public policy and regulation (PP&R) version of the original template is available online.³⁸ For example, this “PP&R” variation includes a cue at Item (I): “With a

³⁷ Aside from the standard “cued” version designed for the pitcher shown in Figure 3, there is also a cued version of the original template designed for the pitchee (<http://bit.ly/2jDshLI>) and a modified cued version designed for mechanical engineering (<http://bit.ly/2jG84s9>).

³⁸ <http://bit.ly/2ivGq0L>

particular emphasis on the policy/regulation dimension, how will major decisions/behaviour/activity be influenced by the outcome of this research?” And at Item (J) a cue supplementing the standard “What is the primary source of the contribution to the relevant research literature?” with: “What is the core policy/regulatory contribution?”

5.5 Pitching Research[®] as a Learning Tool

There are five good examples of recent papers that illustrate the research learning potential provided by the pitching tool. Faff, Ali, et al., (2016) outlines a “fantasy” research pitch exercise conducted in a PhD course at the University of Queensland. Using Faff’s (2015) pitching research[®] template, students attending the course were asked to engage in a group exercise to pitch a “fantasy” light-hearted research topic. While the final exercise was completed in a 90-minute timeframe (60 minutes of brainstorming, followed by 30 minutes of reporting back to the full group), the cohort had already been exposed to 5 x 90 minute sessions of related material over the weekend PhD module. Three groups of five were formed and they pitched three “fun” (or nonsense) topics: (a) Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Impact on Society; (b) Wipe-a-Baby; (c) Quality of Dairy Products: The Happiness of the Cow Does Matter. In the guise of “Fantasy Pitching II”, Faff, Wallin et al. (2016) extend upon Faff, Ali, et al. (2016), outlining a further fantasy research pitch exercise conducted in a PhD course at the University of Queensland. Four groups were formed and they pitched “pretend” topics relating to: (a) Star Wars; (b) Pokemon Go; (c) R&D; and (d) Uber. Faff, Carrick, et al. (2017b) and Faff, Baladi, et al (2017), follow up with Fantasy Pitching “III” and “IV”.

Ratiu’s (2016, p. 810) pitching research[®] letter “... presents a new angle to Faff’s (2015, 2016) pitch template. To better appreciate the research thrust underlying a scholarly paper, a reverse-engineered pitch can be created. This helps enhance one’s understanding of the finer aspects of an article and it is also an exercise to practice the pitching skills. A step by step guide for reverse-engineering is presented, followed by some tips and things to remember. The conclusion is that the pitch template has a real educational value, by offering

a very structured and concise medium to extract core ideas from any paper.” Salehudin (2017) makes a similar case for reverse engineering applications of the pitching template.

5.6 Pitching Research[®] as a Research Agenda Setting tool

Following on from the previous section and continuing the focus on the reverse engineering applications, Maxwell (2017) and Nguyen (2017) argue different angles on the potential for using the pitching framework to help set a research agenda/find an idea. Maxwell (2017) details his use of the pitching template framework to develop a research agenda for his PhD at the University of Queensland (UQ) Business School. As he states: “The pitching template was used once for the research proposal submitted when applying for the PhD program and twice more during the early months of the program. Use of the pitching template framework appears to have helped progress my thinking about and communication of my research agenda. This may be seen as anecdotal evidence of the pitching template’s benefits for researchers.” Similarly, Nguyen (2017) is representative of a large group of eager young scholars who have a good academic background, full of enthusiasm to do research and a clear area of interest in mind but struggling to find a good research idea to kick off the research journey. Extending on the original purposes of the RE pitch exercise, Nguyen (2017) uses his own experience to design a “pitching research lite” procedure in which novice researchers can use it to increase the likelihood of finding a new research idea.

5.7 Pitching Research[®] as a Mentoring Tool

There are two good examples of recent papers that illustrate the research mentoring potential provided by the pitching tool. Faff, Godfrey and Teng (2016), provides a narrative about a visiting undergraduate Chinese exchange student to the University of Queensland, Jie Teng, seeking opportunities for research projects. Recognizing that the student had only limited exposure to research and an unknown appreciation of what it entails, the mentor devised a program of incremental “discovery” and learning, based on Faff’s (2015) “pitching research[®]” template tool. Under close guidance, Jie was asked to choose a recent academic paper of interest to him and then to reverse engineer a “pitch” for that chosen paper. The

target for this exercise was Acharya and Xu (2013, NBER) (now a forthcoming paper in *Journal of Financial Economics*, Acharya and Xu 2016): a paper examining the topic of “Innovation and Financial Dependence”. The pitching process was completed, in 10 small stages, over a period of about 5 weeks. Ratiu, Faff and Ratiu (2016) presents a similar narrative, but with some more than subtle differences, relating to a staged pitching task focusing on the “freemium” model applied to computer games.

5.8 Pitching Research[®] as a Collaborative Tool

Wallin and Spry (2016) show the application of the pitch template to a marketing research topic. The context for the application of the pitch template here is that the first author is in the process of developing a pipeline of research post PhD. A key component of a sustained academic career is collaboration with other academics, so in this instance the application of the template was used as an exercise to clarify the details and direction of a research study between collaborating authors. The authors argue that “the simple and systematic approach of the pitch makes it a useful tool to stimulate discussion between co-authors across the components of a research project.” Further they report that “... the pitch template was discussed across two meetings; the first discussing the motivation/puzzle, key papers and step three (Idea, Data, Tools) and the second focusing on the step 2 (grappling with what is new? and so what?) and step 1 (Contribution and other considerations). While initially filling in each element of the pitch was relatively quick (a detailed draft could be finalised in one day), the breakdown of whole research process into its’ component steps lead to much discussion, reading, thinking and revision as we (the co-authors) clarified our vision and understanding of the project.” (Wallin and Spry, 2016, p. 435)

5.9 Pitching Research[®] as a Research-led Teaching Tool

Based on Faff’s (2015) template tool, Faff (2016b) explains how meaningfully layered “pitching research[®]” tasks can be designed to accommodate a wide range of student mastery, that enable a clear/easily implementable pedagogic strategy. Faff, Li, Nguyen and Ye (2016) describe a real example of this strategy, piloted for three UQ Winter Scholars sponsored by

the UQ Advantage Office – as part of a program aimed at undergraduate and coursework masters students. Superficially, the goal is a narrowly-focused guide for future UQ Winter and Summer Scholars. However, this paper strives for a much deeper objective: to serve more generally as a highly relevant resource for a vast array of broadly similar scenarios in which instructors and research mentors are looking for practical guidance on how to “ease in” undergraduate students, to the confronting world of scholarly research. Similar examples are detailed in Faff, Carrick, et al. (2017a) and Faff, Carrick, et al. (2017c).

5.10 Learning from “Pitching Research[®]” Competition Winners

The year 2016 has been a BIG! As a companion to Faff (2015) and the current paper, Faff (2016c) reviews experiences and draws insights from a series of workshops, pitch days, competitions, webinars and other events based on the “pitching research[®]” template tool. With close to 80 unique events conducted throughout the calendar year 2016, this intense program of activity culminated in the Final of a “pitching” competition at the University of Queensland sponsored by the UQ Association of Postgraduate Students (UQuAPS). Like its inaugural version the previous year, the UQuAPS 2016 event captured the full spectrum of academic discipline areas: from human movements to ... telehealth to ... architecture and more. Other similar major events held and activity in 2016 include: the SIRCA “pitching symposium”, the FIRN “pitch my research” competition, the ANZAM Doctoral workshop and the AIC2016 pre-conference pitching workshop. Faff (2016c) reviews these events, with a particular focus on the winning pitches and the winning pitchers. Faff, Babakhani, et al (2017) take a closer look at the insights gained from the 2015 and 2016 pitching competitions held at the University of Queensland.

5.11 Using Social Media to Leverage Research Visibility

“... if I create high quality research, readers and other interested researchers will beat a path to my door”. **WRONG**. Such an approach worked well in the 19th century and seemingly for much of the 20th century. However, the way of the 21st century is for smart “consumers” of new information to massively filter and strategically skim – and this puts the onus heavily

back on the “producers” of research to market their “wares” in clever/honest ways that attract attention and gain visibility. Striving to keep up with the latest trends, the PitchDoctor, has embraced this challenge through a series of “pitch of the week” posts on LinkedIn³⁹ – focused on the “pitching research[®]” framework of Faff (2015). Faff, Lay and Smith (2017) review the PoW series, showcasing a dozen of the more prominent LinkedIn posts.

5.12 Increasing the Discoverability of non-English Language Research Papers

Discoverability or visibility is a challenge that faces all researchers worldwide – with an ever increasing supply of good research entering the scholarly marketplace; this challenge is only becoming intensified as time passes. The global language of scholarly research is English and so the obstacle of getting noticed is magnified manyfold when the article is not written in the English language. Indeed, despite rapid advances in technology, the “tyranny of language” creates a segmentation inhibiting scholarly research and innovation generally. Mass translation of non-English language articles is neither feasible nor desirable. Faff, Alqahtani, et al (2017) propose a strategy for remedying this segmentation – such that, the work of non-English language scholars become more discoverable. The core piece of this strategy is a “reverse-engineering” [RE] application of Faff’s (2015, 2017) “pitching research” template. More specifically, they provide translated versions of the template across **TWELVE** different languages: (1) Chinese; (2) Spanish; (3) Vietnamese; (4) Arabic; (5) Polish; (6) Hindi; (7) Tamil; (8) Portuguese; (9) Korean; (10) Greek; (11) Indonesian; (12) French. Further, they showcase illustrative dual language examples of the RE strategy for the Chinese and Vietnamese cases.

5.13 Other “PR” Pedagogic Reverse Engineering Strategies

Teng and Faff (2017) is a companion piece to Faff, Godfrey and Teng (2016) that documents a “snowballing” pedagogic strategy. Specifically, Teng successively chooses one of the key papers in each of three further pitching rounds, thereby producing four linked pitches. In the initial case he pitches a paper on “innovation and financial dependence”. In

³⁹ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/robertfaff>

the second stage he pitches a paper on IPOs and innovation. In the third stage he pitches a paper on ownership and innovation. In the fourth and final stage he pitches a paper on corporate control vs. shareholder activism.

Nguyen, Faff and Haq (2017) outline a “pitching research” “lite” procedure, founded on a basic reverse-engineering strategy. Specifically, with the “PR lite” procedure, they argue that the novice researcher can increase the likelihood of finding a viable and worthwhile new research idea without necessarily “incurring the cost” of completing the full PR template. The goal of Nguyen, Faff and Haq (2017) is to describe this “RE/PR lite” procedure and illustrate it based on one author’s own experience, focusing on the topic of “bank risk exposure” and the interaction with his research mentors (the other two authors).

5.14 Other Support Resources

As briefly described in the appendix at the end of this paper. Specifically, the appendix covers: (AA1): Extended advice to third parties; (AA2): Doctoral symposia and doctoral education; (AA3): Research grants; (AA4): YouTube video resources; (AA5): Pitching Research Letters; (AA6): Pitch ambassadors; (AA7) Dedicated “PitchMyResearch.com” website; (AA8) Research Digest.

6. Conclusion

Following a regularly updated revision process, the current paper is a “dynamic” companion to Faff (2015). Specifically, in the current paper I further explore a methodical approach to pitching a new research proposal, enabled by Faff’s pitching template. This simple template is designed to allow a researcher in virtually any academic discipline to identify the core elements of a viable and worthwhile empirical research proposal. The template is built around the core “gimmick” of a “3-2-1” countdown design. **Three** represents the essential ingredients of Idea, Data and Tools. **Two** represents the two basic questions a researcher has to convincingly answer: “What’s new?” and “So what?” **One** represents the “holy grail” Contribution! I hope that this template will be of great use as a training tool for developing

strong research proposals by the leading researchers of the future. While the current paper is now in its tenth major version, I will continue striving hard to broaden its appeal to all possible areas of academic endeavour.

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Table 1: Summary of Exemplar Completed Pitches using Faff’s (2015) Pitching Template available in the Online Internet Library

Appendix	Topic Area	Pitch Title	Pitcher(s)	Affiliation
A1.1	Corporate Finance (EG1)	“Explaining the Trade-off Theory Puzzle with a Unified Theory of Capital Structure”	Robert Faff	University of Queensland, Australia
A1.2	(EG2)	“An investigation of the link between Credit Re-ratings and Corporate Financial Decisions; the effect of Financial Flexibility” (reverse engineered)	Saphira Rekker	University of Queensland
A2.1	Accounting (EG1)	“Financial Reporting of European Financial Institutions During the GFC” (2 versions: (a) original; (b) original with feedback)	Raluca Ratiu	Babes-Bolyai University, Romania
A2.2	(EG2)	“An Investigation of the Short and Long Run Relations Between Executive Cash Bonus Payments and Firm Financial Performance” (3 versions: (a) original; (b) original with feedback; (c) revised pitch)	Stacey Beaumont & Robyn King	University of Queensland
A3	Corporate Social Responsibility	“CSR strategies in response to competitive pressure” (3 versions: (a) original; (b) original with feedback; (c) revised pitch)	Marion Dupire-Declerck, mentored by Bouchra M’Zali	SKEMA, France
A4	Inter-disciplinary: sustainable systems/consumer behaviour	“Converting planetary boundaries into action: A new approach to meeting global greenhouse gas targets”	Saphira Rekker	University of Queensland
A5.1	Qualitative (EG1)	“Understanding why ECRs might use a Pitching Template”	Ingrid Nielsen	Deakin University, Australia
A5.2	EG2	“Understanding the emergence, adoption and perceived impacts of corporate tax practices in Australia”	Mattia Anesa	University of Queensland
A6	Management	“How do universities engage with controversial industries? A case-study of onshore/unconventional gas research programs funded by industry”	Liz Hardie	University of Queensland
A7	Chemistry	“Molecular biomarker records of Australian sea-surface temperatures over the past five centuries”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A8.1	Mechanical Engineering	General advice about using the template to research students in this field	Suyash Mahto	University of Queensland
A8.2		“Investigation of a theoretical function to describe damping in conveyor belts under non-steady state conditions”	Suyash Mahto	University of Queensland
A9	Computer Science	“Alternative way to play multi-robot games: Implementing genetic algorithms in game theory”	Lexie Yao	University of Queensland
A10	Mathematics	“Measuring efficiency in the National Rugby League”	Daniel Murray	University of Queensland
A11	Physics	“Going Around the Loop: Modelling fermions in a Sagnac Interferometer”	Harry Mulgrew	University of Queensland
A12	Healthcare	“Negotiating role identities of Thai and Japanese healthcare interpreters at Thai private hospitals”	Wanvipha Hongnaphadol	Kasetsart University, Thailand
A13	Psychology	“The Effectiveness of a Six-Month Dance Intervention in Parkinson’s Disease and the Elderly”	Ria Vaportzis	Monash University, Australia
A14	Strategy	Expediting the transition to low-carbon electric power systems in developing economies: A comparative study of China and India using a Sectoral Systems of Innovation (SSI) framework approach	Paul Newbury	University of Queensland
A15	Governance	“Board of Directors Characteristics and Credit Union Financial Performance”	Luisa Unda	LaTrobe University
A16	Sport	“Measuring efficiency in the National Rugby League”	Daniel Murray	University of Queensland
A17	Energy Policy	Expediting the transition to low-carbon electric power systems in developing economies: A comparative study of China and India using a Sectoral Systems of Innovation (SSI) framework approach	Paul Newbury	University of Queensland
A18	Climate Change	“Molecular biomarker records of Australian sea-surface temperatures over the past five centuries”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A19	Research Policy	“How do universities engage with controversial industries? A case-study of onshore/unconventional gas research programs funded by industry”	Liz Hardie	University of Queensland
A20	Taxation	“Understanding the emergence, adoption and perceived impacts of corporate tax practices in Australia”	Mattia Anesa	University of Queensland
A21	Banking	“Bank Risk Exposure, Bank Failure and Off Balance Sheet Activities: an Empirical Analysis for U.S. Commercial Banks” (reverse engineered)	Hengsheng Nie	University of Queensland
A22	Behavioural Finance	“Corporate Social Responsibility and CEO Overconfidence”	Sid Song	University of Queensland
A23	Public Policy & Regulation	“Are member needs being better met under MySuper?”	Geoff Warren	CIFR
A24	Education	“Developing graduate skills and attributes through internationalisation in Australian Universities”	Jac Birt	University of Queensland
A25	Market Microstructure	“Algorithmic trading in the foreign exchange market”	Dave Michayluk	University of Technology, Sydney
A26	Information Systems	“The Impact of Leadership in Agile Information System Development Projects”	Mone Andrias	University of Queensland
A27	Immunology	“Identification of Novel Immune Cells”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A28	Biology	“Genetic sequencing of Eucalypts”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A29	Management Accounting	“The role of heteroglossic dialogue in performance evaluation: a case study of a non-government organization”	David Smith	Monash University
A30	Multidisciplinary (climate science)	“Fingerprinting major dust storms: a multidisciplinary approach”	Marita Smith	Australian National University

Table 1 cont.

Appendix	Topic Area	Pitch Title	Pitcher(s)	Affiliation
A31	Accounting Theory	“A General Theory of Accounting”	Gabriel Donleavy	University of New England
A32	Accounting History	“The gap between just price and fair value”	Gabriel Donleavy	University of New England
A33	Archaeology	“History in their bones”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A34	Behavioural Economics	“The Impact of Home Loan Key Fact Sheets on Borrowers’ Judgments of Loan Suitability”	Ross Skelton	Queensland University of Technology
A35	Humour	“Mickey Mouse & Climate Change”	Robert Faff	University of Queensland
A36	Phytology	“The chemistry of sexual deception in orchids”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A37	Organic Chemistry	“Synthesis of fungal metabolites from novel medicinal mushrooms”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A38	Public Sector Accounting	“Public Sector Financial Accountability: Reforms for Improved Accountability”	Graham Bowrey and Greg Jones	University of Wollongong
A39	Islamic Finance	“Capital, Charter Value, and Risk: Are Islamic and Conventional Banks Different?”	Robert Faff	University of Queensland
A40	Consumer Behaviour	“Controversial Leisure: ‘Legally’ High Youth”	Alison Joubert	University of Queensland
A41	Tourism	“Exploring the role of corporate retreats in restoring directed attention”	Chelsea Gill	University of Queensland
A42	Philosophy	“Ethical theory for business ethics: can it be both unified and practical?”	Simon Burgess	University of New England
A43	Research Advice	“Generating Innovative Research Ideas”	Robert Faff	University of Queensland
A44	Research Student Creativity	“Training creative problem solving skills in higher degree research students”	Jennifer Gippel	Australian National University
A45	Pharmacy	“Can I quit smoking with this medicine?”	Sam Hollingworth	University of Queensland, Australia
A46	Mining Engineering	“Numerical simulation of heat transfer in confined particle suspensions: Thermo-rheological behaviour of hydraulic fracturing fluids”	John McCullough	University of Queensland
A47	Education for Sustainability	“Systems Thinking Approach to Education for Sustainability: A Case Study of University Kebangsaan Malaysia”	Siti Nur Diyana Mahmud	University of Queensland
A48	Public Health	“Psycho-social Early Childhood Development (ECD) and public health: a health systems approach”	Zina Ndugwa	University of Queensland
A49	Corporate Tourism	“Exploring the role of corporate retreats in restoring directed attention”	Chelsea Gill	University of Queensland
A50	Sociology	“From a normative discourse to contextualised practices: A case study of a Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) in Bangladesh”	Jae-Eun Noh	University of Queensland
A51	Virology	“De-mystifying the Dark Art of in vitro culture of bovine respiratory tissues”	Patricia Eats	University of Queensland
A52	Food Science	“Development of a microencapsulation technique for fortification of hydrophobic functional components using complex coacervation in acidic beverages”	Sara Ghorbani Gorji	University of Queensland
A53	First Aid	“Fast versus slow bandaid removal”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A54	Emergency Medicine	“Ultrasonography versus Computed Tomography for suspected Nephrolithiasis”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A55	Orthopaedic Medicine	“Head and neck injury risks: the link between head banging and heavy metal”	Marita Smith	Australian National University
A56	Stock Liquidity	“Corporate Governance and Stock Liquidity in Australia: A Pitch”	Searat Ali	Griffith University
A57	Non-bank Financial Institutions	“Identifying Jumps in the Stock Prices of Banks and Non-bank Financial Corporations in India – A Pitch”	Mohammad Abu Sayeed	University of Tasmania
A58	Agile Software Development	“The Impact of Leadership in Agile Information System Development Projects: A Pitch”	Mone Andrias	University of Queensland
A59	Bank Subsidy	“Quantifying the “Too-Big-to-Fail” Subsidy Value for Large Australian Banks: A Pitch”	Yilian Guo	Macquarie University
A60	Hedge Funds	“Capacity Constraints, Fund Flows and Hedge Fund Alpha: Asia Pacific Evidence – A Pitch”	Mui Kuen Yuen	Massey University

Table 1 cont.

Appendix	Topic Area	Pitch Title	Pitcher(s)	Affiliation
A61	Finance	“Equity Ownership Choices in Acquisitions: On what matters: A Pitch”	Man Dang	Latrobe University
A62	Price Discovery	“The When and Where of Price Formation. Intraday Dynamics in Price Discovery: A Pitch”	Martin Hauptfleisch	University of Technology Sydney
A63	Board Governance	“Does board governance matter in member-owned financial institutions?: A Pitch”	Luisa Unda	Latrobe University
A64	Continuous Disclosure Regulation	“Keeping the market informed - How effective is the market operator's monitoring of listed firms' disclosure: A Pitch”	Ellie Chapple, Martin Lubberink & Thu Phuong Truong	Queensland University of Technology & Victoria University of Wellington (NZ)
A65	Financial Literacy	“Forex Retail Online Trading: Why does this business continue to grow?: A Pitch”	Athanasios Fassas	University of Sheffield Thessaloniki, Greece
A66	Superannuation	“Information Costs and Superannuation Choices in Australia: A Pitch”	Natalie Peng	University of Queensland
A67	Various	UQAPS 2015 Pitching Research Competition	Various pitchers	University of Queensland
A68	Health and Medical	Gold Coast Health and Medical Research – pre conference booklet		
A69	Informed Trading	“Informed Trading around Accelerated Share Repurchase: A Pitch”	Ladshiya Atisoothanan	Latrobe University
A70	Imputation Tax Credits	“An effect of ownership structure on the capitalization of imputation tax credits into equity returns: A Pitch”	Nguyen Ngoc Anh Le	Latrobe University
A71	Executive Overconfidence	“CEO Overconfidence and Corporate Debt Maturity”	Robert Faff	University of Queensland
A72	Security Class Actions	“Market impact and the role of litigation funders in securities class action: A Pitch”	Chapple, Clout & Tan	QUT & UNSW
A73	Real Estate	“Real Estate Volatility Index and Its Economic Significance”	Lin Mi	University of Queensland
A74	Marketing	“Latent variable modelling of behavioural decision theory”	Thomas Magor	University of Queensland
A75	Aviation	“Aviation-exposed risk for tourism destinations: A method for reducing information asymmetry in destination-airline relationships”	David Tan, Tay Koo, and David Duval	University of NSW
A76	Sustainability Practice	“Understanding the Practise of Sustainability in Organisations”	Liz Nicholls	University of Queensland
A77	Board Diversity	“An investigation of the effect of board diversity on capital expenditure decision performance”	Martin Livingstone	University of Queensland
A78	Research Funding	“Streamlined Research Funding using Short Proposals and Accelerated Peer Review”	Robert Faff	University of Queensland
A79	Insider Trading	“Do insider trading policies restrain insiders’ opportunistic trading?”	Marvin Wee	University of WA
A80	Virtual Learning	“Nature of Formative Assessment in Virtual Learning Environments”	Chinthake Wijesooriya	University of Queensland
A81	Integrated Reporting	“A lot doesn't mean good, but good means a lot. The Integrated Reporting case.”	Astrid Zakrzewska	Warsaw School of Economics
A82	Property Investment	“Who are residential property investors in Australia?”	Maria Belen Yanotti	University of Tasmania
A83	Risk Management	“Risk management and firm performance: evidence from Australia”	Giulia Leoni, Cristina Florio	RMIT University, Italy
A84	Computer Games	“Creating Value Through the Freemium Business Model: A Consumer Perspective” (reverse engineered)	Bogdan Ratiu	Bucharest, Romania
A85	Innovation/Finance	“Innovation and financial dependence” (reverse engineered)	Jie Teng (UQ Visiting Scholar)	Fudan University, China
A86	Political Finance	“Political contributions, political connections and firm performance in Australia”	Long Zhang	Macquarie University
A87	Foreign Portfolio Investment	“Gravity and Culture in Foreign Portfolio Investment” (reverse engineered)	Katsiaryna Zhaunerchyk	University of Queensland
A88	Default Risk	“Women in the boardroom and their impact on default risk”	Searat Ali	Griffith University
A89	CEO Compensation	“CEO Compensation and Firm's Cash Holding”	Muhammad Atif	Griffith University
A90	Regulation	“Market impact and the role of litigation funders in securities class actions”	Victoria Clout	University of NSW
A91	Credit Ratings	“Credit rating standards around the world”	Anamaria Cociorva	University of Lund, Sweden
A92	Reverse Engineering Letter	“A Reversed Engineered Pitch Based on Rietveld (2016), “Creating Value Through the Freemium Business Model: A Consumer Perspective”” [Pitching Research Letter]	Bogdan Ratiu	Bucharest, Romania
A93	IPOs	“Does going public affect innovation?”	Jie Teng (UQ Visiting Scholar)	Fudan University, China
A94	Executive Compensation and Debt	“Executive Compensation and Debt”	Nargess Mottaghi Golshan	Curtin University
A95	Bank Risk	“Measuring bank risk by z-score”	Xiping Li	Massey University
A96	Governance and Leverage	“Corporate governance, the global financial crisis, and leverage in Australia”	Nadarajah Sivathaasan	Griffith University
A97	Spillovers	“The dynamics of contemporaneous spillover effects among European financial markets: A Pitch”	Marinela Finta	AUT
A98	Banking	Haq, M., Faff, R., Seth, R. & Mohanty, S. 2014. Disciplinary tools and bank risk exposure. Pacific-Basin Finance Journal, 26, 37-64. (reverse engineered)	Bao Nguyen (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A99	Leadership	Steffens, N. K., et al.. (2014). Leadership as social identity management: Introducing the Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI) to assess and validate a four-dimensional model. The Leadership Quarterly, 25, 1001-1024. (reverse engineered)	Matt Brenner	University of Queensland
A100	Shareholder Activism	“Shareholder proposal activism and Corporate Social Responsibility”	Yi Yang	VUW, New Zealand

Table 1 cont.

Appendix	Topic Area	Pitch Title	Pitcher(s)	Affiliation
A101	Value-based Management	“Translating promise into reality – Performance implications and antecedents of CFO commitment to Value-based Management (VBM)”	Sebastian Firk	Georg-August-University Göttingen
A102	Weather & Finance	McTier, B. C., Tse, Y., & Wald, J. K. (2013). Do Stock Markets Catch the Flu?. <i>Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis</i> , 48(03), 979-1000. (reverse engineered)	Ihtisham Abdul Malik	University of Queensland
A103	Consumer Research	Dolbec, P.-Y. & Fischer, E. (2015). Refashioning a field? Connected consumers and institutional dynamics in markets. <i>Journal of Consumer Research</i> . 41 (6), 1447-1468. (reverse engineered)	Alison Joubert	University of Queensland
A104	Refinancing Risk	Harford, J., Klasa, S., Maxwell, W. F., 2014. Refinancing risk and cash holdings. <i>Journal of Finance</i> , 69(3), 975-1012. [reverse engineered]	Hasibul Chowdhury	University of Queensland
A105	Career Adaptability	Career Adapt-Abilities Scale: Construction, reliability and measurement equivalence across 13 countries. Savickas, M., & Porfeli, E. (2012). <i>Journal of Vocational Behavior</i> , 80, 661-673. (reverse engineered)	Kirsty Mitchell	Bond University
A106	Environmental Activism	Dono, J., Webb, J., & Richardson, B. (2010). The relationship between environmental activism, pro-environmental behaviour and social identity. <i>Journal of Environmental Psychology</i> , 30(2), 178–186. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.11.006 (Reverse Engineered)	Beile Zhang	University of Queensland
A107	Impact Investing	Höchstädter, A. K & Scheck, B 2015, 'What's in a Name: An Analysis of Impact Investing Understandings by Academics and Practitioners', <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , vol. 132, iss. 2, pp. 449 - 475. (Reverse Engineered Paper)	Tim Pullen	University of Queensland
A108	Import Demand	Harb, N. (2005). Import demand in heterogeneous panel setting. <i>Applied Economics</i> , 37(20), 2407-2415. (reverse engineered)	Leelyn Cruddas	University of Queensland
A109	Glocalisation	Gond, J.-P., & Boxenbaum, E. (2013). The glocalization of responsible investment: Contextualization work in France and Quebec. <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> , 115(4), 707-721. (Reverse Engineered)	Kun Zhang	University of Queensland
A110	CEO Incentives	“Can the design of equity-based compensation limit investment-related agency problems?”	Xin (Tracy) Qu	Griffith University
A111	Corporate Governance	“The role of institutional investors in moderating CEO Power and their compensation”	Puspa Muniandy	Deakin University
A112	Volatility Linkages	Mi, L., Benson, K. and Faff, R. (2016b, Working Paper). Information and Volatility Linkages between the Real Estate Market and Major Financial Markets: The Broad Impact of REVIX. (reverse engineered)	Qiaozhi Ye (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A113	Interest Rate Risk	Di Iorio, A., Faff, R. and Sander, H. (2013) “An Investigation of the Interest Rate Risk and Exchange Rate Risk of the European Financial Sector: Euro Zone versus Non-Euro Zone countries”, <i>Journal of Accounting and Management Information Systems</i> , Vol. 12: 319-344. (reverse engineered)	Bao Nguyen (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A114	Auditing	“Does Auditing Affect Owner-managers’ Decision-making? - Evidence from Different Company Life-cycles”	Amirul Nasir	Deakin University
A115	Innovation/Ownership	Aghion, P., Van Reenen, J., & Zingales, L. (2013). Innovation and Institutional Ownership. <i>American Economic Review</i> , 103(1), 277-304.	Jie Teng (UQ Visiting Scholar)	Fudan University, China
A116	Corporate Control	Cremers, K. J. M., & Nair, V. B. (2005). Governance Mechanism and Equity Prices. <i>Journal of Finance</i> , 60(6), 2859-2894.	Jie Teng (UQ Visiting Scholar)	Fudan University, China
A117	Goodwill	An investigation of the relationship between insider trading and goodwill impairment	Zhengling Xiong (Ling)	University of Queensland
A118	Financial Herding	Lugo, S., Croce, A. and Faff, R., “Herding Behavior and Rating Convergence among Credit Rating Agencies: Evidence from the Subprime Crisis”, <i>Review of Finance</i> , Vol. 19, No. 4, 2015, pp. 1703-1731. (reverse engineered)	Ya Li (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A119	Ecological Economics	Tipper, R. (1997), Scolel Té: International pilot project for carbon sequestration and community forestry in Chiapas, Mexico https://web.archive.org/web/19990822211450/http://www.ed.ac.uk/~ebfr11/%20 [Reverse Engineered]	Manuel Siegrist	Bond University
A120	Sustainability Investing	Lee, D., Faff, R. and S. Rekker, "Do High and Low-ranked Sustainability Stocks Perform Differently?", <i>International Journal of Accounting and Information Management</i> , Vol. 21, No. 2, 2013, pp. 116-132. (reverse engineered)	Qiaozhi Ye (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A121	Gender/Insider Trading	Zhong, T., Faff, R., Hodgson, A. and Yao, L., “The Role of Board Gender on the Profitability of Insider Trading”, <i>International Journal of Accounting and Information Management</i> , Vol. 22, No. 3, 2014, pp. 180-193. (reverse engineered)	Ya Li (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A122	Agricultural Economics	“Primary producer decision making regarding the application of controls for feral pigs (sus scrofa)”	Ed Lefley	University of New England
A123	Insider Selling	Dechow, P. M., Lawrence, A., & Ryans, J. P. (2015). SEC comment letters and insider sales. <i>The Accounting Review</i> , 91(2), 401-439. [reverse engineered]	Bao Nguyen (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland

Appendix	Topic Area	Pitch Title	Pitcher(s)	Affiliation
A124	Financial Risk Tolerance	Gerrans, P., Faff, R. and Hartnett, N., "Individual Financial Risk Tolerance and the Global Financial Crisis", <i>Accounting & Finance</i> , Vol. 55, No. 1, 2015, pp. 165-185. [reverse engineered]	Ya Li (UQ Winter Scholar)	University of Queensland
A125	Governance/Default Risk	"Does Corporate Governance Quality affect default risk? The Role of Growth Opportunities and Stock Liquidity"	Searat Ali	Griffith University
A126	Auditor-provided Tax Services	Clive S. Lennox (2016) Did the PCAOB's Restrictions on Auditors' Tax Services Improve Audit Quality?. <i>The Accounting Review</i> : September 2016, Vol. 91, No. 5, pp. 1493-1512. [reverse engineered]	Eunice Khoo	University of NSW
A127	Accounting Disclosure	Hogan, B. and Jonas, G., (2016), "The Association between Executive Pay Structure and the Transparency of Restatement Disclosures", <i>Accounting Horizons</i> 30(3), 307-323. [reverse engineered]	Stacey Beaumont	University of Queensland
A128	Digital Representations	"Improving Situation Awareness with Digital Representations"	Mark Bremhorst	University of Queensland
A129	Sustainable Tourism	"Usefulness of psychophysiological measures for sustainable tourism"	Nazila Babakhani	University of Queensland
A130	Tax Minimisation	"Field-level legitimization of corporate tax minimization"	Mattia Anesa	University of Queensland
A131	Leadership Contagion	"Is My Leader Contagious? The Role of Emotional Contagion and Implicit Leadership Theory in Employees' Perception of Abusive Supervision"	Hieu Nguyen	University of Queensland
A132	Innovation/Collaboration	"Exploring Inter-organisational Collaboration Practices for Open Innovation"	Janine Lay	University of Queensland
A133	University Entrepreneurs	"The competing logics of university entrepreneurship collaborators in social sciences"	Dinah Joesoef	University of Queensland
A134	Strategic Decision Making	"Leadership Practices in Strategic Decision Making"	Richard O'Quinn	University of Queensland
A135	Strategic Decision Making (2)	"Dominant stories and strategic decision-making in complex, dynamic and ambiguous business environments."	Bruce Mortimer	University of Queensland
A136	Leadership (2)	"Investigating chef-leader behaviour impacts on subordinate work team identification"	Matt Brenner	University of Queensland
A137	SMEs	"Developing capabilities for innovation in small and medium enterprises"	Tam Thanh Nguyen	University of Queensland
A138	Leadership Learning	"Cricket balls, rolling pins and gourds: Artefacts and stories of leadership significance"	Emma Watton	Lancaster University
A139	Organisational Portfolio	"Diversification or Desynchronicity: an Organisational Portfolio Perspective to Risk Reduction"	Xuefeng Shao	University of NSW
A140	Organisational Psychology	"Responding to jerks at work: When and why employees prefer to reintegrate or punish workplace offenders"	Mylyn C. Dat	University of Queensland
A141	Human Movement	"Training to enhance neuromuscular control of the ankle in cerebral palsy"	Shari O'Brien	University of Queensland
A142	Protein Engineering	"Leveraging uncertainty in ancestral sequence reconstruction using partial order graphs"	Gabe Foley	University of Queensland
A143	Telehealth	"Improving Telehealth value propositions for sustainability: development of a decision tool to aid health services and consumers"	Kathy Dallest	University of Queensland
A144	Mobile Learning	"Mobile learning and professional development pronunciation training for in-service teachers of English at Vietnamese provincial universities: A design-based research study"	Tran Le Nghi	University of Queensland
A145	Church Architecture	"Communities of Faith: Modern church architecture in Queensland 1950-1980"	Lisa Daunt	University of Queensland
A146	Gender & Risk Tolerance	"Women and Finance in contemporary world : Case of Select Indian Cities"	Kanchan Sehrawat	University of Delhi
A147	Research Agenda	"Developing a Research Agenda through Pitching"	Victor Maxwell	University of Queensland
A148	Reverse-engineering Pitching	"Reverse Engineer Your Literature: Applying the Pitch Template to Help Understand Academic Literature"	Imam Salehudin	University of Queensland
A149	Earnings>Returns Relation	"Isshaq, Z., & Faff, R. (2016). Stock Liquidity Risk and The Cross-Sectional Earnings>Returns Relation. <i>Journal of Business Finance & Accounting</i> , Vol. 43, No. 9, pp. 1121-1141." [reverse engineered]	Bao Nguyen (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland
A150	Brand Marketing	Pappu, R., Qvester, P. G. (2016). How does brand innovativeness affect brand loyalty? <i>European Journal of Marketing</i> , 50(1), 2 - 28. [reverse engineered]	Marisol Escobar (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland
A151	Bank Risk Exposure	"Basel II, competition and bank risk exposure: evidence from Asia- Pacific"	Bao Nguyen (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland
A152	Organisational Adaptation	Bremer, J. and Linnenluecke, M. K. (2017) Determinants of the perceived importance of organisational adaptation to climate change in the Australian energy industry. <i>Australian Journal of Management</i> , forthcoming. [reverse engineered]	Matthew Khong (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland
A153	Momentum Trading	Schneider, Paul and Gaunt, Clive (2012) Price and earnings momentum in Australian stock returns. <i>Accounting and Finance</i> , 52 2: 495-517. [reverse engineered]	William Tunny (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland
A154	Capital Budgeting	Turner, M. J., & Guilding, C. (2012). Factors affecting biasing of capital budgeting cash flow forecasts: Evidence from the hotel industry. <i>Accounting and Business Research</i> , 42(5), 519-545. [reverse engineered]	Angel Chen (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland
A155	Diversification	Bowman, Robert G., Chan, Kam Fong and Comer, Matthew R. (2010) Diversification, rationality and the Asian economic crisis. <i>Pacific Basin Finance Journal</i> , 18 1: 1-23. [reverse engineered]	Robin Carrick (UQ Summer Scholar)	University of Queensland

Note: all exemplar templates listed in this table are available from the online Internet appendix at: <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/supplementary-material-pitching-research>

Figure 1: Faff (2015) Pitching Template

Pitcher's Name		FoR category		Date Completed	
(A) Working Title					
(B) Basic Research Question					
(C) Key paper(s)					
(D) Motivation/Puzzle					
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “IDioTs” guide				
(E) Idea?					
(F) Data?					
(G) Tools?					
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?					
(I) So What?					
ONE	One bottom line				
(J) Contribution?					
(K) Other Considerations					

Source: Faff (2015).

Figure 2: Pitching the “Pitch Research” Project

Pitcher's Name	Robert Faff	FoR category	Higher Education	Date Completed	18/12/14
(A) Working Title	“Pitching Research”				
(B) Basic Research Question	Create a tool/mindset that captures the essential information needed to give a sound basis for starting a new research project				
(C) Key paper(s)	Stokes, D., (2013), “Generating Innovative Research Ideas”, Journal of Accounting and Management Information Systems 12, 145-155.				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	The hardest thing about doing research is starting it. Finishing the research is also difficult, but unless you begin, finishing is irrelevant. Novice researchers rarely know where to start – they often suffer from being overwhelmed. Novice researchers never know what are the essential items of information that would be convincing to their potential research mentor (or supervisor). Everyone is busy – especially supervisors and research mentors. Creating a more effective means to “pitch” a research topic would be beneficial for all concerned.				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “ IDioTs ” guide				
(E) Idea?	Its all about the “pitch”. The relationship between the two parties to the “pitch” is central and critical – hence, I purposefully draw attention to this linkage by choosing the paired terms “pitcher”/“pitchee”. Then, the core idea here is developing a pitch “template” – a succinctly formatted device that is logically designed, builds in its flow and allows a clear and coherent message to be conveyed between the “pitcher” and the “pitchee”				
(F) Data?	Normally in research we expect to see “data”. The nature of data in this project is very different. In a sense the data are the worked examples of the template showing novice researchers in a very real and practical way “proof of concept” – how it can work in their field of interest.				
(G) Tools?	The core tool here is the “naked” pitch template itself. This is supplemented by: Short term: • advice on use; • a version of the template with “cues” Long term: • evolving library of examples; • expanding set of Internet resources including a Youtube video; appendices; PowerPoint slides and Prezi presentation template; • technology enhanced delivery of template technology via web-based application.				
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?	Novelty can be thought of in a few ways. First, focusing attention on the common challenge faced by novice researchers: to initiate a “conversation” [i.e. meaningfully convey essential information] with a mentor in a simple and clear way regarding a new research idea. Second, the novelty is around the simple template device – not new in its constituent parts, but new in its overall design by bringing together cohesively, essential ingredients that create a simple “synergistic” package. The template “tool” is a big driver, but this is inextricably linked to the “idea” as well. The worked examples, as “data”, are also very important for inducing wide takeup of the concept.				
(I) So What?	My pitching template research is important because it will lead to major efficiencies in the research process – efficiencies that can be characterised by substantial savings in time at the beginning of the research journey – for BOTH novice and seasoned researchers (mentors). This saving in time will have positive psychological/motivational effects that help magnify the benefits going forward. These benefits will manifest in: higher quality research outcomes; more timely PhD/paper completions and help create good long-term research habits that will give a “sustainability” dimension.				
ONE	One bottom line				
(J) Contribution?	FREE provision of a simple tool and deep support ... across the full spectrum of academic research ... with many potential applications ... finance, accounting, management, CSR, chemistry, physics, healthcare, psychology ... short-term and long-term benefits to all researchers. Extensive impact on research that is NOT discipline constrained				
(K) Other Considerations	No direct Collaboration – but extensive support “collaboration” critical eg provision of examples to populate an expanding library; workshops/seminars/pitch day events Target Journal: ultimately - highest profile/quality education-type journal, relevant to higher education/research. “Risk” assessment: (1) “competitor” risk - low; (2) risk of “obsolescence” – low, involves an issue of enduring concern relevant to ALL research fields; (3) “no result” risk – low. Other challenge(s)? getting people to “listen” and “invest” a little time reading what is being offered – the “salesman” dilemma. Is the scope appropriate? As potential examples expand, exploit the online angle. Perfect template is unattainable – convince audience of core benefit, encourage adaptation to personal preference. Need to confront various negative “syndromes”: (a) “in house” templates/“I already do this!”; (b) Too good to be true; (c) Too simple to be useful; (d) Nothing new, so little value.				

Source: Faff (2015).

Figure 3: Faff (2015) Pitching Template with Cues for the Pitcher

Pitcher's Name	Your name here ⁴⁰	FoR category	Field of research?	Date Completed	Insert date here
(A) Working Title	Succinct/informative title here				
(B) Basic Research Question	IN one sentence, define the key features of the research question.				
(C) Key paper(s)	Identify the key paper(s) which most critically underpin the topic (just standard reference details). Ideally one paper, but at most 3 papers. Ideally, by “gurus” in the field, either recently published in Tier 1 journal(s) or recent working paper e.g. on SSRN.				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	IN one short paragraph (say a max of 100 words) capture the core motivation – which may include identifying a “puzzle” that you hope to resolve.				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “IDioTs” guide				
(E) Idea?	Identify the “core” idea that drives the intellectual content of this research topic. If possible, articulate the central hypothesis(es). Identify the key dependent (“explained”) variable and the key test/independent (“explanatory”) variable(s). Is there any serious threat from endogeneity here? If so, what is the identification strategy? EG: is there a natural experiment or exogenous shock that can be exploited? Is there any theoretical “tension” that can be exploited?				
(F) Data?	(1) What data do you propose to use? e.g. country/setting; Why? Unit of analysis? Individuals, firms, portfolios, industries, countries ...? sample period; sampling interval? Daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual, ... Type of data: firm specific vs. industry vs. macro vs. ...? (2) What sample size do you expect? Cross-sectionally? In Time-series/longitudinal? (3) Is it a panel dataset? (4) Data Sources? Are the data commercially available? Any hand-collecting required? Are the data to be created based on your own survey instrument? Or by interviews? Timeframe? Research assistance needed? Funding/grants? Are they novel new data? (5) Will there be any problem with missing data/observations? Database merge issues? Data manipulation/“cleansing” issues? (6) Will your “test” variables exhibit adequate (“meaningful”) variation to give good power? Quality/reliability of data? (7) Other data obstacles? E.g. external validity? construct validity?				
(G) Tools?	Basic empirical framework and research design? Is it a regression model approach? Survey instrument issues/design? Interview design? Econometric software needed/appropriate for job? Accessible through normal channels? Knowledge of implementation of appropriate or best statistical/econometric tests? Compatibility of data with planned empirical framework? Is statistical validity an issue?				
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?	Is the novelty in the idea/data/tools? Which is the “driver”, and are the “passengers” likely to pull their weight? Is this “Mickey Mouse” [i.e. can you draw a simple Venn diagram to depict the novelty in your proposal?]				
(I) So What?	Why is it important to know the answer? How will major decisions/behaviour/activity etc be influenced by the outcome of this research?				
ONE	One bottom line				
(J) Contribution?	What is the primary source of the contribution to the relevant research literature?				
(K) Other Considerations	Is Collaboration needed/desirable? – idea/data/tools? (either internal or external to your institution) Target Journal(s)? Realistic? Sufficiently ambitious? “Risk” assessment [“low” vs. “moderate” vs. “high”: “no result” risk; “competitor” risk (ie being beaten by a competitor); risk of “obsolescence”; other risks? Are there any serious challenge(s) that you face in executing this plan? What are they? Are they related to the Idea? The Data? The Tools? Are there ethical considerations? Ethics clearance? Is the scope appropriate? Not too narrow, not too broad.				

Source: Faff (2015).

⁴⁰ The guidelines in red should be deleted and replaced by the best available “answers” in relation to the proposed research topic, obeying an overall 2-page (1,000 word) limit.

Figure 4: Indicative Pitch Item Completion “Clock” from PitchMyResearch.com Web Portal

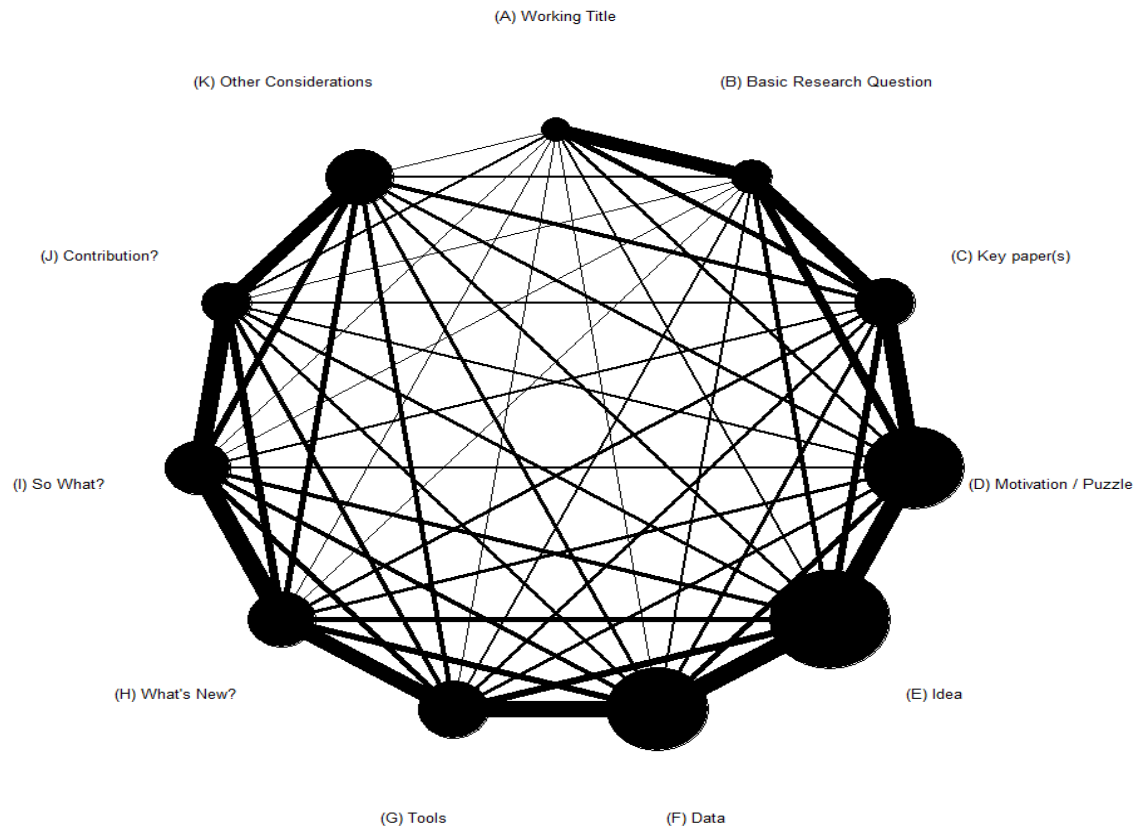
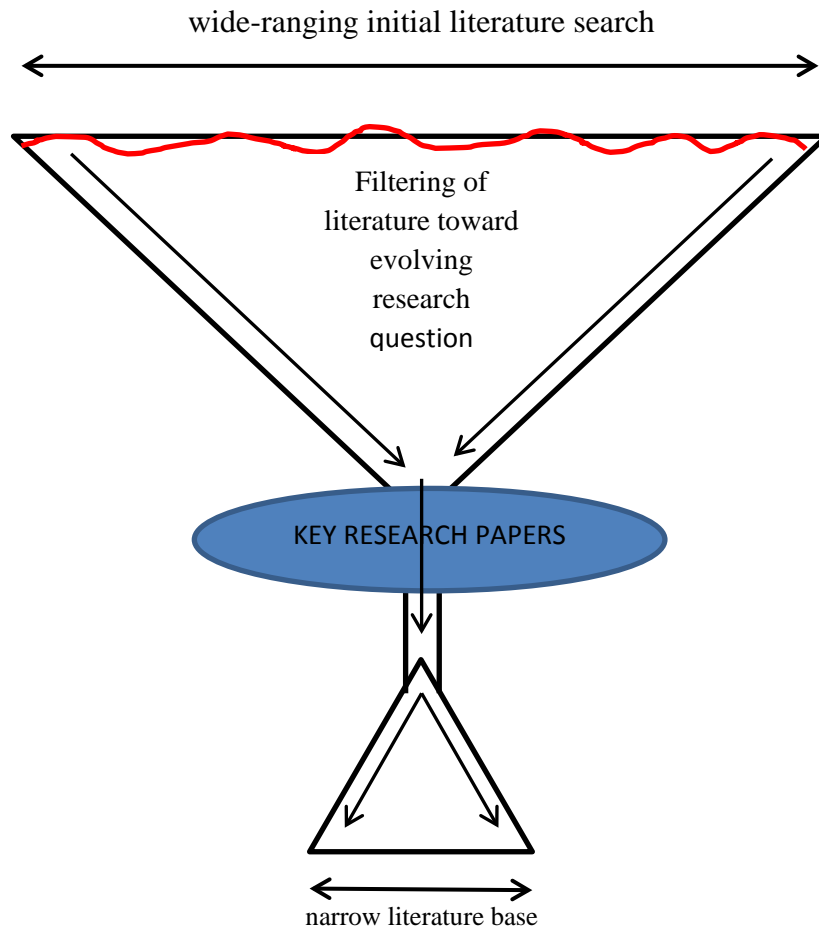
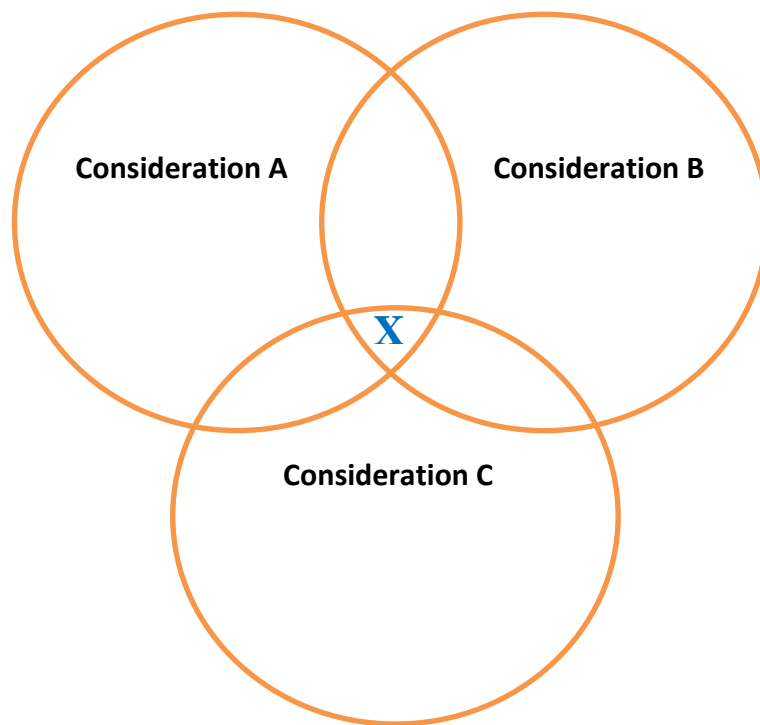


Figure 5: Faff's (2015) Cocktail Glass Approach to Reading/Filtering the Literature

Source: Faff (2015).

Figure 6: A Generic Characterisation of how Mickey Mouse might help to identify Novelty in Research



Appendix: Supplementary Material, Support and Initiatives

A1. Extended Advice to Third Parties

Aside from the core stakeholder – the “pitcher” (Honours student, PhD student, novice researcher) – followed closely by the “pitchee” (supervisor, research mentor or potential collaborator), there are several third-party stakeholders whom might benefit from the current paper and its associated template.⁴¹ I have several main categories in mind: the research methods “instructor”; the postgraduate coordinator and the doctoral symposium organizer. I offer a range of general advice for each category in online Internet Appendix D.⁴²

A2. Doctoral Symposia and Doctoral Education

There have been several groups of PhD students exposed to the pitching concept at doctoral/ECR symposia around the world. This all began with the paper development workshop sponsored by IAEER/ACCA in June 2013, held at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. The International Accounting and Finance Doctoral Symposium (IAFDS) has also hosted pitching themes in 2013 (University of Bologna, Italy); 2014 (Trondheim University, Norway); 2015 (University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) and 2016 (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow). In this most recent IAFDS, a new theme was explored: “pitching research[®] for engagement and impact” (Faff and Kastle, 2016). A similar session was run at the Doctoral Symposium linked to the Scottish BAFA in August 2016. The 2016 ANZAM Doctoral Workshop had a vibrant set of pitch submissions spanning the management discipline.⁴³

In June 2015, the Comparative International Governmental Accounting Research (CIGAR) group held a PhD Seminar in Malta at which students received a talk on “pitching” and were encouraged to apply it to their research.⁴⁴ At the University of Queensland Business School in 2015 and 2016, in excess of thirty PhD/Honours students attending the local annual

⁴¹ To assist third-party users, a set of PowerPoint slides is available at (please scroll down the webpage until you find the relevant weblink prompt): <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/staff/robert-faff>

⁴² Online Internet Appendix D can be accessed at (please scroll down the webpage until you find the relevant weblink prompt): <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/supplementary-material-pitching-research>

⁴³ <http://www.anzam.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/2016-ANZAM-Doctoral-Workshop-Program.pdf>

⁴⁴ This session was led by Dorothea Greiling.

Research Colloquium, submitted pitches, collated into a “Pitch Booklet” circulated to all participants. PhD students at the AFAANZ Doctoral Symposium were exposed to the pitching concept in 2014 (Auckland, New Zealand); 2015 (Hobart, Australia) and 2016 (Gold Coast, Australia).

In 2015, AFAANZ created a Doctoral Education Network (AFDEN) to encourage and help enable the broad offering of a rich suite of doctoral-level subjects suitable for accounting and finance students in their first year of study, leading up to PhD Confirmation.⁴⁵ As part of AFDEN, a course titled “The Research Process” (offered twice yearly) has a core element on “pitching research[®]”.

A3. Research Grants

AFAANZ have an annual grants program designed to provide “seed” funding for small research projects, particularly focused on early career researchers. Since its inception over 10 years ago, this grant scheme has disbursed a total approaching \$2 million in competitive funding to worthy novice researchers. In all years prior to the 2015 funding round, a very traditional approach has been used for such grant applications. Persuaded by the argument that applying for research funding is a classic case of the challenges faced by novices starting research, AFAANZ adopted the pitch template as a core part of its required grant application. From 2016, the submission process is totally online – hosted by PitchMyResearch.com^{46, 47}

A4. YouTube Video Resources⁴⁸

Several of the “pitching” sessions have been recorded and freely available for anyone to view/use. One of the earliest workshops presented at Monash University on 14 August, 2014

⁴⁵ <http://www.afaanz.org/doctoral-programs#AFAANZDOCTORALEducationNetwork>

⁴⁶ In each year around 100 applications are received. For a full list of the successful recipients of these grants see http://www.afaanz.org/images/stories/pdfs/general_pdf/2015_AFAANZ_Research_Grant_Recipients.pdf

⁴⁷ An example of an actual successful AFAANZ grant illustrating the use of the pitch template framework is available from the authors webpage: <http://www.business.uq.edu.au/staff/details/robert-faff> (please scroll down the webpage until you find the download prompt).

⁴⁸ For a full set of video resource see the playlist at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLQEsMfMAm1vjmoO7sU2Gs34BKRonvc9-H>

was recorded and the video is available on YouTube.⁴⁹ Similar recordings are available from presentations that I did at the University of Queensland for UQAPS and for TRI-PACE.⁵⁰ In a follow up session at the University of Queensland,⁵¹ four example pitches are recorded: (a) sustainable systems;⁵² (b) accounting;⁵³ (c) chemistry;⁵⁴ and (d) archaeology.⁵⁵ There are also videos of all finalists in the 2015 and 2016 UQAPS “pitching” competitions held at the University of Queensland.^{56, 57} In addition, an iSpring Powerpoint webinar is available on YouTube.⁵⁸

A5. Pitching Research Letters

In 2016, the editors of *Journal of Accounting and Management Information Systems* (JAMIS) launched *Pitching Research Letters* (PRL), a new dedicated section in JAMIS. As stated by the JAMIS Editors, PRL is a “letters” style section of JAMIS targeting PhD students and, more generally, novice researchers in the accounting, information systems and finance disciplines (broadly defined) – that is, targeting novice researchers in the research domain traditionally serviced by JAMIS. Such researchers are invited to complete a research “pitch” and write a brief discussion of their pitch according to a prescribed “letter” format – along the

⁴⁹ The workshop is also accessible from the “supplementary material” weblink on my UQ webpage (scroll down):

<http://www.business.uq.edu.au/supplementary-material-pitching-research>

⁵⁰ The former video is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u6PX4hPubY>, while the latter can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtT8pf06aHk&feature=youtu.be>

⁵¹ A video of the Introduction to this “pitch examples” session is available at: <https://youtu.be/ruL9ZYOfv5k>

⁵² This video is available at: <https://youtu.be/QBo2wU0z18o>

⁵³ This video is available at: <https://youtu.be/mjBBRnN6gwY>

⁵⁴ This video is available at: <https://youtu.be/PmjM9XfxZ4E>

⁵⁵ This video is available at: <https://youtu.be/AylMABEq4Cc>

⁵⁶ The 2015 UQAPS pitching research competition final was video recorded and the YouTube addresses are as follows (the event introduction can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQ6I6ejgy4c>):

1. Gill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaYchX039Fs>
2. McCullough: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvgbX9oCIHo>
3. Eats: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlCRGpu2P9M&feature=youtu.be>
4. Mahmud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZTkGJTWO2Y&feature=youtu.be>
5. Ndugwa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPNfHUolx5c&feature=youtu.be>
6. Gorji: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBGEWPR1bUk&feature=youtu.be>
7. Noh: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoUWH2LRmUE>

⁵⁷ The 2016 UQAPS pitching research competition final was video recorded and the weblinks are as follows:

1. Nazila Babakhani: <http://bit.ly/2o7jbJs>
2. Lisa Daunt: <http://bit.ly/2nLLWlQ>
3. Shari O'Brien: <http://bit.ly/2nY34RI>
4. Tran Le Nghi Tran: <http://bit.ly/2nVq6rW>
5. Kathy Dallest: <http://bit.ly/2o7Doiu>
6. Gabriel Foley: <http://bit.ly/2olzYrF>

⁵⁸ This video is available at: <https://youtu.be/19s-2Mear5I>

lines of Beaumont (2015), Ratiu (2015) and Unda (2015).⁵⁹ Examples of these JAMIS letters are: Rad (2016); Rekker (2016); Shahzad (2016) and Xue (2016).⁶⁰ In an exciting development announced at the 2016 AFAANZ conference, the *Accounting Research Journal* put out a restricted call for PRL submissions and these short papers will be published in 2017. Already four such PRLs are forthcoming for 2017: Lee and Turner (2017); Sinnewe (2017); Truong and Nguyen (2017); and Zhang (2017).⁶¹

A6. Pitch Ambassadors

If you are a co-ordinator of an Honours/Masters cohort of students I openly invite you to become a “pitch ambassador”. The inaugural pitch ambassador is Dr Marvin Wee at the University of Western Australia. The ambassador role offers a range of benefits: sponsorship of best pitch award within a given cohort (minimum of 10 enrolled students); supply of stressballs and/or other branded merchandise (USB sticks, baseball caps and notepads); the possibility of arranging a special pitch talk or helping to run a pitch day and/or facilitation pitch feedback to students.⁶²

A7. Dedicated “PitchMyResearch.com” Website

In just a very short time, the pitching template introduced by Faff (2015) has gained much exposure and use in Australia and around the world. But, beyond its intuitive appeal, can we measure and optimise the impact of the “template” empirically? This question motivates an AFAANZ-sponsored project that I have jointly with Dr Keith Godfrey (University of Western Australia). With an explicit focus on accounting and finance research, the aim of the

⁵⁹ As stated in the publicity from JAMIS, this unique opportunity is designed to provide a range of developmental objectives: (a) serve as an important exercise for novice researchers, allowing them to explain their research plans clearly and succinctly; (b) allow them to publicly “stake a claim” over a specific research question [in effect to serve as a “registered” PRL pitch]; and (c) offer novice researchers a meaningful publication avenue that they would not readily find elsewhere. Crucially, JAMIS have wisely notified that upon request from submitting authors, the editors will agree to an “embargo” period of up to 12 months – that is, the accepted PRL paper in question will have an agreed minimum delay in publication as measured from the date of acceptance.

⁶⁰ Examples of short papers that illustrate the application of the pitching template are: Ali (2016); Atif (2016); Beaumont (2015a, b); Brenner (2016); Ellis (2016); McKay and Haque (2016); Qureshi (2016); Rad (2016); Rahman (2016); Ratiu (2016); Ratiu (2015a, b); Rekker (2016); Shahzad (2016); Sivathaasan (2016); Unda (2015a, b); Wallan and Spry (2016) and Xue (2016).

⁶¹ Collectively, the framework described in the current paper covers three related research perspectives: (a) the research – based on the core template “tool”; (b) the researcher – through the agency of the “pitch of the week”; (c) the research journey – as reflected in the pitch research letters.

⁶² For anyone interested in this ambassador role please contact me to discuss details.

project is to document the benefits of template pitching and to develop measures to improve the cues and training. Moreover, one of the lasting benefits from this AFAANZ project will be a web portal for use by students, researchers, and supervisors when creating and reviewing research pitches: “PitchMyResearch.com”. Registration is free. As the AFAANZ project develops, users will be able to create private pitches, or select other users for collaboration and review. The on-line streamlining of the pitching and review processes will be a valuable contribution on top of the research outcomes. While the focus of this project with Keith is narrowly positioned in the “accounting and finance” space (i.e. linked to the core charter of the funding body, AFAANZ), I have ambitious plans to expand it more broadly in the future.⁶³

A8. UQBS Research Digest

The UQBS Research Digest – a fully online e-digest – showcases recent research produced by researchers belonging to the University of Queensland Business School.⁶⁴ The digest aims to engage with non-academic external stakeholders, succinctly capturing the essence of selected research projects using the pitch template format.

⁶³ Specifically, I am developing a much deeper and more ambitious version named “**i-TEMPLATES: Innovation in Teaching and Enhanced Mentoring of Pitch Learning Across Tertiary Education Spectra**”.

⁶⁴ The UQBS Research Digest is fully and freely accessible online at: researchdigest.business.uq.edu.au