

Guidelines for preparing a Research Proposal

This will provide us with information about:

- Your area of interest, your knowledge of the field and possible topic within that area;
- Your understanding of at least some of the existing literature, methodological approaches, theory and/ or current debates relevant to your topic;
- Your understanding of possible research approaches to the problem/ issue you want to study.

The proposal will help our decision making about your ability and preparedness to undertake research. It also enables us to start matching you with a possible supervisor/ supervisory team with appropriate expertise.

There is no rigid format for your research proposal, and we do not expect your proposal to be fully worked out – once accepted for research degree study, you must expect to develop and modify your proposal considerably, with the support and advice of your supervisory team. However we would expect a worthwhile proposal to run up to 1500 words (excluding your bibliography), and to include the following elements:

1. An indicative title
2. An introductory statement which outlines the general topic or area you are interested in, and explain the reasons why you want to undertake research in the field (about 200 words)
3. A short survey which indicates the range of reading you have already done, relevant to your topic, and your reactions to this, including identification of existing ‘gaps’ where you could expect to make a contribution (about 400 words)
4. A statement of one or more specific questions or issues which you plan to investigate, within the overall area of interest, and which will form the focus of your research (around 200 words)
5. An outline of the data sources, research methods and/or critical approaches which you are considering adopting for your project. Depending on the kind of research envisaged, your work may involve e.g. documentary analysis, empirical fieldwork, theoretical analysis, literary criticism.... Or an interdisciplinary combination (up to 500 words)
6. A concluding comment on how your completed project might be expected to contribute to the further development of the field (about 200 words)
7. A bibliography including full references for the literature referred to in the proposal (not included in word count)

If there is any special training you believe you will need in order to undertake the project it would be helpful also to mention this briefly. Your research training needs will in any case be assessed fully and systematically addressed as part of your programme of study. This is not included in the word count.