

Guidelines for the Doctoral Thesis Proposal and Thesis Proposal Examination

Doctoral Thesis Proposal Format (20-25pp double spaced + Works Cited)

- 1) Outline – statement of the problem and focus of research (~4pp)
- 2) Method – how you will address the problem (theoretical orientation) (~5pp)
- 3) Literature Review – major/recent works that address similar concerns (~5pp)
- 4) Primary Sources – the texts you plan to write on and related materials (~5pp)
- 5) Chapter Outline – brief outlines of each chapter (~5pp)
- 6) Works Cited — works cited in the Thesis Proposal (you may include an additional bibliography with other relevant sources if you'd like)

The process of preparing the Proposal for the Thesis Proposal Examination is as follows

During preparation of the Thesis Proposal, students and supervisors should meet 1) to discuss initial plans; 2) to follow up on progress during writing of the Proposal, to discuss any problems or questions students may be encountering; 3) to discuss a first draft and offer comments on it before submission to the Thesis Committee.

- In consultation with the Thesis Committee, students and supervisors should agree on a provisional date for the Exam before students begin writing the Proposal. A firm date for the Exam can be set once a complete draft of the Proposal has been received and reviewed.

- Supervisors will require at least two weeks to offer feedback on the complete draft of the Proposal. Following revisions on the basis of that feedback, the supervisor will decide whether the Proposal is ready for submission to the Thesis committee or needs further revision. Once the Proposal is submitted to the committee, they will require at least two weeks to review it before the examination.

- In order to allow sufficient time for feedback, revision, and review by the committee students should thus plan to submit a complete draft of the Proposal at least six weeks month prior to the prospective date of the Examination.

Doctoral Thesis Examination

Format: 2 hour oral examination by the Doctoral Thesis Committee

- 1) 20 presentation of the Thesis Proposal
- 2) 60 minutes of questions from members of the Thesis Committee
- 3) 30 minutes of general discussion and suggestions for proceeding with the Thesis or revising the Thesis Proposal

At the end of the Exam the candidate will leave the room and the Committee will confer to decide whether the Exam is assessed a Pass or a Fail. If the result is a Fail, the candidate may undertake revisions of the Thesis Proposal and retake the Exam.

The purpose of the Thesis Proposal Examination is:

1) To discuss details of Doctoral Thesis Proposal and address questions concerning the viability of the project, the appropriateness of the methodology, knowledge of existing literature on the topic and of primary texts, and to assess the construction of the chapter outline

2) To evaluate the candidate's preparedness to write the Doctoral Thesis

- The Proposal should be theoretically and methodologically coherent, persuasively framed, situated within the existing literature, and it should outline a project which will make an original contribution to scholarship on the topic. Approval of the Thesis Prospectus for circulation to the Dissertation Committee does not constitute a guarantee that it will be viewed as adequate at the Examination. The candidate is responsible for ensuring the quality of their work, the coherence of their project, and their preparedness discuss it.

- Answers to questions and engagement in discussion during the Thesis Exam should demonstrate preparedness to undertake the Doctoral Thesis. This means the candidate should be able to: 1) speak coherently and persuasively about the theoretical and methodological framework of the project; 2) demonstrate fluency in the existing literature and thorough knowledge of the primary texts which will be the focus of the Thesis; 3) engage constructively with criticisms and suggestions from the Committee.

*Note: Should the result of the Doctoral Thesis Exam be a Fail, this should not be taken to suggest a judgment upon the candidate's ability to write a significant Doctoral Thesis or to complete the degree. Rather, it suggests that the Thesis Proposal requires further development and the candidate requires further preparation before undertaking the Doctoral Thesis.