

THE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE OR THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Why Write a Proposal?

The purpose of the proposal is to help you to focus and define your research plans. These plans are not binding, in that they may well change substantially as you progress in the research.

The Proposal is expected to:

- Show that you are engaging in genuine enquiry, finding out about something worthwhile in a particular context;
- Link your proposed work with the work of others, while proving you are acquainted with major schools of thought relevant to the topic;
- Establish a particular theoretical orientation;
- Establish a methodological approach,

Structure of a proposal

1. Background of the Study
2. Statement of the Problem
3. Motivation
4. Aims and Objectives
5. Research Questions
6. Review of the literature
7. Research design and Methodology
8. Structure of the Dissertation
9. Plan of the Research
10. Glossary of terms
11. Appendices
12. Selected Bibliography

1. Background of the Study

- The research field, the theme;
- It provides background information relating to the social/ political/ historical/ cultural/ educational/ artistic, *etc.* context of the study.
- The sociohistorical context of the work

2. Statement of the Problem

- This may include reference to a 'gap' in the research literature, to the need to apply certain ideas in a new context.
- Any project of research stems out of what the candidate may have singled out while reading texts of fiction. (Observation)
- One may only proceed from the contradictions, paradoxes, misunderstandings noticed in the work(s) under scrutiny.
- Such paradoxes usually induce **QUERIES**.

3. Motivation

- There is no research project that is not determined by an interest, curiosity, or empathetic need or intention, the researcher must like/enjoy what she/he is doing.
- Interest is necessary, as the researcher builds a career, and is supposed, right from the beginning to set cogent habits to view her/his future: “*words become acts, acts become habits, habits become character, and character determines a destiny.*”

4. Aims and Objectives

- To state clearly and succinctly the purpose of the study
- The aims will be related to the purpose and the questions,

5. The Research Question(s)

- Also known as ‘problematic’, it puts forward questions, a query that needs to be answered.
- The ideal type of ‘research question’ would imply an overall question concerning the whole dissertation, and this question might be divided in sub-questions each one answered in the shape of the major sections (chapters) of the work.
- The research question(s) (usually What, How, Why, or What if) should be few, so that the focus is manageable.

6. Review of the Literature

- To show that you are aware of significant writers/researchers in the field, and to indicate which issues/topics you will focus on in your review (this may change later);
- To demonstrate critical analysis;
- Your review should be shaped by your argument and should seek to establish your theoretical orientation.

7. Research Design and Methodology

The conceptual apparatus: it is made of all the concepts (denotative words) that are used to implement your analysis, and depends on the type of approach the researcher has chosen. These are considered as tools that definitely need to be defined in the theoretical part of the dissertation, either in the introduction, or in the first chapter, as this will be determined by both the candidate and the supervisor.

A valid corpus: representativity, exhaustivity, and homogeneity confirm the validity of the corpus.

8. Structure of the Dissertation

The process: at this stage of the reflexion, the candidate ought to state the different parts of the progression of the work clearly and stick to this progression, reminding the examiner how she/he is processing: 1st chapter, 2nd chapter, 3rd chapter, *etc.*

The plan: The candidate have to include a plan of the research suggesting titles and subtitles of chapters/sections.

9. Glossary of Terms

Lists of technical or special terms or words used in a particular subject and their meanings (e.g. from another culture, acronyms, key concepts in a relatively new field); This is best placed in a position which is easy to locate (e.g. after the main text parts)

10. Appendices

To display documents/materials which are relevant to main text, but whose presence in the text would disturb rather than enhance the flow of the argument or writing;

11. Selected Bibliography

- List of works that have been consulted thus far and appear to be useful;
- Use referencing conventions recommended by your supervisor;

The Function of the Proposal

- The statement of purpose will provide the content of the introduction.
- These are purely indicative directions as the final shape of the work will result from the combined agreement of the candidate and the supervisor.