

**Department of Anthropology | Stanford University ANTHRO Third Year Dissertation Proposal Meeting form****Dissertation Proposal Draft guidelines – the written proposal**

In the Third year of the Ph.D. degree program, each Ph.D. candidate must submit a written dissertation proposal (approximately 10-15 pages long), which must be approved by the candidate's Dissertation Reading Committee. The proposal should be written and approved before the student undertakes the bulk of the dissertation research in the fourth year of the Ph.D. in Anthropology. An approved proposal should establish the background, feasibility and interest of the proposed research, and details procedures for time to accomplishing the research during the fourth year of the Ph.D. in Anthropology.

A dissertation proposal will clearly specify the leading research questions and hypotheses, the data relevant to answering those research questions, the theoretical framework and the methods of analysis. It will provide a brief literature review, elucidating the relationship of the proposed research to other current research, and a clear work plan. The proposal should also present and interpret progress to date if the research is already underway. Finally, it should briefly discuss any research costs involved and the anticipated sources of funding.

The written proposal may be modeled on the project description for an NSF Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant (DDRIG) in Cultural and Social Anthropology.

**Proposal Overview and Format**

Students should begin thinking about a dissertation topic early in their degree program. Concentrated work on a dissertation proposal normally begins after successful completion of ANTHRO 308. Proposal writing in Cultural and Social Anthropology or ANTHRO 308A. Proposal Writing in Archaeology; and, the student collaborates with their faculty advisor and Qualifying Examination Committee members in the choice of a topic for the dissertation.

The dissertation proposal is a comprehensive statement on the extent and nature of the student's dissertation research interests. Students submit a draft of the proposal to faculty advisor at the end of Spring quarter in the Second year of the degree program. In Autumn quarter of the third year, students submit funding proposals to at least three agencies and further revise the dissertation proposal. In Winter quarter of the third year, student confirm Area and Topic for the purpose of the Qualifying Examination requirement. The students experience in the Qualifying Examinations further informs revision to the dissertation proposal. Then, in the Spring quarter of the third year, students must provide a written copy of the proposal to the Qualifying Examination Committee members for Area and Topic no later than two weeks prior to the date of the dissertation proposal review.

The major components of the proposal are as follows:

- a detailed statement of the problem/question(s) to be studied and the context within which it is to be seen. This should include a justification of the importance of the problem, theoretically.
- a thorough review of the literature pertinent to the research problem. This review should provide proof that the relevant literature in the field that has been thoroughly researched. Good research is cumulative; it builds on the thoughts, findings, and the mistakes of others.
- a statement on the overall design of the proposed study, including general explanatory interest, overall theoretical framework within which this interest is to be pursued, and the model or hypotheses to be tested or the research questions to be answered
- a discussion of the conceptual and operational properties of the variables
- an overview of strategies for collecting appropriate evidence (sampling, instrumentation, data collection, data reduction, data analysis)
- a discussion of how the evidence is to be interpreted (This aspect of the proposal will be somewhat different in fields such as history and philosophy of education.)

**Dissertation Proposal Meeting guidelines – the meeting for approval of the dissertation proposal**

The meeting for a review of the dissertation proposal usually follows the oral component meeting reviewing the Qualifying Examinations for Area and Topic. The Dissertation Reading Committee members can be the Qualifying Examination Committee members, either all, or partial. Or, the Dissertation Reading Committee can include other faculty.

The student and faculty advisor are responsible for scheduling a meeting to review the proposal; the faculty committee members convening for this evaluative period should be considered the Dissertation Reading Committee. Normally, all must be present at the meeting either in person or via televideo conference. The meeting should be 60-90 minutes in length.



Dissertation Reading Committee does not approve the dissertation proposal. Request for revision(s) and recirculation, with addendum,

Deadline given: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Notation regarding request for revision: \_\_\_\_\_

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Submit completed form and all supporting statements/documentation [i.e. the (revised) Dissertation Proposal draft] to the Student Services Officer (50-51G) via scanned email file attachment (.pdf).

Director of Graduate Studies: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (First, Last) Signature Date