

How to submit a proper proposal

The following paragraphs can be read as a rough guideline for the composition of a proposal on the basis of which we will be able to discuss an intended B.A. thesis – in seminars as well as in consultation hours. As you will note, a “proper” proposal consists of more than a preliminary outline of an initial idea you might have towards your B.A. topic (or other research). Try to frame your research intentions according to the various points mentioned below.

1. State your topic

in a few sentences. Do not forget to indicate references to time frame and regional scope of your topic.

2. Read around your topic

in order to provide context for what you are going to develop. As a rule you should have read four to five academic monographs plus some five articles of refereed journals. Try to structure this part with regard to your topic. In your proposal the literature review should make up some 25-30% of your text.

3. Derive a research question

from the context (2) laid out above. Be as precise as possible. If there are more than one individual question you would like to pursue, please relate them to one another – and do not just add them one after the other. If possible provide a hypothesis in this part of your proposal. This part possibly covers 10% of your proposal.

4. Indicate the primary material

you are going to use. State where the material is to be found and why you consider it relevant for your topic and research question. If you select from a broad range of available data or from a broader archive please explain how you will go about selecting relevant primary material. Provide a critique of your primary sources by explaining the potential of the material to be used and also by indicating its limits.

5. Explain how you are going to use

that material and how it will link up to research question (3) and context (2). In some instances it will make sense to write about (4) and (5) in one and the same paragraphs. Together indicating the primary material and explaining how to use it should make up some 30% of your proposal.

6. Provide an outline,

possibly by sketching a table of contents, which indicates the structure of your BA dissertation. Choose headlines and chapter captions which reflect key aspects of the argument you want to make.

- ▶ When writing up your BA dissertation all these aspects (1-6) should be covered in your introduction (plus reference to key terminology or key concepts).

7. Add a bibliography

or a reference matter at the end of your proposal. Please include only such titles which you have either footnoted or referenced in other style in your proposal. Do not include references which you have not worked with in the main body of your text!