

## **Guidelines for writing the proposal**

The Proposal or Prospectus (to be submitted before the comprehensive exam in the fourth semester)

A proposal is a descriptive dissertation prospectus. The purpose is to clarify the dissertation project and to provide direction for research and writing.

The student must determine whether the materials for the dissertation, or a substantial part of them, are available in the department and the university libraries, or elsewhere in the country, or online. S/he must indicate if there will be a need to travel abroad to obtain or gain access to the relevant materials. The students must present a plan for gaining access in advance and include it as part of the proposal.

The "Proposal" is submitted both electronically and in five printed copies to the Director of the **British and North-American Literature and Culture Study Programme** bearing a date and the signatures of both the candidate and the supervisor. The deadline of submission is 31<sup>st</sup> May (December for cross-semesters). Submission deadlines are not negotiable. No proposal may be submitted without the supervisor's signature indicating his or her approval. The texts will be sent electronically to all the other members of the plenum as well as to all registered PhD students.

The "Proposal" should include:

1. The working title of the dissertation. This may be subject to revision or more exact specification, but even at this stage it should describe the project as accurately as possible.
2. A definition of the subject, agreed upon by both the candidate and the supervisor. This should include a statement of the problem of the dissertation and an account of what its investigation will involve in the way of problems, the ground to be covered, the specific issue or "thesis" of the investigation.
3. A justification or demonstration of the need for this study. In other words, an answer to the question of exactly what the significance of the particular study at this time is.
4. A brief account of the existing state of scholarship on the subject. It would help the student position his or her work in relation to existing scholarship and further explain or justify the undertaking of the project (see "3" above) in terms of its potential contribution to literary/cultural, etc. studies. The candidate must take a position and support that position, not merely describe a body of literature. This is the way to convince the Committee that the investigation is both significant ("3" above) and original.
5. There should also be a concise one-paragraph indication of the method or methods to be employed (old-spelling edition, close reading, genre study, psychological criticism, deconstructive analysis, and so forth) and material covered.
6. A tentative list of the divisions, phases, or chapters into which the dissertation will fall, so far as the student can see them at this early stage of work. This list should include a chapter by chapter outline with an indication of the projected length and number of months required to write each one. Add a one-paragraph assessment of feasibility.
7. A selective bibliography done according to the MLA format. The bibliography should reflect the scholarship in the field pertinent to the topic. It should list:
  - a. The primary sources on which the dissertation will be based. These will include the most authoritative editions including letters, autobiographies, journals, and criticism, as well as poetry, drama, fiction, and essays; first and similarly important editions of such primary sources; other important editions to be used or consulted; whether such sources are or are not available in Hungary.

b. The chief secondary sources including the general, critical, scholarly, and biographical works, books, and articles on the specific dissertation area and whether or not these are available in Hungary.

8. The text of the proposal should be very carefully edited (with all grammatical and mechanical errors weeded out). Suggested over-all length: 4,000-4,500 words plus bibliography.

9. For further details see the protocol of the comprehensive exam at <https://deidi.unideb.hu/en/node/390>.