

**UNIVERSITY OF MALTA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCES**  
**GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MPhil/PHD PROPOSALS**

These Guidelines are intended to provide guidelines to potential applicants for the MPhil/PhD research degree in Anthropology. Broadly speaking, there are 2 phases to any formal application to do a research degree at the University: (a) a pre-formal application Departmental Consultation phase, and on its successful completion, (b) a formal application to the University.

**A. PRE-APPLICATION DEPARTMENTAL CONSULTATION PHASE**

1. Stage 1: Research Statement (within 2 weeks)

The student submits a 3-5 page Research Statement. It is a relatively informal statement of the student's research interests and plans. .

The Research Statement is intended to provide a basis for further discussion with the student's potential supervisor.

We will give you feedback, and this will lead to Stage 2:

2. □Stage 2: Draft Research Proposal

The student submits a Draft Research Proposal of 8-10 pages at a specific deadline to be agreed on with their potential Supervisor The Draft research proposal is a more detailed version of the earlier statement, revised to reflect and communicate changes in and development of the research agenda. It should demonstrate expansion and development of the research statement and be arranged in a draft structure of a formal proposal. Specific requirements will be worked out with your supervisor/s.

On receipt of this, we shall give you further feedback leading to:

3. Stage 3: Formal Research Proposal

The student prepares a Formal Research Proposal (of 10-20 pages). It should be a formal research proposal in the style of a major funding agency, including abstract, theoretical concerns, background, research contributions, key research questions, methodology and methods, budget and schedule.

The rationale for the Formal Research Proposal is that it should 1) propel the student into their research with a specific and detailed plan, 2) demonstrate clear intellectual and methodological rationales for research – and show clear ability to locate research within an intellectual trajectory/debate 3) enable the student to gain experience preparing a full and detailed formal proposal (an essential professional skill)

**General Criteria of Evaluation**

A well-defined research question

A detailed description of appropriate evidence to answer the research question

A feasible plan for gathering and analyzing this evidence

The significance of the research to important theoretical and methodological issues in anthropology

Those applicants with applied anthropological objectives should emphasize the theoretical and methodological impact of their research for the discipline as opposed to its applied value only.

4. In order to guide students in preparing your formal research proposal, here is the link to actual research proposals:

<http://gravlee.org/ang5091/proposals.htm>

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/anthropology/programmes/phd/how-to-write-your-research-proposal.html>

[http://devtome.com/doku.php?id=an\\_example\\_anthropology\\_phd\\_research\\_proposal](http://devtome.com/doku.php?id=an_example_anthropology_phd_research_proposal)

#### 5. Summary of what a Research Proposal should tackle:

(a) A review of the literature, both theoretical and ethnographic, with discussion of selected themes/ issues in the ethnography, and of relevant aspects of the history, economy, and languages of the region/ field where the study will be conducted.

(b) An outline of the questions to be addressed and the expected contribution of the study to anthropological understanding.

(c) A methodological discussion, in which theoretical questions and general issues are translated into researchable empirical questions and the methods to be employed are justified and described.

(d) A presentation of the schedule for the research, and its estimated budget.

6. In addition to the theoretical aspects above, anthropological research also involves fieldwork/ field research. Consequently attention should be devoted to the practical issues that are likely to arise. This implies a discussion of the practical, political, and ethical issues affecting conduct of the research. Your proposal should also therefore address, briefly or in detail as appropriate, the following five areas (if appropriate):

(i) History. Consider the sources and historiographical issues relating to the area, people and/or institutions you intend to work on. How much is known of the history? How much is contested, by whom, and in what ways?

(ii) Language. Specify the languages with which you will have to work. Are different languages used by different people or for different purposes? How and why might an attention to language be relevant to your research? How will you negotiate the use of different languages in your research?

(iii) Global relations. Set out how you would locate the people or problem you are working on in terms of global political economy, trans-national institutions, national

and regional governments, etc. What other large-scale frameworks are relevant, e.g. cultural areas, traditions, movements, processes, or trends?

(iv) Theory. Discuss the relations between the theory/theories you wish to work with and concrete research topics you will have to address in fieldwork or archival research.

(v) Methods, techniques and ethics. Discuss the principle methods and techniques you expect to use in your research, together with practical and ethical issues relating to these.

The research proposal enables the Department to assess your progress in the acquisition of generic research skills, and to satisfy itself that you are adequately prepared for the research you plan to undertake.

## **B. FORMAL UNIVERSITY APPLICATION PHASE**

On satisfactory completion of the above, the student will be recommended to apply formally for the MPhil/PhD with the support of the Anthropology Department. Registration is normally in the first instance for an MPhil to be upgraded to a PhD after 12 months of full time research.