

## Guidelines for Advisees Writing Thesis Proposals

Most successful proposals will total 25-50 pages, double-spaced. That length helps ensure coverage of all relevant material going into the proposal defense.

Good proposals contain several sections - these each will later be expanded to become chapters of the thesis. Here is the usual format, with *rough* page length suggestions:

1. **Statement of the Problem (3-5 pages):** establishes the importance of your topic and the need to for knowing more about it via research
2. **Literature Review (10-25 pages):** identifies 2-5 key domains of conceptual and research literature relating to your topic
3. **Conceptual Framework (3-8 pages):** presents not only the core research question(s) to be investigated in your thesis and but also how you plan to frame the study conceptually/theoretically
4. **Research Design (5-10 pages):** describes how you will investigate your core research question(s), with specific focus on sample data/setting, methods, and limitations
5. **Conclusion (1-2 pages):** briefly restates the case for a) your research question's importance for theory/policy/practice and b) the research design you've chosen.

Proposals also should have a title page, a table of contents with page numbers, an abstract (a summary under 250 words), and a reference list for cited publications. Proposal pages should be numbered. Also, students writing a proposal should choose a consistent style for citations, reference lists, headers/subheaders, and so forth (most people in our field use APA Style, but it's not required).