

Writing your research proposal

Students applying to BG for an EdD or a PhD must submit a research proposal with the standard application form. The standard application form is designed to enable you to give an overview of your professional experiences and academic qualifications for study at doctoral level. By asking you for a research proposal we hope to get a good picture of the kind of research you want to undertake and your understanding of what such research is likely to entail.

At the application stage, of course, you are unlikely to be in a position to provide a detailed and comprehensive outline of your intended work, and indeed the shaping up of a research plan would very much be done in conjunction with your supervisors at a later date. However, you should approach this task with care as it does form part of the initial selection process and gives us a clear indication of how we determine going about supporting you as effectively as we can.

The description of your proposed research should consist of up to 5 typed sheets of A4 (or 2500 words, 12 point, Arial). It should start with a provisional title and then take whatever form seems best. It should include some information about the following:

- the general area, field or discipline within which you wish to conduct your research and why (in explaining the attractions of your chosen research you might find it helpful to indicate, for example, what has stimulated that particular interest and any study or research in the area you have already undertaken);
- the kind of research question or questions you would hope to address and why (in explaining what is likely to be the main focus of your research by way of a question or questions it may be helpful to indicate, for example, why these issues are of particular concern and the ways in which they relate to existing literature);
- the sources of information and types of research methods you plan to use (in explaining how you anticipate collecting your data it may be helpful to indicate, for example, which sources you will be targeting and how you will access them).

In addition to the above, it would also be helpful to include any comments you are able to make concerning:

- how you intend approaching the analysis of the data generated;
- the general timetable or timeline you would follow in order to ensure you carry out your research and write it up on time;
- any plans you may have for undertaking 'fieldwork';

- any challenges that might be anticipated in carrying out your proposed research (e.g. ethical, financial, professional).

It is important when you select your referees that you choose individuals who can comment upon your academic suitability to carry out work at doctoral level as well as something of your personal character and professional background.