

Guidelines for preparing a research proposal for a PhD thesis

The aims of the proposal are to provide information about the intended research project in terms of content and methodology so that the Department can assess:

- a) the feasibility of the project
- b) the suitability of the candidate for being registered for a PhD degree; moreover, the proposal will assist the Department to assign a suitable supervisor to the student.

The proposal, which may be developed in consultation with a member of the Department's staff, should not exceed 5,000 words. It is understood that the student may need to deviate from the proposed outline as the actual PhD research unfolds.

PhD Thesis

a) Topics for PhD research should fall within the wide spectrum of psychoanalytic enquiry. They may examine any suitable phenomenon from a psychoanalytic (or analytical psychology) perspective using appropriate methodology (typically, theoretical, historical or empirical); they may also focus on psychoanalysis or analytical psychology as an object of enquiry. Theses should represent an original contribution to the field.

b) The length of the thesis may not exceed 80,000 words (excluding notes, appendices and references).

The proposal would normally include the following components, depending on the nature of the project:

▪ **Statement of the research question:** What is the relevance of and the rationale for choosing this area of enquiry? Why is the research question posed in the way it is? Does the candidate have any particular motivation for posing this question or does he/she possess any expertise in this area?

▪ **A focused introduction:** This should include a brief critical review of the literature relevant to the research question. What are the main texts and trends informing the thinking which has led to the formation of this research question?

▪ **Hypotheses:** What are the main hypotheses or lines of enquiry? Within what general theoretical and/or historical framework will this research be carried out? What specific contribution from psychoanalytic/Jungian perspectives is relevant to this piece of research?

▪ **Research design and Methodology:** How are the main hypotheses going to be investigated or researched? An outline of the methodology, research design and procedure should be given. In addition, the anticipated structure of the thesis (i.e. sections and chapters) should be outlined.

▪ **Pilot work and ethical issues:** In proposals for empirical research, details will need to be provided of the proposed pilot work, the sequence of the various investigations and the research instruments which are intended to be used. In addition, the relevant methods of analysing the data will need to be discussed. Candidates should bear in mind that approval by an ethics research committee will be required before any collection of data.

▪ **Timetable:** An outline of the approximate timetable of the various stages of the proposed research should be given.