<u>Writing a Successful PhD Proposal</u>

A research proposal should be 1,500 to 2,000 words in length. The elements we expect to see in a research proposal are:

i) Title

ii) Research Question(s)

iii) Research Context

iv) Research Methods

v) Preparedness

You need not actually insert the headings, but you may wish to. In any case, the elements are the same for a proposal for a PhD project or a funding application.

<u>Research Questions</u>

The title of the project is not usually formulated as a question, but the most coherent projects often centre on a single research question. Sometimes this can be impossible to achieve, and it is fine to have, say, three interconnected questions. Alternatively, you can have one main question and indicate several subsidiary questions which will drive your research. The question/s should indicate what you will be looking for as you carry out your reading and searching.

<u>Research Context</u>

You need to give the names of specific scholars & key works, though there may not be space for full details. You need to show: (1) that you have read some of the key works in the field already, and (2) that what you are doing has a different emphasis from work previously done – e.g., you consider ideas in new combinations, or take a new critical approach, or consider a question which has not been asked before. For a PhD, you need to emphasise strongly the originality of your work and its likely contribution to advancing knowledge or developing ways of thinking in your subject area.

<u>Research Methods</u>

This includes: (1) intellectual approach and justification – e.g. theoretical stance, choice of qualitative and/or quantitative methods (2) practical aspects of method – where will you look for your material? Do you need to use archives? Do you need to obtain particular kinds of secondary material? Will you be conducting any other kinds of research – e.g. conducting interviews or taking photographs? Will you need ethics approval? Do you need any specialist software or online resources?

You should also say why Glasgow is an appropriate place to carry out this research project – does it have any relevant research groups or training opportunities? Are you hoping to be working with a particular expert in the field?