

Guidelines for the Comprehensive Exam Proposal

2000-2500 words maximum

Suggested sections to the proposal:

1. Overview of thesis interest
 - What is my research area (State it clearly)
 - Why do I want to study it? (Scholarly Rationale)
 - Why is this issue important? (Theory, research, practice in social work)
2. Introduction of 2-3 questions/areas of inquiry, typically:
 - The state of empirical knowledge related to your topic (substantive)
 - The theoretical or conceptual approaches to studying your topic
 - The methodological approaches that have been used to study your topic

This section should give the scholarly, intellectual rationale for exploring the scholarship related to the 3 comprehensive exam questions/areas of inquiry

3. Question/area of inquiry 1:
 - A clearly stated question
 - The bodies of literature you expect to use
 - An introduction to the main themes you expect to explore with this question (a preliminary outline).
4. Question/area of inquiry 2: same as for Q1
5. Question/area of inquiry 3: same as for Q1

Overall:

Your proposal does not present a response to the comprehensive exam questions/areas of inquiry. Rather, it offers your intellectual rationale, supported by key literature (writers/theorists/empirical studies), for exploring the scholarship on this area. The rationale will aid in articulating your entry into this scholarship and the kinds of themes or debates that you expect to explore. Your presentation on each question/area of inquiry should show evidence of the following:

- A scholarly rationale for the question and evidence that it is relevant & timely
- Your awareness of the key writers and debates
- The intended scope of your question (scholars and works that will comprise the focus vs. those that may not be central to your comprehensive exam question)
- How you imagine answering this question (method with the literature)
- What you would include (an initial outline)
- An appendix of key references