A key part of your application is your research proposal. Whether you are applying for a self-funded or studentship you should follow the guidance below.

View the guidance on [how to write your PhD by published work research proposal](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees/mode-of-study/phd-by-published-work/how-to-write-your-phd-by-published-work-research-proposal).

You are encouraged to contact us to discuss the availability of supervision in your area of research before you make a formal application, by [visiting our areas of research](https://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/research-degrees/research-areas).

What is your research proposal used for and why is it important?

* It is used to establish whether there is expertise to support your proposed area of research
* It forms part of the assessment of your application
* The research proposal you submit as part of your application is just the starting point, as your ideas evolve your proposed research is likely to change

How long should my research proposal be?

It should be 2,000–3,500 words (4-7 pages) long.

What should be included in my research proposal?

Your proposal should include the following:

**1. TITLE**

* Your title should give a clear indication of your proposed research approach or key question

**2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

You should include:

* the background and issues of your proposed research
* identify your discipline
* a short literature review
* a summary of key debates and developments in the field

**3. RESEARCH QUESTION(S)**

You should formulate these clearly, giving an explanation as to what problems and issues are to be explored and why they are worth exploring

**4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

You should provide an outline of:

* the theoretical resources to be drawn on
* the research approach (theoretical framework)
* the research methods appropriate for the proposed research
* a discussion of advantages as well as limits of particular approaches and methods

**5. PLAN OF WORK & TIME SCHEDULE**

You should include an outline of the various stages and corresponding time lines for developing and implementing the research, including writing up your thesis.

For full-time study your research should be completed within three years, with writing up completed in the fourth year of registration.

For part-time study your research should be completed within six years, with writing up completed by the eighth year.

**6. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

You should include:

* a list of references to key articles and texts discussed within your research proposal
* a selection of sources appropriate to the proposed research