UK Department of Anthropology
Policy on PhD Proposal Approval Process and Scheduling

This policy for the process of PhD Proposal Approval clarifies how students seek approval of their PhD proposals, both for internal committee approval and for submitting to external funding agencies.

Key points in the approval process:

- An NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant (NSF DDIG) style proposal will be the model for proposals in the approval process.
- Students must have their PhD research proposal approved prior to writing their PhD qualifying exams. The time frame of when proposal approval and qualifying exams will take place is to be determined by the student's advisor and committee. However, PhD Qualifying exams should take place no later than one year from approval of the PhD Proposal. Conversely, exams can be scheduled to occur soon after proposal approval, with the understanding that if the proposal does not receive committee approval, exams will need to be RE-scheduled for a later date.
- Approval will take place in the form of a committee meeting (a "typical" one to 1.5 hour meeting) during which faculty will discuss and offer comments on the proposal. The "approval" itself is a conversation among committee members (and the student) about necessary revisions, and agreement about when those revisions will be completed, and which committee members want to see another draft of the proposal (or not). Following the approval meeting, the student's advisor should send an email to the DGS and the Graduate Secretary indicating that the Approval meeting occurred, and that the proposal was approved (this email will be added to the student's file as documentation).
  - In order to schedule the meeting for proposal approval, the student must submit to the whole committee, **a complete, fully drafted (all sections, all bibliography, all complete)**, close to final proposal . The draft for "approval" will have resulted from revisions of (many) previous drafts of the proposal, commented on and developed in conjunction with the student's advisor.
  - Students must **submit this draft proposal at least two weeks prior** to the committee meeting, in order to give faculty time to read and comment on the proposal draft.
  - For students **planning to submit proposals for funding**, the Proposal Approval **meeting must occur AT LEAST one month PRIOR** to the first deadline for ANY external funding (Fulbright IIE "small Fulbright" excluded). The proposal model will be the NSF style grant, even if the first deadline is SSRC or Wenner-Gren. (Thus the need for approval to occur 1 month prior to the deadline, giving the student time to make necessary revisions, and to formulate the proposal according to different foundation criteria).
    - An example in relation to funding deadlines: If a student plans to submit the SSRC grant on November 1st, the committee approval meeting must occur no later than October 1st. The student must submit the fully drafted, heavily revised and advisor approved (for distribution to committee members) proposal draft by September 15th. In practice then, the student should have drafted a solid proposal by the end of spring semester, and revised it all summer – if the advisor is willing to work with the student over the summer. If the advisor is not available to comment and discuss revisions during summer months, then the student should have drafted a proposal earlier in the spring and worked closely with the advisor prior to the summer break. At the latest, on August 15th, the student should submit a "close to perfect" draft to the advisor for one final round of revising prior to distributing to the committee for the approval meeting.

Approved by Faculty January 2009
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