

# Guidelines for the Preparation of the Ph.D. Research Proposal

Department of Plant Biology

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The Ph.D. research proposal should present the project's significance, design, and timetable succinctly, yet with adequate detail for the non-specialist members of the examining committee to understand clearly the research being proposed. The proposal should also provide a thoughtful synopsis of the research progress to date. While it is not intended to serve as an initial draft of the student's Ph.D. dissertation, a thorough and careful job on the proposal can provide the foundation and partial outline for the final dissertation. The research proposal should be presented to members of the Preliminary Examination Committee at least one week in advance of the exam.

The format for the Ph.D. Research Proposal in Plant Biology follows that specified for pre-doctoral proposals by the National Science Foundation (NSF). This format is chosen here so as to facilitate submission of applications to NSF for support of students' Ph.D. research in the Department of Plant Biology. The format is as follows:

- I. Title page, including:
  - A. Title of proposed research project
  - B. Student's name, previous degree(s), dates and institutions
  - C. Date of preparation
  - D. Name of advisor
- II. Abstract. A one-page summary of the proposed research (~200 words, double-spaced).
- III. Main body of proposal (not to exceed 16 double-spaced pages), including
  - A. Statement of purpose and significance of the research in the specific field, as well as broader relevance in science.
  - B. Background
  - C. Proposed research
    1. Current status/progress. Present and interpret progress to date if the research is already underway.
    2. Further studies. This should constitute about one-half of the main body of the proposal and contain sufficient detail to permit evaluation by the committee.
  - D. Timetable for the research program. Give a realistic appraisal of events and expected achievements in the projected research; should be no more than one page.
- IV. References. Approximately 25-40 in the format of familiar journal such as *Plant Physiology* including full article titles and inclusive page numbers.
- V. Appendices (as needed).
  - A. Charts, diagrams, tabular material, and other illustrative material.
  - B. All materials included in appendices must be referenced in the body of the proposal.
- VI. Student's Curriculum Vitae
- VII. Graduate Courses.
  - A. List all courses taken at the graduate level. Indicate institution, title of course, course number, credit hours (or units), grade and date
  - B. List of courses yet to be taken, with course numbers and names and semester in which student plans to take each course.