

MA Project Proposal Structure

Please write your project proposal using the following 7 headings. Your proposal will change as you develop your work, but it is essential to have a plan to begin with.

1. Working Title:

This should express the main area of investigation, implying its questions and potential argument or standpoint. While being a working title, which will inevitably change over time, it is important that you are as specific and precise as possible. The title should be brief, and reflect the main question of the project. You should avoid over-long or technical words, and phrases such as 'an investigation into...'.

2. Aims and Objectives:

Define briefly your subject and the main concerns of the investigation, including a set of aims and objectives that will guide your research. Your proposal is primarily practice based, you should also use this section to describe your vision of your practice and the way in which you work in your practice on your preoccupations and concerns. After defining your subject, you might find it helpful to think about the main concerns of the project as questions you are asking yourself, to which you hope to find the answer. The aims and objectives are important because they, in a sense, declare the criteria for your investigation, against which the success or failure of your project can be assessed. If you find it difficult to articulate your aims and objectives you might find it helpful to think of your aim as the most significant questions or problems you hope to tackle. Your objectives are the steps by which you will meet this aim. Your proposal should normally have one or two aims, followed by a series of around 6 objectives. The idea is that by the time you have met all your objectives, you should have achieved your aim.

3. Context (Including Historical, Contemporary and Theoretical Contexts):

There is no single history that suits all investigations but you should identify the various strands of history that relate to your particular research. It may be a history of ideas and concepts that have influenced the development of a particular area of art, the history of the medium or technology in which you work, or a particular part of the history of art.

As far as you are able, define the contemporary work that relates to your field of investigation. You must do this for the following reasons:

- to demonstrate that you are aware of the field in which you are working
- to demonstrate that your proposed research will have distinct feature which will make it potentially original
- to form the basis of links with other research work to which you will contribute or on which you will build.

4: Methodology:

try to describe the basic methods and procedures you will adopt in discovering and recording research information

your proposals are practice based, so ask yourself, how does the theory relate to the practical experimentation?

what is the theory for?

what process of experimentation will you use?

how will you record what you do and keep track of what you have done?

5. Outcomes:

Think about the form of the final presentation, again this will change over the period of research and experimentation but it is good to have an idea of what the final outcome might be.

6. Work Plan:

Map out the whole length of the course (60 weeks over 2 years Extended Full Time). You will probably have a more detailed plan for the first third and after that the plan will be more general. As you move forward the plan can develop and you will add further detail. Some students find it helpful to define short deadlines, 3 or 4 weeks long and indicate in the plan exactly what you plan to achieve by that time, for example, over a certain 3 weeks you plan to read and analyse a particular book and also experiment making some new work. After the 3 weeks you can look at your own progress. If you have not met your own deadline, ask yourself why? Did you need more time, if so change your plan. If it was not relevant or something else became more interesting, note this on your blog and change your plan. If you met your deadline then move on the next stage.

7. Bibliography:

This is a list of all sources you will or intend to use during the project. This is everything from films, books, research papers and journals, websites, magazines, special collections etc. We expect to see a mixture of sources, and you need to consider accuracy. Some basic rules are:

Web - often self publish and not peer reviewed – so try to make sure your quotes are supported from more than one source. Some research sites are peer reviewed.

Book – data is often considered accurate, but not always up to date. The publishing process is often slow, so a couple of years could have passed since the book was researched and written.

Papers / Journals – these are often peer reviewed, so the information is considered accurate.

Magazines – often not peer reviewed and may follow editorial policy - so could ignore fact or represent information in a 'directed' fashion

finally primary research – talking directly to an author/artist – this is the best kind of research because it is direct from the source, and not a secondary source as above.