

Additional information about the Field Statement:

As stated in the Field Statement Guidelines, “The purpose of this statement is to critically review the history of the topic, laying the groundwork for a student's dissertation project.” Thus, it should be a paper critically reviewing literature in the field, rather than a compilation of some consensus view. A student should take an independent study class with his or her committee chair while working on the field statement and should discuss papers/progress in writing/issues over the course of the semester with him or her.

Before you begin:

- Form your Ph.D. committee
- Ideally students should have thought about the composition of their committees and have a general idea of what they want to do for their dissertations by the end of the summer between the 2nd and 3rd years in the program.
- At the beginning of the 3rd year, students should turn in the Ph.D. committee forms (keep in mind that you need to ASK people if they are willing to be on your committee and that you can change your committee later if you need to).

Step 1: Write a brief (1 page) field statement proposal

- It should address the following questions:
 - What is the tentative title and proposed contents of the field statement?
 - How does the field statement relate to the anticipated dissertation project?
- After discussions with your committee chair and others, write the field statement proposal and have it approved. This should be done quickly in the first semester of the 3rd year.

Step 2: Write an outline and a preliminary bibliography for the field statement.

- This document will define the extent and scope of the statement to be produced. (so again TALK to your advisor and committee members).
- This is a PRELIMINARY bibliography. It is anticipated that there will be subsequent additions to the bibliography as the field statement is written. Discuss the bibliography with your committee members to get ideas about what papers might be missing and which are particularly important in the field.

Step 3: Write the field statement

- A good field statement, however, is more than a simple review of the literature; it should also exhibit creativity and critical thought, as well as a student's intellectual grasp of the topic in question.
- The field statement not only demonstrates a student's ability to synthesize the material, but also shows an ability to go beyond that material and suggest a general plan of valuable future research.
- The review should be comprehensive but not exhaustive (i.e. we DO NOT want a laundry list of everything ever written on the topic!).
- The field statement is limited to 50 double-spaced pages in at least 12 point font (exclusive of the bibliography). If you are able to comprehensively cover the topic in fewer pages that is GREAT!

- As you critique the current literature within each subtopic of your field statement, you should ask yourself the following questions:
 - What are the limitations of the previous research? (in terms of sampling, methodology, statistics etc.)
 - To date, what has been done well? (i.e. critique includes the good and the bad)
 - How could the previous research be extended? (i.e. What is the logical next step? What are the big gaps?). This is particularly important since it is assumed that you will try to fill one of those gaps with your dissertation research. If you do not point out possibilities and gaps, your committee is likely to wonder why anyone should do research in this area (i.e. are all the questions solved?).