

ZUGS

Exposé

Guidelines

In accordance with Section 6 of the PhD Regulations, a seven- to ten-page research proposal must be submitted when applying for admission to the PhD program. The members of the PhD committee will decide on your admission to the PhD program primarily based on your research proposal.

The synopsis should be prepared in consultation with your primary supervisor.

In your research proposal, you should provide a concise, clear overview of your planned research project. It should make clear what is to be investigated (research question), why the topic is scientifically or socially relevant (state of research and gaps), what objectives are being pursued, what theories underpin the work, how the research will be conducted (research design, methodology and data) and what potential challenges may arise. It should also include a rough timetable, which should demonstrate the feasibility of the project within the specified timeframe of 8 semesters of normal program length, as well as an initial selection of literature. In the case of cumulative theses, the content of the individual papers must be outlined.

The following overview and guiding questions will help you to structure your exposé.

Title of the dissertation – working title

The title of the dissertation should be precise and meaningful. You may revise the title as you progress with your work, so it should be regarded as a working title.

Introduction – State of the art & research question

1. Introduction to the topic & relevance

Begin with a brief, concise introduction to your topic. Explain what it is about and why the topic is academically and/or socially relevant.

2. Current state of research

Provide an overview of the current state of research. In doing so, discuss the current research literature, studies, as well as key theories and methods. Highlight what has already been investigated using specific theories and methods and where gaps in the research exist.

3. Research objective and research question

Based on the current state of research, derive one or more research questions and/or hypotheses that you wish to address in your thesis and formulate your research objective. The research question must be precisely formulated and

specific enough to allow it to be answered within the scope of the research project. Pay particular attention to sensibly narrowing down the topic, taking feasibility into account. In doing so, answer the following question: What new, original and relevant contributions are expected from my dissertation that go beyond previous research?

Theory & Methodology

1. Theoretical Framework

Describe the key theory or theories and the most important theoretical approaches you will use in your thesis. Explain why you plan to use these theories and how they support your research. Outline the most important concepts and terms from the theory or theories that you intend to use in your analysis.

2. Methodology

Describe your approach/research design and explain which method(s) you will use for your work and, where applicable, how you will proceed with data collection and analysis. In doing so, also reflect on the limitations of the chosen method(s).

Please address the following questions:

| What type of study is this? (exploratory, descriptive, causal, etc.)

| What approach/research design has been chosen? Check question: Can the research question be answered using this approach?

| Which method(s) have you chosen? (humanities, quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.)

| What type of data will be used, is it accessible, and how will it be collected if necessary?

| If applicable, explain the case selection/selection of interview partners, experimental design, sampling, etc., and what kind of conclusions can be drawn from this.

| If applicable, outline the preliminary operationalisation (e.g. data and methods for statistical analyses; material for text analyses; type of network analysis; experimental design, etc.).

| Which analytical methods will be used? (e.g. analytical methods, statistical methods, discourse analysis, standard methods of literary studies, etc.)

| What software is being used?

| What ethical considerations must be considered? (participant consent, data protection, etc.).

Publication strategy

For cumulative dissertations, outline the planned content of the individual papers and specify potential publishers/journals that would be thematically suitable for publication. Ensure that each paper, taken on its own, makes a recognisable contribution to the current state of research.

Timetable

Present the milestones of your research project clearly. You should aim for a timeframe of no more than 4 years (8 semesters of normal program length). The timetable can be presented, for example, in a table or a Gantt chart.

Show as realistically as possible how much time you plan to allocate to each phase of the research, and to what extent your research project is realistically feasible within the specified timeframe. Typically, the timetable comprises the following sections: literature review, development of the theoretical framework, creation and testing of data collection instruments, data collection, data analysis, and the writing and revision of the thesis. You should also allow for participation in workshops and conferences to obtain feedback, as well as buffer time for unforeseen delays.

Bibliography

List all sources used and relevant to your work completely, accurately and in accordance with academic standards.