

How to write a research proposal

M.A. Roads to Democracies

M.A. Roads Coordination-Team

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uni-siegen.de

www.uni-siegen.de

Basic information

- **Roads to Democracies is a research-oriented and interdisciplinary master program.**
- **The requested research proposal should give the program coordinators an insight into your research ideas and should also indicate your interest in interdisciplinary research questions.**
- **The research proposal is one of the essential requirements to be accepted to the program, that is, it should comply to highest academic standards.**

Evaluation Criteria

The research proposal will be assessed by the program coordinators according to the following criteria:

- standards of academic writing (structured argument, correct referencing, etc.)
- in-depth exploration of the topic (paper length: 2000 to 2500 words, excluding references – not longer, not shorter!)
- exhaustive academic analysis, including a well-defined topic, precise research question, connection to relevant academic literature, and coherent discussion and analysis
- strong connection to the study program (no seminar papers or final theses from previous studies allowed)

Don'ts: plagiarism, incorrect sourcing, incomplete bibliography

The topic of the proposal

- Should be related to the study program
- Must clearly define the research problem or question
- Must include a literature review
- Should present initial ideas about the appropriate methods that will be applied to the analysis of the research problem.
- Should give an indication which theories and concepts will be relevant for the study.

Aspects to include in your Research Proposal

A. Reasonable introduction to the topic.

Introduction to and adequate presentation of the topic.

B. Description of the research problem and research question.

Including the scientific relevance and/or knowledge gap and research aim.

C. Literature Review

Summarize the literature review and describe the State of the Art. What are the main findings regarding the topic? Do the researchers agree or are there differing scientific opinions? Describe what are the potential inconsistencies or gaps.

Aspects to include in your Research Proposal

D. Research Question and Methodology

- Clearly name the research problem, research question, and hypothesis to be validated.
- State if you are working with a hypothesis.
- Clarify how to proceed methodically when answering the question – detailing which empirical methods and data are necessary.
- Is it an empirical paper? If so, what methods will you use and what kind of data do you need to analyze?
- Indicate whether quantitative (statistical) or qualitative (interpretative) methods are required.
- Are there already ideas on how the methodology could be organized as a working process.
- Mention if you plan to conduct interviews or field observations.
- The proposal should contain a reasonable review of the existing knowledge summarizing insights from the literature review.

Aspects to include in your Research Proposal

E. Timeline

- The timeline should show how the research work is organized.
- The writing period for the Master's Thesis within our program is a maximum of 18 weeks. In cases of empirical work, the period is 26 weeks.

F. Bibliography

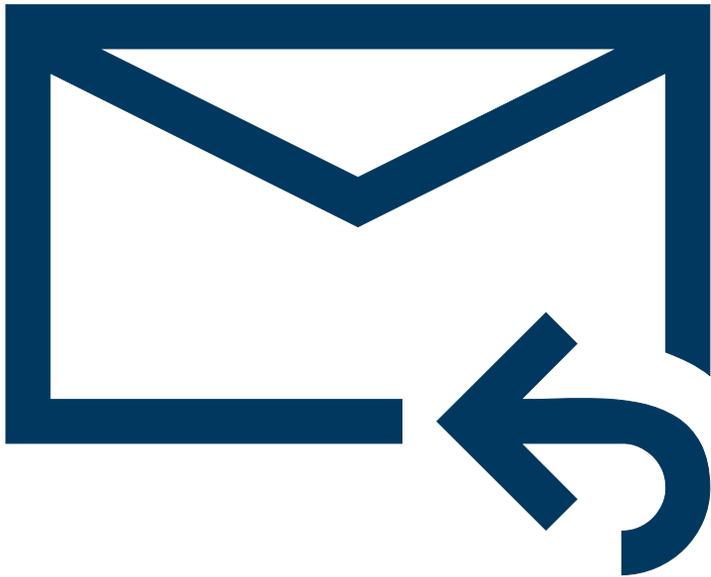
- List the most important sources that will be relevant to your research project.
- List all the sources that you have used for your proposal (including the internet, electronic sources and AI).
- Make sure that other persons' work have been cited appropriately and provided with the corresponding bibliographical references.
- The same is true of all drawings, sketches, pictures and other illustrations that appear in the text.

A Declaration needs to be included

Copying work by others, explaining a particular idea using someone else's words and concepts without making clear that it's a quote, downloading essays or parts of essays from the internet or using AI-based text generators without indicating their source is regarded as intentional plagiarism. **Intentional plagiarism is no small matter, but a disciplinary offense.**

Please consider this information while preparing your thesis proposal.

- With the submission, applicants agree to a plagiarism check.
- Here you can find the *Guidelines for the use of "AI-based" language models/text generators (ChatGPT or similar) in the Faculty of Arts and Humanites*



Questions?

Please contact:

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Further references:

<https://apastyle.apa.org/>
