

Guidelines for the Structure of a Thesis Proposal

1. Introduction / Thesis topic

What is the topic of the thesis? What is the general background and context of the thesis topic? How is the topic related to a specific research area, sub-discipline, or field? Why is this topic of interest: relevance, empirical interest, research gaps?

2. Research aim/ Research questions

What are the concrete aims and objectives of the thesis? What is the central research question? How is this research question related to a specific research context? Why is the research question relevant within this scientific context?

3. Literature review / Current state of research

What research has been done so far in this particular area? What relevant literature has been published that is related to the topic? How does the topic connect to previous studies and the existing literature in general? Where are gaps in the existing literature? What new aspects does the thesis focus on?

4. Theoretical framework

What theories and theoretical approaches are you planning to work with? What are the underlying theoretical assumptions? What terms and concepts are relevant for your thesis? Why are you choosing a particular theoretical approach? What would be alternative approaches?

5. Research methodology

What kind of methodology will be used to answer your research question and why? What kind of sources or documents will be analyzed? Will you collect your own data/ conduct your own survey? What kind of research or data collection instruments will be used? What are the advantages of your research methodology with regards to your research question? What are the limitations?

6. Thesis structure

How will your thesis be structured? What chapters and subchapters do you want to include? How do they relate to each other?

7. Results/ Findings

What could be the outcomes and results of your thesis? What hypotheses or arguments could your thesis support or disprove?

8. Problems/ Open questions

What problems did you encounter while planning your thesis? Were you able to solve them? What problems and open questions remain unsolved?

9. References

Provide a bibliography of all the literature you have referred to in your thesis proposal. Optionally you may add a list of further relevant literature.