

## **GUIDELINES FOR WRITING A DOCTORAL THESIS RESEARCH PROPOSAL<sup>1</sup>**

### **Overall remarks:**

- ✓ Please write the proposal taking into account that it should be understandable to any faculty, even those who are not expert in your research topic.
- ✓ The recommendation for this research proposal is 20 pages maximum (Times New Roman, size 11, 1.5 line spacing, A4 paper size, 2.5 cm all margins). This makes the proposal more concise, with just the essentials, and therefore, clearer and more understandable for those who evaluate it.
- ✓ It is expected that the thesis will be composed of several papers (published, accepted or under editorial review, in journals included in Journal Citation Reports -JCR-) or SCImago Journal Rank -SJR- (e.g. 3/5 papers, depending on the type of thesis).
- ✓ These guidelines are recommended but not mandatory.
- ✓ For this proposal, please consider the “Procedures to ensure research ethics.”<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ Please see the links at the end of this document for further information about “How to write a research proposal”. Also, your supervisor(s) will give you advice on this process.

### **TITLE AND ABSTRACT (0.5-1 page)**

- Tentative title of the doctoral thesis (the title should capture the essential of the research in just a few words).
- Date of the proposal (day/month/year).
- Name and contact information of the PhD student and his/her supervisor/s (e.g. affiliation, address, email).
- Abstract (150 words).

### **1. INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH (1.5-2 pages)**

- 1.1. Problem statement**
- 1.2. Main objectives of the research or research questions**
- 1.3. General theoretical framework of the study**
- 1.4. Main contributions of the research / research gaps**

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<sup>1</sup> Document approved by iDEM Doctoral Committee (24-3-2017).

<sup>2</sup> Guidelines for research ethics developed by the National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway (please read carefully section “D”):

[https://www.etikkom.no/globalassets/documents/english-publications/60127\\_fek\\_guidelines\\_nesh\\_digital\\_corr.pdf](https://www.etikkom.no/globalassets/documents/english-publications/60127_fek_guidelines_nesh_digital_corr.pdf)

**2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY / LITERATURE REVIEW<sup>3</sup> (4-5 pages)**

**2.1. Positioning of the research in the field of study**

**2.2. Key literature and authors related to the research**

**2.3. Key research findings (both theoretical and empirical) based on the literature review**

**2.4. Main hypotheses (or propositions) supported by the literature**

**3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS / METHODOLOGY (1-2 pages)**

**3.1. Methodological approach (quantitative, qualitative, etc.)**

**3.2. Data and description of variables or constructs**

**3.3. Techniques of analysis**

**3.4. Econometric model/s (if applicable)**

**4. TIMELINE AND BUDGET (1-2 pages)**

**4.1. Schedule / Plan of work**

**4.2. Planned Budget**

**5. CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS TO ADVANCE (0.5-1 page)**

**6. TENTATIVE INDEX OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION (0.5-1 page)**

**7. OUTLINES OF POSSIBLE JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS (1-2 pages)**

(Including for each paper –e.g. 3/5 papers- the following items: suggested journal, title, objective, conceptual framework and methodology).

**8. REFERENCES (3-4 pages)**

**9. APPENDICES (if necessary)**

**Some useful links about “How to write a research proposal”:**

- Penn State University:  
<http://pwr.la.psu.edu/resources/graduate-writing-center/handouts-1/WritingProposals.pdf>
- University of Exeter:  
[http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/webteam/shared/postgraduate/pdfs/A\\_Guide\\_to\\_Writing\\_your\\_PhD\\_Proposal.pdf](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/webteam/shared/postgraduate/pdfs/A_Guide_to_Writing_your_PhD_Proposal.pdf)

*If clicking the links doesn't work, please copy and paste the URL in a new browser window.*

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<sup>3</sup> A guide to writing a literature review: [http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/authors/pdf/lit\\_infographic.pdf](http://www.emeraldgrouppublishing.com/authors/pdf/lit_infographic.pdf)