

Guidelines for writing a research proposal

A proposal is a summary of the PhD project that the applicant wishes to pursue as a doctoral candidate. The aim of the proposal is to arouse the interest of those reviewing the application, to demonstrate your own theoretical and methodological skills and to demonstrate a deep understanding of the topic. The proposal should clearly and comprehensibly present the research question, the scientific background (state of the art) and the planned methodologies of the project. This serves to inform a lecturer about the planned PhD work and to convince him or her to act as your supervisor for the dissertation.

Writing a research proposal requires care and attention, as this is the most important document for your application. Make sure that it is clearly structured, precisely formulated and free of spelling and grammatical errors. The proposal should be 5-7 pages long, including the list of references. Here are some general guidelines:

1. Title page:

- Name
- Title of the dissertation project
- Date
- Name of the graduate school to which you are applying.

2. Summary or topic:

- What is the overall aim of the dissertation project? Why should the topic be researched and how? This element should be a brief, concise summary of the topic.
- Describe the aims of the research and what contribution it might make to science.
- Emphasise why your research is important and relevant.
- How can the results be used?

3. Background and context:

- Explain the scientific background of the research field and the significance of the research question.
- Show that you are familiar with the current state of the art. What relevant studies already exist and what have they found?
- Your own work on the topic can be mentioned here. However, it is important to differentiate the doctoral project from the current state of the art. What new contributions do you plan to make? Where are gaps in existing research and which hypotheses need to be tested?

4. Research question or hypothesis:

- Formulate clearly and precisely the research question or hypothesis to be investigated.
- Give reasons why this/these question(s) is/are important.

5. Methodology:

- Describe in detail the methods you intend to use to answer the research question(s).

6. Timetable:

- Provide a rough timeline of how the research will be conducted over the period of the PhD.
- Concrete interim goals and benchmarks can be outlined here.

7. List of references:

- Attach a list of all publications cited in the proposal.

Further information on applying for a doctorate in Germany can be found here:

<https://www.academics.com/guide/apply-for-phd-in-germany>