

1. Title

The title captures the essence of your topic and research question.

Researcher's name

Date

2. Abstract (max. 150 words)**3. Introduction** (max. 1 page)

What is your research topic? How does your topic fit within the wider research context in your field of expertise? Background and rationale: Challenges and relevance. Describe how your subject relates to the wider world. What drives research in your field? If you are aiming for a novel breakthrough, describe what you are planning to achieve. How does your topic relate to industry, society, etc.?

4. Literature review (state-of-the-art) (max. 3 pages)

Brief review of relevant literature: What is and is not already known about your topic? Why is the topic relevant? Cite previous research and literature to support your claims and identify a knowledge gap. Use subheadings to organize the text into chapters following a logical outline. Use pictures, if necessary. Most importantly, you must clearly demonstrate the novelty and originality of your research by answering the question: Has someone else already done what you plan to do?

5. Research objectives and questions

What are your research objectives?

Describe the nature of your research. How will your research contribute to the advancement of knowledge in your field?

Break down your topic into 2-4 research questions to clarify the content, feasibility and relevance of your research.

6. Research strategy and methodology (max. 1 page)

Describe your research strategy. What are your sources of data and how will you access them?

The research method must be appropriate to your objectives and approach. Remember to assess the research methods critically. Demonstrate your knowledge of alternative methods and make the case that your approach is the most reliable way to address your research questions.

Describe your data collection methods and the level and unit of analysis.

7. Research environment and partners

Supervisor, thesis instructor(s) and possible research group.

Companies and other universities.

8. Internationality and plan for internationalization

Describe, for example, international partners such as specific scientific community/communities or your plans for research exchange. Explain how this international dimension will benefit your research.

9. Research schedule (approx. ½ pages)

Prepare a rough quarterly or half-yearly schedule for your research. The structure of the schedule depends on the form of your thesis. Students are generally recommended to opt for the so-called compendium or a thesis based on a compilation of publications, in which case the schedule should include the publications and their estimated completion dates. If you are writing a monograph, the stages of your research process should be outlined in the schedule.

Please note that your research plan must fit in with your overall study plan: full-time students are expected to complete their theoretical studies in 2 years and part-time students in 3 years.

The time-to-degree for full-time doctoral students is 4-5 years and for part-time students 6-8 years. A licentiate degree takes about 3-5 years.

Your schedule should include at least the following units: preparations, literature search and analysis, data collection and analysis, manuscript editing, thesis examination process (pre-examination, possible corrections and public defence: 6-12 months). Set reasonable deadlines. Visualize your schedule, for example, by drawing a line chart.

If you are a part-time student, you should also include possible study leave in your schedule. It is advisable to take time off from work especially to analyse your data and edit the manuscript. Be realistic and consider whether you have the resources to stay on schedule.

10. Financing

Provide a rough estimate on how you plan to finance your doctoral studies.

For full-time students, we recommend an employment contract lasting a minimum of 3 years.

If you study on a part-time basis, will your employer support your studies, e.g. financially or by granting study leave(s)?

To ensure steady progress, part-time students should set aside periods of time for studying and conducting research on a regular basis each week. Additional study leave should be organized at least twice for data analysis and thesis editing.

11. Bibliography

List of the literature mentioned in part 4.