

Guidelines on How to Write a Proposal

Edition: April 26, 2022

Chair of Economics of Horticulture and Landscaping

1 Structure of a Thesis Proposal

Your thesis proposal should consist of 6-8 pages, and include the following elements in the order listed below.

- Title page
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Goal(s) and objectives
- State of the art
- Material and methods
- Expected results and discussion
- Potential conclusions
- Work plan, including time table and milestones
- List of references

The structure of the proposal is very similar to the bachelor/master thesis, and accordingly a large part of the (updated) material of the proposal will become part of the thesis.

1.1 Title Page

- Use a short, descriptive title for the proposed thesis project
- Include information about the author, institution, college/school, examiner(s) and/or supervisor(s) and date of delivery (see last page of the guidelines)

1.2 Abstract

- The abstract is brief, but addresses all parts of the thesis proposal
- Length: 100 - 150 words
- Outline the key tasks of the thesis
- For the thesis itself, the abstract addresses each part of the thesis with one sentence

1.3 Table of Contents

- List all headings and subheadings with page numbers
- Subheadings should be indented

1.4 Introduction

- Sets the context for your project and captures the readers' attention
- Explains the background of your project, starting from the broad picture, narrowing in on your specific research question
- Cite pertinent references and relevant statistical background data

1.5 Goal(s) and Objectives

- In a few sentences (or bullet points), state what you want to accomplish
- You may use the form of a problem statement, a goal statement, scientific research question, objectives or hypotheses – not material and methods
- Capture the essence of your intended project and also set boundaries

1.6 State of the Art

- Reviews the prior knowledge on the research topic and focuses on relevant content
- Cites pertinent references and classifies the work in their context

1.7 Material and Methods

This section contains an overall description of your approach, materials, and procedures.

- What materials will be used?
- Which methods will be used?
- How will data be collected and analyzed (incl. any statistical analysis planned)?
- Do not include expected results and discussion, here

1.8 Expected Results and Discussion

- What do you expect to find?
- Present any intermediary results, if available
- Discuss how intermediate results fit into your thesis (if appropriate)

1.9 Potential Conclusions

- What new knowledge will the proposed project produce?
- Why is it worth knowing, what are the major implications?

1.10 Work Plan, Including Time Table and Milestones

- Describe in detail what you plan to do and when
- List the essential stages of your project in a table
- Indicate deadlines you have set for completing each stage of the project, including any work you have already completed
- Discuss any particular challenges that need to be overcome, possible alternatives

1.11 List of References

- Lists all sources of ideas, concepts, text and data that are not your own
- If you use material of your own that you have published previously, cite yourself
- If you make a statement, back it up with your own data or with source citations
- In particular, any numbers or trends stated must be supported by sources
- All sources cited in the text must be listed in the list of references
- Separate information you obtained (e.g., from experts) from references

2 Some Tips How to Prepare a Good Proposal

The following section provides you with some tips how to prepare a good proposal. It highlights important aspects that students sometimes get wrong but that are essential for solid scientific work.

2.1 Remark

Adhere to the “General Advice on How to Write Scientific Papers” very carefully:

https://www.oekglb.wzw.tum.de/fileadmin/forschung/GeneralAdviceHowWriteScientificPapers_GabaOek.pdf

2.2 Figures and Tables

- Figures and tables serve to illustrate important aspects of the background material, as well as results of your own data collection and analysis
- Well-chosen and appropriately labeled figures and tables can reduce text length, and improve proposal clarity
- Technology (scanners, drafting software) can help you create or modify figures; in many cases, it will serve you better to modify a figure from somebody else’s text and adapt it to your own thoughts (and what you really need for your argument) than to just copy and paste it (a source will be needed anyway, if not absolutely everything is from you, including the data and idea)
- Each figure or picture needs to have a label below; all figures have to be numbered
- Each table needs to be numbered and requires a title
- Any sources used should be placed flush left, underneath the table
- You must refer to each figure and each table in the text

2.3 Grammar and Spelling

- Poor grammar and spelling distract from the content of the proposal; readers focus on grammar and spelling problems and often miss key points in the text; word processing software has grammar and spell checkers; use them
- You should have read and corrected your proposal many times before handing it in
- Try to keep your language simple and sentences short, but use appropriate technical terms
- Ask fellow students or friends to proof-read your proposal
- If you get comments or questions that seem irrelevant, your paper is not written clearly enough

Technical University of Munich

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Thesis Proposal

Submitted to Apply for Supervision in the Preparation of a Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Academic Degree of [B./M.]Sc. [please choose & fill in]

TitleTitleTitleTitleTitle

Lisa Exemplary

Examiner:

Second examiner:

Supervisor:

Start Date:

Date Submitted: