




Introduction to Doctoral Studies at Hanken
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Research Proposal and Study Plan

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Research proposal and study plan


Research proposal = Plan of your **thesis and thesis work**
 » The concept of research plan is synonymous with research proposal

Study plan = Plan of your **studies including time-table**

- » Your most important tools when planning your studies and working with your thesis
- » The documents you should continually work on
- » Your "business cards"



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Research proposal and study plan: one document or separate documents?

- » When using the plans **internally**
 - the plans help you to organise your thoughts and your work
 - the most effective means of communicating with your supervisors

→ Make the choice how to structure the plans according to your **own or your supervisors' preferences.**
- » When using the plans **externally**
 - admission to courses, tutorials and workshops
 - funding applications
 - researcher school applications
 - study abroad applications
 - for building your own networks

→ Usually you must **follow strict rules** set by the recipient.



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Study plan

Work-plan and time-table for doctoral studies

- » The plan describes
 - a) what you have already achieved + when (**history**)
 - b) what you plan to achieve + when (**planning**)
 regarding courses, presentations, thesis process, study abroad...
- » The plan can be written
 - a) chronologically (e.g. year 2011, year 2012...)
 - b) by task (courses, conference presentations, seminars, important steps in the thesis work...)
- » Remember to state if you study full-time or part-time
- » The study plan is usually short (1-2 pages)

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Research proposal

Always remember that the aim for your doctoral studies is to **“independently create new scientific knowledge”**.

The research proposal describes **how** you plan to succeed in reaching this specific goal.

The two most frequent mistakes made by Ph.D. Students?

- » They assume that the research proposal is identical with their thesis manuscript.
- » They believe that the research proposal is a tender for doing consultancy work.

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Research proposal

- » Usually *maximum* 10 pages including abstract (1 page) and list of most significant references (max-max 15 pages, never more + use a sensible font size)
- » The proposal starts with a one-page summary (*abstract*). The abstract is very important, it is read by everyone.

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The contents of the proposal

1. Summary (*abstract*) covering **all items** of the proposal (1 page)
2. *Scientific* description of the *problem area* and statement of *objective(s)*
3. *Operationalisation* of the objectives, description of empirical material and analytical strategy
4. *Time schedule* (the present stage of the project + detailed plan of what will be completed)
5. *Financial plan* (including information on received and applied funding)
6. Additional information (e.g. name(s) of supervisors, part of a larger project, membership in researcher school, description of place of work especially if you plan to study abroad...)
7. *List of most significant references*

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Part 1: Description of the problem area and statement of objective

Answers the questions **"what?"** and **"why?"**

- » Give a clear description of the **state-of-the-art** of the **research topic** of the **scientific field** you have chosen for your project (including relevant **references**). The description should lead to a well-structured **problem description**.
- » State why further research in the field is called for (**scientific contribution**)
- » Define your research questions/hypotheses
- » State your (**scientific**) **objective(s)** in relation till problem description.

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Part 2: Operationalisation of the objectives, description of empirical material, analytical strategy

Answers the question **"how?"**

- » Describe and explain the **methodological approach** you plan to use, which permits empirical measurements of the problem dimensions that the statement of objectives comprises. Justify you choices.
- » Describe (the proposed) **empirical material** and the **analytical strategy** (to be) used.

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Part 3: Time schedule

Answers the question "**when?**"

- » Present a **time schedule** for each important step of your thesis work.

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Part 4: Financial plan

- » **Income**
 - received funding (how much, when, what for)
 - applied funding, decision not yet received (how much, when, what for)
 - planned applications (how much, when, what for)
- » **Costs**
 - full-time or part-time studies
 - empirical study
 - conferences, courses...
 - study abroad
 - other?

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Remember when using your research proposal and study plan externally

- » Follow carefully all the rules (e.g. how the plan should be structured, the length of the plan, special requirements regarding contents...). Do not destroy your chances by being careless.
- » Be sensible and realistic. Do not try to be too smart and too optimistic. The evaluators take into account that plans vary according to the level of experience of the student.
- » Remember that often the same people read your proposal in different settings at least in Finland; Finland is a small country.

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