

Purpose of the Research Proposal

Due by the end of the third month of the PhD fellowship, the formal research proposal serves two important functions. First, having the proposal accepted by the School of Doctoral Studies and Kristiania enables the PhD Fellow to be eligible to earn a PhD from the university. Without this required exercise, PhD Fellows will not be allowed to progress in their program of study. Second, this provides a critical opportunity for cross-disciplinary feedback about the quality and contribution of the PhD Fellow's planned project. The proposal will be reviewed by the Fellow's supervisor, the Program Committee, and the Doctoral Degree Committee. All three points of review will provide feedback based on the criteria discussed in this document and a recommendation for progression.

Recommendations for progression will be an accept, accept with minor revisions (which do not need to be reviewed at the PGC or DDC, but must be approved by the supervisory team and will be reviewed during the WIP), major revisions required (which does have to be reviewed again by the PGC and DDC before the Fellow can progress), or unsatisfactory which requires an entirely new research proposal to be written.

When writing the proposal, PhD Fellows should remember that the purpose of this document is to build a persuasive case for the conceptual and practical value of the research agenda that the Fellow is implementing over the next three years. This document should be written for an interdisciplinary audience, not for a specialist audience. That is to say, the Fellows should not assume the readers' familiarity with the field of study. Broadly, the research proposal will be evaluated (see the rubric) on its scientific quality and feasibility.

Research Proposal Requirements

The Research Proposal should adhere to the following requirements:

- The document should not exceed 10 pages, using single-spacing and Times New Roman 12-point font.
- Figures and tables are permitted, but they should be referred to in the text and included within the 10-page limit.
- The 10-page limit does not include the references section.

The Research Proposal should include the following sections, each fulfilling its specific objectives:

1. Title

A concise and informative title that reflects the research topic.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an overall context for the research and broad justification of the study.

- **Background:** Provide an introductory and brief overview of the research area, including key concepts, rationale, context, theories, and previous research.
- **Research Problem:** Clearly state the research problem or gap in knowledge that the study aims to address.

- **Research Questions or Objectives:** Clearly state the specific objectives or research questions that the study aims to address. These objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART objectives).
- **Research Scope & Boundaries:** Define the boundaries and limitations of the research. This includes specifying the scope of the study in terms of the target population, geographic location, and any other relevant contextual factors, ensuring that the research is focused, achievable, and aligned with the overall aims of the PhD program.

3. Literature Review

This section situates the study's theoretical perspective within the broader field(s) of study relevant to the research proposal.

- **Review of Literature:** Conduct a brief review of most relevant literature to establish the theoretical framework and context for the proposed research.
- **Research Gaps:** Identify gaps, limitations, or unresolved issues in the existing literature that the proposed research will address.

4. Theoretical Framework

This section specifically identifies the relevant theoretical perspective(s) and introduces the overall project's broad hypotheses and/or research questions. This should not be described in terms of anticipated papers, but should be a holistic view of the project.

- **Theoretical Perspective(s):** Present the theoretical perspective(s), framework(s), or model(s) guiding the research. Explain how these perspectives contribute to the understanding of the research problem and how they shape the research design and analysis.
- **Hypotheses or Research Questions:** Formulate testable hypotheses or research questions that will be investigated in the study.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Provide empirical or theoretical evidence from previous studies or scholarly work that supports the use of the chosen theoretical framework. This strengthens the credibility and validity of the proposed research.
- **Limitations and Critique:** Acknowledge any limitations or critiques of the chosen theoretical framework. Discuss any potential weaknesses or alternative viewpoints that exist in the literature.

5. Methodology

This section should present an overview of the proposed research methodology (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), data collection methods, sampling techniques, and any tools or instruments to be utilized. Like the theoretical framework, this section should not be described in terms of the anticipated papers, but should be a holistic view of the project.

- **Research Design:** Describe the overall research design, including the research approach (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods) and any specific methods or techniques to be used.
- **Data Collection:** Explain the methods and tools for data collection, including sampling techniques, data sources, and instrumentation.

- **Data Analysis:** A discussion of the data analysis techniques or methods that will be employed to analyze the collected data and address the research questions or objectives. This part should demonstrate the researcher's understanding of appropriate and potential analytical approaches.

6. Research Plan and Timeline

This section should outline the anticipated research papers that will be produced as a part of the PhD and in so doing describe research activities and timelines with milestones and deliverables. This should be aligned with program requirements.

- **Research Activities:** Provide a detailed plan of the research activities, including data collection, analysis, and any other necessary steps.
- **Timeline:** Outline a realistic timeline for each stage of the research, indicating key milestones and deliverables.

7. Expected Results and Contributions

- **Expected Findings:** Discuss the anticipated findings or outcomes of the study and their potential implications.
- **Potential Contributions:** Highlight the originality and potential contributions of the proposed research to the field, such as advancing theory, filling gaps in knowledge, or providing practical applications.

8. Ethical Considerations

- **Ethics Approval:** Describe any ethical considerations associated with the research, such as participant consent, data confidentiality, or potential risks.
- **Ethical Guidelines:** Explain how ethical standards (e.g., GDPR compliance) will be upheld and any measures taken to ensure the well-being of participants and compliance with ethical guidelines.

9. Resources and Budget

- **Resources:** Identify the resources required to conduct the research, such as access to data, facilities, equipment, or collaboration with other institutions.
- **Budget:** Provide a brief budget estimate if applicable, including any funding needs or anticipated expenses.

10. References

Include a comprehensive list of references cited throughout the proposal (inline citations) using a standard and consistent citation style.

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluative Criteria	Accept	Accept w/ Minor Revision	Major Revision	Unsatisfactory	Feedback for PhD Fellow
Scientific Quality					
• Clarity & pertinence of objectives, RQ's/H's and project description					
• Soundness and credibility of conceptualization and study rationale					
• Soundness of proposed research design(s)					
• Potential to contribute to theory, field, and/or applied work beyond the current state-of-the-art					
• Well-reasoned rationale for expected research results, societal relevance, and potential for research impact					
• Project well-aligned between rationale, background, and research plan					
Feasibility					
• Implementation of the progress plan is realistic					
• Demonstrated contingency plan for data collection and analysis					
• Ethical considerations and how these will be handled well-articulated					