

Guideline for Bachelor paper Research Proposal

N.B.: This is a very general guideline for the Bachelor paper Research Proposal. Your supervisor might require slightly modified research proposal.

Deadline: You need to submit your research proposal to your supervisor no later than **on first working day of quartile** (Q4 or Q1) in which you do your BSc Thesis research.

The aim of your research proposal

- Convince others that you have a worthwhile research project
- Why do you want to do it? Make sure that you have a clear focus: what is the goal of the study, which problem do you want to solve, what do you plan to accomplish?
- How are you going to do it? Do you have a good grasp of the relevant literature? Is your research design appropriate?

Structuring of your research proposal: key elements that should be present

- **Framing the research problem:** follow the research funnel. Provide the necessary background or context for your research problem. Describe the situation and complication: i.e., what's the context of your study and what is wrong and/or should be improved/developed/solved? Why is the problem important? Why is your study necessary?
Go beyond the obvious: seldom the initial research question is the actual problem. For help on problem framing, see:
http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jpc/vol3iss2/IPC_V3Is2_Hicks&Nair.pdf
and
<http://hbr.org/2012/09/are-you-solving-the-right-problem/>
- **Key concepts:** based on the framing of your research problem you can derive a number of key concepts that play an important role in your study. Make sure you define these key concepts: they are the constituting elements of your research goal and research question. Based on your key concepts you *might* be able to identify independent and dependent variables and develop a conceptual model.
- **Research Goal:** one sentence summarizing the goal of the study
- **(Central) Research Question:** one sentence framing the key problem. Contains core concepts and, for example, the type of approach (why, to what extent, how, etc), type of organization, type of issue, etc. And, has to fit with the research goal! N.b.: for the generalizability of your study it's usually better not to mention a specific organization in the research question
- The central research question *could* be split in smaller questions, which ideally would be answered in separate chapters and/or sections
- Make both goal and question as precise, specific and focused as possible: this is your most important safeguard against derailment of the project
- **Theoretical framework:** Which theory/theories are most relevant? If you have good key concepts this would already give a clear indication of appropriate theory
- Identify "key player's" and refer to the most relevant and representative publications
- **Academic relevance:** What's the value for the (specific) academic field(s)?
- **Practical relevance:** What's the value for organizations or industries?
- **First ideas on the empirical part** (if relevant).
- **Outline of the thesis:** provide a short overview of the envisioned sections/chapters and what they contain
- **Planning:** when do you expect to deliver what section of your study? What are risks and how will you deal with them if they occur?