

Abstract of Proposed Doctoral Research Project

The abstract of your doctoral research proposal is part of your application to the doctoral programme at the Faculty of Environmental and Regional Sciences and Education (i.e., URBI Faculty). It needs to convince the admission committee that your research project would pose an important contribution to the scientific debate in the field of the chosen doctoral school and its main topics. It is meant to show that you are able to self-responsibly plan and conduct a high-quality research project within a certain organisational and temporal framework.

A complete and reasonable abstract of your research proposal should address the following topics and questions. The questions and indicated word counts serve as guideline:

- Research Problem and relevance: What is the problem you are planning to address and solve with your research? Why is it relevant? What is already known in scientific literature? What are gaps of knowledge that justify your research? [about 500 words]
- Research Questions: What are your main research questions resp. objectives? In case of a cumulative PhD-thesis (i.e., dissertation based on published articles), what are the topics and objectives of the planned publications? [about 200 words]
- Research Design and Methods: Which research methodology will guide you through your research? How do you intend to answer your research question(s)? Which scientific theories or concepts are of interest and relevant to investigate your research problem; and which will you employ in your research? Which set of research methods will you apply, based on which theoretical approaches? For empirical work: How do you want to gather data (modelling, experiments, surveys, etc.)? How do you plan to analyse the data? What are the reasons why you chose this set of methods, and not alternative ones? [about 1000 words]
- Relevance in the Context of the Doctoral School and Programme: How is your research project related to the subject of the selected doctoral school? Does your research build on existing findings or ongoing research activities at the doctoral school? [about 300 words]
- Project Management: What is the planned schedule for the project? Considering your publication plan, what are important milestones? [about 200 words]

A well-structured abstract answers these questions transparently and step-by-step. We recommend the following structure of the abstract:

Title page

- Working title of your research project
- Your name and contact details
- Doctoral school, curriculum, and supervisors

1. Problem addressed

- State of the art in the field
- Identified gap of knowledge

2. Research objective(s) and questions

- Main research objective(s)
- Research questions (of planned publications)

3. Research design and methods

- Main theoretical approaches
- Selected set of research methods
- Justification of method selection

4. Relation to subject of the doctoral school

5. Preliminary schedule

6. Bibliography



An extended and updated abstract of your research proposal, usually 5 to 10 pages in length, must be submitted as a "Research exposé" to the URBI Dean's Office within the first year of your doctoral studies.