

SUM 4100 Research methods and project design

Evaluation form: pass/fail

SUM 4100 is an introductory course in methods at Master level that is taught every fall semester. The teaching has been a combination of active lectures and group activities during weekly seminars. The final exam assignment is the last of in total five assignments and builds on the other four (already assessed by the course leaders). The students have already received comments on a draft of this final assignment. In addition to the curriculum covering methodology, specific methods, ethics, and designing a research project, the students have been given a detailed document that describes how the assignment should be solved. This is reproduced in the evaluation criteria listed below.

For evaluating this assignment, the following criteria should be used: In the guiding text for the research proposal, we suggested the following structure:

1. Title
2. Introduction/Background/Rationale
3. Research question(s)
4. Literature review
5. Aims and objectives
6. Methods
7. Timetable
8. References

Because there is a variety of types of theses (empirically based-primary sources; empirically based-secondary sources; theoretical thesis), the students were given the freedom to decide how to structure the proposal beyond our suggested content. A maximum length was set at 10 pages (+\ - 10%), excluding references.

The proposal should further be evaluated on the following:

- Is the structure coherent and clear?
- Is the title clear?
- Is the problem to be investigated clearly stated in the introduction and supported by references? Is a rationale/justification for the research demonstrated?
- Is the literature review clearly written, concise and supported by references?

- Does the research question demonstrate that the project is doable?
- Are aims and objectives clearly stated and related to the research question?
- Are the methods linked to the research question (would they allow to answer the question), is it sufficiently explained where to find sources of information? In terms of specific research tools, students only need to mention which ones they plan to use, supported by references (the text books are enough) is there a plan as to how the data is going to be analyzed?

Is the timetable detailed enough to allow the student and the supervisor to monitor progress? Are the references properly cited in the text and in the reference list?

Students should use Chicago author-date style.

A good proposal should be clear, well written, well justified in terms of topic and method, and have a clear timetable. To achieve the mark “pass” the overall assessment of the research proposal text should indicate whether the proposal in general has a good presentation of the research theme to be investigated and is satisfactory in most of the criteria mentioned above. Moreover, the candidate should demonstrate an acceptable level of independent and critical thinking. The lower level for achieving pass should be equivalent to a C.