
Course Exam

Master Thesis Research Proposal

MAE4221 Research Seminar I: Researcher's Skills

Centre for Educational Measurement at the University of Oslo (CEMO)

Instructor(s): Diego Gonzalez & Ronny Scherer

Main Task

Your main task for this course exam is to **write a comprehensive research proposal** that outlines the **topic, main objectives, background, and approaches** for your Master thesis. While engaging in this task, you will be asked to organize your ideas, formulate scientific research questions, and communicate them clearly. The resultant proposal shall guide you further in the work on your thesis.



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Proposal Content and Structure

The research proposal must contain the following elements:

- *Title page:*
 - Tentative [title](#) of your Master thesis
 - Your name and the names of the supervisor(s), including their affiliation
- *Main text:*
 - **Abstract** (max. 150 words) and **3-5 keywords**
 - **Introduction and background**
 - **Topic:** Introduce the topic and its relevance.
 - **Problem:** Describe the research problem/gap and its relevance (for research, education, and/or society).
 - **Review of relevant scholarship:** State-of-the-art (relation to previous studies), key concepts and constructs, theories, differences between previous research and the current research (if applicable)
 - **Research questions and/or hypotheses**
 - **Research questions/hypotheses and objectives:** Define the main objective(s) of the study, research questions/hypotheses, and contribution.
 - **Proposed methods and feasibility**
 - Describe the **intended study approach** (i.e., study type/design, data/sample, measures/variables, analytic methods/framework).
 - Describe the **feasibility**: What is needed to address the research questions and/or test the hypotheses?
 - Any data requirements (availability/accessibility)?
 - Any ethical or practical constraints?
 - Any software requirements?
 - **Proposed schedule**
 - Develop a schedule outlining the different phases of your research.

- *References*
- *Tables*
- *Figures*

Proposal Format

- *Format style:* APA 7th edition (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>)
- *Layout:* 1 inch margins, double-spaced
- *Font:* Calibri, Cambria, or Times New Roman, 12pt
- *Document format:* Word- or pdf-file
- *Length:* max. 10 pages (incl. title page, main text, references, tables, and figures)

Evaluation Criteria and Process

A good research proposal shows

- **Value:** Good account of the relevance and contribution of this research
- **Coherence:** Internal (logical flow, scientific reasoning) & external (literature)
- **Clear language:** Concise, structured, and appropriate use of language
- **Feasibility:** Realistic, answerable, and feasible research questions and approaches
- **Specificity:** Specific research questions and measurable constructs/concepts

An easy route to a bad research proposal

- Ignore the content elements and formatting guidelines.
- Misrepresent the state-of-the-art of your research topic (e.g., ignore landmark studies and publications).
- Provide too much/not enough detail on minor/major issues.
- Write down everything you know about the topic without a clear sense of direction.
- Write the research proposal without consulting with your supervisor(s).
- Ignore the above-mentioned elements of a good research proposal.

Quality Assurance

A committee of CEMO staff will assess all thesis proposals intermediately before the final deadline and provide you with feedback. This step will allow you to further improve your proposal before submitting the final version that is subject to the grading.

Grading

The research proposals will be graded as *pass or fail*. Students must achieve at least 60 % to pass the exam.

Proposal Submission

Please upload the proposal in one document via the **Inspira exam system** (as a pdf- or a docx-file).

Submission deadline: 04.06.2021, 3:00 PM Oslo time, via Inspira