

MAE4230 Research Seminar I: Researcher's Skills - Proposal Specifications

General format: PDF max. 8 pages APA-style: 1 inch margins, double-spaced, 12pt, ...

- Front Page
- Provisional working Title of Master Thesis
- Abstract (max 150 words)
- Keywords
- Thesis team (name, position, affiliation)
- You
- (Co-)Supervisor(s)
- Main

Introduce general Topic (state of the art, central terminology & constructs)

Zoom in on Problem (relevance: societal, scientific, methodological?)

Define study Objective (contribution?)

Outline intended study Approach (design, operationalisation, method, analysis framework...)

Specify preliminary Research Questions

Feasibility: What is needed to target the RQ's & achieve objective?

pay special attention to data requirements (availability/accessibility) & ethical+ practical constraints

specify a time plan

It is natural that there will be a high variability in level of detail between different proposals. For instance, less exploratory research or established research approaches/lines tend to allow for a more easy a priori write-down of specifics. This will be taken into account in the evaluation of your proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

A good proposal:

Value: convince reader of research relevance

Coherence: internal (logical flow) & external (literature)

Language: clear & structured

Steering: guide for the researcher

Realistic: answerable & feasible

Quality assurance step: A committee of CEMO staff will assess all thesis proposals intermediately before the final deadline and provide you with feedback to allow you to further improve your proposal before submitting the final version.

The easy route to a bad proposal:

- Do not comply with content and style requirements
- Misrepresent the state of the art & do not cite landmark studies
- Too much/not enough detail on minor/major issues
- "Rambling all over the map" without a clear sense of direction
- Opposite of the above criteria for a good proposal