

Graduate School of Business and Economics (GSBE) Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Basel

Guidelines for the research proposal

Objective of the proposal

The objective of the proposal is to demonstrate the student's aptitude, ability and skills necessary to conduct independent research that has the potential for being publishable in international peer-reviewed scientific journals. The research proposal serves as the key input for the decision on admission to the second phase of the doctoral studies. For doctoral students that are employed at the Faculty of Business and Economics (with internal or external funding), this decision coincides with the decision on prolongation of the employment contract beyond one year.

Content

In the proposal, students describe their first planned research project. The proposed project must correspond to one independent research paper that has the potential for being publishable in international peer-reviewed scientific journals.

The proposal must describe in detail

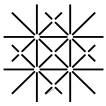
- (a) the research question and why it is important
- (b) the current state of the literature
- (c) the contribution to the literature
- (d) the methodological challenges that have to be solved
- (e) for empirical projects, the data that will be used
- (f) the empirical methodology and/or the theoretical framework that will be used to answer the research question and how it helps to solve the methodological challenges

If already available, students may include first preliminary work such as descriptive empirical results or an outline of a theoretical framework. Depending on the amount of preliminary work, it can be included in the text or added as an appendix.

The expected length of the proposal is usually no more than 20 pages.

Submission

Doctoral students that are employed at the Faculty of Business and Economics (with internal or external funding) must submit the research proposal no later than 9 months after the start of employment. The deadline for doctoral students without employment at the faculty (external doctoral students) is 4 weeks before the end of the third semester after enrollment.



The presentation and defense of the research proposal (1st-year assessment) take place no later than 10 days after the submission deadline. The Graduate School coordinates time and date at a sufficiently early stage (no later than 3 months before the submission deadline) between the parties involved (see below "Evaluation").

Evaluation

Doctoral students must present and defend their research proposal in front of the first supervisor and at least one member of the steering committee of the GSBE ("Group I"). In case the second supervisor has already been appointed, he or she may as well be invited to the defense of the research proposal. The member of the steering committee gives a recommendation regarding the continuation of the doctoral studies based on the research proposal, its presentation and the student's ability to defend the proposal. The first supervisor makes the final decision regarding the continuation of the doctoral studies based on both these criteria and the overall performance of the doctoral student.

Revision

If, after the defense, there is greater need for improvement (e.g. lack of important points, insufficiently mature or too ambitious research proposal), an improved version can be submitted within 14 days. The final decision is made based on the revised version within 3 days after the resubmission. The Graduate School coordinates and documents the process.

Unfavorable assessment

If the decision is to discontinue the doctoral studies, supervision consent will be withdrawn and the doctoral student will be exmatriculated at the earliest possible date. Moreover, the employment contract of doctoral students that are employed at the Faculty of Business and Economics will not be prolonged beyond the initial first year (see § 23, 1 of the Guidelines for the scientific staff at the University of Basel).

Presentation and defense of the Research Proposal

Procedure:

- presentation 15 to 20 minutes maximum (PhD student)
- 30-45 minutes discussion
- Follow-up discussion without the PhD student (first supervisor, member of the steering committee of the Graduate School GSBE, and second supervisor, if taking part in the defense)
- Final discussion with all parties involved, including the PhD student (feedback, if necessary, required improvements of the Research Proposal).

Evaluation criteria

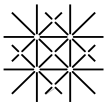
The proposal will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Originality:

The proposed project must make an independent and substantive contribution to the scientific literature in the chosen field of research.

2. Scientific quality:

The methodology proposed to answer the research questions of the project must be appropriate, i.e. it must be suitable to solve the methodological challenges, and it must resemble the state-of-the-art in the chosen field of research.



3. Feasibility:

The proposed research must be feasible. As a general guideline, it should be possible to finish the first research project within approximately one year.

4. Overall quality:

The output of the research project must have the potential for being publishable in international peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Basel, May 28, 2021¹

Prof. Dr. Conny Wunsch

Head of the Program Committee of the Graduate School of Business and Economics (GSBE)

¹ Initial version dated Basel, October 7, 2019.

Updated version according to the guidelines of the President's Board of the University of Basel regarding employment and supervision of doctoral candidates at the University of Basel as of January 1, 2020¹, dated May 27, 2020 www.unibas.ch → Research → Graduate Center → Documents and Regulations.

Updated version with regard to the presentation and defense of the research proposal, Basel, dated May 28, 2021.