Guidelines for writing a doctoral research proposal for the public presentation at the Faculty and evaluation criteria

Social Sciences Directorate of Doctoral Studies (Directorate of Studies 40)
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Passing the public presentation at the Faculty (FÖP) allows you to move on to the research phase of the doctoral programme. The public presentation is an opportunity both to discuss your work with an interdisciplinary group of colleagues and to confirm that your research plans are feasible. Your research proposal should therefore demonstrate that you have a concrete plan for carrying out a robust, relevant research project and for writing your doctoral thesis.

Your proposal may not exceed **4,000 words** (excluding references). Together with the research proposal, doctoral candidates need to submit several documents when registering for the public presentation at the Faculty.

You need to discuss your research proposal with your **supervisor(s)** to make sure it aligns with academic norms and standards in your discipline. While there is flexibility in the structure of your proposal, you should address the following aspects:

- **Research topic:** Define the research subject and its broader scholarly and public relevance.
- **State of the art and theoretical approach:** Describe existing research in the area, situate your project in it, and explain what theories and concepts you will use.
- **Research objectives, questions, and/or hypotheses:** Summarise the aims of the research and the questions or hypotheses you use to structure it.
- **Methodology:** Describe how you will carry out the research, and justify your approach and choice of methods, including data sources and analytical approach.
- **Ethical considerations:** In addition to completing the Research Ethics Pre-Screening for PhD Projects, discuss ethical considerations in the design and process of your research, including reflections on your role as a researcher.
- **Composition/structure of the doctoral thesis:** State the type of doctoral thesis (a monograph or a collection of papers) you plan to submit, and its anticipated structure.
- **Work plan:** Include a time schedule and describe the financial resources and the support structures in place to help you complete the doctoral thesis.

During the public presentation at the Faculty, you will give a 10-minute presentation that summarises the research plans described in your research proposal and key aspects of the Research Ethics Pre-Screening for PhD Projects. The presentation is followed by a 10 to 20-minute discussion with the respective doctoral advisory board and a short internal discussion of the board members. The supervisor/s is/are expected to attend the presentations. They are invited to the board's internal discussion, but do not have the right to contribute to the joint recommendation. The board gives feedback and suggestions, and checks that you are well prepared to complete the doctoral programme.

In particular, the Doctoral Advisory Boards at the Faculty of Social Science evaluate:

- **Feasibility:** Can the project be completed in the time planned? Is the scope realistic and suitable for a doctoral thesis project? Have access to data and ethical issues been considered? Does the doctoral candidate have the necessary support for completing the project?
- **Contribution:** Is the relevance of the research project for the academic literature clear? Does the project relate to established lines of work in the discipline?
- **Coherence:** Does the research endeavour form a coherent single project and address a specific overarching research question or problem? Are the theories, methods and analytical approach aligned?

You can receive further guidance and tailored support by taking the introduction course and by signing up for peer mentoring.

For further information about the doctoral programme in Social Sciences, please visit the website of the **Vienna Doctoral School of Social Sciences**: vds-sosci.univie.ac.at