

# PhD Research Proposal Guidelines

a four-year, third cycle doctoral programme

Title: Teacher Education and Educational Sciences of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education

The PhD Research Proposal Guidelines are laid down in the [Rules of the Doctoral Programme of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education](#) (hereinafter: the Rules), adopted at the 9th regular meeting of the Senate of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education.

Doctoral candidates choose the topic of their doctoral dissertation in accordance with their enrolled study programme and in agreement with the intended supervisor and/or the potential co-supervisor. Doctoral candidates submit their research proposal to the VIS (University Information System) after it has been endorsed by the intended supervisor and/or the potential co-supervisor.

*The research proposal shall be designed in the following way:*

- a) The proposal shall consist of 5 up to 7 pages long text, a list of literature and sources used and referred to in the text, normally in .doc format, Times New Roman, size 12, single spacing. The pages must be numbered. Academic English style of writing shall be used. The doctoral candidate is responsible for the linguistic correctness of the text and must ensure that the text has been proofread before the submission by attaching a proofreader's confirmation at the time of submission.

The research proposal shall include:

➤ TITLE (in English)

The title of the research proposal should be short and concise (up to 150 characters) and reflect the content of the doctoral dissertation. As a rule, the title should be free of punctuation (commas, colons, semicolons, dashes), abbreviations, symbols, quotation marks, etc.

➤ TITLE (in Slovene)

The Slovene translation of the title of the dissertation must be consistent with the English title.

➤ KEYWORDS

Keywords are descriptors of the research topic. They usually consist of 5 up to 7 words or phrases. They are usually ranked from most to least relevant, but alphabetical order can also be used.

➤ SCIENTIFIC FIELD OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

The scientific field to which the proposed doctoral thesis will contribute should be indicated.

➤ THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/Framework:

The theoretical background provides an overview of the specific research literature and includes an introduction to the concepts used in the title and keywords. The most relevant theories related to the research topic should be discussed, compared and examined. Recent national and international bibliography should also be included which will demonstrate the doctoral candidate's expertise of the research field. The doctoral candidate must cite the bibliography used appropriately in the body and at the end of the text. The chosen method of citation must be applied consistently. The length of the theoretical background is approximately 1.5 pages and 25 references.

### ○ Research problem or research purpose

The research problem is a general, broad question to which the doctoral thesis will relate. It is necessary to explain what is already known in the selected research area (previous research review), what has not yet been investigated, and to justify why the selected topic is worth investigating. In this way, the doctoral candidate has justified the relevance of the proposed research problem/question and will also be able to state the Research contribution of the thesis which refers to a novel and significant addition to a particular field of study that advances the existing knowledge, theories, or practices.

### ○ Research objectives, research questions, and/or research hypotheses

The main research problem is broken down into more specific questions. Based on theories, research findings or reflected experiences, hypotheses or assumptions can also be formulated about what kind of results will be achieved. It is recommended to set research questions or hypotheses that explore cause-effect relationships (expected differences or relationships between data). The objectives should be specific and testable. It is important that the research questions, hypotheses or objectives are substantively derived from the research problem and that the sample, data collection techniques and data processing procedures used to answer these questions are specified. The research questions, hypotheses and objectives provide a framework for the research study and help guide further research. Depending on the research approach, the doctoral student may formulate either research questions, hypotheses or objectives (or all three).

### ○ Research design and research methods

The research method (descriptive, causal-experimental or causal-non-experimental) and the research approach (theoretical or empirical research: quantitative research, qualitative research, mixed methods research, action research, evaluation research, etc.) should be indicated. In the case of empirical research, the sample should also be indicated, a description of the data collection process should be provided, whether and how the ethical standards of educational research are followed should be specified, and how the obtained data will be processed.

### ○ Sample

The sampling method should be stated (random, non-random: random/purposeful sampling). The sample should be described in detail (sampling method, number of units, average age, average length of service, gender distribution, distribution by level of education, etc.) Any characteristics of the sample that are relevant to the research or any variables covered by the research questions, hypotheses or objectives should be stated.

### ○ Data collection

The techniques and instruments intended for data collection should be specified. The process of instrument development or authorship should be indicated. The data collection instruments should be described in detail (e.g. number of questions, what content areas they cover, how many open/closed/combined questions, etc.). It should also be described how the measurement properties of the instruments used (validity, reliability, objectivity, sensitivity) will be verified or ensured. The data collection procedure should be described (when will the data be collected, where, for how long, how, etc.) and whether a pilot study is planned or has already been conducted.

### ○ Adherence to ethical standards

It should be stated how compliance with ethical standards in educational research will be ensured.

- **Data analysis**

In the case of quantitative research, the statistical procedures intended to analyse the data collected in order to answer the research questions or test the hypotheses should be stated. In the case of qualitative research, the process of qualitative data analysis should be described.

- **Expected results and original research contribution**

The expected specific results (in terms of the research problem, research objectives, research questions and/or hypotheses) should be stated. In particular, the expected original contribution to the development of the scientific field of the doctoral thesis should be highlighted.

- **Literature**

All (and only) references included in the text of the research proposal should be cited. The references should be listed in alphabetical order of the authors' surnames. If multiple works by the same author are used, the works should also be ordered by year, from the most recent to the oldest. References should be cited consistently and correctly, according to the chosen citation method, which is common in the disciplinary field of the selected research topic. In case you use the APA7 citation style, here are some links to the websites which provide guides for using this citation style: <https://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/apa-referencing/7gettingstarted>, <https://www.newcastle.edu.au/library/study-skills/referencing/apa7>, <https://goldenwestcollege.libguides.com/apa7> etc.

➤ **DRAFT RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

(except for those who progressed regularly and were enrolled in a PhD programme before 2021/22)

The draft research data management plan is prepared by the doctoral student (applicable to the generation of doctoral students enrolled from the academic year 2021/2022 onwards) in light of Article 50 of the UL Doctoral Regulations, which states that research data generated and collected for the purposes of the doctoral thesis must be published or otherwise made available in a way that is transparent, accessible and interoperable (and what should that be? To help doctoral students plan for the management of research data, the University of Ljubljana has produced a guide for creating a research data management plan and a form for doctoral students. All materials are available on the [UL Doctoral School website](#)).

- b) Curriculum vitae of the doctoral candidate (list of the most important scientific, professional, project-related and other publications and works).
- c) Approval of the Ethics Committee of the UL PEF (in accordance with Article 51 of the Regulations, available from the UL PEF Chancellor's Office) or of another ethics committee, if the nature of the proposed disposition of the thesis so requires.

When submitting the research proposal application to the VIS, the doctoral candidate may also request that the dissertation be written in English, stating the reasons for writing in a foreign language. In this case, the doctoral candidate must submit not only the draft dissertation and the CV in Slovenian, but also the draft dissertation and the CV in English. If the doctoral candidate is a foreigner, the research proposal and the CV may only be written in English.

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Prof Dr Janez Vogrinc