

Template for Bachelor- and Master thesis proposals

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To be filled out before the start of the thesis, after agreeing a topic with a supervisor. Restrict to 4-5 pages including references.

[Preliminary title]

It is often useful to think about a title that sums up the contents of the planned thesis in a nutshell. Titles should be as short and concise as possible.

[Aims of the thesis]

*What is the general aim of the thesis? Try to phrase in one sentence, what you want to achieve overall with this thesis. Why is it worth to conduct your research? Why is it **novel** and needed?*

[Research questions or hypotheses]

*For more descriptive theses, it is often better to phrase two to three research questions. What do you want to find out, and why is it worth to answer these questions? Research questions often help you to identify **research gaps**, i.e. aspects that have not yet been covered by others and are worth examining. For theses including lab or field experiments, or pseudo-experimental approaches at the landscape scale (e.g. comparing different management categories), it is usually required to develop clear, testable and falsifiable hypotheses. Discuss these with your supervisors early on and visualize.*

[Material and methods]

Describe here, what data you want to use, if they are already available or need to be collected. Describe the sampling design (sample size, number of replicate samples, sampling strategy (e.g., regular vs. random sampling), type of controls). Think of potential statistical methods to analyse and visualize your data already at this step. The methods section is especially important and should be discussed with your supervisors.

[Expected results]

Try to imagine here how your main results could look like. Mention two or max. three expected outcomes of your thesis. Think of how you would visualize these results, e.g. in boxplots, scatterplots or other plots depending on the data - even just using pen and paper. Imagining the key graphs of your results section will make it much easier to plan data collection and analysis.

[Feasibility and risks]

Estimate the time you will need to collect your data and finalize analysis and writing. Think of factors that might prevent you from conducting your thesis work as planned. Develop a "Plan B" in case you think that there are considerable risks involved.