

Doctoral Program in Law – Research Plan Guidelines

General Guidelines for the Research Plan

The research plan is the most important part of the application. The plan must clearly describe the background of the dissertation project, the current state of research on the topic, the project's research questions and methods, and the expected results of the project. Additionally, the plan should outline how the results of the project will be disseminated. The research plan can be written in Finnish, Swedish or in English.

The research plan should demonstrate that:

1. The research topic is scientifically original and relevant.
2. The research questions are defined with sufficient precision.
3. The project contributes new knowledge to its field.
4. The applicant has sufficient knowledge of their field and its methodologies.
5. The applicant is capable of completing the project within a timeframe of three to four years of doctoral studies.

When drafting the plan, it is important to keep in mind that the evaluation panel consists of experienced legal scholars, but its members may not be familiar with the specific topic of the research plan.

The structure and technical implementation of the plan must meet the following requirements:

Structure of the Research Plan

The research plan consists of the following sections:

1. Project Title

This section presents the title of the research project, the applicant's name, and the project's start and end dates.

2. Abstract

The abstract provides a brief and concise description of the research topic, research questions, planned methodology, and expected results of the project.

3. Declaration of the use of artificial intelligence

Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in drafting the research plan must be clearly disclosed at this stage, with a transparent explanation distinguishing the applicant's own work from that produced by AI software. If no AI tools were used in preparing the proposal, this should be explicitly stated.

4. Background and Significance of the Project

This section situates the dissertation research within its scientific and societal context. It includes a description of the background and scientific and societal significance of the project, as well as a review of previous research on the topic. The section should also identify research gaps or other needs that the project aims to address.

5. Objectives, Results and Impact

This section presents a clear description of the project's objectives and research questions. It also outlines the expected results, the added value the project contributes to existing research, and the project's scientific and societal impact.

The objectives and research questions should be original yet feasible within the timeframe of the dissertation project. It may be useful to describe the objectives and research questions in a way that briefly outlines the background for each objective, followed by the corresponding research questions and expected results.

6. Methods and Data

This section presents and justifies the methodological approaches and methods used in the project. It also discusses potential risks associated with methodological choices and describes how these risks will be managed.

Additionally, the section describes the research data, explains how it will be collected and analyzed, and considers the ethical dimensions of the research.

7. Implementation and Publication

This section outlines the project's implementation plan, describing its phases (e.g., literature review, data collection, analysis and writing) and intermediate goals. It also presents the project's publication plan.

If the applicant has already worked on the project, this section should describe the project's status at the time of application.

8. Bibliography

Technical Requirements

The research plan must not exceed **22 000 characters** (excluding spaces) including titles, abstract and references, but excluding bibliography.

The abstract must not exceed **2000 characters** (excluding spaces).

The research plan should be written in **12-point font** (except for headings).

Margins must be at least **2 cm wide**.