

# Faculty of Cultural Studies and Aesthetic Communication

## **Guidelines for writing your dissertation synopsis**

You are at the beginning of a research project that is likely to last several years and culminate in the award of your doctorate. You are required to submit an application including an outline of your research project to the dean's office of Faculty 2, University of Hildesheim, for approval by the Faculty 2 doctoral committee. You should present a convincing argument for your research in a synopsis, in which you outline your plan for your dissertation. The guidelines below provide a recommended structure for your synopsis, but in following them you are free to present your project in an appropriate manner.

Your synopsis should be approximately 10 pages long and set out in a clear, reader-friendly way. Please note the following formal requirements:

Font: 12 pt; line spacing: 1.5; fully justified margins; top and bottom margins; page numbers; table of contents.

It should contain the following:

### **General information**

#### 1. Personal details

- Surname, first name, degree
- Position (if applicable)
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Private address, telephone, e-mail
- Work address, telephone, e-mail (if applicable)

#### 2. Details of your project

- Working title of your dissertation
- Subject area and orientation
- Name of your dissertation supervisor
- Details of collaboration with other researchers or institutions (if applicable)

### **Topic**

Introduce your topic and its parameters. What is the background to your topic? Which academic issue have you chosen to address?

### **Key research question**

The focus of this short synopsis should be the key research question that provides the basis for your work. What key question do you want to answer in your dissertation? Why is it socially or academically relevant to find an answer to this question? There may be other subsidiary questions, depending on the particular topic and scope of your dissertation. They must have a clear link to the key question.

### **Objective of the dissertation and anticipated results**

Here you should think about the objective of your research question: what am I aiming to achieve with this dissertation? What do I need to examine/prove/refute? What are the anticipated results?

### **Procedure**

Explain how you intend to examine and answer your research question. Which research methods are you going to employ to find this answer, e.g. theoretical or empirical; primary or secondary analysis; quantitative or qualitative? Which methods have you chosen for your work, and why? Think about the time required for applying certain methods. Do you have the necessary skills, or can you acquire them?

### **Existing research and available materials**

Provide a concise description of existing research as it relates directly to your project. Refer to relevant, key works by other researchers. The presentation should describe what you are seeking to achieve with your research. Explain how you plan to make your own, fresh, constructive contribution to the research debate. Refer to the materials you have used and their availability. What findings and opinions already exist on this subject? Which resources should be used and why?

### **Stages and scheduling**

In a table, set out your chronology for working on your topic and estimate how much time you will spend on each section as part of your overall schedule. What are the different stages of your work plan? What research or travel will be required? When do you plan to write and revise your work?

### **Selected research bibliography**

List the works that you have referred to in your synopsis, along with a selection of key works that you intend to refer to when writing your dissertation.

Doctoral board

April 2013

**Contact** for acceptance of doctoral candidates and procedural/organisational issues relating to doctorates

### **Karin Burg**

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