

# Proposal for a BA or MEd Thesis at the Institute of English Studies

The following guidelines aim to support you in the planning and writing process of your BA or MEd thesis at the Institute of English Studies. Please read them carefully and follow the proposed steps to structure your work. It is important in finding a first and second examiner (*Erst- und ZweitprüferIn*) for your thesis, that you contact potential examiners well in advance (see document “Writing BA Theses at IES – Examiners, Topics, Timeline, Procedure”) and develop a clear plan for your thesis in the form of an exposé or thesis proposal. Your proposal should be approximately 3- 4 pages in total, including cover sheet and bibliography, and encompass the following:

1. Cover sheet
2. Central research questions and problem
3. Current state of research (literature review)
4. Theoretical framework
5. Research methodology and data or material
6. Projected outcomes
7. Structure/outline of table of contents
8. Time plan
9. Research literature

## 1.1 Cover page

The cover page should contain the following information: (Working) title of your thesis, first name and surname, address, e-mail address, university, course of studies, semester, matriculation number, names of preferred first and second examiners and date. Please see chapter 1.2 of the IES stylesheet for more details and chapter 4 for a sample cover page.

## 1.2 Central research questions and problem

In this section you should define the content and scope of your thesis and formulate the central research question(s).

- What do you wish to analyse?
- How might you formulate your research question(s)?
- Why is your research worth carrying out - i.e. what research gap is it filling?

## 1.3 Current state of research (literature review)

- What is your core research literature? Which studies have been published in the context of your research topic and what are central findings of these studies?

## 1.4 Theoretical framework

- Which theoretical framework serves as the basis of your thesis?

## 1.5 Research approach and methodology

Plan and design your research in a way that your theoretical framework, the selection of research objects and focus and the research methodology (if you are writing an empirical thesis, for instance) are logically connected to the core research question.

If you plan to write an **empirical thesis**, you should describe the general structure of your thesis in this section as well as the methodological approach designed to address your research question. This involves addressing questions, such as

- Which method(s) will be applied and how?
- What constitutes the research data (e.g. films, newspaper articles, interviews, statistical data, classroom observation, corpora, questionnaire data, roleplay, simulations, think-aloud protocols, etc.)?
- How is this data to be analysed and interpreted?

If you plan to write an exclusively **theory-based thesis**, you should specify here how you plan to systematically include and analyse theoretical concepts and published research findings.

- What theory are you addressing?
- What are its core questions and findings to date?
- What are your guiding questions?
- How do you plan to answer them?

### **1.6 Projected outcomes (only where applicable – e.g. in classroom-based research, but not, for instance, in most linguistics and literature theses)**

In this section you are not supposed to present the conclusion or results of your thesis. Rather, the aim is to become aware of the potential types of outcomes you anticipate before the actual work process.

- Which answers to your research question(s) do you think are conceivable and possible?
- Can you already formulate theses, ideas, and/or assumptions?

You should present a first draft of the structure of your paper in this section. It is important that the structure is consistent and that the systematic and logical order of your contents is already visible at this stage. The (draft) table of contents should specify the function and approximate length of the individual chapters. You can also annotate your table of contents in order to clarify this to your examiners. Please see chapter 1.4 in the IES stylesheet for more information on your contents page.

### **1.7 Time plan**

The time plan should specify in weekly steps which tasks and work steps will be realised when. Remember that the official amount of time you have for writing the thesis is 8-weeks. Please also say when you plan to register your thesis and when the latest possible date for handing in the thesis would be. Allow enough time for the final revision process and for your paper to be thoroughly proofread. Students are encouraged to make use of the individual consultation services offered by the Writing Center for Academic English in the Language Center (cf. [http:// https://www.leuphana.de/en/institutions/language-center.html](http://https://www.leuphana.de/en/institutions/language-center.html)). The staff there do not offer a proof-reading service, but they are happy to work with you on a variety of issues, such as reviewing drafts at any stage of the writing process, structuring your text, introducing and discussing quotations from the literature or writing a strong introduction and conclusion.

### **1.8 Research literature**

Please list the research literature referenced in the proposal in a list of 'works cited'. You may also list any other relevant research literature from your initial literature review in a list called 'further reading'. See chapter 2 in the IES stylesheet for more information on the documentation of sources and chapter 5 for a sample list of works cited.

**Good luck with your thesis!**