**Thesis proposal (pass/fail)**

*Format*

The format of the thesis proposal should be as follows:

Front page with your name and student number, the name of the programme, the name of your supervisor(s), the word count of the ‘body of the text’ (see below), and a candidate journal for publication (this helps to determine the intended audience of your thesis and hence writing style).

----------------------- The body of the text should be **max. 750 words** and contain: -----------------------

Introduction:

* Start with a paragraph describing a problem in the real-life world (so that a BoS member not familiar with statistics understands why you are pursuing research in this direction);
* Then, add a paragraph describing what is known in the literature;
* Also, describe what is not known and which gap you will address in your thesis;
* End with a clear research question and, if applicable, your hypothesis (for confirmatory research questions – it should be a testable hypothesis) or expectations (for exploratory research questions – can be much vaguer because of the explorative nature of the question).

Analytic strategy:

* Describe how you are planning to answer your research question and how to test your hypothesis or explore your question. Be as specific as possible and preferably use an illustration to help the reader understand how all your plans connect.
* Also, include information on what data you are going to use and if you already have ethical consent. If you do already have consent, putting the FETC case number on your front page also suffices.
* Describe what software/packages you will use.

-------------------------------------------- End of word count --------------------------------------------

Reference list

* Add a reference list for the literature used in the text – you can use the formatting style of the chosen journal, but this is not mandatory.
* Add about 20 extra references that will be used for the thesis (you do not have to have read these already).

You are requested by the faculty to submit your proposal via Osiris. Also, send the final version to your supervisor via email.

*Grading*

The Board of Studies will review the proposals (2 social sciences professors per proposal) and decide whether:

* The thesis proposal is sufficient (**a pass**); sometimes, this is accompanied by some minor suggestions that can be helpful and should be discussed with your thesis advisor and/or mentor, but there is no need to send the thesis proposal back to the Board for re-evaluation.
* The thesis proposal has serious shortcomings (**a fail**) that need to be considered and improved within a given timeframe. Clear questions or recommendations for improvement will be provided and should be discussed with your thesis advisor and mentor. An improved version must be sent to the Board. The Board will re-evaluate the thesis proposal and repeat the process until they consider the plan sufficient (**a pass**).

*Note that this evaluation process is done to increase the success chances of all thesis. It has no effect on the final grade for the thesis, and also not on the grade for the research seminar course.*

*You will only receive written feedback from the Board of Studies on your proposal if you receive a fail. If you receive a pass, you will normally not receive written feedback. This does not mean your proposal is flawless, but that the board deems your thesis proposal feasible and of sufficient quality.*

**Checklist:**

*Essential:*

Do the first couple of sentences explain the underlying real-world problem you are going to contribute to (so that a BoS member not familiar with statistics understands why you are pursuing research in this direction);

Is the paragraph describing the current state of affairs clear, and does it end with a clear gap in the literature?

Is the research question clear and does it end with a question mark?

Are there hypotheses (for confirmatory research questions – it should be a testable hypothesis) or expectations specified (for exploratory research questions – can be much vaguer because of the explorative nature of the question)?

Is the analytical strategy detailed enough? (Describe how you are planning to answer your research question and how to test your hypothesis or explore your question. Be as specific as possible and preferably use an illustration to help the reader understand how all your plans connect)

Is the plan feasible: are all data collection plans coordinated / aligned with internal/external stakeholders.

Is information about the data present (or in the case of a simulation study, the population)? Also, mention information about data ownership of the data (e.g., CBS, Cito, open data - with a hyperlink, secondary data - with citation)

Is the software mentioned (only mentioning R is not enough, what packages do you expect to use)?

Is [Student Ethics Review (UU-SER)](https://uu-ser.sites.uu.nl/) permission obtained or requested? Describe if you expect any issues.

Did you provide ~20 additional references that will be used for the thesis (you do not have to have read these already)?

Is a prospective journal for publication selected in the field of MSBBSS?

*Helpful:*

Is the title attractive and clear, also for non-specialists?

Is there a nice graph / figure (this will make any reviewer happy, but be sure the figure is helpful, is clear, and has a good header)

Did you avoid jargon and abbreviations (the text will be read by a very experienced scientist who will probably not be familiar with your specific niche topic)?