

Pre-Proposal for Master thesis

General

The pre-proposal for your Master's thesis is an important part of your application for an Excellence Scholarship, along with your grades, your motivation letter and the letters of recommendation. Through your pre-proposal, the selection committee assesses your ability to deliberate a scientific topic independently and to design a research project.

The Master's thesis is written in the final semester of a Master's degree programme, based on the coursework of the previous semesters. The final topic of your thesis will be defined during your Master's studies in collaboration with your supervisor. The pre-proposal can be considered as an outline of a possible Master's thesis that will serve as an input for the process leading towards the topic of your Master thesis.

Describe your current idea for your thesis in max. 500 words on a separate sheet.

You may use the structure below if you find it useful. Divide your text into different paragraphs to give it a clear structure. Use subheadings to make it more reader-friendly.

Structure/content

Title

Define a short, significant title which summarizes the contents of your pre-proposal.

Introduction

Give a short introduction to the subject. Establish a context for your research and explain why it is important.

Objectives and goals

State the main research question(s) you want to address.

Methods of investigation / implementation

Explain the methods and techniques which you plan to use for your project. These methods will vary from one subject to another: e.g. with respect to field work, lab experiments, modelling techniques, interdisciplinary collaboration, data acquisition, infrastructure needed, software used, etc.

Background / prior work

List the main relevant work by others and/or results you have achieved in your previous work investigations.

Timetable and milestones

Consider that the Master's thesis has to be completed within a given time (4-6 months depending on the Master's programme; check the duration of the programme you are applying for in the correspondent regulations). Thus, the results of your project must be achievable in the given time. State a realistic timetable of your project and mention the milestones you want to achieve.

References

List papers and publications you have cited in your pre-proposal or which you have collected for further reading. Use established scientific citation practice.

The pre-proposal for the Master's thesis must be developed independently by yourself. If you refer to work already done at ETH Zurich or elsewhere, this must be properly referenced. All forms of plagiarism are unacceptable and will disqualify your scholarship application.

As part of the evaluation of your application, you are interviewed by one of our professors or scientists; your project proposal will also be discussed.