

Template for PhD Project Description

Natural History Museum, University of Oslo

These guidelines have been approved by the PhD committee of the Natural History Museum (NHM). All PhD project proposals should adhere to the guidelines, effective from January 2020.

The PhD thesis is an independent scientific work that meets international standards regarding academic level, method, and ethical requirements. The preferred format of the thesis is a collection of articles published in internationally recognized publication channels (peer-reviewed scientific journals or conferences).

The project description is a required attachment to the formal application for admission to the PhD programme at the NHM and must be approved and signed by the PhD candidate and the supervisors. The main purpose of the project description is to ensure that the project has scientific relevance, a suitable workload for the project period and clear milestones. The PhD project shall be ambitious but feasible. Accordingly, as a rule of thumb the project description shall not list more than three subprojects. The project description should be detailed enough for the PhD Committee at NHM and the MN Faculty to assess research goals, scientific challenges, incremental milestones and publication plan. It also forms the baseline for the third semester evaluation and any later evaluations.

The project description should be between 4–10 pages (including list of references), and should contain the following eleven elements:

1. Project title

2. Main objective and summary of the project

Present the main objective and a brief summary, explaining how you intend to attain your goal. This part should include a list of planned publication titles and authors.

3. Project background and scientific basis

Provide a brief survey of existing research efforts and scientific basis, with references to scientific literature. If your project is a part of a larger research effort requiring coordination, explain specifically your planned contributions within the larger framework.

4. Research questions and foreseen challenges

Outline your research questions and foreseen challenges, both for the broader thesis and for each planned publication. Explain their scientific foundation and your approach to address them. Describe your ambitions of reaching beyond the state-of-the-art and how to reach these goals.

5. Scientific methodology

Outline your methods for reaching your scientific goals. Describe how you are planning to use empirical, analytical or other methods for your research. Please state how these methods relate to the expected scientific contributions of the thesis. If applicable, describe the source of your data.

6. Expected Impact

The description of impact should address impact on your field of science, methodology and society, if appropriate.

7. Ethics

Describe any research-ethical challenges related to your project and propose means to address those (cf. research-ethical guidelines of the Norwegian Research Ethical Committees^{1,2}). Check if your project requires

¹ [The guidelines of the National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology](#)

² [A Guide to Internet Research Ethics](#)

notification to the Data Protection Official for Research³ . Candidates doing fieldwork abroad should check if they also have to register their project with the applicable local authorities. If the collected material is intended for molecular work follow the requirements of the Nagoya protocol⁴ .

8. Project timeline

Outline a research plan for each semester including coursework, scientific contributions, and planned publications. Indicate mandatory/teaching duties (25%) when applicable as well as planned visits to other research institutions (national or international). The project timeline will be assessed during annual evaluations starting with the third semester. The project timeline should contain milestones.

9. Project organisation and cooperation.

The principal supervisor should provide an overview of the expertise of each supervisor how they collectively cover the academic field of the project.

10. Cooperation with external parties.

Some projects have significant contributions from non-UiO partners, like partial external supervision of the PhD student, or part-time employment of the student by an external partner. For each external partner, the required standard agreement concerning the completion of PhD education in cooperation with an external party has to be signed by the external party and UiO and submitted as part of the PhD application. The agreement includes a list of specific contributions committed by the external party. The project description may contain further details about the planned cooperation, e.g., potential for innovation for the external party.

11. Literature references

Please list applicable references.

³ [Data Protection Official for Research:](#)

⁴ [About the Nagoya Protocol](#)