

Committee of doctoral education

English translation of the Swedish original, which remains the only authentic one.

## Guidelines for the Project Description

*For applications tied to research projects financed by external fundings, instructions on description of the project for doctoral research may, in accordance with a specific decision taken by the committee on doctoral education, deviate from the common guidelines for project description. Such special instructions for project description shall be formulated by the leader of the externally funded project in consultation with the chairperson of the committee on doctoral education. The special instructions shall be formulated with regard to the common guidelines and shall be adopted by the committee on doctoral education before a vacancy for employment as doctoral student is announced. The special instructions shall be included in the announcement of vacancy.*

*For description of all other doctoral research projects, the following common guidelines apply for project description.*

A project description must be included in the application for admission to the doctoral programme (employment). The description must not contain a full explanation of the project and it will be performed; nor must it contain a complete explanation of the issues to be examined, materials, methods or the like. Naturally, these details can be discovered only when the work begins and as the project takes shape during the first year of the programme.

The primary aspect the project description should reflect is the applicant's interest for the subject and how the applicant envisions studying this subject. The description should contain basic information about the purpose of the project and the method the applicant intends to use.

The project description must not exceed 15 000 characters including spaces, footnotes, list of references etc. (n.b. - any text that exceeds the 15 000 character limit will not be considered) and must be written in English, Swedish, Danish, or Norwegian. It should contain information about the following:

### 1. Subject and Purpose

The project description should begin with a short explanation of the project subject and purpose: What legal issues will the project take up? What is the purpose of addressing these issues (for example, the establishment of new legal theory, the need for new legislation, the need for protection of certain rights)?

The description of the subject and purpose should be as concrete as possible in order for the Faculty to determine the research potential of the project. The project description provides a framework for the project, without ruling out the need for changes during the project in relation to the original plan – for example, should new issues arise or should some of the planned issues become obsolete.

The subject area should be sufficiently limited so that the project can be completed within the time frame for the doctoral programme, and to results in a dissertation of 200-300 pages. A dissertation intended only as a reference to existing sources of law should not be accepted as a rule. Doctoral studies demand more independent work – the study and analysis of the legal framework, interpretation of complex case law, study and analysis of the legal-political reasons behind the law, construction of theories, ideological criticism, interdisciplinary analysis of the cause and effect of law, and so forth.

## 2. Description of issues and organisation

In addition to the short description of subject and purpose, the project description should contain a detailed description of the content of the main issues for research. However, this description should not be too detailed, but should focus instead on the problems the project will address. There should be a clear picture of how these research issues and the organisation of the project are related.

The project description should also take into consideration and problematise the current state of the art in the proposed research field.

## 3. Validity for research and results and current state of research

The project description should explain, in a precise and analytical way, why a research project in this subject could be of interest to the research area, and specifically how the project relates to existing research in that area. For instance, this can be realised in the description of the subject and purpose or in the description of the current state of research. A project having research potential is usually recognised by its treatment of issues not previously addressed scientifically – the project is valid in that it can produce new theory and continued research.

However, a project can still have research potential, even if the subject has been addressed earlier. For example, perhaps the previous treatments have not delved deep enough into the subject, or perhaps the proposed project can contribute new value, such as new or adapted theory.

In addition, the proposed project can be of interest even though the subject has been exhaustively researched earlier, where for example if the law has undergone significant change or the conditions validating the previous research have altered considerably.

## 4. Method and theory

The project description must contain a brief explanation of the method or methods to be used, such as (legal-)sociological, (legal-)historical, (legal-) philosophical, (legal-) economic and comparative methods. In addition to describing what methods will be used, the applicant should describe why the particular methods have been chosen. Any difficulties that might arise in using the methods should be

described; for example, the risk that collected material is not representative, or that the analysis can be inconclusive if only one method is used.

If methods other than those commonly found in legal science are to be used on a large scale in the project, it can be suitable to describe how such methods will be validated so they can be applied in a correct manner and on a sufficiently scientific level.

The project description should also reflect upon why the particular theoretical choices might be suitable.

## 5. Material and formalities

The project description should indicate what Swedish and foreign material the applicant intends to use in the scientific analysis, such as non-published works, administrative decisions, judges not referenced, interviews, completed surveys, foreign legislation and practice, and so on.

The project description should explain how the material will be used and any specific problems that might arise in obtaining these materials (for example, documentation in the possession of authorities or foreign material), and how such problems might be overcome within the time frame of the doctoral programme.

The project description should include relevant literature and other sources of law for the subject. The references may be designed in various ways, but it is important that the form selected is consequent throughout the entire project description.