



### **Guideline for the preparation of a synopsis (concept for the thesis)**

The preparation of a synopsis enables you and your supervisor to gain a clear impression of the subject, the objective, and the procedure of your research project. At the same time, it forms the basis for the subsequent introduction to your thesis. Before writing the concept, you should have already discussed the topic of your thesis with your supervisor, you can then make the exact arrangements; in most cases, it is necessary to revise the concept several times.

#### 1. Working title

The wording of the working title should provide information about the topic and the question of your work: What are you investigating and from what perspective? The work on the title often continues throughout the entire work process, since the title is, in a sense, the signboard of your work and should summarise the objective as aptly as possible. Often an appealing or provocative content title is combined with an informative subtitle as an "eye-catcher".

#### 2. Introduction and problem statement

This part first introduces your topic and provides an outline of the problem: What is it about? What problems arise? What is the significance of the topic for theology? What is the social relevance? In the introduction of the topic and in the development of its problems you should outline background information and the state of research on your topic with the help of academic literature. This depiction should lead to the question of your paper (like a funnel).

#### 3. Objective and questions

Here you define the objective of your work and the related questions. This part is of central importance because it sets the framework of your research process and determines your methodology. It is crucial to formulate the guiding objective and the specific questions arising from it as precisely as possible and to discuss them with your supervisor. You should keep these question(s) in mind during the research process and when writing the thesis and, if necessary, clarify or correct them. This will help you to develop the common thread of your work and to formulate the transitions between the chapters.

#### 4. Name and delimit the object of research, taking into account the state of research.

Which sources, texts, objects or factual questions will you use to work on your research question? This is a crucial step. The main point here is,

- a) that you choose your object of investigation in such a way that you can achieve significant results for your research question
- b) that you narrow down your topic in such a way that it can be realistically dealt with in the time available.

c) that you take into account and present the current state of research.

d) that you add something new to this state of research by filling a research gap, establishing new references, or examining what has already been researched from new points of view.

## 5 Methodology and planned procedure

Method and procedure are guided by the fact that they correspond to the research question, are appropriate to the object of research, and that the standards of the subject are taken into account. Important is that you reflect on and justify your choice of method and procedure. In the case of systematic theological work, for example, you should consider whether you choose a more theological or dogmatic-historical orientation or whether the work is more systematically philosophical, and whether you are doing an exegesis of the text textual exegesis (what kind of text?) or whether you seek to penetrate a factual problem speculatively and conceptually, whether you present several theological drafts and compare them with each other, or whether you are aiming for a strong topical reference and a practical orientation.

The structure of the paper, which should be attached to the synopsis in tabular form, results from the intended approach.

## 6. Timetable

It is important that you draw up a concrete timetable for your research work so that it is realistic and practicable. The timetable includes the different steps of your research work with the time required for each. The timetable should be based on the specified processing time of your thesis.

## 7. List of literature that has been used

Throughout the research process and already when preparing the concept, you should properly catalogue the literature you have used. This will save you a lot of corrective work later on! The list of literature used in the synopsis is important information for your supervisor so that he or she can understand what you have dealt with and where you may have overlooked important literature.

Good luck!