GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A RESEARCH PLAN FOR A DOCTORAL DISSERTATION/LICENTIATE THESIS

A research plan of 3 to 5 pages must be enclosed to the application for completing a scientific postgraduate degree and registering the doctoral dissertation/licentiate thesis. The research plan must have the acceptance of the main supervisor and the follow-up group. The research plan should cover the entire dissertation/thesis project. If the subject of the dissertation/thesis or the mode of completion (e.g. from an article-based dissertation with articles published separately to a monograph) changes substantially, a new research plan should be submitted for approval to the Scientific Postgraduate Committee of the School of Medicine.

1. Title of the study

2. Background of the study
A short summary of the background of the study with relevant references.

3. Aims of the study
The aims should be defined and presented clearly (e.g. overall and detailed objectives). Different components of the sub-aims should be connected to each other.

4. Subjects and methods
A general, relevant description of the methods, study design, animals, patient data and statistics. Remember to consider the following points:
- Choice of methods and their justification
- Description of methods: explain the principle instead of technical details
- Description and justification for the use of animals
- Number of patients/study subjects and selection criteria
- Data sources (e.g. measurements, case histories, registers) and method of data collection (prospective, retrospective)
- Variables used in analysis: response variable, independent variables, confounding variables
- Sample size and sample size rationale, preferably statistical power analysis and expected number of response events or expected distribution of response magnitude and the magnitude of the significant difference in biological/clinical/public health terms
- Description of statistical operations (methods, randomization, validity, sample sizes etc.)
- Qualitative research designs described according to the respective methodological principles

5. Implementation of the study
Type of dissertation (monograph or article-based dissertation)
Division into sub-studies and a description of problem formulation/content

6. Timetable of the study
A timetable of the different phases of the study and a publication plan

7. Ethical considerations
Does the study require a permission from the Ethics Committee or from the Laboratory Animal Committee?

8. References
Most important/essential references of the study field. The list of references must cover the references used in detail.