

Open / Theoretical Projects with self-chosen topic

Masters Students can work on a self-chosen topic in a “open project” (Urbanism) or “theoretical project” (Architecture). Topics should be broadly within the range of expertise of the team members at the Chair of Urban Development, which can be found on the team member profiles on the website at <https://www.arc.ed.tum.de/en/re/team/>. For inspiration, current research projects can be found at <https://www.arc.ed.tum.de/en/re/research/>.

Open or theoretical projects can enlarge upon work of previous semesters, form the basis of a Master’s thesis, or can be detached from previous or future work. They can be worked on either collectively or individually. It is also possible to have your project jointly supervised by another chair together with the chair of Urban Development.

In order to be able to make full use of the semester as working time, a project proposal should be prepared by the students in time before the start of the semester. The proposal shall meet the following requirements.

1. Project proposal

In the project proposal, students, in consultation with their supervisor, determine the content of the project, the methodological approach, as well as the exact submission requirements. The written presentation of the work project serves to clarify the content and method.

The proposal should contain, besides a meaningful title:

- a) Abstract (about half a page)**
Should provide basic information on the project and give a concise and complete description of the topic, aim, as well as its innovation, topicality, relevance and spatiality.
- b) Research questions, method and data (about one page)**
Research questions of the project are formulated and appropriate methods and data sources presented. If applicable, a case study is selected and explained.
- c) State of research and previous work (about half a page)**
This section should provide information on preparatory work by others or by the student, in the course of the studies or previously.
- d) Time schedule**
The time schedule should display work steps and important milestones. The individual working phases (e.g., research, evaluation, elaboration of text and posters) as well as possible planned excursions should be shown.
- e) Literature and contacts (max. one page)**
Important literature and contacts with institutions should be named.

2. Theme

Two specialisation options exist for projects at the Chair of Urban Development:

1. A **theoretical-analytical project** with explicit relevance to spatial concerns, which develops *new scientific knowledge* for the practice of urban studies.
2. A **synthetic design-oriented project** which, based on a problem analysis, generates *new, subject-specific knowledge* about possible solutions to a concrete spatial problem.

A **theoretical-analytical** project is subject to the general rules of scientific work. Theoretical projects are possible with or without an empirical study. Empirical studies, such as case studies, must be referenced to theory in order to contribute to generalized knowledge. For a theoretical project, a rationale for the topic selection is crucial. The relevance of the chosen topic for the practice of urban studies must be clearly demonstrated. Thus, explicit relevance to spatial concerns is necessary. A part of the theoretical work should be given to describing the consequences of the knowledge gained in terms of its application to practice in an appropriate extent, and to make observations regarding possible applications.

A **synthetic design-oriented** project would include, for example, the development of urban design concepts, spatial strategies, concepts for urban and regional development, future scenarios, or action programs. For a synthetic design-oriented project, the uniform requirements of different spatial scales and the varying problems between regions and countries mean that no uniform format can be prescribed. However, at the Chair of Urban Development, we work mostly at the neighbourhood to region scales. Because of the interdisciplinarity of the course, and the diversity of the current problems of cities and regions, it is part of the purpose of the project itself to justify the chosen design format and to reflect on the background of contemporary planning practice.

3. Formal requirements

A free or theoretical project can be written in either German or English. The submitted materials must be linguistically uniform.

Submission requirements

I Brochure

The preparation of a printed brochure is obligatory. The scope of the brochure will vary according to the specialisation (see above):

A **theoretical-analytical work** should normally include per person:

- A maximum of 80,000 characters (including spaces), corresponding to about 25 pages of text according to the TUM format template for scientific reports, in addition to
- Figures and tables,
- Cover, abstract, table of contents, lists of images and tables, bibliography, as well as appendix.

A **synthetic design-oriented work** should normally include per person:

- Minimum 10,000 characters (including spaces), corresponding to approximately 4 pages of text,
- figures and tables,
- cover, abstract, table of contents, lists of images and tables, bibliography, as well as appendix,
- plans and posters (see below)

II Poster

The submission of posters is obligatory for synthetic design-oriented projects. The number is to be individually agreed upon with the supervisors. In fully digital projects, the posters can be replaced with an adequate digital alternative (miro, prezi, ...). In a theoretical-analytical work, posters can be used supplementary.

III Model

The submission of a model is optional and recommended, if the thematic orientation and chosen approach of the project is appropriate.

IV Presentation

A public presentation of the project in a 15-minute viva is obligatory. For this, a PowerPoint presentation and/or posters and possibly models can be used.

A PDF version of the brochure, posters, and presentation must be submitted. In addition, two specimens of the brochure must be handed in, and one specimen of each poster.

In the work, parts that were produced either together or separately shall be labelled. All group members must contribute to all products of the group work.

Supervision of the free project

The free project is supervised by a research assistant of the chair. Supervision is arranged by appointment, usually on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. In addition, there are two interim presentations.

Grading of the free project

The written version, posters, models and final presentation each make up part of the overall score.

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