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Guideline for Bachelor/Master/Seminar-Theses

1. Introduction

The guidelines presented here should help you to write a bachelor or master thesis.

You should try to find your own topic which you are interested in. This can be something you have encountered in your studies but can also go beyond material covered in class or textbooks. The topic must be discussed with and confirmed by your supervisor. This also applies to any change of topic, title of your thesis etc. Be prepared to make some suggestions for possible topics, or at least name areas in which you are interested. Your supervisor will help you to specify a topic of mutual interest.

Finding the appropriate literature is an important part of your work. Your supervisor will usually be able to provide you with some first references, but you should be able and learn to locate relevant sources yourself. There are several specialized internet archives for scientific work which you could browse to find relevant material. Some of them are

Google scholar: <https://scholar.google.de/>

National Bureau of Economic Research: <http://www.nber.org/>

Centre for Economic Policy Research: <http://cepr.org/>

REsearch Papers in EConomics: <http://www.repec.org/>

Social Science Research Network: <https://www.ssrn.com/en/>

Also, use the library's access to electronic journals: <http://www.ub.uni-siegen.de/>

2. Formal requirements

With your thesis you should demonstrate your ability to carefully analyze and illustrate an economic topic by identifying and summarizing the relevant literature, structuring your insights, and presenting them in an appropriate and scientific way. You will also have to fulfill some formal requirements.

The thesis should consist of a cover sheet, followed by the table of contents, if applicable a list of figures and/or tables, the main text (body), the bibliography and, optionally, an appendix. A list of abbreviations at the beginning is recommendable if your work contains more than a couple of well-known and standard abbreviations.

For page numbering please use Arabic figures, starting with the Introduction. The table of contents, and the list of figures and tables should be numbered with Roman figures. Furthermore, the thesis should show a correct, clear and precise style of expression. Use either British or American English, but be consistent. Use a spell-checker!

Cover sheet

Your thesis must have a cover page. The information on this page is compulsory, but you may vary the design.

- Title
- Your name / address / student ID / email
- Type of thesis (BSc, MSc, seminar)
- Date of submission
- A reference to the university, our faculty and the program in which you are enrolled
- Name of supervisor(s)
- Title of seminar (if applicable)

Table of contents

Segmentation up to 2 or a maximum of 3 levels (chapter, subchapter, sub-subchapter) satisfies the needs of most topics and is recommended. Refrain from structuring your thesis to even more levels.

List of figures and tables

If your text contains more than just a few figures, tables or abbreviations include a list of these. Devote a single page to each of the lists.

Length

The standard master's thesis is about 60 pages (± 10 percent), the standard bachelor's thesis 40 pages and a standard term paper 15 pages long. These numbers refer to the overall length, but without the appendix. Do not try to cheat by manipulating the font size, paragraphs, etc.

Font and margin

Make use of Arial or Times New Roman (font size 12), 1.5 line spacing and full justification. Leave a margin of 2.5 cm on each side and below the text for comments. If your thesis/paper is bound, leave a broader left margin.

Citation

Thoughts of other authors have to be indicated as such. If you refer to the complete work, you name the author and the year, e.g. "Blanchard (2008) shows that..." or "a greater share of private external debt... (Blanchard, 2008)". If, by contrast, you quote directly, also give the corresponding page: "Blanchard (2008, 15) emphasizes ...". Verbatim citations have to be presented in quotation marks.

If you do not indicate sources that you use this will be considered as plagiarism in severe cases and your thesis will be rejected, i.e. you fail. We routinely conduct computerized tests for plagiarism.

Do use primary literature instead of quoting secondary sources to avoid misleading interpretations. Only in the case that original sources are not available use secondary sources but make clear that the citation is not from the original: "Mueller (2008, cited after Meyer (2015)) finds that...". Both sources should appear in the bibliography.

If you name common facts, you do not have to indicate a source. If in doubt, use a source.

Finally, all sources you quoted (and not more!) have to appear in the bibliography.

Footnotes

Amendments that impede the flow of reading but contain important/useful information should be banned to footnotes. Use footnotes sparingly.

Figures and tables

Figures and tables should be located near the particular section that makes reference to them. Graphs and charts that are not discussed in detail or provide additional information can be shifted to the appendix.

All figures and tables have to be numbered, titled and referenced with their sources (your own work should be marked as e.g. “own illustration”). The numbering of material in the appendix should be numbered separately (Table A1, Figure A1, ...).

Equations

Set equations off from the text by using a separate line. Center and number them. Even if you present a theoretical model, try to avoid ‘equation overkill’.

Bibliography

You have to present all the sources you use in the text (but not more!) in the bibliography. The articles, books, etc. have to be sorted by the name of the author (for identical authors beginning with the oldest work, if sources are from the same year use letters, “Blanchard (2016c)”).

You need not stick to the mode of citation that is presented here, but use one of the common quotation forms (e.g. let yourself be guided by professional journals like *American Economic Review* or *Econometrica*) and be consistent and as clear as possible.

In general, try to avoid using internet sources. You should only make use of them if they are well known for their reliability. For sources that are only available on the internet, give their URL and the date when you last accessed them.

Examples

Monographs

North, Douglass C., John Joseph Wallis and Barry R. Weingast (2009) *Violence and Social Orders: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Recorded Human History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Articles in edited volumes

Tomz, Mike and Michael Wright (2010) *Sovereign Theft: Theory and Evidence about Sovereign Default and Expropriation*, in: William Hogan and Federico Sturzenegger (eds) *The Natural Resources Trap*, Cambridge: MIT-Press, 69-110.

Articles in journals

Robinson, James, Ragnar Torvik and Thierry Verdier (2006) *Political Foundations of the Resource Curse*, *Journal of Development Economics* 79, 447– 468.

Working papers

Rodrik, Dani (2000) *Institutions for High-Quality Growth: What they Are and How to Acquire Them*, NBER Working Paper 7540.

Unpublished work

Eichengreen, Barry (1993) *The Crisis in the EMS and the Transition to EMU: An Interim Assessment*, University of California at Berkeley, mimeo.

Internet source

Pisani-Ferry, Jean, Norbert Röttgen, Andre Sapir, Paul Tucker and Guntram Wolff (2016) *Europe after Brexit: A Proposal for a Continental Partnership* (<http://bruegel.org/2016/08/europe-after-brexit-a-proposal-for-a-continental-partnership/>) (Accessed: 8. 5. 2017).

Appendix

The appendix contains tables and figures that are not discussed in detail in the text.

3. Empirical analysis

If your thesis includes your own empirical analysis be sure to carefully document the data, the estimation method, your results and interpretation, and robustness checks. Use the appendix if necessary.

Keep in mind that the reader should be able to track and reproduce your analysis with the information you provide. Indicate weaknesses of your study!

4. Electronic Version

All students should provide an electronic version (.pdf file) of their work per email. If you are submitting your Bachelors' or Master's thesis, you are required to hand in an electronic copy on CD/DVD to the Prüfungsamt which makes the email unnecessary.

You also have to hand in printed copies of your work. Consult the Prüfungsamt concerning BSc/MSc Theses. **Two** copies of Seminar theses have to be handed in directly to us.

If your thesis comprises an empirical analysis include the respective files (i.e. using STATA: .dta .do and log files). A printed version of these files is not required.

5. Deadlines

Make sure to fulfill all deadlines, late theses will be rejected. No exceptions will be made!

For further questions contact us at the addresses provided on the homepage. **Use your official student-email account for all correspondence.**