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Department of Economics

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Guidelines for Writing Seminar Papers and
Scientific Theses (Bachelor, Master)

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1. Structure of the thesis

1.1 Preface

Please write your thesis or seminar paper in such a way that a fellow student with the same field of study and subject can follow your reasoning after careful reading and some reflection. He/ she should also be able to understand your arguments and to re-express your key message.

Please pay attention to the fact that a fellow student should be able to understand your work without previous knowledge of the topic and without having to read the literature quoted by you. Write clearly, directly and concisely. Avoid long and complicated sentences and use simple, understandable language.

A critical discussion of the literature is essential! Do not just recite un-commented positions from the literature. Argue conclusively. Every claim needs justification! Do not claim things or assume they are self-evident. Justify and, if possible, cite sources that support your claim. If available, also cite contrasting opinions and reason why you side with what position. Explain figures, tables and charts carefully. If necessary, include formal proofs.

The articles quoted by you, especially articles in scholarly journals are usually written for well-trained economists. Due to lack of space, the authors of the articles typically submit a summary of their work and omit some steps in their proofs. It is your task to give detailed explanations (and to complete the missing steps in the proofs).

1.2 Introduction

Start with a chapter "Introduction", in which you explain the research question and the aim of your paper or thesis. Define the most important terms. Explain the structure of your paper or thesis. Keep in mind that the introduction is intended to raise interest in your paper or thesis.

1.3 Main Body

The main body serves to carry the literature review, your arguments, and your reflections about the research you have found. Make sure to be as concise as possible but not to omit important points or research strands (even though they may not be mainstream they could have had impact). In the literature review, make sure to set the topic into context of related research.

1.4 Summary and conclusion

Review the key results and draw a conclusion in this section. Discuss the significance and implications of your results and give – if possible – a short outlook on future research issues.

2. Formal specifications

2.1 General

On our homepage you will find MS-Word and LaTeX-templates as a download that might help you to create your thesis. **Please use these templates.**

- Number of pages:
 - *Bachelor's seminar paper*: 13 (+/- 1) pages of pure text (incl. most important tables/figures)
 - *Master's seminar paper*: 14 (+/- 1) pages of pure text (incl. most important tables/figures)
 - *Bachelor's thesis*: 20 pages of pure text (incl. most important tables/figures)
 - *Master's thesis*: 40 pages of pure text (incl. most important tables/figures)
- Left margin: 6 cm and right margin: 1.5 cm
- 1.5-line spacing and footnotes with 1.0-line spacing
- Use Times New Roman in font size 12 and use font size 10 for footnotes
- Use justification and hyphenation
- Except for the cover page, each page has to be numbered consecutively
- There is a point at the end of each footnote
- Formulas and symbols should be written in italics. Use font size 10 for indices.
- Put numbers in brackets and to the left. Indent formulas equally.
- Please number formulas, figures and charts
- Your thesis should follow this structure:
 - Cover page
 - Table of contents
 - List of tables and figures
 - List of abbreviations
 - List of symbols
 - Text of thesis
 - Appendices
 - List of references

- Please submit your seminar paper as a single copy. Plain paper and a folder are completely sufficient.

The grade of your work depends both on the content and on formal criteria. Formal mistakes/errors (spelling, punctuation, citations, layout) will lower your grade and may lead to a fail.

2.2 Cover page

The cover page has to contain the following information:

- Institute and university
- Name of seminar
- Instructor
- Current semester
- Title of the thesis or seminar paper
- At the bottom on the left side: Your address, deadline
- At the bottom on the right side: Last name, first name, subject, semester number

Please note that you are not allowed to use the seal of the CAU or the seal of the Business, Economics and Social Sciences Faculty on your thesis or paper.

2.3 Table of contents

The table of contents should provide information about the structure of your paper or thesis and should also be the directory. Its purpose is to reflect how well you have understood the topic. It is of central importance that you develop a clearly visible “golden thread” throughout your paper. Make sure that the table of contents of your paper is comprehensive and well balanced.

The page “table of contents“ has to state consecutively the headings of the single chapters, sections and subsections in complete wording as well as the page numbers of the chapter beginnings.

Number the chapters with one numeral (1.,2.,3,...), sections with two numerals (1.1,1.2,1.3,...) and subsections with three numerals (2.1.1,2.1.2,2.1.3,...). A subsection 2.1.1 is senseless without the following 2.1.2.

2.4 Abbreviations

Please use abbreviations sparingly. Common abbreviations like “etc” and “e.g.” can be used without explanation.

You have to explain all other used abbreviations in the text when they are used for the first time and list them all in an alphabetical list of abbreviations.

Examples:

EC	European Commission
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

2.5 Appendices

The text part of your paper should be written fluently and should be easy to read. Long mathematical proofs that are necessary for the complete derivation of your results as well as additional tables and figures should be placed in the appendix. A small number of relevant figures and tables can be included in the main text.

2.6 Statutory declaration

At the last page, every bachelor or master thesis (note: not relevant for seminar papers) has to contain a personally signed statutory declaration in accordance with the following content:

I hereby declare that I have composed my Seminar’s thesis “topic” independently using only those resources mentioned, and that I have as such identified all passages which I have taken from publications verbatim or in substance. I agree that my thesis may be checked for plagiarism using testing software. Neither this thesis, nor any extract of it, has been previously submitted to an examining authority, in this or a similar form.

Wenn die Arbeit nicht als PDF per Email eingereicht wird: I have ensured that the written version of this thesis is identical to the version saved on the enclosed storage medium.

Kiel, den

.....
(Unterschrift)

According to the examination regulations (§ 8, Section 3), the violation of the statutory declaration results in a failure of the examination.

For further information, please refer to the “Merkblatt für Diplomprüfungs-Kandidaten “ provided by the examination office.

3. Quotation

3.1 General

You have to quote all references you have used. If you pass the thoughts of others off as your own, you are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of academic fraud that will have legal consequences. There is no need to quote general knowledge or common economic terms. Please make sure that you solely use scientifically reliable sources for your thesis. "Wikipedia" and course material are not permitted. Do not cite working papers if the work has been published already.

Use the following method of citation, which is common in scientific literature.

3.2 References in the text

Please mark the used sources with:

- Name of author
- Year of publication
- Page number

A source reference in the text should always be as short as possible so that it does not hinder the reader. If you want to indicate more than two sources, please use footnotes.

Examples:

In the text:

- 1.) Herberg (1994), p. 45, uses the following definition: „ An economic good is...”.
- 2.) An economic good is... (Varian (1989), pp. 426-431; Herberg (1994), p.325.)

In the footnote:

- 1.) Schneider (1963), p. 4; Wöhe (1981), p. 399; Woll (1981), p. 54.

If you refer to a text with two authors, always indicate both in your reference. For publications that have more than two authors, list only the first author followed by the abbreviation "et al.". Furthermore, please differentiate if you quote several publications published by the same author by using lower case letters after the year of publication.

Example:

Stobbe (1987a), Stobbe (1987b)

Publications of institutions have to be treated accordingly.

Example:

World Trade Organization (1989), p. 62.

3.3 Bibliography / References

The bibliography includes all sources that have been cited in the paper. Order the sources alphabetically according to the surname of the (first mentioned) authors. If there is more than one publication of an author, arrange them in chronological order. Please list publications with one author first and afterwards the ones with co-authors.

The bibliography provides the complete information of the sources/publications that are cited in short form in the seminar paper or thesis. For each source/publication you have to provide:

- Names of all authors of the publication (in the order given in the publication), together with the initials of the first names
- Year of publication (optionally with lower case letters – see above)
- Journal articles: Title of the article, name of the journal, number of the volume, page numbers (of the beginning and the end of the article)
- Books: Title of the book including subtitle, number of edition (if it is not the first one), place of publication
- Articles in edited volumes: Title of the article, name of the publisher/editor (abb.: ed.) title of the edited volume including subtitle, place of publication, page numbers.

If a book has been translated, you have to indicate it with the foreign-language original title, and year as well as place of the primary publication. In many cases, the titles of books, edited volumes and the names of journals are emphasized by italics and additionally, the publisher of books and edited volumes are mentioned, too. If you also want to do this, you have to proceed consistently.

Examples:

Herberg, H. (1994), *Price theory- An Introduction*, 3rd. Edition, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart.

Krugman, P. (1980), *The Increasing Returns Revolution in Trade and Geography*, *American Economic Review* 99, pp. 561-71.

Herberg, H. and Kemp, M.C. (1969), *Some Implications of Variable Returns to Scale*, *Canadian Journal of Economics* 2, pp. 403-415; reproduced in: M.C. Kemp (editor), *Production Sets*, Academic Press, New York, chapter 7.

Siebert, H., Gronych, R., Pethig, R., (1980), *Trade and Environment - A Theoretical Inquiry*, *Studies in Environmental Science* 6, Elsevier, Amsterdam.

Varian, H.R. (1989), *Grundzüge der Mikroökonomie*, Oldenbourg, München (german version of: *Intermediate Microeconomics. A Modern approach*, Norton & Co., New York).

3.4 Citation of an article from the Internet

The following information is obligatory:

Surname of the author or the authors, initial(s) of first name, year of publication in parentheses, title of the essay, web address, page number.

For Bachelor and Master theses, you have to add a data medium with the indicated online files (usually in pdf format).

Example:

Seliger, B. (1995), *Transformation als Chance*,

URL: <http://www.bwl.unikiel.de/Ordnung+Wettbewerbspolitik/Diskussionspap1.html>, p. 2.

(Last accessed on September 5th 2011).

Because the content of online files changes quickly, you have to state the date of the last access.

3.5 Direct Quotation

A direct quote always has to be embedded in quotation marks and has to conform exactly to the original source. Squared parentheses are used for additions. If an explanation is necessary, please include it (comment of the author).

Example:

In this context, Ethier (1983), p. 5 states: „The principle of *comparative advantage* is one of the great ideas of economics ... The basic idea ... is attributed primarily to David Ricardo.“.

References in English do not need to be translated. References in other foreign languages, though, have to be stated in the text in their original language, and the translation has to be stated in a footnote. Generally, direct quotes should be as short as possible. A direct quote is considered short if it is at most three lines long. If, as an exception, your quote is longer, i.e. more than three lines, indent it and use a smaller font size.

Use direct quotes sparingly. In most cases you can explain the content in your own words – an indirect citation - and then provide the reference. Please do it!

As a rule, quote the original source. Only if the source is not traceable or accessible, may you quote from a secondary source.

3.6 Tables and Figures

You can support your arguments with tables and figures. Tables have to be numbered consecutively; the same holds for figures. Provide a title for each table or figure. The number and title have to be stated above the table/figure. Existing remarks in the original table or comments from you have to be in smaller font and placed below the table. Your own remarks have to be marked with "Comment of the author".

Please indicate the source of the table/figure directly below it. Make sure that the reader can verify whether the table/figure has been copied without any change, whether changes to the original have been made, or whether they reflect your own calculations.

Examples for an unchanged table/figure:

Source: World Trade Organization (1989), Table 5.24.1, p. 62.

Source: Krugman et al. (2012), Figure 2.6, p. 48.

Examples for your own table/figure:

Source: own calculations/own design

Example, if you change a table/figure

Source: based on World Trade Organization (1989), Table 5.24.1, p. 62.

3.7 Footnotes

Footnotes can be used to provide additional information that is not required for the understanding of the arguments, but nevertheless shed light on some detail or otherwise provide useful additional information.¹ You can, for example, place a definition or mathematical equation in a footnote. Footnotes can also be used for supporting arguments. Please number the footnotes consecutively, and separate them from the text. Footnotes end with a full stop. *Please use footnotes sparingly.*

3.8 List of Symbols

All symbols used have to be explained in the text. Symbols may only be used in the text if they appear in formulas.

¹ Long mathematical derivations of more than 1/3 page have to be placed in the appendix.

4. Literature Search

We may provide you with some literature references for your topic. These references are only a starting point. It is your tasks to do an extensive search of the scientific literature on your topic that goes beyond the references that are provided. You have to carefully select and evaluate the sources you present and cite. In general, you should cite only the following types of publications: (i) articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, (ii) scientific monographs, (iii) scientific working papers. Regarding working papers bear in mind that these are mostly preliminary and might not contain well-conceived techniques or models. Make sure to check whether the paper has already been published. If so, you have to use the published version. If the paper has not been published yet, use the most recent version of the working paper. You might want to take a look at other work of the author(s) to evaluate the quality and future impact.

We may ask you for a minimum number of scientific sources. Avoid expanding the number of sources by just citing different papers for single strands of thought that can be found in one paper you already cited.

Wikipedia and Google are not quotable sources! Try to avoid referring to textbooks (especially general books from undergraduate courses – most concepts in these books can be assumed to be known)!

Helpful links (apart from the university library catalogue search) for a literature search are:

German National Library for Economics: <http://www.zbw.eu/en/search/>

Its search engine can also be found here: <http://www.econbiz.de>

University Library: <http://www.ub.uni-kiel.de/english>

For articles in scientific journals:

<http://www.econlit.org>

<http://scholar.google.de>

<http://www.jstor.org>

Reliable working paper series are provided by the following research networks:

NBER, CEPR, CESifo

Working papers and articles can also be found at:

<http://econpapers.repec.org>

Scientific publishers:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com>

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>

Statistics and data can be found at the following sources:

OECD iLibrary

Eurostat

World Bank Data

World Bank Governance Indicators

SND (Swedish national data service)

ICPSR (International social science data)

How to Obtain Literature?

During your literature search you may have come across some sources, especially working papers but also some published papers, that you may be able to access online and download. If you conduct your search from a university computer, you may have online access to the scientific journals for which the university library has a subscription. In some cases, access is limited to issues published before a certain date. Many journals and most monographs are not accessible online. You can obtain those either at the university library (<http://www.ub.uni-kiel.de/english>), the faculty library (<http://bibliothek.wiwi.uni-kiel.de/>), or the German National Library for Economics – ZBW (<http://www.zbw.eu/en/>.) The German National Library for Economics (ZBW) is located in Kiel. It is the biggest library of its kind in the world, and there is almost nothing that they do not have.

Do not limit your reading to online sources!