

Faculty of Economics and Management

Master in Economics and Management of the Public Sector (LM63)

Guidelines for completing Degree Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis is an important part of your degree course. The purpose of this guide is to help you to manage your degree thesis more effectively.

The thesis should demonstrate your ability to carry out independent inquiry, to define and execute a programme of research by developing a research process and methodology for collecting data systematically, organizing your findings and ensuring that they are presented in a cogent and clear manner. This will enable you to apply both the conceptual knowledge, which you have acquired during your degree course, and to integrate knowledge from different subject areas in order to apply it analytically.

Every thesis is different; and there are a variety of methods and ways of defining and approaching a particular area or topic. You should identify the correct research approach with your supervisor. However, there are some general principles which apply to all the thesis. Some general recommendations will be given here. Here is the logical sequence of steps you are expected to do in order to accomplish your dissertation work:

1. Identifying a suitable project topic (or just identify the subject area in which you are interested)
2. Appointing a thesis Supervisor and start a fruitful cooperation with him (topic, timetable, etc.)
3. Submitting the final draft of your degree thesis
4. Oral Defence

1. CHOOSING A SUITABLE TOPIC/OBJECTIVE

You need to have a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve. Choose a topic which will sustain your motivation:

- Because it takes you into a new area
- Because it increases your knowledge of an old area
- Because it enhances career opportunities by increasing key skills
- Because it offers a service to your (current or prospective) employers

The objective is the problem or question you want to solve or answer.

2. THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

You should approach academic staff whose areas of expertise and research interests fall within the thesis area. The Degree Thesis Regulation contains more information on whom can be appointed as a supervisor.

INITIAL MEETING

Items to be discussed and agreed at this meeting should include:

- Terms of reference (thesis topics and objectives, issues to be resolved, and intended thesis outputs)

- The research methodology and research questions (literature review)
- Thesis timetable and possible structure
- The means of keeping in touch with your Supervisor and when various key meetings are likely to take place

PROGRESS MEETINGS

You should aim to meet your thesis Supervisor from time to time throughout the thesis period as your work is progressing (remember to collect what reading needs to be done, what contacts need to be made, what data must be collected, what analysis must be carried out). Your Supervisor will want to ensure that you are clearly making satisfactory progress. Certainly, any major changes in project direction or any major problems should be notified to and discussed with your Supervisor as early as possible.

Prepare for your meetings. A meeting with your Supervisor like any other meeting requires preparation. He or she will have points to raise with you. Make sure you have thought through the points you want to raise with him or her.

- Send written material in advance, if at all possible.
- Do not expect the Supervisor to read your draft at the meeting. If he/she is not ready rearrange the meeting to give him or her time to read it.
- Do your own proof-reading. It is waste of a Supervisor's time to proof-read your work.
- Make sure you use a spell-checker and have read through the material afterwards to remove the 'sillies' created by the spell checker.

3. THE FINAL DRAFT

For the front page use the form available on the website.

The degree thesis can be written in one of the three official languages (English, Italian, German). At the beginning of your degree thesis you are asked to write a short abstract in the three official languages.

Your text must be:

- word-processed and one-sided on A4 paper
- in 12-point Times New Roman or 10-point Tahoma font
- 1,5 points line spacing
- printed with a 1-inch (or 2,54 cm) right side, top, and bottom margin; margins on left should be 1,4 inch (or 3,55 cm) to accommodate binding
- page numbered at bottom center (for all pages)

Thesis of 15.000 words length are encouraged. Thesis counts for 15 ECTS credits, that is approximately 275 work hours.

4. ORAL DEFENCE

The candidate is required to make a presentation in front of a panel of at least 3 members nominated by the Faculty. Please, make sure to make a consistent presentation according to the keypoints of your thesis that you think are more interesting or more original in approach. The presentation will last approx.. 15-20 minutes and will be followed by a general discussion.

5. POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- Rushing into action without thinking out what your thesis is really about, thus ending up with bits and pieces of research all focused on different things.
- Underestimating the time needed for writing up. This can take up a very large part of the thesis duration. Allow at least two weeks to complete the final write-up. A list of “important dates” is reported at the url <http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/thesis/master/default.html>. (timeline)
- Failing to build in any contingency for events such as delays in computing or printing etc.
- Having too great a scope at the beginning and then not being able to recognize this when the project becomes unmanageable.
- Losing all of your data or written work due to a hard disc failure or loss of a USB memory stick. Keep back-ups of all your data held electronically.

Any changes regarding the Supervisor strictly follow the recommendations reported in the Regulation at the url <http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/thesis/master/default.html>

6. PLAGIARISM

Do not copy from other sources. Sanctions apply in case of plagiarism. See the Regulation on Degree Exams.

Appendix

Formatting and citations

You should not litter the text with footnotes. However, you must attribute ideas which belong to others and also demonstrate that you have surveyed the relevant literature. The bibliography and references in the text should be presented in a consistent manner, following one of the standard formats such as MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style. For further support and the use of citation styles our Library offers advice, introductions to academic writing tools and guidelines: <http://www.unibz.it/en/library/infolit/citation-and-plagiarism.html>

When writing an essay, report or other assignment you will often need to support your arguments by referring to other published work such as books, journal or newspaper articles, government reports, pieces of legislation or regulation, dissertations and theses, and material from the Internet.

You will need to give accurate references:

- To give credit to other authors' concepts and ideas
- To provide the reader (often the marker/examiner of the assignment) with evidence of the breadth and depth of your reading
- To enable the readers of your work to locate the references easily
- To avoid being accused of plagiarism, an academic offence which can lead to loss of marks or module failure

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND APPENDICES

"Literature" is a collective term for the books, journals, articles, reports which deal with your topic. At the end of your thesis you should include an alphabetical list of all your reference sources. Please follow the APA (American Psychological Association)'s Author style.

This guide provides examples of the most commonly cited types of sources.

The "appendices" should be the place where you place large data sets or large pieces of technical information.

HOW TO FORMAT IN TEXT CITATION

In-text citations use the author's last name and the date, separated by a comma:

(Austin, 1998)

If the author's name is mentioned in the narrative, then only the date need be given in the brackets:

Austin (1998) provides a new methodology...

In case of two authors always use both names every time they are referred to in the text. Use the ampersand (&) to connect the names in the parentheses, but spell out "and" in the running text:

(Parker & Mokhesi-Parker, 1998)

Parker and Mokhesi-Parker (1998) in examining institutional design and function ...

In case of three to five authors cite all the authors in text the first time a reference occurs; in subsequent citations, include only the surname of the first author followed by et al. First reference:

(Parker, Mokhesi-Parker, AuthorC, AuthorD & AuthorE, 1998)

Subsequent references:

(Parker et al.)

In case of six or more authors cite in text only the surname of the first author followed by et al. and the year for the first and subsequent citations:

(Parker et al., 1998)

In case of group or corporate authors use the name of the body in the citation:

(World Bank, 1998)

In case of unknown author use the first few words of the title as the reference in the text (capitalize all words in title):

("Structuring Lawmaking", 2002)

Author is listed as "Anonymous". Use it as if it were the author's name:

(Anonymous, 2003)

If the reference is to an exact quotation, the author, year and page number must be included. The page number can be given in parentheses at the end of the exact quotation or incorporated into the in-text citation:

Newman (1994) concluded "sibling conflict is so common that its occurrence is taken for granted" (p. 123).

Such findings have prompted one researcher to conclude, "Sibling conflict is so common that its occurrence is taken for granted" (Newman, 1994, p. 123).

For exact quotations from sources without page numbers, use paragraph numbers, if available. If the paragraphs are not numbered, but there are headings, use the heading name and count the number of paragraphs after the heading to the paragraph containing the quotation.

(Smith, 2003, para. 1)

(Greene, 2003, Discussion, para. 4)

HOW TO FORMAT REFERENCE LISTS

BOOK

Single author	Austin, J. H. (1998). <i>Zen and the brain: Toward an understanding of meditation and consciousness</i> . Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Multiple authors	Calarco, M., & Atterton, P. (2009). <i>Animal philosophy: Essential readings in continental thought</i> . New York, NY: Continuum.
Edited Book	Ickes, W. (Ed.). (1998). <i>Empathic accuracy</i> . New York, NY: Guilford Press.
Group or corporate author	World Bank. (2004). <i>Gender and development in the Middle East and North Africa: women in the public sphere</i> . Washington, DC:

	Author.
Chapter or essay in book	Herrmann, R. K. (2002). Linking theory to evidence in international relations. In W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse, & B. A. Simmons (Eds.), <i>Handbook of international relations</i> (pp. 119-136). London, England: Sage.
Article from a reference book	Chen, J. Q. (2003). Intelligence: Multiple intelligences. In J. Guthrie (Ed.), <i>Encyclopedia of education</i> (pp. 1198-1201). New York, NY: Macmillan.

ARTICLES

A new element to journal article citations is the addition of the DOI (digital object identifier), which provides a persistent way of accessing digital information. If the DOI is not provided in the online database, online journal, or article, try CrossRef's free DOI look-up (<http://www.crossref.org/guestquery/>). Note: not all articles have DOIs.

Article in a journal (one author)	Oware, M. (2009). A "Man's Woman"? Contradictory messages in the songs of female rappers, 1992-2000. <i>Journal of Black Studies</i> , 39(5), 786-802. doi:10.1177/0021934707302454
Article in a journal (up to seven authors)	Ko, C. H., Yen, J. Y., Liua, S. C., Huang, C. F., & Yen, C. F. (2009). The associations between aggressive behaviors and internet addiction and online activities in adolescents. <i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i> , 6, 598-605. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.11.011
Article in a journal (more than seven authors)	Burger, J., Gochfeld, M., Jeitner, C., Burke, S., Stamm, T., Snigaroff, R., ... Weston, J. (2007). Mercury levels and potential risk from subsistence foods from the Aleutians. <i>Science of The Total Environment</i> , 384, 93-105. doi:10.1016/j.scitotenv.2007.05.004 When authors number eight or more, include the first six names, then three ellipses, and then the last author's name.
Article in a journal (advanced publication)	Levskaia, A., Weiner, O. D., Lim, W. A., & Voigt, C. A. (2009). Spatiotemporal control of cell signalling using a light-switchable protein interaction. <i>Nature</i> . Advance online publication. doi:10.1038/nature08446
Online – only supplemental material for articles	Chandler, D. (2009). Liquids: Condensed, disordered, and sometimes complex. [Supplemental material]. PNAS: <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of the United States of America</i> , 106, 15111–15112. doi:10.1073/pnas.0908029106 If no author is given, move the title and bracketed description to the author position.
Article in a popular magazine	Henry, W. A., III (1990, April 9). Beyond the melting pot. <i>Time</i> , 135(4),

	28-31.
Article in a newspaper	<p>Young, J. (2003, February 14). Prozac campus: More students seek counseling and take psychiatric medication. <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i>, pp. A37-38.</p> <p>If the article was found through the newspaper's website, include "Retrieved from" and the URL of the home page.</p>

MEDIA

Sound Recording	<p>Desmond, P. (1959). Take five [recorded by Dave Brubeck Quartet]. On <i>Time out</i> [CD] New York, N.Y.: Columbia. (1987)</p> <p>Use the original copyright date after the author/composer's name. If the date of the recording is different from the copyright date, place it after the name of the recording label, as above.</p>
Video Recording	<p>LaVoo, G., & Brown, E. T. (Producers), & Cardozo, P. (Director). (2003). <i>Real women have curves</i> [DVD]. United States: HBO Video.</p>
Television	<p>Daniels, G. (Writer) & Kwapis, K. (Director). (2006). Gay witch hunt [Television series episode]. In G. Daniels (Executive producer), <i>The office</i>. Los Angeles, CA: National Broadcasting Company.</p>

WEB/ONLINE

Web page	<p>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). 2009 H1N1 Flu ("Swine Flu") and You. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm</p>
Blog Post	<p>McAdoo, T. (2009, September 10). Use of First Person in APA Style [Web log message]. Retrieved from http://blog.apastyle.org/.</p> <p>In blog posts, authors may adopt a screen name. Use that screen name as the author if that is the name under which that person posts messages.</p>
Online Video	<p>BirdTricks. (2008, April 27). Tips for training a parrot to talk [Video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89dZNPPYOdk</p> <p>A screen name is used for the author name in this example.</p>
Data Sets	<p>Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. (2007). Eurobarometer 68.1: The European parliament and media usage, September-November 2007 [Data file and code book]. Retrieved from http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/access/index.jsp</p>

Tables/Figures and Equations

Tables/Figures should:

- be embedded in the text or have their location shown with a placement indicator
- be numbered consecutively with Arabic numbers
- use Panel A and Panel B to denote sections of a table/figure

Equations should be typed on separate lines and numbered consecutively at the left margin, using Arabic numbers in parentheses. Please use italics for scalar variables, use boldface to specify vectors and matrices, and use script for sets.

Thesis in the area of Law: some specific rules

For Thesis in Law it is possible to use either the in-text citation (see above) or footnotes citation. Here you can find some basic principles about the positioning and style of footnotes.

Positioning

If a footnote refers to the content of a paragraph, one or more sentences or a subordinate clause, insert the footnote number at the end of the passage concerned, after its closing punctuation mark. This should preferably be the full stop at the end of a sentence. Only if the footnote refers purely to a particular word or words should the number be inserted immediately thereafter. But always place it after any associated punctuation mark.

Example

Incorrect

"...The Directive's objective is to prevent and remedy "environmental damage" which is damage to protected species and habitats (nature), damage to water and damage to soil¹⁵. In the..."

Correct

"...The Directive's objective is to prevent and remedy "environmental damage" which is damage to protected species and habitats (nature), damage to water and damage to soil.¹⁵ In the..."

Style

Use footnotes (at the bottom of each page) rather than endnotes (at the end of the document). Begin each note with a capital letter and end it with a full stop. Unless the reference is general in nature, include the exact page number. If the passage being referred to covers more than one page, give the full range. Abbreviate "page" to "p."