

# Faculty of Economics and Management

## Master in Public Policy and Innovative Governance (LM63)

### *Guidelines for Completing the Degree Thesis* October 2024

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The thesis is a crucial part of your degree course. This guide aims to help you manage your thesis more effectively.

Your thesis should showcase your ability to conduct independent research, design a systematic methodology, and present findings clearly. It integrates the conceptual knowledge gained during your studies, applying it analytically across various subject areas.

Each thesis is unique, and there are many ways to approach your research. You should consult with your supervisor to determine the best approach. However, some general principles apply to all theses. Below is the recommended sequence for completing your thesis:

1. Identify a suitable project topic (or just the subject area in which you are interested).
2. Choose a supervisor and work closely with them to refine your topic and timeline.
3. Submit the final draft of your thesis.
4. Oral Defence.

## **1-CHOOSING A SUITABLE TOPIC/OBJECTIVE**

Start with a clear understanding of what you want to achieve. Choose a topic that will keep you motivated, whether because:

- it introduces you to a new area of interest
- it deepens your knowledge of an existing field.
- it develops key skills that enhance career prospects.
- it provides valuable insights or services to your current or prospective employer.

The objective is the question you want to answer.

## **2-THE ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR**

When selecting a supervisor, approach academic staff whose expertise and research interests align with your thesis topic. For further details on eligibility, refer to the Degree Thesis Regulation.

### **INITIAL MEETING**

In your first meeting, you should discuss and agree on:

- Thesis topic, objectives, and expected outcomes.

- Research methodology
- Timeline and potential structure of the thesis.
- Communication methods and scheduling of key meetings with your supervisor.

### **PROGRESS MEETINGS**

Regular meetings with your supervisor are essential for tracking your thesis progress. During these meetings, discuss key aspects such as required readings, data collection, contacts, and analysis. Ensure you notify your supervisor early about any major changes or challenges.

- Prepare in advance and send written material ahead of time.
- Don't expect your supervisor to review drafts during the meeting; reschedule if more time is needed.
- Proofread your work thoroughly before submission, using spell-check and manual review for accuracy.

## **3-THE FINAL DRAFT**

Use the unibz front page template available on the website.

Your thesis may be written in any of the three official languages: English, Italian, or German. An abstract in each language is required at the beginning of your thesis.

Formatting requirements:

- Word-processed, single-sided on A4 paper.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman or 10-point Tahoma font
- Line spacing: 1.5 points
- Margins: 1 inch (2.54 cm) on the right, top, and bottom; 1.4 inches (3.55 cm) on the left for binding.
- Page numbers at the bottom center of each page.

The thesis is worth 11 ECTS credits, equivalent to approximately 275 hours of work. Focus on content quality rather than page length. Be concise and avoid irrelevant material to inflate page numbers. Recommended lengths are 8,000–10,000 words for quantitative theses and 12,000 words for literature reviews and more qualitative works.

## 4-ORAL DEFENCE

You are required to present your thesis before a panel of at least 3 members nominated by the Faculty. Please ensure that your presentation is coherent and highlights the key points of your thesis that you find most interesting or original. The presentation will last approximately 10 minutes and will be followed by a general discussion.

You may choose the language of presentation (English, German, Italian). Please note that questions may be asked in any of these three languages.

## 5-POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

- **Lack of Clarity:** Rushing into action without clearly understanding what your thesis is truly about may lead to disparate pieces of research that lack cohesion.
- **Underestimating Writing Time:** Writing the thesis can take a significant amount of time. Allow at least two weeks to complete the final write-up. A list of important dates can be found at <http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/thesis/master/default.html>.
- **Inadequate Contingency Planning:** Failing to account for potential delays in computing or printing can disrupt your timeline.
- **Overly Ambitious Scope:** Starting with a broad scope and not recognizing when the project becomes unmanageable can hinder progress.
- **Data Loss:** Losing all your data or written work due to hard disk failure or loss of a USB memory stick can be catastrophic. Always keep backups of all electronically stored data.

Any changes regarding your supervisor should strictly adhere to the recommendations outlined in the regulations available at <http://www.unibz.it/en/economics/thesis/master/default.html>

## 6-PLAGIARISM AND AI

Do not copy from other sources, as sanctions will be applied in cases of plagiarism. Please refer to the Regulation on Degree Exams for more details.

You are encouraged to use AI in writing your thesis while adhering to academic and ethical principles including:

- **Clarity of Usage and Attribution:** Clearly state the extent and nature of AI tools used in your dissertation. This includes specifying whether AI was used for data analysis, literature review, content generation, or any other aspect of the research. Properly attribute any AI-generated content or data according to academic citation standards.
- **Originality and Critical Engagement:** Ensure that your work remains original and that you critically engage with AI-generated content. AI should not replace your own analysis, interpretation, or synthesis of information. Acknowledge the limitations of AI tools. Understand that AI may not always provide accurate or contextually relevant information, and you should be prepared to interpret and validate the results.

Discuss your use of AI tools with your thesis supervisor. They can provide guidance on acceptable practices and help ensure that your approach aligns with disciplinary standards.

## 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> .
	Author.
Chapter or essay in book	Herrmann, R. K. (2002). Linking theory to evidence in international relations. In W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse, & B. A.
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

## 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/questquery/>). 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., Huanga, 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., &amp; Brown, E. T. (Producers), &amp; Cardozo, P. (Director). (2003). <i>Real women have curves</i> [DVD]. United States: HBO Video.</p>
Television	<p>Daniels, G. (Writer) &amp; 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 <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ga.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ga.htm</a></p>
Blog Post	<p>McAdoo, T. (2009, September 10). Use of First Person in APA Style [Web log message]. Retrieved from <a href="http://blog.apastyle.org/">http://blog.apastyle.org/</a>.</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 <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89dZNPPYODk">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89dZNPPYODk</a></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 <a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/access/index.jsp">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/access/index.jsp</a></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 theses in the field of Law, you may use either in-text citations or footnotes. Below are some essential principles regarding the positioning and style of footnotes.

### Positioning

- When a footnote refers to the content of a paragraph, one or more sentences, or a subordinate clause, place the footnote number at the end of the relevant passage, following the closing punctuation mark. Ideally, this should be the full stop at the end of a sentence.
- If the footnote pertains specifically to a particular word or phrase, insert the number immediately after the word, but always after any associated punctuation.

### 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 soil<sup>15</sup>. 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.<sup>15</sup> In the..."

### Style

- Use footnotes (located at the bottom of each page) instead of endnotes (at the end of the document).
- Begin each footnote with a capital letter and conclude it with a full stop.
- Unless the reference is general, include the exact page number. If the referenced passage spans multiple pages, provide the full page range.
- Abbreviate "page" to "p."