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Guidelines for Writing a Master Thesis

Who is the thesis aimed at?

With the final thesis you show that you are able to apply the methods and models learned during your studies, to penetrate relevant scientific literature, to put it into an understandable context and to transfer it to economic problems.

Your paper should be written in such a way that a fellow student who has attended lectures similar to yours can read it with profit. Do not expect any additional literature study from your reader for comprehension, only advanced economic analysis skills and an understanding of common economic terminology. More specific terms that are central to your work should be defined precisely in each case.

The thesis should be self-contained. Mathematical and verbal economic derivations should be comprehensible and leave no gaps. Write as an economist. Interdisciplinary links are possible, but should ultimately remain understandable within the framework of an economic perspective.

Scope of material, structure and literature research

Review relevant literature. Use reference and online libraries to comprehensively address a topic. Depending on the topic, it may be necessary to compile, evaluate, or collect data. For this purpose, look at public sources and databases or build up your own data source, for example with the help of an experiment.

Write an abstract that concisely anticipates the results of the work (no more than 100-150 words). In an introduction, you should motivate the work and introduce its methodology and approach. A brief overview of the outline can be given, but this is not absolutely necessary. A conclusion should again summarize the results of the paper. Write in such a way that your conclusions follow clearly from the paper and avoid merely repeating results.

Structure and format according to your own taste, whereby a second level of structure is usually sufficient. With a third level of structure (e.g. "2.1.1 The incentive restriction"), you risk fragmenting your work too much. At the beginning of the paper there should be a table of contents with page numbers of all subchapters, in which all appendices should also be listed. At the end of the paper there is a complete bibliography (see also below: Citation). Weigh whether further lists (tables, figures, symbols, ...) are helpful for your readers. Complicated derivations or data can be outsourced to an appendix.

Paragraphs should never consist of just one sentence! Instead, try to link your sentences together and work out the contexts between the sentences. Bullet points are not a suitable means for the structure of

a thesis.

Paragraphs can be separated by a new line with indentation (as in this paragraph) or without a blank line. Decide on one of these variants and do not use both (as just done).

Style

Avoid unnecessary value judgments! Support your conclusions with arguments and facts. If controversial positions arise, you should assess them neutrally. If you take a position, make it clear how you arrived at your judgment. Write as precisely as possible and avoid vague or unclear statements. Explain mathematical results verbally.

Use illustrative graphs, charts, and tables when appropriate to the content of the thesis. These must be adequately described and interpreted in the context of the paper. In addition, they must be labeled with a title and reference and numbered consecutively. Make sure that the labels are understandable and correct. Create your own graphs, charts, and tables and avoid copying from original sources.

Avoid buzzwords. For example, instead of "men tend to behave as homo economicus," you should rather describe the specific contexts in which a man behaves rationally or in a self-interest-maximizing way.

Zitieren

Use footnotes sparingly. They serve to contribute necessary cross-references and additional information without disrupting the flow of the text. Cite directly in the text according to Harvard style, e.g. (Schelling 1970: 12), or (Mankiw 2005a: 978). A page citation should be included if possible. If a text was written by two authors, both should be cited. If there are three or more authors, only the first is named and the abbreviation "et al." is added.

Make sure that your bibliography is complete and consistent. All sources used must be listed, arranged alphabetically by author's last name and by year of publication if the author is the same. For Internet sources, please provide a link to the source and the date it was last accessed. Sources not cited in the text must not be included in the bibliography. Examples of English-language bibliographies are:

Abbink, K. (2006), "Laboratory experiments on corruption," *International Handbook on the Economics of Corruption*, ed. by S. Rose-Ackerman, Edward Elgar: 418-437.

Kaplow, L. and S. Shavell (1994), "Optimal Law Enforcement with Self Reporting of Behavior," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 102 (3): 583-606.

Jacquemet, N. (2007). "Corruption as Betrayal: Experimental Evidence," mimeo. Online version at <http://team.univ-paris1.fr/teamperso/jacquemet/Corruption.pdf> (accessed January 14, 2010).

Rose-Ackerman, S. (1999), *Corruption and Government. Causes, Consequences and Reform*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

You can quote important statements of opinion or central statements verbatim. But this does not replace your own choice of words, which you must use to place a quotation in the context of your work. If you quote verbatim, the quoted text must be placed in quotation marks.

Formal requirement for acceptance of the work

Your work must contain the following affidavit at the end. If this affidavit is not found in the paper, or is incomplete, a correction may be denied if necessary:

"I, NAME, hereby certify that I have written this paper myself and that I have not used any sources or aids other than those indicated. All statements that have been taken over verbatim or in spirit are marked as such. I have not submitted this work in the same or similar form to any other examination authority."