

Instructions for writing a Master's thesis

Length

- 25 to 40 pages of continuous text (without cover page, outline, bibliography, appendix, etc., but including figures and tables).

Page layout

- Page margins:
 - top, bottom and right: at least 2 cm
 - left: at least 3 cm
- Typesetting:
 - Font size: 12pt
 - Calibri, Times New Roman, Arial or similar font
 - Line spacing: at least 1.5 times
- Lettering on page: one-sided
- Footnotes: on the bottom of each page, font size: 10pt
- Page numbers: Cover page and outline without page numbering, then continuous Arabic numerals

Structure and external form

- Please be sure to keep to the following order:
 - Cover sheet
 - Outline
 - Main text
 - Bibliography
 - (possibly) list of abbreviations (usually not necessary)
 - Appendix (if applicable)
- Please check for spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes, missing words, missing pages or page numbers, etc. before submitting your paper. The external form of your work is one of the assessment criteria, as are the structure and content.

Cover sheet

- The cover page must contain the following information:
 - Name of institute, chair and professor supervising the thesis
 - The topic
 - Information about the author of the paper: name, matriculation number, address, semester number
 - Date of submission

Outline

- Number your bullet points with Arabic numerals.
- A sub-level (2.1, 2.2, etc.) only makes sense if it consists of at least two sections.
- The outline should provide information about the "red thread" of the paper

Introduction

- In the introduction, you should briefly place your topic in context and state the objective of the paper.
- You should briefly summarise the main results and show how your work is structured.

Main body

- In the main body, it is important to present the topic in a logically clear way.
- Your paper should show that you have understood the underlying literature (no matter whether theoretical or empirical work).
- Do not translate verbatim from the original literature, but present your topic in your own words.

Conclusion, Outlook, Final remarks

- In addition to a summary of the results, the concluding part of your paper should also contain a clear statement to be derived from the results.
- If necessary, you should discuss the results critically and point out open questions.
- In the concluding part of your paper, however, you should not introduce any new economic arguments. Only refer back to the arguments discussed in the main section.

Footnotes

- Footnotes should be placed at the end of each page to indicate marginal notes by the author that are not directly related to the topic.
- All references to footnotes are marked in the text by superscript numbers.

References

- Please provide clear references for all ideas that have not been developed independently - unless they are common scientific knowledge.
- **ATTENTION: References generally do not belong in footnotes.** This disrupts the reading flow of your work. Write a literature reference at a suitable place in the continuous text.
- This is how you cite correctly:
 - *Regular citations* appear in the running text with details of the author and year of publication.

Example:

According to Saez (2001), the more elastic top earners are to an increase in tax rates, the lower the optimal tax rate on their earnings.

- Place *verbatim quotations* in inverted commas and cite (in the main text or in a footnote) the author, the year of publication and page number.
 - If you make changes to a literal quotation, for example, to better integrate it into the flow of the text, place insertions in square brackets [word added] and mark places where you have deleted text with [...].
 - Literal quotations should be the exception and should not exceed two to three lines. If a quotation is longer, the text is indented and single line spacing is used.

Example:

This argumentation is based on the observation that "in Germany the overall economic inheritance volume [...] has grown strongly". (see Corneo et al., 2016, p. 51).

- *Indirect citations:* If you only quote a passage of text from a paper in spirit, cite the source (usually in the main text) including the corresponding page number.
- If an article has three or more authors, you can use the abbreviation "et al." for example Saez et al. (2012) instead of Saez, Slemrod and Giertz (2012).
- Always cite the original literature and not secondary sources.
- Databases such as EconLit or Google-Scholar are suitable for searching for additional literature.

Bibliography

- Include all literature sources used.
- Arrange the bibliography alphabetically according to the last name of the first author.
- If two different articles with the same author and year of publication are cited, you can separate them using a and b, i.e. Saez (2001a) and Saez (2001b).
- Pay particular attention to consistent citation (also with regard to the capitalisation of publication titles, journal names, etc.).
- Cite according to the following scheme:
 - *Book title:*

Auerbach, A. and L. Kotlikoff (1987). *Dynamic Fiscal Policy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 - *Journal articles:*

Saez, E., Slemrod, J. and S.H. Giertz (2012). "The Elasticity of Taxable Income with Respect to Marginal Tax Rates: A Critical Review". *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 50(1): 3-50.
 - *Working Papers:*

Bernheim, D.B. and D. Taubinsky (2018). "Behavioral Public Economics. NBER Working Paper No. 24828.
 - *Essays in collective volumes:*

Chetty, R. and A. Finkelstein (2003). "Social Insurance – Connecting Theory to Data". in: Auerbach, A.J., Chetty, R., Feldstein, M. and S. Saez. *Handbook of Public Economics Volume 5*. Elsevier, New York.

Figures and tables

- Figures and tables must be numbered consecutively (separately). They must always be anchored in the text, i.e. mentioned.
- Consider whether each figure is meaningful and relevant to the topic.
- Explain in your text what can be seen in an illustration or table.
- As a rule, use figures and tables sparingly.
- You can also place less central figures and tables in the appendix.