



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS
School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences

Guideline for writing a thesis or term paper

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1 Procedure

1.1 Start and contact

For theses: If you would like to write a thesis with me, you should contact me with a significant time ahead of your planned submission to arrange a first meeting. The first meeting will have the goal to define a general research question for your thesis and to get to know each other. For bachelor theses, I provide you with a list of potential research questions. For master theses, I welcome your own ideas and suggestions for a thesis project, but you are also welcome to contribute to some of my ongoing research projects. I only take on research projects that are applied in their nature (for bachelor students: relying on empirical literature, for master students: primarily applying microeconomic methods) and that address research questions that are of general interest to me. If your heart is absolutely set on a topic, you can try to convince me of its relevance and feasibility; otherwise I would be also happy to suggest you various ideas for research.

For term papers: You should follow the guidelines of the syllabus indicating the schedule of topic submission, scheduling, and communication. The topic for term papers you are usually encouraged to develop your topic and research question independently. Nonetheless, all topics have to be approved by me. In some cases, I can provide you with a list of potential research questions. Term paper research projects are applied in their nature (relying on empirical literature or applying microeconomic methods) and address research questions that are of related to the course material.

1.2 Exposé

For theses: As a next step, you are required to write an exposé. The exposé for bachelor students consists of three parts, each around one page long. The first part is a research proposal that should be written as an introduction to your thesis. It should state the research question of your thesis and explain its relevance. Moreover, it should provide a short verbal description of the structure of your thesis explaining how you are going to proceed to answer your research question and shortly outlining the content of each section of your thesis. The second part outlines the structure of your paper in table format. It includes the title of your thesis as well as the table of contents including all sections and subsections. In the third part of the exposé, you should provide us with a preliminary list of references. While the list should be tentative and does not have to state all sources you may end up using, it should be formatted fully according to general bibliography style used in economics. Please have a look at the section “List of references” below, which gives you an overview of the formal requirements.

The exposé for master students should be extended by one additional section, outlining the data requirements and main estimating approaches for the paper. So the exposé for masters should consist for example of the parts 1. Introduction, 2. Data and empirical approach, 3. Structure, 4. List of references.

For term papers: Please refer to the requirements of the course syllabus.

2 Formal requirements

2.1 Structure of the paper

A paper consists of:

1. Title page
2. Table of contents
3. List of figures/list of tables (if you have more than 3 figures/tables in your paper)
4. Main body
5. List of references
6. Appendix

2.2 Title page

Title page consists of three parts:

- **Upper part:** Title of the paper
- **Middle part:** Thesis as part of the [full name of your degree] at the University of Texas at Dallas or for term papers: [Course Id] - [Course name]
- **Bottom part:**
Submitted on [date of submission]
to Prof. Dr. Elías Cisneros,
School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences,
By [first and last name], [NetID]

2.3 Table of contents

The table of contents contains the outline of your work and lists all sections and subsections including the list of references and appendix, numbered in Arabic: 1, 2, 2.1, 2.2, 3, 4, 4.1, 4.2, etc.) with the corresponding page numbers. Only number subsections if there are at least two of them, so 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. but not only 4.1.1.

Page numbers start with the first page of the actual text in Arabic numbers and end with the last page of your text. The table of contents, appendix, etc. are numbered in Roman. There is no page number on the title page.

2.4 List of figures/list of tables

If you include more than 3 tables or figures in your paper, make a list of figures/tables that contains the title of the figure/table and its corresponding page number. Moreover, if you use symbols or shortcuts other than those commonly known,¹ add a list of abbreviations as well. This also means that all your tables (and figures) should be numbered consecutively (in Arabic) and should receive a short and informative title.

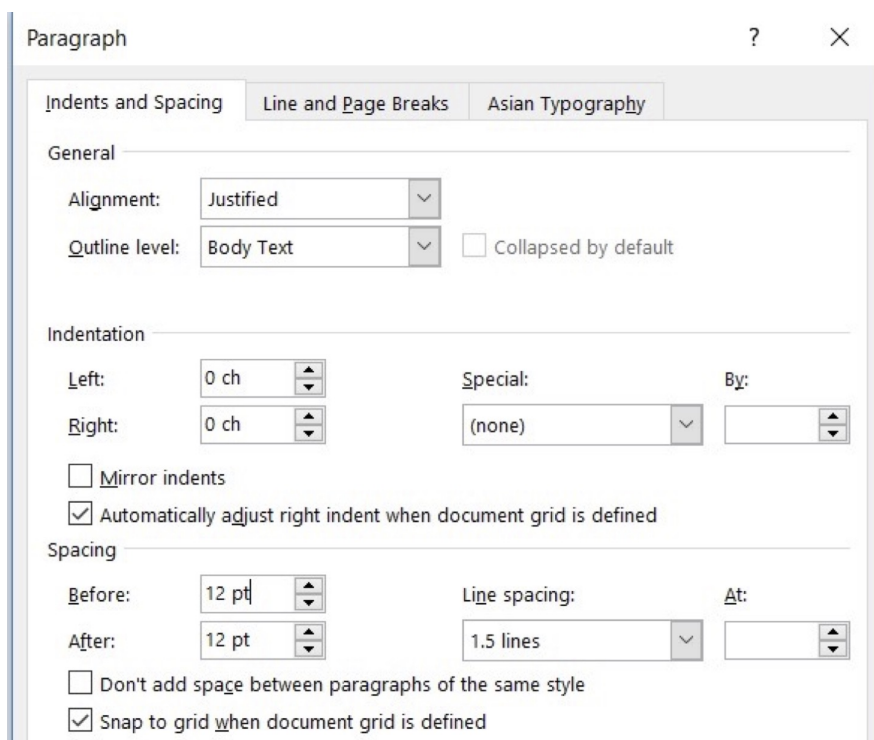
2.5 Formal text requirements

The text body should comply with the following instructions:

- Extent:
 - Bachelor thesis: 30 pages (maximum deviation +/- 10)

¹Tip: avoid the use of acronyms, unless you are using a term extensively.

- Master thesis: 35 pages (+No upper page limit for the Appendix)
- Term paper: See syllabus (usually: undergraduate 5 pages, graduate: 20 pages)
- Format:
 - Margins: right and left margin together around 5 cm, top 1.8cm, bottom 1.8cm
 - Line spacing: 1.5
 - Alignment: Fully justified paragraphs (In German: Blocksatz)
 - No indentation for the main body text
 - Typeface: Serif types like Times New Roman, Cambria, CMR or similar, using font size of 12pt for the body text. Section and subsection titles are in bold, with section titles in size 14pt and subsection titles in size 12pt.
 - Do not use blank lines to structure your sub-subsections; please use the paragraph spacing controls by your software instead (e.g. 12pt before and after the section/subsection titles). Similarly, do not use blank lines to divide your paragraphs, control the distance between the paragraphs instead by spacing options (e.g., 12 pts before and after each paragraph, see below):



- Do not leave large free spaces between the lines or between sections (no empty half pages within the text are warranted)
- Header and footer: No header is needed. Add page numbers to the footer. Page numbers should be in Arabic and right-aligned in size 10pt.
- Footnotes: Use Word's (or LaTeX's) auto-numbering feature to insert footnotes throughout the text. Footnotes should be in size 10pt, single-spaced, and hanging indented.
- Tables and figures:
 - * Each table and figure should appear complete at one page except long tables that are necessary to span over one page.
 - * Tables and figures should be placed in the text body close to the first reference to them. Supplementary tables and figures can be collected at the end of the thesis in the Appendix.

- * Tables and figures should be numbered continuously throughout of the text with titles on the top, left aligned, font size 12pt and non-bold.
 - * If you add tables or figures from your primary literature, do not use the original number of the table or figure but renumber them.
 - * If necessary, sources of the table, figure or data and notes should be added and placed under the table/figure in size 10pt.
- Equations: equations should be written using an equation editor (typeset as formulas) and numbered consecutively. You can refer to the equations by their number.

If your work deviates strongly from these formal requirements, this may impact your final grade. Moreover, we take grammar, spelling, comma placement and linguistic expression seriously, so should you.

2.6 Rules of citation

You are writing a scientific paper and hence your own contribution has to be clearly recognizable. Write the paper in your own words and do not copy from other sources unless marked as such. There are direct and indirect quotes: direct quotes (displayed within quotation marks “this is a direct quote”) *are only used for exceptionally perfect and unique statements*. If parts of the quote are left out, you have to mark that within brackets (“text [...] text”). Indirect quotes are sentences that summarize an argument from a reference in your own words. I suggest you to use the English citation method. The English method states the source either after the quote in parentheses (Acemoglu, 1990) or refers to the authors in line and states the publication year in parentheses. Indirect quotes are at times introduced by “cf.” or “see”; if a quote refers to a text page longer than a page, you write the starting page followed by “f” or “ff”. While *general references to a work do not need a page number*, you should always state the page for “direct quotes” and for numbers. Authors’ names are shortened in the main body text (surname only) and given in full in the bibliography (surname, initials). When there are two authors, the format of citing names should be A and B (year). While when there are three authors or more, the format should be *FirstAuthor et al. (year)*. You generally do not have to refer to the full names of authors, name the title of the paper, refer to the authors’ institutions, etc., not even if this is your main literature source and you are introducing the paper for the first time.

Examples of the English citing method:

- Today there are still around 57 million children out of school and more than 770 million adults remain illiterate (UNESCO, 2014, p.2ff).
- Some economists argue that the current political backlash can be seen as a medium term consequence of the financial crisis (Adams, 2016, Bruno and Müller, 2017, Preston et al., 2012).
- Rodrik (2009) points out that neither the proponents nor the critics of globalization got it right.
- Feenstra and Hanson (1996, 1999) find that, in the presence of vertical integration and international outsourcing, free trade could actually increase skill premium in both developed and developing countries.
- Black and Brainerd (2004a, 2004b) test Becker’s model of discrimination by comparing the difference in residual wage gaps between. . . .
- Costantini and Melitz (2008), Atkeson et al. (2010) and Bustos (2011) have indicated that increased foreign market access can increase firm productivity by creating incentives for firms to engage in process innovation or adopt new technologies.

2.7 Bibliography

All references that you refer to in the text (and only those) have to be listed in the bibliography. Please, list them using the following format:

- **Books:** Authors (year of publication): *Title*, Edition, Publisher, Place of publication.
 Todaro, M.P., Smith, S.C. (2012): *Economic Development*, 11th edition, Pearson Addison Wesley, Boston.

- **Journal articles:** Authors (year of publication): Title, *Name of The Journal*, volume (issue): pages.
Shemyakina, O. (2011): The effect of armed conflict on accumulation of schooling: Results from Tajikistan, *Journal of Development Economics*, 95(2):186-200.
- **Articles in a collected volume:** Authors (year of publication): Title of article, in Editor of anthology, ed., *Title of anthology*, Publisher, Place of publication, Pages.
Hedman, E. (2005): A state of emergency, a strategy of war: Internal displacement, forced relocation, and involuntary return in Aceh, in E. Hedman, ed., *Aceh Under Martial Law: Conflict, Violence and Displacement*, Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford, p. 7-11.
- **Working papers published as a part of a series:** Authors (year of publication): Title of article, *Name of working paper series*, No., Institution, Place of publication.
Duggan, V., Rahardja, S., and Varela, G. (2013): Service sector reform and manufacturing productivity: Evidence from Indonesia, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper* No. 6349, World Bank, Washington, DC.
- **Electronic sources:** Author (year of publication): Title, available at internet source, date of access.
Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) (2016): GPS data collection, available at <http://dhsprogram.com/What-We-Do/GPS-DataCollection.cfm>, Accessed on 17.02.2016.

For more information on how to cite different papers consult the Chicago Manual of Style: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Journal articles and discussion papers are often available both in print and electronic format. These are not electronic sources and have to be cited as journal articles (or working papers), without a doi (digital identifier) or link. Only those articles that are only available via the internet are electronic sources.

The bibliography is structured alphabetically, by the family name of the first author. If you refer to more than one article from the same authors, sort them according to the year of publication (newest first). In case of several articles from the same authors in the same year of publication identify them with a, b, c etc. Please use always the latest published version and if working and discussion papers are already published, always refer to the published (journal article) version.

2.8 Appendix

Supplementary materials like additional tables, illustrations or longer derivations should be placed in the appendix. You should refer to them in the text (e.g., see table A.3 in the Appendix). Give all tables concise and meaningful titles that are self-explanatory and can be understood directly.

2.9 Submission

For Theses: TBA

For term papers: Submission via eLearning, only.

3 Content-related requirements

Structure your paper in a meaningful and understandable way and give your sections and subsections short but informative titles. In general, be cautious about the quality of your literature sources and the correct citation as well as a good scientific writing style.

In literature studies : The primary literature serves as a starting point and serves as a major part of your thesis (or term paper) and can only be changed if I agrees to a different main source. Additionally, I expect you to search for more related literature of good quality and to place your primary literature in the context of the rest of the literature. If your primary literature is an empirical paper, I expect you to clearly explain the methods used in this specific paper. This includes writing down the main estimating equation explicitly and explaining its components as well as interpreting its main results (the main tables that you are referring to should be included in the appendix). The correct description and interpretation of the empirical study (or studies) is one (central) aspect that is going to influence your final (thesis) grade. A further major part of your thesis (or term paper) is the discussion, in which you should link the different findings together, interpret the results and discuss how they contribute to answering your main research question, compare the main results with theoretical expectations and with findings of different studies. In sum, you should go beyond summarizing main findings and should provide a critical discussion of how the presented literature helps you to answer the specific research question. The thesis ends with a conclusion that provides a short summary of your main findings/insights and may include further policy implications or open questions for future research.

In empirical studies: In general, I will be happy to suggest you prospective topics for research and provide you with data or help you to find adequate data sources for your empirical work. Alternatively, feel free to approach me with more specific research plans that you feel broadly linked to my research interests. Empirical studies generally start with a short introduction that states the research question and its relevance and clearly identifies the research gap that your study is going to address (and a short sketch of the structure of the paper). This should be followed by a literature review that should also include a (more or less formal) sketch of theoretical arguments and result in a set of working hypotheses that will guide your empirical work. The next section should describe the data (data sources, data cleaning or data generating process and all relevant measurement issues), followed by a clear explanation of the used empirical methods. You should provide your main estimating equations (numbered and correctly specified) and explain all subscripts, variables and estimation approaches. I also expect you to give a general intuitive explanation of your model choice. The next section should present the results (in neatly organized tables) and provide an interpretation for the results. In the discussion part, you should link the different findings together, interpret your results in the context of the rest of the theoretical and empirical literature and especially comment on whether the empirical findings conform with your hypotheses. The thesis ends with a conclusion summarizing your findings that also may include a discussion of potential limitations, policy implications and future research prospects.

Literature:

Schimmel, J. (2012): Writing Science: How to write papers that get cited and proposals that get funded, Oxford University Press, Oxford.