

Master thesis: hints

50 pages (+/- 10 %). Please take the information from the internet pages of the academic office (Studienbüro) on the "Format of the Master's thesis" into account.

The thesis is expected to prove your ability to examine a research question with the scientific methods of the respective field.

What makes a good master thesis?

- A well specified research question which is analyzed and discussed systematically.
- A research question set in the context of the relevant literature, ongoing debates or lasting controversies.
- Finding relevant literature is part of the process of developing your research question. The library (Fachbibliothek Wirtschaftswissenschaften) offers courses and assistance with questions on search strategies, data bases, access to print and digital sources etc.
- Your independent analysis of the topic, a traceable presentation of your thoughts and well-argued conclusions.

You are expected to critically discuss the literature, to scrutinize the methods used and the results presented by other scholars. And we expect you to be just as critical with your own approach and conclusions!

Structure of the thesis

The quality of a paper is often signaled in the introduction and the conclusion. The motivation and relevance of the research question, the method to address it, the structure of the argument and the main results are presented in the introduction. The conclusion contains a concise summary of the argument and the results of the thesis. Questions for further research can also be addressed there. Introduction and conclusion should be brief and to the point.

The structure of the thesis follows the research question. The train of thought should be clear to the reader at every point of your thesis. Introductions or summaries at the end of chapters are a good place to explain how this step in your analysis fits into the argument of your thesis.

Scientific writing

We expect correct spelling, punctuation and grammar in your thesis. Straight forward language and simple sentence structures make the text accessible. Avoid colloquial language just as much as complicated wording.

Tables, diagrams etc.

Tables, diagrams, figures etc. are numbered. The complete sources of the material are provided.

We recommend using footnotes for short remarks which would disrupt the argument presented in the main text (e.g. references to supplementary literature or another section of the thesis). Avoid long digressions in footnotes by clarifying how the additional material relates to the main argument.

Referencing

Referencing is essential to good academic practice. References to the material you used in developing the argument of your thesis are included in the text. A reference provides the reader with all the information needed to accurately identify the original source of the authors you have quoted or paraphrased. Be meticulous in your working with the literature. Direct and indirect quotations, extracts, tables, figures etc. have to be referenced appropriately.

The *Guide to the Harvard system of referencing* provided by Anglia Ruskin University will help you with almost any question on referencing (<http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>). If you are in doubt especially with referencing archive sources, reprinted works, edited works etc. please do not hesitate to talk to us!

References in the text

- (author year, page number). Mention the relevant pages in the source, avoid "ff." and "et seq."
- With more than two authors the abbreviation et al. (and others) is used. Example: Schulze et al. (2007, 15)
- All references used in the text have to be presented in full in the bibliography at the end of the text.

Direct quotation

- The literal quote is presented in quotation marks: reproduce it exactly as in the original.
- Omissions are marked by three dots.
- Insertions into the original quote are presented within brackets and identified as additions by the author.
- Literal quotes of one or two sentences are integrated into the text. Longer literal quotes are indented and single-lined.

Example: "Mutual understanding and peaceful relations among the peoples of the earth have been impeded not only by the multiplicity of languages but to an even greater degree by differences in patterns of thought – that is, by differences in the methods adopted for defining the sources of knowledge, and for organizing coherent thinking." (Pribram 1949, 1)

Indirect quotation

- The argument presented in the source is rephrased in your own words.
- If several works of the same author are referenced, the years of publication are listed after the author name.
- If several sources for one statement are listed, the references at the end of the sentence are separated by semicolon.

Example: According to Mankiw and Taylor (2014, 783) deregulation is a source of further innovation.

Diagrams, tables etc.

- Diagrams and tables reproduced from the literature are referenced like a direct quote (author year, page number).
- For tables and diagrams you put together yourself: the sources of the data are listed completely.

Example: IMF *World Economic Outlook Database* October 2014.

The bibliography

- In alphabetical order of the last names of the authors.
- If several works of the same author are used, they are listed in chronological order, beginning with the latest work.
- For articles from handbooks, anthologies, etc. each individual author of a contribution and the title of the article are listed. Editor, title of the anthology etc. are also mentioned.
- Every source referenced in the text is listed completely in the bibliography. The bibliography does not contain material which is not referenced in the text.

Examples:

Articles in journals:

Rivot, Sylvie (2013). Gentlemen prefer liquidity: Evidence from Keynes. *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 35 (3), 397-422.

Note: If you use articles from printed journals (with page numbering), the URL is not included even if you accessed the article electronically!

Books:

Kindleberger, Charles P. und Aliber, Robert Z. (2005). *Manias, panics and crashes – A history of financial crises*. 5th edition. New Jersey: Wiley.

Articles in anthologies:

Laidler, David (2006). Keynes and the birth of modern macroeconomics. In: Backhouse, R. und Bateman, B.W. (eds.) *The Cambridge companion to Keynes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 39-57.

Internet source:

Ip, Greg (2015). As the Euro Nudges Up, Could U.S. Inflation Be Next? *The Wall Street Journal*, published on 03.12.2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2015/12/03/greg-ip-as-the-euro-nudges-up-could-u-s-inflation-be-next/> (accessed 3 September 2016)

Newspaper articles:

Slapper, G. (2005). Corporate manslaughter: new issues for lawyers. *The Times*, 3 Sept., p. 4b.