

Final Thesis: Guidelines

Economics: Design and Behavior

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1 Topics and Thesis Completion

At our chair, we offer the possibility to write Bachelor and Master theses in Experimental and Behavioral Economics. We expect Bachelor students to write a critical literature review on a specific topic chosen from our research interests. The Bachelor thesis should focus on one or more papers, contextualize the paper/s into the relevant literature, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the papers. Bachelor thesis can also include an empirical section.

We expect Master students to write empirical theses. To guarantee a sufficient background to write a Master thesis with our chair, we recommend attending at least one course in Experimental and Behavioral Economics offered by our chair. Students are asked to collect and analyze their own data; students at our chair are invited to collect data online, in the field, or bring their own data. Publicly available dataset (i.e., World Value Survey, SOEP, experimental data from published articles, etc) can also be used. In some cases, students will be able to collect data with us in the Cologne Laboratory for Economic Research.

If you are interested in writing your thesis at our chair, you should prepare a short proposal indicating one or two main references, the general idea of the thesis, and how you plan to collect the data (for Diploma and Master thesis). We expect students to autonomously develop their own research idea starting from the list of research interests of our team (see 1.2). Making the effort to independently formulate your own topic is in our view the first step toward a successful thesis; we are of course happy to discuss with you your idea and give you feedback along the way. For further details on how to apply for writing the thesis with our chair, please see Section 2.

1.1 Completion period and length

The official regulation for each major determines the legal requirements and the time allotted for thesis completion. In general, the completion time for the thesis is:

- **Master:** 6 months (no exceptions);
- **Bachelor:** 12 weeks (no exceptions).

The time starts from the moment the thesis is officially registered by our chair. The thesis can be written in German or in English. Up to date official regulations from the WiSo Assignment Office can be found at this *link*.

The length of the Bachelor thesis should not exceed 30 pages, and the length of the Master thesis should not exceed 60 pages. For Master theses we encourage students to follow the structure of a research paper; this format is typically more concise, precise, and formal. Writing the thesis in the format of a research paper helps students to streamline their ideas and findings, but often requires a bigger effort on their side (see Section 3).

1.2 Team and detailed list of research interests

Please find below the list of our research interests. Your choice of topics is not bounded to this list, but selecting a topic close to our current research interests can guarantee you a closer and more profitable supervision.

- **Prof. Dr. Felix Kölle**
 - Cooperation
 - Social norms
 - Pro- and anti-social behavior
 - Conflict & Competition
 - Framing effects

2 How to Apply

Students interested in writing their thesis with our chair must have a strong interest in the field of Experimental and Behavioral Economics. Master students should have attended courses on these subjects.

In case you want to apply for a thesis with our chair, please follow these steps:

1. Send an email to Felix Kölle (felix.koelle@uni-koeln.de). Please, include in the mail the following information:

- Object: Thesis Request (Chair: Economics: Design and Behavior)
 - Attachment 1: Application form (downloadable from our webpage)
 - Attachment 2: Overview of your grades from WiSo Assignment Office
2. Our researchers will schedule an appointment with you to discuss and define the project
 3. Once the topic of the thesis has been defined, we will proceed with the formal application
 - Bachelor: form here
 - Master: form here
 4. After the thesis is officially accepted at our chair, you will be assigned to one of our researchers that will follow you during the completion of the thesis.

Please notice that the assignment of the thesis takes place twice per semester through the Assignment Office of the WiSo faculty (<http://www2.wiso.uni-koeln.de/pa/service/downloads.shtml>).

3 How to Structure your Thesis

Students can follow a standard thesis format (Annex A) or a more concise research paper structure (Annex B). All thesis must follow the rules set by the Assignment Office.¹ Students must submit a CD/DVD containing a pdf file of the thesis and two hardback copies of their manuscript. The thesis must be printed in A4 format, font-size 12, and 1.5 line spaced. Left-margin should be 5 cm, other margins should be 2 cm.

Figures and tables: Figures and tables should be numbered sequentially throughout the entire text. Figures and tables can be placed in the main text or in a separate Appendix; try to limit the number of figures and tables

¹Rules set by the WiSo Assignment Office have priority over the rules defined in this document. Please let us know if you find any inconsistency.

reported in the main text. Each figure and table must be clearly labeled; remember to precisely describe all the dimensions of the charts (e.g., x and y axes) and use intelligible labels. The sources of the figures and tables must be clearly specified in the notes (right below the figure or table); make sure to gather and store all the necessary information to correctly acknowledge your sources. Figures and tables supplement the main text; you have to cite in the main text all figures and tables included in your thesis. When describing them, focus only on the main lessons you can derive from the chart or table. Always report the number of the relevant figure or table you are referring to. You may want to use the cross reference function in your editor to make sure you are referring to the right number.

Quotations and references: Please follow the APA (American Psychological Association) style guidelines for in-text citations and references. The following text is taken from Angeli, E., Wagner, J., Lawrick, E., Moore, K., Anderson, M., Soderlund, L., & Brizee, A. (2010, May 5). General format. Retrieved from <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

”When using APA format, follow the author-date method of in-text citation. This means that the author’s last name and the year of publication for the source should appear in the text, for example, (Jones, 1998), and a complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper.

If you are referring to an idea from another work but **NOT** directly quoting the material, or making reference to an entire book, article or other work, you only have to make reference to the author and year of publication and not the page number in your in-text reference. All sources that are cited in the text **must** appear in the reference list at the end of the paper. [...]

If you are directly quoting from a work, you will need to include the author, year of publication, and the page number for the reference (preceded by ”p.”). Introduce the quotation with a signal phrase that includes the author’s last name followed by the date of publication in parentheses.

According to Jones (1998), ”Students often had difficulty using APA style, especially when it was their first time” (p. 199).

[...] Your reference list should appear at the end of your paper. Each

source you cite in the paper must appear in your reference list; likewise, each entry in the reference list must be cited in your text. ”

For a detailed explanation of the structure of the thesis see Annexes A and B. Once you have decided the format that fits best your thesis, make sure you are carefully following the guidelines we have provided.

Every thesis must include a declaration according to § 17 par. 9 of the DRE, § 19 par. 9 of the MRE or §13 par. 9 of the BRE. The following signed declaration of originality has to be submitted in German (even for thesis written in English) together with the date of thesis submission. Please note that submitted theses may be anonymously saved and processed by Turnitin (iParadigms LLC) to check for plagiarism.

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und ohne die Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus veröffentlichten und nicht veröffentlichten Schriften entnommen wurden, sind als solche kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit ist in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form oder auszugsweise im Rahmen einer anderen Prüfung noch nicht vorgelegt worden. Ich versichere, dass die eingereichte elektronische Fassung der eingereichten Druckfassung vollständig entspricht.²

Together with the thesis, students must submit a curriculum vitae containing educational background and career history, including internships and exams.

²I hereby declare that I have single-handedly written this thesis and used only allowed resources. All passages containing published or unpublished work by other authors are marked as such. The thesis was never used for another examination.

4 Contact

If you want to apply for a thesis with our chair or if you have any doubt, please feel free to contact us.

Please make sure you have carefully read the present document before applying for a thesis. For problems related to the administrative procedure, please remember that the main source of information should be the WiSo Assignment Office (documents here: <http://www.wiso.uni-koeln.de/15679.html>).

A Standard Thesis Structure

Title

Summary

Concise summary of the thesis, containing all key information.

Table of contents

Please report the list of contents here.

List of tables

Please report the list of tables here.

List of figures

Please report the list of figures here.

Introduction

Presentation of the broad research topic – why it is relevant, debate in the literature, etc. Make your arguments as precise and compelling as possible; have a clear structure in mind before writing.

Review of the literature

Overview of the relevant literature

Research

If you are writing a research thesis, please describe your data in detail. If you collected the data, report the procedure you used. You should include in the Appendix any material you used to conduct your research (e.g., instructions, questionnaire, etc). Independent researchers should be able to replicate your research based on the information reported in this Section. Report the main results in this Section (or in a separate Results Section). Results must be supported by statistical analysis corroborating your statements.

If you are writing a bachelor thesis, contextualized the chosen articles and discuss them (strengths, weaknesses, gap, etc) in this Section. Please clearly discuss your arguments and support your claims in light of the existing lit-

erature.

Discussion and Conclusion

Summarize your contribution/analysis and relate your findings to the broader literature you are speaking to.

References

Appendix

B Research Paper Structure

Title

Abstract

The abstract summarizes in about 200 words the main contribution and findings of the thesis. Avoid citations in the abstract; do not simply copy sentences from the Introduction here.

Keywords: report 3-4 keywords here (e.g., cooperation, experiments, children behavior)

1. Introduction

Introductions usually follow a general-to-specific movement and provide a blueprint for the entire paper. Introductions are often composed by three parts:

- presentation of the broad research topic – why it is relevant, debate in the literature, etc;
- focus of the paper and main research question to be addressed – highlight the gap in the literature and how you will fill this gap with your work;
- overview of your methodology and results.

You may consider to write your introduction last. Make your arguments as precise and compelling as possible; have a clear structure in mind before writing. Guide the reader throughout your reasoning.

2. Methods

Describe your data in detail. If you collected the data, report the procedure you used. You should include in the Appendix any material you used to conduct your research (e.g., instructions, questionnaire, etc). Independent researchers should be able to replicate your research based on the information reported in this Section.

3. Results

Report the main results in this Section. Results must be supported by statistical analysis corroborating your statements.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Summarize your contribution and relate your findings to the broader

literature you are speaking to.

References

Appendix