Information on writing theses at the Chair of Development Economics (Prof. Fuchs) and the Ibero-America Institute for Economic Research

Status: March 2024

Please also note the information on the website of the Examination Office:
https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/574058.html

Before choosing the topic:

- We supervise **Bachelor theses** in the research areas of the Chair and the Ibero-America Institute. Bachelor theses summarize the current literature and may contain (descriptive) empirical analyses. We support bachelor theses that contain an empirical analysis (usually with the statistical software Stata or R). We expect basic econometric knowledge.

- We supervise **Master theses** in the research areas of the Chair and the Ibero-America Institute. We expect an empirical study (usually with the statistical software Stata or R) to be part of your master thesis. Econometric knowledge is expected for this.

- **If you would like to complete your Bachelor's or Master's thesis at the Chair of Development Economics, we expect that you have attended at least one lecture or seminar by the Chair or the Ibero-America Institute before.**

- First, read the requirements of the examination regulations for your degree program carefully. It is advisable to research and read the relevant literature both on your chosen topic and on suitable research theories and methods at an early stage. It takes much longer than expected to find, read, and understand relevant quality literature. A literature review is beneficial for preparing a good project plan and during the whole working process of the thesis.

- We encourage you to pursue your own research ideas. When searching for topics, orientate yourself primarily towards lectures and seminars as well as literature reviews. The research question must not have been dealt with in this form before. It should be relevant. It should also be possible to formulate the topic as a question, which will then be discussed and answered in the thesis. However, the topic should not be too extensive and general. The topic should personally interest you.

- Alternatively, you can request topic suggestions for Bachelor and Master theses from Melanie Schmidt (melanie.schmidt@uni-goettingen.de).

- You should contact the members of the Chair early enough to prepare your chosen topic thoroughly. Please contact Prof. Fuchs or one of his team members listed on the Chair's homepage directly, stating your proposed topic or main areas of interest and the course(s) taken at the Chair/the Ibero-America Institute:

o Dr. Gerda Asmus (gerda.asmus@uni-goettingen.de): Political economy and development; economic history; radicalization; revolt; Eastern Europe and Russia

o Dr. Adriana R. Cardozo Silva (acardoz@gwdg.de): Migration; remittances; labor markets; trade agreements; international organizations; Latin America

o Dr. Ianna Dantas (iannaraissa.moreiradantas@uni-goettingen.de): Environmental and agricultural economics and policy; food value chain; land use change; sustainable natural resources management

o Dr. Lennart Kaplan (lennart.kaplan@uni-goettingen.de): Measuring effectiveness and political economy of development cooperation (especially China); trade and development; global health

o Dr. Sarah Langlotz (sarah.langlotz@uni-goettingen.de): Conflicts; migration; global health

o Prof. Inma Martínez-Zarzoso (imartin@uni-goettingen.de): Global value chains; development aid; environmental policy; migration; trade policy and trade agreements

o Dr. Felicitas Nowak-Lehmann (fnowak@uni-goettingen.de): Migration; aid effectiveness; trade policy & trade management; effects of globalization

o Samuel Siewers, M.Sc. (samuel.siewers@uni-goettingen.de): Environment and development; humanitarian aid; Latin America

o Felix Turbanisch, M.A. (felix.turbanisch@uni-goettingen.de): China's economic development; China's foreign trade; political economy of autocratic systems

o Laura Wedemeyer, M.Sc. (laura.wedemeyer@uni-goettingen.de): Environment and development; political economy of autocratic systems; development aid (especially from Arab countries or non-state actors); international organizations

o Dr. Juliane Zenker (jzenker@uni-goettingen.de): Impact evaluation of policy measures; social policy in developing countries; micro-entrepreneurs in developing countries; gender inequality; social norms; female economic empowerment; Africa; South Asia and Southeast Asia

- *Only for master theses:* **Please register on Stud.IP for the [Colloquium: Research Colloquium of the Chair of Development Economics (Prof. Fuchs)](#). The password is: FxIb2019. You will find the "starter package" and an example of an anonymized MA theses under files. In the package, you will find important information for planning and implementing your (empirical) thesis.**

Topics and procedure:

- After the initial consultation, you will present a concept to your supervisor that forms the basis of the actual work upon approval. The concept should essentially contain the following on approximately three pages (plus bibliography):

    o (Work) title; date; name; student number; email address

    o Motivation of the research question; description of the hypotheses, if applicable; description of the scientific approach; description of the data used, if applicable

    o Structure of content

    o Basic, preliminary literature references

- After you have submitted your concept and discussed it with us, we will sign the application for admission to the thesis. This document is required for the Examination Office. In the case of empirical work, we recommend that you have refreshed or extended your knowledge of the necessary software (Stata, R, GIS) before the topic is chosen. To refresh or extend your Stata knowledge, we offer the course "801628 Stata Self-Study (SoSe 2020 - unlimited)" for self-study on Stud.IP (password: butisitcausal?).

- Please note the information about the announcement of the topic and the start of the processing on the Examination Office's website for economics at https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/574060.html.

- Supervision: Assistance is provided on content, data preparation, and econometric problems. Appointments for meetings can be arranged to clarify questions that arise. The supervisor neither corrects the syntax of programs nor provides econometric programs. Please adhere to the agreed appointments. Some prerequisites are:
    o Straightforward questions and concrete problem definition

    o Non-negotiable deadlines, etc.

    o Consistent work

    o Time for work

    o Contact when problems arise

- *Only for master theses:* **We recommend that you participate in our master thesis colloquium and present your thesis's status at least once during your time of work ("Research Colloquium of the Chair of Development Economics (Prof. Fuchs)").** The presentation will not be evaluated and only serves to improve your scientific work. Please sign up on Stud.IP for the colloquium (details see above). Please make an appointment for your presentation with your first supervisor. The colloquium takes place at irregular intervals. You will be notified of the presentation times by e-mail.

Notes on structure and outline:

- A scientific paper begins with a **cover sheet**, which provides information on the thesis's title, the author (name, first name, matriculation number), the supervisors (first and second reviewer), and the deadline.

- This is followed by a complete **table of contents** with page numbers, a list of figures, tables, and, if necessary, a list of abbreviations.

- That is followed by the content part of the work. This part begins with an **introduction**, in which the central research question is introduced, the goals of the thesis are formulated, and the structure of the thesis is briefly explained. This is followed by the central part of the thesis, which usually consists of several chapters.

- The chapter following the introduction usually contains an **overview** of the existing **scientific literature** on the paper's topic (see literature references).

- The further chapters of the thesis depend on the topic at hand.

- The **concluding chapter** contains a summary of the results of the work, focusing on the **answers to the central research question** and an outlook on **future research needs**, if applicable.

- The paper concludes with an alphabetically sorted **bibliography** (possibly followed by an appendix).

- A well-structured thesis usually contains no more than **three outline levels**.

- A signed **declaration** must be attached to each scientific paper. Use the text given in the document "Information Sheet - Preparation of Thesis" that is made available on the website of the Examination Office: https://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/574058.html.

- Additionally, please attach a **declaration** if you have used AI-based chatbots such as ChatGPT. Sample annex:

  Declaration on the use of ChatGPT and comparable tools: In this paper, I have used ChatGPT or another AI as follows.:

  [ ] not at all

  [ ] during brainstorming

  [ ] when creating the outline

   [ ] for the development of software source texts

  [ ] for optimizing or restructuring software source texts

  [ ] for proofreading or optimizing

[ ] further, namely: …

I hereby declare that I have stated all uses completely. Missing or incorrect information will be considered as an attempt to cheat.

Notes on formulation:
- Make sure you use **correct spelling and punctuation**. Formal correctness is part of the evaluation of the overall performance. It is strongly recommended to have the work proofread. The time required for this should be planned from the beginning.

- The **quality of the formulated text** is of central importance to the evaluation. A precise yet easily understandable wording characterizes a good scientific writing style. Avoid using terms that are unnecessarily evaluative and do not lapse into a narrative or journalistic writing style. Rhetorical questions should be used rarely, and all other literary stylistic devices should be avoided if possible.

- The quality of a text's content particularly includes its **logical consistency**. Argumentation chains must be stringent. If you, e.g., start a sentence with "therefore, ...," then this conclusion should result from the preceding sentence (or sentences).

- Complicated facts can sometimes be illustrated with a suitable **example.** In many cases, diagrams or tables are also useful for illustration.

- **Tables and illustrations** must be **numbered**, have a **meaningful title,** and a **reference**. Meaningful illustrations and tables are self-explanatory, i.e., they can be understood without the accompanying text.

- In general, it is important to make sure that the work has an **easily comprehensible common thread.** The quality of your work stands and falls according to all experience with this criterion. Everything that is not part of the topic should not be discussed. Conversely, no essential aspects should be left out. A common mistake is that authors cannot separate themselves from once formulated partial texts—even when they are unnecessary for understanding the work. When proofreading, each sentence should be critically reviewed for necessity and, if necessary, deleted or shortened.

- The **research question** you **formulated** in the introduction should be **taken up again** in the **summary** at the latest and answered if possible. Otherwise, the topic may have been missed.

- **Paragraphs** are a good tool to separate ideas from each other and structure a text meaningfully, even within chapters. Usually, the most important sentence of a paragraph is right at the beginning.

- **Footnotes** are used for important remarks or remarks that require a more detailed explanation but disturb the actual reading flow.

Notes on literature and citation:

- It is imperative to make sure that **quotations** from the literature are marked accordingly. **Even parts from the literature** that are **reproduced in your own words** and that go beyond the generally established knowledge must be marked with a quotation. If such quotations are omitted, it is **plagiarism**.

- Cite according to the author-year citation method. We recommend the **Harvard citation style** (see the information sheet "Citing according to the Harvard system" or https://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing). All sources that you have cited in the text must appear in the bibliography. Anything you have only read but is not cited in the text must NOT appear in the bibliography.

- All text parts (of more than two words) or ideas that are not your own must be marked. This means that the text must be formulated, so it is clear which parts are your thoughts and which parts repeat other people's ideas. If you do not follow these academic writing standards, you are stealing intellectual property (**plagiarism**). By signing the affidavit, you agree to use good academic writing standards that prevent plagiarism. Otherwise, your work will be rejected, i.e., you will fail and may face further disciplinary action. All work can be tested in this regard. Below, you can find a selection of links to further information on good academic writing standards in German or English:

  - http://www.arbeitschreiben.de/

  - https://www.wiwi.hu-berlin.de/studium/sb/Leitfaden.pdf

  - Especially pages 4-5 on plagiarism: https://www.uni-oldenburg.de/fileadmin/user_upload/germanistik/download/Leitfaden_wiss_Schreiben_WJ_final.pdf

  - https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian.html

  - Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Kate L. Turabian. 2018. Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. 9. Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

- Make sure that you use **scientific literature** for your work. A large part of this literature can be found in **refereed journals**, whose articles are usually written in **English**. It is imperative that you take this literature into account; otherwise, you run the risk of neglecting important findings from the literature. Lecture scripts and internet pages (Wikipedia) should be avoided. Newspaper articles and the like can serve the motivation of a topic and should otherwise only be used in exceptional cases. Textbooks can be cited but are usually not sufficient to deal with questions in their full depth. You should avoid any popular science literature.

- Be sure to use the **literature suggested by your supervisors**. Of course, this is only an excerpt from the entire relevant literature. A **comprehensive literature search** on the Internet and in suitable databases is essential. Please also note the offers of the SUB.

Notes on submission:
- The thesis must be submitted digitally (upload as PDF in FlexNow, max. 100 MB, by 23:59 on the submission date) to the responsible examination office within the announced deadlines. Attachments must be compressed to a .zip file. Before you can upload the thesis, you must agree to the declaration of independence, nevertheless it must be included in the thesis. Please refer to the instructions on the website of the Examination Office for Economics (https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/627721.html).

- *For empirical theses only:* Please send all files necessary for replicating your empirical analysis to your supervisors on the day of submission. Your empirical analysis is considered replicable if all results used in your thesis (regression tables, figures, etc.) can be generated from the raw data using your code scripts.

  Your submission should include the following files:

  - all raw data

  - the merged dataset

  - code to clean and merge the raw data

  - code to analyze the data

  - log files

  - a short instruction for the replication, e.g. a README.txt

  The raw data should be marked as such and stored in a separate folder. If the datasets are very large, please use the University's file transfer service GWDG ownCloud. The merged dataset should be saved in a common format (e.g. csv, dta, rds). Please make sure that your code can be executed outside your own computer without further adjustments to the code. For that reason, please use relative file paths only. If you are conducting your empirical analysis with R, please create an RStudio Project for your analysis so that no file paths need to be specified. Add comments to specify which part of the code corresponds to which part of your paper.

Other notes:
- The **length** of a bachelor thesis should be 25 to 30 pages, and that of a master thesis should be 40 to 50 pages. These page numbers do not include the cover page, table of contents, list of figures, tables, bibliography, and appendix. Figures and tables in the main part of the thesis are, therefore, included in calculating the number of pages.

- The work must be written **in German or English.** Please also note the requirements in the examination regulations of your course of study.

- You can use any **word processing software** that you feel comfortable with. Preferably use LaTeX if you want to use many formulas in your thesis.

- Please use the following **formatting**: font size: 12 pt, line spacing: 1.5-fold, alignment: justified, margin (right, left, top, and bottom margin): 2.5 cm each. The Chair does not make any regulations for the formatting of the work beyond the points mentioned above. It is the task of the author to think about an **attractive design** and to implement it. It should always be kept in mind that this is a **scientific work**. This limits not only linguistic and stylistic elements but also graphic design options.

- It is strongly recommended to keep **close contact with your supervisors** during the writing phase and make appointments to discuss your work's status, previous results, and further procedure.