

Guideline for the preparation of economic papers at the Chair of Macroeconomics

Status: July 2024

1 Basics - How do you write a good scientific paper?

- Once you have agreed the topic with your supervisor, we expect you to prepare a 2 to 3 page exposé. Here you should motivate your topic, present your research question and the intended choice of methods as well as the preliminary structure of your thesis. It may also be useful to name initial literature and data sources.
- In addition to any introductory literature provided, independent literature research must be carried out. The specialized databases provided by the library and, for example, Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.de>) are suitable for this. When selecting sources, prioritize relevant journals and (thematically) current literature.
- The introduction is a particularly important part of your paper. This is where you engage the reader. It begins with a statement of the problem/motivation and the formulation of your research question. If necessary, formulate hypotheses. You then briefly summarize your approach and key findings.
- The main body of your thesis then commences, wherein the author presents their analysis in detail, with the option of including multiple (sub)sections as required. It is imperative to ensure that this is done in consultation with your supervisor.
- Finally, write a conclusion/outlook, the bibliography and attach any appendices.
- Good academic papers are written in such a way that readers can quickly grasp the essentials. We recommend that the structure of your work be based on contributions by experienced authors. Use tables and figures sparingly and purposefully.
- Concentrate on the essentials for answering your research question. Ask yourself for each paragraph whether it is necessary on your way to answering your research question. Avoid generalisations. Use short, concise sentences.
- The focus is on economic issues and methods, but interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.
- A formally correct paper with a comprehensible structure and language as well as correct citation (Harvard citation style) is a matter of course.

- You may use AI-based tools to support your work. You must use them in a controlled manner and just like other aids and sources, correctly indicate their use. Further information can be found in this [guideline](#)¹.

2 Form specifications

- For reasons of simplification, you can use the generic masculine with a single reference to the fact that personal designations apply to all genders.
- Seminar paper must be submitted in digital form. Your paper (PDF file) and any additional material (e.g. tables, R-script) must be submitted to the Chair of Macroeconomics **by email**, meeting the submission deadline (not a matter for negotiation), stating the names and matriculation numbers of all authors involved.
- Final theses must be submitted in accordance with the regulations of the **examination office** and your examination regulations by the deadline in two bound copies as well as an electronic version to the central examination office. Additionally, the digital version of the thesis must be submitted **by email**. USB sticks used for the submission of the electronic version can be picked up at a later date from the secretary's office.
- Seminar papers and project papers should be 15 to 20 pages per author. Bachelor's theses should be 50 pages long, Master's theses should be 60 pages long. The page numbers do not include lists of figures, abbreviations, contents, tables, references and appendices.
- The work is to be created in 12 pt font size, justified with 1.5 line spacing and a margin of approx. 2.5 cm top/bottom and 3.5 cm left/right.
- Footnotes should be in 10 pt font and single-spaced.²
- Variables must be *italicised*. Variables must always be introduced (e.g. the minimum wage \bar{w}) and their notation consistently maintained. Formulae should be numbered and set off, e.g:

$$2 \sum_{i=1}^n a_i \int_a^b f_i(x) g_i(x) dx \quad (1)$$

- Relevant figures and tables belong in the main body. If possible, these should be created by the reader and, if necessary, labelled with the source. Only supplementary or very comprehensive material belongs in the appendix.

¹It is available only in German language. You may need to translate it.

²Footnotes contain only (further) notes and references to content and should be used sparingly. The citation style is the same as in the main text (Harvard citation style).

- We recommend to write scientific papers with **L^AT_EX**. This has several advantages over conventional text processing programmes, such as a clean text image, proper formatting of formulas, a complete and uniform bibliography, simplified management of footnotes, tables and graphics, etc. Here is an [introduction](#).

3 Structure

The paper should contain the following and listed in the order:

1. Front page
2. Abstract of maximum 150 words
3. Table of contents with page numbers
4. List of abbreviations with page numbers, if applicable
5. If applicable, list of figures and tables with page numbers
6. Introduction
7. Main part (possibly several (sub)sections, e.g. theoretical part, empirical part)
8. Conclusion/Outlook
9. Bibliography (arranged in alphabetical order)
10. Appendix, if applicable
11. Affidavit

The page numbering of points 2 to 5 must be in Roman numerals, the rest of the text is labelled with Arabic page numbers. The title page is not counted.

4 Title page

The title page should contain the information according to the example.

- Professorship and supervisor
- Topic
- Type of academic work (seminar paper, project, Bachelor or Master thesis)
- Author's first and last name, date of birth, address

<p>Technische Universität Chemnitz Fakultät für Wirtschaftswissenschaften Professur für Makroökonomie Prof. Dr. (habil) Sebastian Gechert</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thema</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Seminararbeit im Rahmen des Seminars im Semester bei Betreuer</p> <p>Eingereicht von: Max Mustermann Matrikelnummer: 123456</p> <p>Straße PLZ Ort</p> <p>E-Mail: x. Fachsemester Studiengang</p> <p>Eingereicht am:</p>

- Number of semesters, degree programme and matriculation number

5 Abstract

An abstract is a brief outline with a concise summary of your work. The abstract is often used to decide whether a more in-depth reading (for your own research) is worthwhile. An abstract helps to assess the relevance of the work.

- The abstract should inform and arouse curiosity about what can be expected in the scientific work.
- The abstract should be sober and factual and should not exceed 150 words.
- The following questions in particular should be addressed: What data/methodology was used and how? What are the most important results? What are the most important conclusions?
- The abstract is written last, because a precise summary is only possible once the complete paper has been written.

An example³:

The empirical literature on the impact of corporate taxes on economic growth reaches ambiguous conclusions: corporate tax cuts increase, reduce, or do not significantly affect growth. We apply meta-regression methods to a novel dataset with 441 estimates from 42 primary studies. There is evidence for publication selectivity in favour of reporting growth-enhancing effects of corporate tax cuts. Correcting for this bias, we cannot reject the hypothesis of a zero effect of corporate taxes on growth. Several factors influence reported estimates, including researcher choices concerning the measurement of growth and corporate taxes, and controlling for other budgetary components.

6 Directories

- *List of abbreviations*: Common abbreviations, such as etc., cf., e.g., USA, do not have to be included in the list of abbreviations. Common topic-specific abbreviations can be used (e.g. GDP = gross domestic product). These should be labelled in the text, e.g. gross domestic product (hereinafter GDP), and listed separately in an alphabetically ordered list of abbreviations if necessary. Mathematical symbols/operators (such as \cup , \subset , \mathbb{N} , \leq , ∂) do not require explanation as long as they are used correctly.

³Gechert, S., & Heimberger, P. (2022). Do corporate tax cuts boost economic growth?. *European Economic Review*, 104157.

- *List of figures and tables*: Figures and tables must be numbered and labelled with a title and the corresponding source. If there are a large number of figures/tables, these must be labelled with a number and title in the list of figures or tables.
- *Appendices*: The Appendix contains relevant additions that would disrupt the flow of the main text (e.g. longer mathematical derivations, extensive tables and figures as well as questionnaires). The same scientific requirements apply as for the text part. If there are several appendices, they should be numbered alphabetically. If they are in digital form you must email them with your filed seminar paper/thesis.

7 Quotations and sources

- Literal (direct) quotations should be used sparingly (only if the content cannot be better reproduced or if the exact wording is important). They should be kept as short as possible without removing the meaning. They are labelled with „quotation and inverted commas“. Omissions are labelled with [...].
- The aim of indirect quotations is to use other people’s ideas but to reproduce them in your own words. They are the usual form of citation.
- Please ensure that you use primary sources and cite the most recent version of a source wherever possible (often a working paper version is available first, but later a journal version).
 - After a direct quotation at the end of the sentence in brackets: Author’s surname, year of publication and page(s), e.g. (Maier 2020, p. 3 [or also: 3 ff., p. 3-7]).
 - After an indirect quotation at the end of the sentence in brackets: Author’s surname, year of publication, e.g. (Maier 2020). Page references are only required here for larger works such as monographs.
 - Alternatively in continuous text, e.g.: Maier (2020), for example, uses this style in some sentences.
 - Several authors in a row are separated by a semicolon, e.g. (Meier 1999; Miller 2000).
 - Several works by the same author are recorded using comma-separated year numbers, e.g. (Meier 1998, 1999).
 - In the case of several works by the same author from the same year, a lower case letter is placed after the year without a separator, e.g. (Miller 2002a, 2002b, 2002c) The order of the lower case letters is based on the first letter of the title (alphabetical order).

- For two authors of a work: connection with „ and “, e.g. (Meier and Miller 1998).
- If there are more than two authors: Use „et al.“ after the first author, e.g. (Meier et al. 1998).
- Documents from an institution without specified authors are cited with the name of the institution or a corresponding abbreviation, e.g. (EU Commission 2003 or OECD 2001, p. 5-7).
- Analogue procedure for newspaper articles, e.g. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, v.2. 03. 2004, p. 2) or (SZ, v. 22. 03. 2004, p. 2).
- Court judgements are cited according to the usual citation method in jurisprudence, e.g. (BVerfGE 89, 155 [180]).
- Collective citations are made in the order in which they are mentioned after the first letter(s) of the surname (alphabet), e.g. (Miller 2002a, Scheider 1999, Otto 1995).
- See further information and examples here: <https://www.unicum.de/>

8 Bibliography

- List **all** cited sources in the bibliography and only these. Ensure that the references are presented in a standardized way.
- Monographs: Surname, first name (year of publication): : *title*, ev. edition, place of publication: Publisher
- Collected volumes: Surname, first name (ed. or eds.) (year of publication): *Title*, place of publication: Publisher.
- Journals: Surname, first name (year of publication): Title, in: *Journal*, year or volume (issue number): Page numbers.
- Contributions to edited volumes: Surname, first name (year of publication): Title, in: First name and surname of the editor (ed. or eds.): *Title of the anthology*, place of publication: Publisher, Page numbers.
- Online sources: Surname, first name (year of publication): Title, in: Name of site/organisation etc., at: URL [retrieved on: date] (*Note: Save online sources for later references.*)

9 Presentations on research - mid-term meeting/defence

- At our seminars, you present the interim results of your research work approximately in the middle of the semester (mid-term meeting). A defence of your thesis is regulated by your examination regulations.
- Midterm-meeting:
 - The main aim of this presentation (20min presentation, 10min discussion) is to present the structure of your work, a summary of your literature research and any initial results.
 - The structure of the presentation should be based on the future seminar paper: Introduction (motivation, research question, hypotheses if applicable), main part (e.g. theoretical concepts/model(s), empirical analyses and initial results), conclusion.
 - The presentation serves to assess your current state of research and your approach, to discuss it **constructively** in the group and then to develop it further together. We do not expect a final result of your work at this point, but consider this step as an important stage towards the successful completion of your research project.
 - Nevertheless, the oral presentation of the preliminary results and participation in the discussion is an oral examination and is therefore included in your overall grade.
 - We encourage you to address open questions at the mid-term meeting, to deepen your ideas together with us and to discuss the further course of research. We also look forward to an **active discussion culture** among all seminar participants.
- Defence of a thesis:
 - The main aim of this presentation (20min presentation, 15min discussion) is to clearly explain the structure of your work: introduction (motivation, questions, hypotheses if applicable), main part (e.g. theoretical concepts/model(s), empirical analyses and results), conclusion.
 - The presentation serves to present your entire work and your scientific contribution.
 - This will be followed by a 15-minute scientific discussion.