

# Guidelines BA and MA Theses

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## Goal of the master thesis

The objective of a BA and MA thesis is to provide a detailed analysis of a specific research topic within the field of development economics. BA theses typically consist of a literature review and an empirical research on the topic. MA theses contain own empirical research analysis (and sometimes field work).

## Requirements for students

The candidate should be knowledgeable in the areas of micro- and macroeconomics and should have attended courses in development economics and principles of econometrics. BA/MA candidates should have experience with statistical software (STATA, R) as well as basic knowledge of Multivariate Methods/Statistical Inference.

## Form and outline of the thesis

### Form

- 1 Problem description and goal of the thesis
- 2 Detailed (economic) description of the problem
- 3 Discussion of the relevant literature
- 4 Empirical analysis of the problem set (MA theses)
- 5 Conclusion (the conclusions should sum up the essential aspects of the thesis and provide an outlook and, if possible, policy implications)

### Outline

#### Cover page:

The cover page should contain the following information: university, chair, name of professor and supervisor (if different from professor), current study term (und Studienfach), topic, name, address and matriculation number of the student.

#### Length:

The MA thesis should be approximately 50-60 pages long, the BA theses approximately 15-20 pages long (including cover page, table of contents, bibliography, etc., and excluding possible appendices). The layout should be as follows: Font: Times New Roman, size 12, line spacing: 1.5, border: double-sided 2.5 cm.

#### General outline:

- cover page
- table of contents
- if applicable, list of figures, list of tables, list of abbreviations
- main text
- bibliography
- if applicable, appendices.

#### Citation:

There is no prescribed citation practice. It is important that the citation method is comprehensible and consistent throughout the thesis. A proposed citation method can be found [here](#).

## Procedure

### A) Choice of the topic

BA and MA theses topics are offered to students in the field of development economics. A list of topics can be found [here](#). However, students can also make their own proposals.

### B) Preliminary meeting

The student should contact [Kenneth Harttgen](#) by email for a preliminary meeting in order to finalize the topic and choose a thesis supervisor from the [Chair of Development Economics](#).

### C) Proposal

After the preliminary meeting, the student will submit a short proposal. The final decision for the commencement of the thesis is based on this proposal.

The proposal should be maximum two pages and must contain the following points:

- A description of the problem/ research question
- Methodology
- A description of the data to be used (in case of empirical study)
- Bibliography
- Provisional table of contents

If the student's proposal meets the above requirements, the student can start the thesis (4 months for BA thesis and 6 months for MA thesis).

Students of the University of Zurich have to find a professor from the University of Zürich who acts as main supervisor of the thesis. Students of the University of Zürich must also get approval from the program manager if the work is 'in a related field'. Further information for students from the University of Zurich can be found [here](#).

### D) Starting to write

As soon as the proposal has been accepted the candidate can start writing the thesis. The theses can be written in German or English.

### E) Support and workplace

During the process of writing, students have the possibility to meet with their supervisor from the [Chair of Development Economics](#). Furthermore, students can hand in a draft of the final thesis in order to get a feedback from their supervisor (at the latest 4 weeks before the final deadline). After the evaluation of the final theses, students can have a final discussion with their supervisors.

### F) Submitting the thesis

Two copies of the thesis must be handed in, duplex print and bound. In addition, the abstract of the thesis (in pdf format) including the e-mail address of the student is needed for the [website](#) of the Chair of Development Economics. Master thesis candidates must also hand in their codes and data of their empirical analysis (zip file or CD).

### G) Evaluation

The following points will be assessed:

1. **Structure:** Structure and outline should be consistent and logical.
2. **Content:** The content must be correct and clear.
3. **Language:** Accurate wording and correct grammar is assumed.
4. **Empirical analysis:** The data collection and analysis must be performed in an accurate and transparent way (MA).

5. **Literature:** The relevant literature should be critically discussed and the references should be correctly cited.
6. **Own contributions** must be clearly defined and distinguished from literature citations.