Guidelines for Academic Papers with Prof. Basten

Prof. Dr. Christoph Basten

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This leaflet offers formal support when writing academic papers. In general, it is assumed that the principles of scientific work are adhered to and that the topic specified in the Thesis Assignment is completed independently.

1 Language

You write the work in either German or English. In general, scientific work must be written objectively and in an impersonal language style. Proper orthography and punctuation are essential. The use of spell and grammar checkers of common word processing programs is highly recommended.

2 Literature Review

In addition to standard works, newer academic publications, scientific studies and articles from specialist journals must also be taken into account. The reliability and quality of the source must be paid particular attention to when searching for literature online.

In cooperation with the Central Library (Zenralbibliothek Zürich), the DBF offers a monthly 90-minute literature research workshop "Literature research for bachelor and master theses" (under "Economics") in German. Participation is recommended because content of the workshop is essential for the writing of a scientific work and is required for writing a Master thesis at DBF. You can find information on this on the website of the Main Library.

3 Citation Standards

The origin of all statements made in the paper must be clearly defined. Own findings must be logically justified, statements from third parties must always be cited with a source. Also pay attention to correct citation (no full details in the text, only author and year), as is usual in the Journal of Finance, for example.

The following sources offer support with citation styles:

1. American Psychological Association (APA) Style Guidelines

2. The Journal of Finance Style Guidelines

3. Fact sheet "Zitierstandard" on the DBF website (in German)

It is highly recommended to take a closer look at a couple of recent Journal of Finance articles. These articles meet the highest standards for scientific writing in terms of quality, citation and

structure. The table formatting is particularly important to look out for. The tables are self-explanatory and understandable without the context of the text, contain numbers with only two or three digits, and do not use unnecessary abbreviations.

4 Outline and Structure of the Paper

Academic paper are to be structured as follows:

- Title page/cover page (without page numbers)
- Thesis Assignment (without page numbers)
- Executive Summary (Page numbering: Roman numerals, starting with Roman I)
- Abstract (Page numbering: consecutive Roman numerals)
- Table of Contents (Page numbering: consecutive Roman numerals)
- List of Figures (Page numbering: consecutive Roman numerals)
- List of Tables (Page numbering: consecutive Roman numerals)
- List of Abbreviations (Page numbering: consecutive Roman numerals)
- Text section (Page numbering: Arabic numbers, starting with Arabic 1)
- Bibliography/references (Page numbering: consecutive Arabic numbers)
- Appendix (Page numbering: consecutive Arabic numbers)

4.1 Title page/cover page

The title page should contain the title of the thesis, the name of the institute and the professor with whom the thesis was written. In addition, the name of the author with the full address (including telephone number, email and matriculation number) and the submission date.

4.2 Executive Summary and Abstract

The maximum four-page executive summary is intended to give the reader an overview of the essential aspects of the academic paper at hand (problem statement, method, results and general assessment). The executive summary serves as the introduction to the paper. It is followed by an abstract (questions, results) similar to the ones in academic journals. The abstract is even shorter and more concise than the executive summary and comprises no more than 100 words.

4.3 Text section

In addition to the analysis of the topic, scientific papers always include an introduction (problem statement, objective and structure of the work) and a final assessment (summary of the results, critical assessment, reference to possible further research).
Bachelor theses should generally contain a text section with a length between 20 - 30 pages (excl. figures), while for master theses 30 - 50 pages (excl. figures) are appropriate. A serif font (e.g. Times New Roman) should be used (12 pt., line spacing between 1.2 and 1.5 lines). The page numbers are to be understood as guidelines. It should be noted that the scope of the pages says little about the quality of the work in question and that quality comes before quantity.

In case of quantitative work, it should also be noted that outputs from statistical software should not be taken over without any further thought. Include only those test statistics that you actually understand and can discuss in the text.

4.4 Figures and Tables

Tables and figures must be numbered separately and consecutively. Each should have a title and a correct reference to the source. They should be self-explanatory and understandable independently (i.e. without the rest of the text). The numbering and title should be above and the source below the table or figure. Self-designed figures are to be identified as follows: "Source: Own illustration". For the format of the source, the explanations from the section "Citation standards" apply.

5 Administration

The administration of the thesis (in particular the collection of the Thesis Assignment and the submission of the electronic version) is carried out via OLAT. Detailed instructions can be found on the UZH Final Theses in OLAT website.

The submission of the thesis is entirely online and takes place by uploading the PDF file of your thesis to OLAT within the specified period of time. Also submit the entire data material used (as Excel table(s) or in CSV format), including all clearly commented computer codes for replicating your results. (Information on how a "Replication Package" should be constructed can be found, for example, here: https://www.aeaweb.org/journals/policies/data-code.) Your data package should also contain the text as a LaTex or Word file.