



## **A Guide**

### **for the Composition of Papers and the Master Thesis**

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## 1. Introduction

The award of a Master of European Studies requires the submission of a master thesis, worth 16 ECTS credits. The text of the thesis should be comprised of 40 to 60 pages DIN A 4 (text, not including reference list, annexes ...). Unless otherwise stipulated, the format standard of the Master's program shall apply (see Annexes).

The following guidelines will help you prepare your master thesis and other papers by explaining the requirements. The thesis is a written assignment in which the participant of the course shall explore a topic **independently** and **in a scientific way**. This guide is designed to be a basic source of information for the preparation of the master thesis. The academic and formal requirements are equally valid for the writing of term papers with the difference that you will have to choose from a list of topics and not come up with a topic yourself.

## 2. Procedure

Support for the thesis is initially provided by a tutorial given by Professor Kühnhardt. It is then up to the students to choose a topic of interest to research and to approach the lecturer who they would like to supervise their theses. All MES lecturers can act as a supervisor for the thesis. Please consider asking lecturers who will come to ZEI later in the year as well. The MES office will be happy to assist you in finding a suitable supervisor and to provide contacts for lecturers that you have not yet met. Students should choose a topic of interest in the scope of economic, political or legal questions of European integration. **Please agree upon an outline, methodology, and reference list with your supervisor until the end of April and make sure that you are aware of the expectations of the respective supervisor.** The master thesis topic along with the consent of a supervisor should be submitted until the end of April/beginning of May to the MES office. The exact deadline and further details about the official procedure will be announced in due time by the MES office.

## 3. Academic expectations

Cheating (Extract § 17 Master's thesis – courtesy translation):

“(1) The Master's thesis is a written exam that demonstrates the examinee's ability to independently address a problem from the program of study within a specified amount of time, to generate a solution and to represent it appropriately. The topic of the Master's thesis should fundamentally come from the core area of the program. The examinee should have the opportunity, when registering for the Master's thesis, to suggest the area from which the topic of the Master's thesis will be chosen; the Examination Board shall not be bound to this, however.

#### 4. Defining the topic of the Master Thesis

There are various questions to ask yourself during the process of finding a research topic for your master thesis. Among others, these should be:

- Do you have a preferred area of interest?
- Do you have enough background knowledge to deal with the topic?
- Do you have access to the proper sources required for successful research?
- What is the goal of your research?

The thesis can pursue different goals. You can choose to take an analytical approach, using various and sometimes conflicting facts, to draw certain conclusions on the matter in question. Alternatively, the thesis can follow a rather argumentative path, providing your own judgement or an assessment on the topic.

The thesis can deal with a broadly defined topic or a topic addressing specific issues. However, try to define the topic of your thesis in a way that it is not too broad or general. This can best be achieved by narrowing down your subject matter to a precise hypothesis/question or statement.

It is important to keep in mind the program's requirements. You have to show knowledge and competence in a specific area of European integration studies and of the standards for scientific work in general. A primarily descriptive paper for example would not be sufficient as a master thesis since it should be a quality piece of scientific work that represents your own thinking.

The timeframe for writing the thesis is maximum three months and lasts from June to the end of August. Topic and tasks are to be limited accordingly in order to allow for a completion in the set timeframe and meet the requirements.

Apart from technical issues it might be very helpful for you to pick a topic you are really interested in, as this will guarantee a higher level of personal motivation and will ease the entire working process. Of course, sources of motivation, such as personal interest in the subject or one's career plans, are up to the individual.

→ **It is important for you to clearly define a scientific hypothesis.** Each thesis has to start with this clearly defined hypothesis. Scientific research, as a thesis, has to go beyond essential descriptions. Moreover, it has to show contextual, analytical and synthetic thinking and comprehension.

#### 5. Supervisor

Since the supervisor evaluates your thesis as first corrector, you should attain his or her approval of your specific topic. It is also recommended to seek assistance whenever needed, for example when researching and especially after you have drafted your first outline. It may be very helpful to discuss at least the first outline in a personal meeting. Stay in touch with your supervisor and take the opportunity to discuss your concerns. Make sure in accordance with your supervisor that you are on the right track **before you start writing your thesis.**

## 6. Research

When researching your topic and/or collecting and analyzing data, read as widely as possible and take meticulous notes, identifying the source each time. Afterwards sharpen your focus and keep developing and defining your ideas. Make sure all of your used information and sources are up to date. It might be helpful to secure their accessibility through the entire writing period, for instance by copying parts of books from libraries far away. **In your reference list, you have to list all information and sources you actually used for the paper. Unimportant information and unused sources shall not be mentioned – select carefully and efficiently!**

→ **It is important for you to find and use relevant literature and to briefly mention/discuss the current state of research** with regard to the chosen topic in your thesis (What has been done so far? What is missing?). Include a convincing reference list that is neither too exhaustive nor too superficial, listing only literature that has been referred to in the thesis.

## 7. Outline

To get to the core issues and accelerate the actual writing process, it is necessary to draft an outline. The outline should contain

- the overall structure of the thesis
- chapter names, headings, subheadings and indications about graphs and figures
- a first chapter “Introduction, hypothesis, state of research and aim of the thesis”

The outline structures the whole task into smaller segments and allows you to restrict the sections to the necessary extent. Additionally, a clear outline will offer your supervisor a comprehensible idea of your research project. A clearly structured table of contents also helps the reader – often handling several articles/books at the same time – to read the research work fast. It may help to summarize the most important points of a chapter in a short abstract at the beginning. Every heading and sub-heading should be as concise as possible, representing the focal point of the related chapter.

The first chapter should be a comprehensive explanation as to why the thesis is necessary and reasonable. Mention shortly solved problems and questions that remain unanswered. Which part of the open questions will be addressed/answered in the presented thesis? This basically means that the introduction goes more in depth than the table of contents.

It is important to revise the outline several times; in fact, your initial outline will rarely look exactly like the final thesis. Therefore, you should be sure to spend enough time on this part of your work. By the end of the drafting process all disputes and the structure of the subsections should be clear – normally the thesis should not be divided into more than three levels of subsections as this could easily confuse both the reader and the author.

Before you start writing – think about the question “who will read my text?”:

- Primary Reader: A person making a decision or triggering further work based on the paper
- Secondary Reader: A person receiving your paper only for information purposes

If the paper is addressed to both types of readers, it should have a strong orientation towards the primary reader. By following the techniques below, you meet the requirements of a secondary reader without compromising a smooth read for the primary reader:

1. Move material for a secondary reader in the annex
2. Divide the report in two parts (part 1: primary material; part 2: secondary material)
3. Put background material in a leading chapter the primary reader may pass by without losing your major points.

If it is unknown who will be the reader – address the report to a “virtual reader“ with the same professional background as you – but who is not familiar with the details of your subject (esp. those that do not know specific abbreviations by heart).

## **8. Composing a Preliminary Version of the Thesis**

The preliminary version of your thesis should be built around the outline. Here are a few things to remember while drafting:

- Use proper grammar, syntax and spelling at all times
- Avoid “opinion style” language
- Avoid interjecting “I” or “me” into the facts
- Make sure that your sentence structure is accurate, in a clear as well as precise language and all paragraphs having a topic sentence

Even though there are formal requirements regarding the length of your thesis, you should not let this affect you in this period nor let it undermine the quality of your reasoning. Shortening your text can easily be left for the editing and sharpening stages.

## **9. Editing the Text**

Do not forget to run several spell checks, since typos tend to diminish the quality of your paper's content in the eyes of the reader in many cases (Caution: Do not rely on computer- spell check!).

Also make sure no quotations or references are missing or that no sources are left unnamed. It is of utmost importance to use relevant academic literature for all papers and the thesis and to indicate quotes and references including the exact page numbers.



**Please note:**

**Cheating (Extract § 17 Master thesis – courtesy translation):**

(7) “When submitting the Master’s thesis, the examinee must state in writing that he/she personally wrote the thesis and did not use any sources or materials other than those listed, and must affirm that any citations used are indicated as such. In particular, a Master’s thesis is not considered to be personally written if the contents or structure and approach to the topic were defined by a third party. The Examination Board can request an affidavit from the examinee in this regard, as well as an appropriate version of the submitted Master’s thesis in pdf format that can be used for an electronic comparison”.

Last but not least ensure all formal requirements are met (see below).

## Formal Requirements

### General structure

All papers must follow this general structure:

1. The title page (see Annexes)
2. A *DEDICATION / ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS* (optional, not commonly used; no page number appears, but counted for pagination)
3. *ABSTRACT* (not necessary for term papers, also optional for the thesis and not a must-have).
4. *TABLE OF CONTENTS* (A full table of contents should be provided. This must include titles and the page numbers for the first page of each chapter. At a candidate's discretion, the titles of substantive sub-sections of each chapter may appear in a Table of Contents)
5. *LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS*, figures and tables
6. *LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*
7. *MAIN TEXT*: The structure of the main text will reflect the purpose, subject orientation, theoretical perspective and methodology identified as appropriate for the nominated topic.

The main text will normally attend to:

- Purpose and rationale;
  - Research questions;
  - A literature review to inform the reader about the topic;
  - Explanation and justification of selected methodology,
  - (Survey populations and/or samples)
  - (Presentation of data and substantive findings);
  - Conclusions.
8. *LIST OF REFERENCES*: Following the last page of the main text, a full list of references of all published works used to support the thesis has to be provided. ZEI accepts American and European quoting style. Candidates should pay particular care and attention to the construction of an adequate reference list for the thesis.
  9. *ANNEX*: Where appendices are used, they should only include material that is supplementary to the main body of evidence, argument and analysis.
  10. *SIGNED DECLARATION*: (see Annexes – for the master thesis only)



## **Reference list, Graphics and Corrections**

### Bibliographic Citation

It is conventional in scholarly work to cite all sources from which information has been derived. Sources of quotations and an authority for statements of fact, opinion and assertion must be clearly, concisely and accurately cited. ZEI accepts American and European quoting style.

As a general rule it is desirable to use quotations sparingly. It is never wise to employ a long series of passages from other writers (even though properly referenced) in order to make the main points of one's essay, for doing this can cast doubt on one's own understanding of the material. What is more, sentences written by another author for different purposes are unlikely to suit one's own specific needs.

On the whole, it is best to use quotations only where the exact form of words is essential to one's argument; in cases, for instance, where one is analyzing closely the author's style, or terminology, or the precise stages in the development of his/her argument.

The task of distinguishing one's own views and ideas from those of others is one of the most important elements of higher education. It is central to one of the principal activities of a degree course: that of making an analysis and evaluation of a theory, or a body of evidence. Plagiarism is condemned because it nullifies such a reasoned inquiry.

### Compiling a reference list

A starting point for compiling a reference list is the writer/researcher's own specialist knowledge of a subject. This knowledge will grow during the research period in accessing relevant literature to get a deeper understanding of the subject. Make sure that you have access to all relevant literature for reference during the writing of the thesis. The works in your reference list should be listed in alphabetical order of the surname of the authors.

For more details about scientific writing, especially theses, please consult any reliable publication.

## **Foreign Language Use**

All papers and contents must be written in English unless the sole use of a translation into English would make the study obscure or imprecise. In these cases both the original citation in a foreign language as well as the translation into English must be included in your work.



**Annex 1: Registration**

Dear MES Fellow,

Please complete this form and hand it in to the MES office until **May 15, 2019 – 9 a.m.**

Thank you.

**Master of European Studies 2018/19**

Registration  
Master Thesis topic and supervisor

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of thesis:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor :  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date and Signature of student \_\_\_\_\_

Please hand in, together with this form, an e-mail where your supervisor confirms that he/she agrees to be your supervisor.

## Annex 2: Guidelines for papers and the Master thesis

Course papers consist of 7-12 pages; please check the information given in the syllabus of the respective module.

The master thesis consists of 40-60 pages.

Submit **one pdf version** to the MES office.

Please stick to the deadlines for submission of papers and the thesis. The deadline for submission of the thesis is **September 2, 2019 – 9 a.m.** (send by e-mail in pdf format). The deadlines for submission of course papers will be announced in the syllabus and the schedule.

1. As typeface chose "Arial" (11 pt.) or "Times New Roman" (12 pt.)
2. Allow a line spacing of 1,5
3. Allow margins of: left: 2,5 cm, right: 3 cm, top & bottom: 2-2,5 cm
4. Write on one side only, do not write on both sides of a page
5. Insert page numbers while leaving out the cover sheet
6. Start with a cover sheet
7. Create the cover sheet according to the example given below
8. Add an outline/table of contents
9. If necessary, add a list of abbreviations used
10. Start your text after the outline/table of contents (and the abbreviations list)
11. If necessary, add a list of annexes, tables and pictures
12. Add a reference list listing all documents and publications used
13. If necessary, list original documents and publications separately

ZEI will accept American and European quoting style. Do not mix the styles. Remember that you have to indicate every idea, thought, number, table, picture etc. taken from anyone else as a quotation. You may use footnotes to elaborate on amendments and continuative thoughts.



**Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung  
Center for European Integration Studies**

Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn

**Annex 3: Cover sheet**

*Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung*

*Center for European Integration Studies*

*Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn*

**<Title of your paper/thesis>**

By

<your name>

<course title>

A paper/thesis presented to the Center for European Integration Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the

Master of European Studies – Governance and Regulation

to achieve the degree of a Master of European Studies

Bonn, <date>

Supervisor: <name of your supervisor>



#### **Annex 4: Declaration Master Thesis**

According to the study regulation of the Master of European Studies Program (§17 (7)) you have to sign a declaration which confirms that you have written the thesis independently, that you have used no other resources or sources than those indicated, that it has not been published partly or entirely and that you have made all quotes identifiable. In cases of doubt, the Examination Office may request an affidavit from the examinee.

**Please copy the following German AND English text, sign it and add it as last page to your thesis.**

An Eides statt versichere ich, dass die Arbeit

*Thema der Masterarbeit/Title of the Thesis*

von mir selbst und ohne jede unerlaubte Hilfe angefertigt wurde, dass sie noch keiner anderen Stelle zur Prüfung vorgelegen hat und dass sie weder ganz, noch im Auszug veröffentlicht worden ist. Die Stellen der Arbeit – einschließlich Tabellen, Karten, Abbildungen usw. –, die anderen Werken dem Wortlaut oder dem Sinn nach entnommen sind, habe ich in jedem einzelnen Fall als Entlehnung kenntlich gemacht.

I declare by oath that the thesis,

*Title of the Thesis*

has been prepared by me alone and only with permitted means of help, that it has not been submitted to any other institution for evaluation, and that it has not been published either in whole or in part. All instances in the thesis – including tables, charts, graphs, etc. – where other works have been quoted verbatim, paraphrased or consulted, have been clearly indicated as references.

**(Place, Date, Signature)**