



INSTRUCTIONS FOR WRITING A BACHELOR'S OR MASTER'S THESIS

I. Formal requirements

1. The thesis must be typewritten (Times New Roman or Arial, font size 12, line spacing 1.5; footnotes: font size 10, line spacing 1.0).
2. Leave a margin of at least 3.5 cm on the right-hand side for corrections.
3. Length (excluding lists, tables and appendices):
 - Bachelor's thesis (6 ECTS): 20–25 pages
 - Master's thesis (12 ECTS): 30–40 pages
4. Please indicate on the cover sheet your first name, surname (including academic titles), matriuculation number, address, telephone number, e-mail address, numbers of semesters, title of the thesis, name of the supervisor.
5. The thesis should include a table of contents with page numbers. List the abbreviations used, and provide an alphabetical bibliography. The latter must state the author (surname and first name), title, edition, place of publication and year of publication of the referenced works. For the footnotes, however, the author's name, a short title and the page numbers are sufficient. In the case of extensive use of materials, a corresponding index may be appropriate; in the case of papers on international law, an index of the cases cited may also be helpful.
6. References and other notes should be placed in footnotes (not endnotes). The footnote must clearly indicate what sources are referenced. If a statute or a judgement is cited, reference should be made to the primary source, not to secondary literature. In the case of international treaties, it is essential to state the date of entry into force and the date of entry into force for the country in question.
7. Divide your text into an introduction, a main body and a concluding chapter. The latter should contain your views on the most important problems dealt with in the paper. The thesis should be structured in an appropriate way, using sections and subheadings. Italics can be used (sparingly) to emphasise important points.
8. Special attention should be paid to matters of language and style. Your text should be clear, comprehensible as well as orthographically, grammatically and syntactically correct. Do not simply copy or reformulate someone else's text. Verbatim quotations should be the exception and must be clearly marked with quotation marks. Your task is to write an original scholarly paper. Your work will be checked for plagiarism, using dedicated software tools. Partly or entirely plagiarised papers will be rejected and reported to the university authorities for disciplinary proceedings.



9. In addition to the seminar paper, an *abstract* (summary of the paper) of no more than 150 words (for Bachelor's theses) or 250 words (for Master's theses) must be submitted.

10. For instructions for the methodological and formal approach as well as the composition of a seminar paper, please refer to

- PETER FORSTMOSTER, REGINA OGOREK & BENJAMIN SCHINDLER, *Juristisches Arbeiten, Eine Anleitung für Studierende*, 7. Aufl., Zürich 2023
- RAPHAËL HAAS, FRANZISKA M. BETSCHAFT & DANIELA THURNHERR, *Leitfaden zum Verfassen einer juristischen Arbeit*, 5. Aufl., Zürich/St. Gallen 2022

If you are writing your thesis in English on an international law or comparative constitutional law topic, we recommend consulting (especially for international material)

- *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation*, aktuelle Aufl., Cambridge Mass.

11. The completed work must be supplemented by the dated and signed declaration in accordance with the information sheet on correct citation and the avoidance of plagiarism. Send two bound copies to the chair (*not* by registered mail) as well as an electronic PDF and Word version to the chair's address (Ist.langer@ius.uzh.ch)

12. There is no possibility to revise and resubmit a rejected paper.

II. How to proceed when writing your paper

1. First, you should familiarise yourself with the topic (relying, for, instance, on a standard textbook) and obtain an overview of the literature and case law. This enables you to (at least provisionally) determine the topic and draw up a list of questions, which should also serve as a provisional proposal for your research question.

2. The second phase consists of collecting material by consulting legal sources, literature and case law or state practice. Do not limit yourself to internet research, and make sure that the material used is up-to-date. Do not just work with textbooks, introductory literature and reference works.

Based on this initial review, expand and refine your thesis proposal; this often results in a new structure. It is advisable to add keywords to the individual points of the outline, indicating what material is already available and noting your own thoughts. The outline should comprise one to three pages and provide information about the questions and problems that arise, the main focus of the work and the necessary delimitation(s) of the topic.

At the end of this second phase there will be an interim meeting; please contact the chair in good time to arrange an appointment. The interim meeting is based on the thesis proposal and a preliminary bibliography; both documents must be sent to the chair at least four working days before the meeting date. It is advisable to wait until after the meeting to start writing the final version.



3. In a third step, you address specific problem and write a first draft. At this stage, it is important to take a closer look at the literature and legal practice. Use the different and often controversial arguments as a structure to help you develop your own view of the issues at hand. Do have the confidence to develop your own opinions on the problem; statements of other scholars, judgements and your own deliberations should eventually form a coherent and continuous argument.

4. It is advisable to check the thesis proposal at every stage of the work and to change it if necessary. The collected material should be continuously organised. Your focus should alternate from the whole to the specific and from the specific to the whole. This helps to ensure a sensible and systematic approach to the topic.

5. In the fourth phase, you draw up the final version. Before handing in your paper, (re-)consider the following points: Does your essay have a methodical structure? Is the choice of research question(s) and the structure sensible? Is your argumentation clear and logical? Is your writing correct and comprehensible? You should also check whether the citations are complete and accurate and whether abbreviations are used consistently. We recommend that you have a fellow student proof-read your paper before submitting it.