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Guidelines for Empirical Bachelor's Master's Theses with Prof. Tilmann Altwicker

1. Principle Guidelines

- *Structure*: The structure of the thesis is as follows: Cover sheet, table of contents, table of abbreviations, main text, bibliography, appendix if necessary.

- *Expected volume of a Bachelor's thesis (Critical Review Paper):* A Bachelor's thesis for 6 ECTS should be 20 – 25 pages or 40'000 – 50'000 characters, with footnotes but not including spaces; and excluding the cover sheet and indices.

- *Expected volume of a Master's thesis:* A Master's thesis with 12 ECTS should be 20 – 30 pages or 40'000 – 60'000 characters, with footnotes but not including spaces; and excluding the cover sheet and indices. In cases where the inclusion of tables and figures leads to a discrepancy between the page count and the character limit, the character limit will be the decisive measure. However, please ensure that all tables and figures directly support and are essential to the research. Overuse or inclusion of irrelevant tables and figures risk reducing the overall quality of the thesis. In justified cases, exceptions to the character limit can be granted by e-mail.

- *Table of abbreviations* (see also No. 8/9 below): The table of abbreviations must contain all abbreviations used in the text (in the case of official documents and legislation, please indicate the administrative reference, i.e. SR number, BBl).

- *Bibliography* (see also No. 8/9 below): All works cited in the thesis must be listed in the bibliography. Please note that journal articles should be used in addition to standard works (by no means only introductory literature/textbooks). The bibliography is not included in the character limit.

- *Tables and figures:* Please ensure consistency in style and presentation across all tables and figures, following the Chicago Manual of Style (see also No. 4 below). Each table and figure should be numbered consecutively and have a descriptive caption which defines any abbreviations/acronyms and cites the source of the data.

- *Basic rule for referencing:* All statements in the text that are not self-evident must be supported by references to the relevant decisions and publications. In particular, the following statements must be substantiated: Definitions of terms (own definitions explicitly labelled so are excluded from this rule), (criticised) positions of other authors or foreign norm interpretations.

- *Spacing:* 1.5 lines.

- *Text font:* Times New Roman, 12 pt., justification and automatic hyphenation, left and right margin min. 2.5 cm

- *Footnotes and table/figure caption font:* Times New Roman, 10 pt., justification and automatic hyphenation

2. Formally Incorrect and Insufficient Theses

- *Formally incorrect theses*: One orthographic or comma error per page is tolerated. Theses with more than five spelling or comma errors after five pages will be rejected for revision as formally incorrect.

- *Insufficient theses*: Insufficient theses will be rejected for revision. If a thesis is still unsatisfactory after the revision, it will be definitively rejected.

3. Submission

- *Printouts:* Submit only stapled or spiral-bound works (no single sheets!).

- *Deadlines:* The submission deadline is binding. A thesis that is submitted late or not at all will be graded 1 and will appear on the Transcript of Records. Postponement or cancellation of the submission deadline is possible only if compelling, unforeseeable and unavoidable reasons, in particular illness, can be proven.

    - Deadlines for Bachelor's theses and Master's theses written in the context of a seminar: deadlines communicated within the seminar apply.
    - Deadlines for individually agreed Master's theses (i.e. not written within a seminar): The latest day of submission is Friday of the first week in June (for submissions in the Spring Semester) and Friday of the first week in December (for submissions in the Fall Semester).

- *Submission:* One physical copy of the thesis must be sent by post (not by registered post!) to: Prof. Dr. Altwicker, University of Zurich, Faculty of Law, Pestalozzistrasse 24, CH-8032 Zurich. One electronic copy in pdf format must be sent to: lst.altwicker@rwi.uzh.ch. For the purpose of timely submission, the electronic is

submission is decisive; the physical copy should be post-stamped no later than the day after the submission deadline.

- The use of LaTeX is encouraged, but not required.[1]

- The following **signed and dated** declaration of authorship must be submitted on the last page of the thesis:

  «I hereby declare that I have composed the presented written thesis independently and only with the aid of the sources mentioned in the indices or in the footnotes. I also assure that I have not already used this thesis as proof of my performance elsewhere. The thesis may be checked for plagiarism using appropriate software.»

  The declaration of authorship is not included in the volume of the thesis and does not count towards the number of characters. The declaration should not be mentioned in the table of contents.

4. Method of Citing

- Please follow The Chicago Manual of Style for your referencing and formatting.[2] Further information here: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

5. Main Evaluation Criteria

- *Bachelor's theses (Critical Review Papers)*: Key aspects of article fully covered / partially covered / missed; common thread / logical structure; prioritisation; accurate legal and statistical terminology; clarity of argumentation; thoroughness and scope of the review; difficulty of the analysis.

- *Master's theses:* Research methodology (appropriateness and execution); data analysis (thoroughness and objectivity, soundness of conclusions); topic fully covered / partially covered / missed; common thread / logical structure; own formulation of question / hypothesis; prioritisation; accurate legal and statistical terminology; clarity of presentation (e.g. figures & tables); thoroughness and scope of the topic; level of innovation / originality; difficulty of the analysis.

[1] See https://www.overleaf.com/ for an excellent LaTeX editor.
[2] For German-language theses, please follow the guidelines of the Schweizerisches Zentralblatt für Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht (ZBl.) available here: Richtlinien zur Erstellung von Beiträgen für die Zeitschrift „Schweizerisches Zentralblatt für Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht" (ZBl

6. Cover Sheet

- The cover sheet must contain the following information: Type of thesis (Master's or Bachelor thesis); first name and surname of the author of the thesis; address; matriculation number; e-mail; name of degree program (incl. major subject/minor subjects if applicable); title of the thesis; semester in which the thesis was written; first name and surname of the supervisor.

7. Sources

Data

- For a list of online databases containing legal data, see https://www.clds.uzh.ch/en/knowledge/databases.html

- Collecting your own data from scratch requires considerable time and effort and should only be done in exceptional cases.

Primary Legal Sources

- UN sources are easily accessible at: https://digitallibrary.un.org/?ln=en&as=1
- EU case-law: http://curia.europa.eu/juris/recherche.jsf?language=de
- For EU legislation see EUR-Lex: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/
- For ECtHR case-law see HUDOC: http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/
- Swiss law: https://www.swisslex.ch/de/
- German law: https://beck-online.beck.de/Home
- Foreign law (Oxford Guides to Foreign Jurisdictions): https://ox.libguides.com/c.php?g=422865&p=2887613
- Foreign case-law: http://worldcourts.com/
- Public international law: good starting points are the database of the Max Planck Institute for International Law (http://aleph.mpg.de/F?func=file&file_name=find-b&local_base=vrh01) and the Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law (https://opil.ouplaw.com/home/MPIL).
- Sometimes it may be helpful to enter the title of a journal in "Google", provided you are on the university network. "Google Scholar" and "Google Books" are further recommended for research.
- To identify the main stakeholders in the debate, you can use "Publish or Perish": https://harzing.com/download/PoP8Setup.exe

- Research in "swissbib" may also be useful (electronic journals are also linked and accessible via the search mask if you are in the university network).

Article Data Bases

- Available at UZH at https://www.ius.uzh.ch/de/library/search.html.
- Essays in English can be found at Westlaw or HeinOnline (https://home.heinonline.org/). For Westlaw, enter the name of the journal (e.g. American Journal of International Law) in the "Database" field and then search using, for example, TI ("American Journal of International Law") (for title) or AU ("Ronald Dworkin") (for author). A handy user manual for Westlaw can be found on their website.
- Swiss secondary literature is very well accessible via Swisslex.
- German secondary literature is accessible via Beck-Online.

8. Structure of Bachelor's Thesis (Critical Review Paper)

Table of contents
Including page references

Table of abbreviations

ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice

I. Introduction
The introduction primarily serves to introduce the article under review:
- A brief introductory sentence to your own paper
- An overview over the article under review (title, author, background, motivation, structure & main findings)
- A brief statement summarising your evaluation of the article, i.e. your conclusion

II. Description of Article under Review
This section describes/summarizes the key aspects of the reviewed article:
- Research question, legal context, hypotheses, data & methods used, results & discussion

III. Meta Analysis
- This section gives an overview of the broader discussion surrounding the reviewed article, such as:
- Has the article been discussed in other works? How was it received?
- How does the law deal with the problem analyzed empirically?

IV. Critique

- This section critically reviews the assigned article, with a focus on method. Discuss any/all of the following elements, where applicable:
- Data (e.g. how was it collected? Entire population or sample?)
- Research questions & hypotheses
- Methods (e.g. choice and implementation; whether the underlying assumptions hold; other methods that could have been used; how does the method work/how is it implemented)
- Findings
- Limitations

V. Conclusion

- How can your review be put in a nutshell (not just a summary)?
- How does it tie into the Meta Analysis (e.g. if the article has been reviewed elsewhere, how does your assessment compare?)

Bibliography

List of legal sources (not compulsory)
Useful if a large number of legal sources is cited

Appendices (not compulsory)

9. Structure of Master's Thesis

Abstract
Max. 10 lines, in which the most important results of the thesis are summarised (in complete sentences, no bullet points)

Table of contents
Including page references

Table of abbreviations

ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice

I. Introduction **

The introduction should address the following points:

- Research question
- Relevance of the research question
- Background/Context of the research question
- Hypothesis, if applicable
- Outline of the structure of the thesis

** Do not adapt these main headings, but add more descriptive subheadings if necessary.

*II. Legal Background**

- This section provides the relevant legal context for the reader to grasp the significance of the empirical analysis.
- Review of relevant laws, regulations, judicial decisions, legal doctrines, policies and/or political discourses

*III. Literature Review**

- Outline of three to five of the most important approaches to / papers written on the problem
- Author's contribution: Based on the literature review, what is your (original) contribution, where do you go beyond the existing literature?

*IV. Research Design***

- Data: Detail where the data comes from (e.g., court decisions, legislative texts, surveys), how it was collected, any limitations or biases inherent in the data; provide an overview through variable descriptions and descriptive statistics
- Methods: Describe the research methods including why they were chosen over other alternatives, how they were implemented, and what their limitations are

*V. Results***

- Clear, concise and unbiased presentation of the findings derived from the empirical analysis
- Use tables, figures and statistical significance tests as appropriate

*VI. Discussion ***

- Interpretation of the results in light of the legal background and the broader implications of the findings
- Where appropriate, compare your findings to previous research, policy and/or legal doctrine

*VII. Conclusion***

- How can the results be put in a nutshell (not just a summary)?
- What are the limitations?
- What is left open?
- Where is further research needed?

Bibliography

List of legal sources (not compulsory)
Appendices (not compulsory)

* Adapt these main headings, e.g. write "The Pragmatic Importance of Judicial Systems" instead of "Legal Background", or "Gender and Judging" instead of "Literature Review".