University of Zurich[UZH]

Faculty of Law

University of Zurich
Chair for Legal Data Science and Public Law
Pestalozzistrasse 24
CH-8032 Zurich
Phone +41 44 634 55 24
https://www.ius.uzh.ch/en/staff/professorships/alphabetical/altwicker.html

Prof. Dr. iur. Tilmann Altwicker
LL.M. | DAS ETH in Applied Statistics
Associate Professor
Phone +41 44 634 51 13
tilmann.altwicker@ius.uzh.ch

Guidelines for Empirical Master's Thesis Proposals 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 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 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 risks reducing the overall quality of the thesis. In justified cases, exceptions to the character limit can be granted by e-mail.

- *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

- *Citation style*: for English-language theses, follow the The Chicago Manual of Style[1], for German-language theses, follow the guidelines of the Schweizerisches Zentralblatt für Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht (ZBl)[2].

[1] https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html
[2] Richtlinien zur Erstellung von Beiträgen für die Zeitschrift „Schweizerisches Zentralblatt für Staats- und Verwaltungsrecht“ (ZBl

2. Minimum Requirements for a Proposal

- *Volume:* The proposal should cover max. three pages (excluding bibliography).

- *Content:* Give a brief introduction of the topic and its relevance, state your research (sub)questions, and describe – in as much detail as possible at this stage – the proposed method of analysis and data you will use (is it openly available, and - if yes - in which format are the data available; do you need to first code the data yourself, construct a dataset etc.). If available, the main hypotheses of the paper should also already be mentioned.

- *Outline:* The preliminary structure of the paper should be illustrated on approximately one page (incl. headings and subheadings).

- *Literature:* The preliminary bibliography should contain 5-10 references. Important: Do not simply cite textbooks, but literature (academic journal articles etc.) specifically relevant to the chosen topic.

3. Proposal Submission

- *Deadline:* If a Master's thesis is written within the framework of a seminar, the deadlines communicated within the seminar apply. For individually agreed theses, the bilaterally agreed deadlines apply. There is no particular deadline for the submission of the proposal and signing the thesis agreement; the time management is the responsibility of the student.

- *Submission:* The proposal must be sent electronically (in pdf or word format) to tilmann.altwicker@ius.uzh.ch and lst.altwicker@ius.uzh.ch .

4. Procedure

- *Pre-review:* After submission, there will be a preliminary review of the proposal by one of the academic assistants. They will either forward the reviewed proposal to Prof. Altwicker or contact the student with suggestions to improve the proposal. The suggestions can be made in writing, in a video call or in an in-person meeting.

- *Review and discussion:* After the academic assistant has forwarded the proposal, the student is responsible for making an appointment with Prof. Altwicker to discuss and finalize their proposal.

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