

# Application procedure and Guidelines for Bachelor and Master theses (Abschlussarbeiten) at the Chair of Economic Policy, especially Competition Economics

Prof. Dr. Germain Gaudin

The Chair of Economic Policy, especially Competition Economics welcomes application for Bachelor and Master theses in all sub-fields of Industrial Organization and Competition Economics.

In order to submit your application for a thesis at the Chair of Economic Policy, especially Competition Economics, you should follow the procedure in Section 1 below. Section 2 of this document presents the relevant guidelines that apply once your application has been accepted. Section 3 presents the evaluation criteria.

## **1 A five-step application procedure**

1. First, you should read the official thesis guidelines of your program from the examination office / Prüfungsamt
2. Second, you should be interested in topics related to Industrial Organization and Competition Economics, and you should have spent some time thinking about a specific research topic in this area for your thesis.
3. Third, the Chair has specific requirements in order to ensure that there is a good allocation between students, topics and supervisors. These requirements are as follows.

- For Master theses:
  - (a) Master theses will be written in English
  - (b) Students should have successfully passed / currently be registered in the following Master-level courses (or equivalent):
    - i. Advanced Microeconomics I and/or II (**compulsory**)
    - ii. Intermediate Econometrics (**compulsory** if you aim at applying an empirical approach to your thesis; recommended otherwise)
    - iii. Industrial Organization (recommended)
    - iv. Seminar "Selected Topics in Industrial Organization and Competition Economics" (recommended)
  
- For Bachelor theses:
  - (a) Bachelor theses will be written in German or in English
  - (b) Students should have successfully passed the following Bachelor-level courses (or equivalent):
    - i. Microeconomics I and II (**compulsory**)
    - ii. Grundlagen der Wirtschaftspolitik (**compulsory**)
    - iii. Spieltheorie (**compulsory**)
    - iv. Law & Economics (recommended)

4. Fourth, candidates are requested to send their application to Prof. Gaudin by email.<sup>1</sup> The application needs to contain the following documents:

- (a) CV (clearly indicating the program and major field of study and student ID)
- (b) Up-to-date academic record (grade transcripts)
- (c) Thesis proposal where you discuss your topic and the related literature as well as your research approach/method on a maximum of two pages (the thesis proposal for a Master thesis must be in English)

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- (d) List of previously completed written work (previous theses, seminar papers, etc.)
- (e) Earliest starting date and deadline

Remarks:

- The chair does not assign research questions, because finding a topic is also part of the process. You are welcome to submit your application with only rough ideas (a finished outline is not necessary at this stage!).
  - The thesis can be based on one or several of the following methods: (1) a theoretical model applied to a specific case study, (2) an empirical analysis, (3) a numerical simulation, or (4) a detailed and structured literature review. Students are expected to demonstrate a strong command of the relevant approach they aim at applying in their thesis.
  - In order to be able to read the relevant literature, a good understanding of (academic) English is required.
5. Fifth, you will then receive an answer by email stating whether your proposal is accepted or rejected, possibly with suggestions for more suitable thesis topics. You may also be invited to revise or refine your thesis proposal. If you do not receive any response within two weeks, please contact the Chair.

Accepted applicants will be invited to an initial meeting for further discussion of their topics.

Finally, accepted applicants who have had the initial meeting must register your thesis following the requirements of the examination office / Prüfungsamt.

## **2 During the thesis**

### **2.1 Formal requirements**

The formal requirements for the thesis can be found in the official thesis guidelines of your program from the examination office / Prüfungsamt.

### **2.2 Supervision**

All along the thesis, the student should contact their advisor when they have major questions. However, it is expected of the student to be able to deal with the thesis in an autonomous fashion.

After the initial meeting, the advisor and the student have agreed on the topic of the thesis, in particular on the literature and the data that the thesis will be based on (if any), as well as on the starting date. For empirical work, the student should have a good idea of data sources and data collection methods before the official start of the thesis, in order to make sure that the thesis can be completed within due time.

Shortly after the start of the working time, the student should share with their advisor an extended table of contents, which contains all sections of the thesis as well as the bibliography. For each section, the student should provide a brief summary of the section's intended content.

Around two thirds of the working time, the student should send their advisor a preliminary draft of the thesis. All sections and main results of the thesis should already be worked out, even though in a preliminary way.

### **2.3 Submission of the thesis**

Submission of the thesis should be done in accordance with the rules set by the examination office / Prüfungsamt (including submission of printed copies).

Students are also invited to share with their supervisor an electronic version of their thesis (in

PDF) by email.

Students working on empirical projects should also share their data set and scripts / do-files for replication purposes. Working examples can be submitted in case of proprietary data. Students working with numerical simulations should also share their codes for replication purposes.

### **3 Evaluation criteria**

The thesis will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Focus on stated research topics
- Understanding and selecting the most relevant literature for the thesis topic
- Correct application of empirical and/or theoretical methods to examine the research topic.  
Explanation of most important aspects of the applied methods (including possible drawbacks)
- Arguments and their presentation (structure, comprehensiveness, logic etc.)
- Overall impression (layout, grammar, citations etc.)