



## Hints for your Master thesis

### Registration for the Master's Thesis

after the acceptance to write your master thesis in economic history, with our supervision (and after your preceding registration on our website), the examination office (Pruefungsamt) asks you to fill out the following registration form:

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/einrichtungen/verwaltung/iv-studierende/zentrales-pruefungsamt/wirtschafts-und-sozialwissenschaftliche-faecher-und-theologien/fachbereich-wirtschaftswissenschaft/downloads/>

If the admission requirements are completed examination office will send you the letter of admission by post (by experience, this arrives typically 2-4 weeks after filling the form above, if no special circumstances apply). When you will have received the letter of admission, you have 1 month to bring this document to Professor Baten, he has to fill out the topic and will send this document back to the examination office (original, no scan), you will take a foto. The title of the thesis should not be changed thereafter. Then the processing time of the thesis will start. When the examination office received the filled out and signed letter of admission, they will inform you about your submission date via email.

At any date after the acceptance to write your master thesis in economic history, you are welcome to make an appointment with Professor Baten in his office hour (Thursdays 16:15-17:00) to speak about a potential topic.

### Literature

In case your topic allows for it, read and cite articles from international economic and economic history journals. The data base EconLit of the main library (UB) enables you to download PDF-files and print them out.

You might also find a controversy in literature, to which you can contribute an empirical finding. If the controversy is important, include it in the "research question" of your thesis.

## Data

If possible, we would appreciate your own creation and investigation of new datasets, as this is very useful for many future career fields. Otherwise, you can get access to other data sets from our department:

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/fakultaeten/wirtschafts-und-sozialwissenschaftliche-fakultaet/faecher/fachbereich-wirtschaftswissenschaft/wirtschaftswissenschaft/lehrstuehle/volkswirtschaftslehre/wirtschaftsgeschichte/forschung/data-hub-firms/>.

You should always consider the following questions: Should I measure this indicator using this variable? Does it make sense? Try to find good arguments for your strategy.

You can also use different data sources. For example, in order to study Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, you can use the “statistical year books” and the bibliography that it includes. In case the required data is only published in charts, you can use the ruler to measure what you need. The measurement errors should be randomly distributed (you should mention that).

Please inform Prof. Baten, before you request data from other researchers or archives. Some researchers get annoyed if they receive too many emails. All data analyzed during your research must be included (on a USB stick) with a clear explanation for each table. Please submit this USB stick with your thesis. Document all of the decisions you make during the construction of your data set. Add all do-files.

Please begin searching for data directly after you have been assigned a topic. Some disasters occurred before when students worked on the literature for three months and only began to collect their data afterwards.

From time to time, you are welcome to present a short power point presentation to your supervisor summarizing your intermediate results to get additional suggestions.

Please organize your data clearly. For example, each combination of time and cross-section uniform should be in the STATA “long” panel format.

Country	Year	GDP	Literacy
uk	1859	2333	34
uk	1860	2366	36
de	1859	1666	66
And so on.			

Please avoid empty rows or columns and add your comments in a separate column.

(The table above is not a form of what the tables in your thesis should look like. It is rather an example of how the raw data should be formed.)

## **Analysis**

We appreciate students analyzing the data on their own. Try to find an answer for an important question or answer it more precisely or for a new time period or a new country.

Read a good introductory book in applied econometrics such as Wooldridge or Studenmund, and a guide book to statistical software such as Stata® if necessary.

We also provide a list of online courses on Stata® on our internet page, as well as do-files for some often-used steps and video tutorials on YouTube. Please find it under the link:

<https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/faculties/faculty-of-economics-and-social-sciences/subjects/school-of-business-and-economics/school-of-business-and-economics/faculty/economics/economic-history/teaching/forschungspraktikum/>.

Look at our presentations and in case you have difficulties running regressions, we can offer you some help. In addition to the analysis, include some diagrams and graphics that explain more about your topic would be benefit.

Please discuss in which way you used your indicators and their definitions.

In case the regional aspects or the geographical relations play a role in between countries, using maps might simplify the text. The empirical-statistical and graphical analysis is very important to us.

All data should be checked for plausibility: Are there any differences between a table and another figure? Or between a figure and the text? Are all of the results compatible with each other? (The analysis and the structure should be logical; the concepts should be explained clearly and easily understandable).

## **Language and style**

You can write your thesis in English or in German (depending on the rules of your Master program), even if the suggested topic is formulated in English.

You should use a clear, easily readable language which does not include colloquial expressions. The nominal style is not desirable, such as using too many nouns that are connected only with verbs derived from "to be".

Is everything logical and formulated reasonably?

## **Presentation in the seminar and support meetings**

We are available for consulting and support during our office hours. After an appointment with your supervisor (normally via email the day before his office hour), you can make a short power point presentation (5 minutes) to present your results so far and discuss the problems that you face and the strategies that you are using to solve these problems.

Do not refer to generally known things in your presentation. Concentrate only on your results and perhaps crucial literature.

Make an appointment to come to the office hour at least a day before. Most students visit it ca. 3 times during the whole period, i.e. in evenly spaced intervals. It is not recommended to spend time outside of Tuebingen during the writing period.

Important: You should summarize the results of each meeting in a short protocol and send it to your supervisor directly after. In our experience, this has drastic implications for the grade, because the students simply forget the details of the advice that we give them if they do not write a protocol in the same or in the following day. We try to give you the best possible tutoring, but it is also important that you inform yourself about what is necessary to write a good thesis.

You are obliged to make a 10-minutes-presentation of your most important methods and results in the research seminar (which is a joint seminar of the bachelor and master thesis writing students, see there). Please check yourself which seminar date is appropriate for your. Use this opportunity to develop your thesis by using your supervisor's advice.

Before the presentation, you should prepare what to say by summarizing the most important results, the explanation of your methodology and your problems and questions.

## **Formalities**

All figures and tables should be numbered and self-explanatory. Please provide exact titles, axis labels, and notes to the tables in which the dependent variables and important explanations about the explanatory variables are mentioned, if this applies. Their sources must be clearly mentioned.

On several points of your thesis you should refer to your main research question, and what a specific section contributed to it.

We advise these formalities:

- Number of pages: around 30-40 text pages (without the figures, tables and index), 40 pages text is the maximum. Please avoid explanations for basic concepts such as age heaping, anthropometry, and OLS-Regression. If you want, you can add appendices on age-heaping or other important topics.
- Tables and figures should be related to the text. They should be easy to find.
- Do not use direct quotations. Instead, summarize findings of other authors in your own words and cite appropriately.
- Sources: Mention only the name and the year in the text. The detailed citations should be included in the reference list. This method is used worldwide and is known by the "Harvard System".

- Do not mention page numbers when it comes to the basic argument of a paper. For example:
  - Baten adopted a middle-position in the development of human capital (Baten, 2003).
  - Moser (2003, p. 13) found that around 1850-70 in 13-15 North European countries patent laws did not have an effect on the level of innovations.
- Sworn statement about the authorship of the thesis, with your signature in the printed version of the thesis.

The Master's thesis should be copied to a USB stick as well as the data, do-files, etc. (as PDF) Add a USB stick to one copy of your Master's thesis by using self-adhesive USB pockets.

### Checklist

1. Have you gained additional knowledge from your data analysis?
2. Have you introduced these results in the introduction and the conclusion? Did you write in a rhetorical style that underlines how important and interesting your study is?
3. A clear research-question? Are the other parts related to it?
4. Are all figures checked for plausibility?
5. Are the main hypotheses constructed clearly and is (if possible) a controversy introduced?
6. Easily readable? No very short paragraphs and no nominal style? Did you proofread the text two or three times so that mistakes are few?
7. Is all listed literature (especially English journal literature) really used in the text?
8. Are the connections between sections clear? Are the theoretical hypotheses tested in the empirical section?
9. Are tables and figures easy to find and clearly explained? Are all of the sources and data documentations clearly mentioned?
10. Any econometric errors? Trend correlation? Missing explanatory variables?
11. Not too many details or facts which are not directly related to your research question?
12. No uncritical acceptance of ideologies and other problems from literature?
13. Are the citations sufficient and uniform?
14. Are the economic questions examined with econometric concepts?
15. Are scatter plots and maps included where they make sense?
16. Are the Master's thesis, the data base and do-files well documented and included on a USB stick?
17. Are important concepts well defined and used?
18. Are empirical results well interpreted and are unexpected and important things examined more closely through e.g. disaggregation, additional data or individual case data?
19. Enough descriptive figures of the variables which you used?
20. Have you chosen the most interesting literature available for your topic?
21. Are the most important questions in the foreground?