



## Requirements and guidelines for writing theses

To assist you in planning and writing your thesis, the following is an overview of the formal requirements of the Chair of Sociology with a focus on Longitudinal Educational Research.

### General requirements regarding contents and prerequisites

With your final thesis (Bachelor or Master thesis) you should prove your ability to work scientifically. This means that you are able to *independently* apply the scientific and methodological tools you have learned during your studies (e.g., literature research, theory-based implementation of empirical studies, preparation of scientific texts and citation) to a *self-selected* research question, critically reflect on your application, and develop further ideas with regard to the research object, the theory, or the method.

Please first check independently whether you meet all the necessary formal admission requirements of the examination regulations applicable to you for the registration of your thesis.

The supervision at the Chair of Sociology with a Focus on Longitudinal Educational Research requires that you have taken courses in the major field of study Education, Work, Family and Life Course (B.A.) or Education, Work, Family and Life Course (M.A.) and that you have gained suitable knowledge of empirical social research in your studies in order to be able to apply this knowledge in your thesis. Preference is given to empirical studies (especially in the case of Master theses), which are thematically and methodologically related to the courses offered by the chair or in the field of education, labor market, family, social inequality, and life course. Access to and use of data, e.g. from NEPS, SOEP or pairfam, is generally possible via the supervising lecturers. For Bachelor theses, it is also possible to write a comprehensive literature study, which discusses the concrete question in a structured way based on published scientific literature and critically examines the empirical design used in earlier studies.

### Topic selection and supervisor

The Chair of Sociology with a Focus on Longitudinal Educational Research does not assign topics for theses. Please orientate yourself on the topics of the courses offered in the past and develop a topic proposal independently based on the contents discussed there. In principle, we supervise theses in which an independent theory-based (empirical) analysis is carried out on a self-selected question.

#### *Exposé for topic identification*

For the personal discussion of your topic proposal, prepare a short exposé, in which you briefly outline your research question and its relevance, your independent contribution to previous research (especially for master theses), initial theoretical considerations and hypotheses, as well as



your planned methodological approach (data set, method, operationalization, if applicable) (2-3 pages). Try to specify your specific research question as clearly as possible, so that handling it within the given time frame and scope is realistic. In addition, prepare a first draft of the outline, from which the content structure of your work clearly emerges (max. 1 page) and draft a short time schedule for the division of the most important milestones (e.g. registration and start, research, empirical work, writing phases, correction, submission, defense) (max. 1 page). Finally, please briefly list the courses attended in the major or in related fields (empirical social research, statistics, etc.) that are relevant for working on your thesis (title of the course, lecturer, and semester) (max. 1 page).

For the design and formatting of the exposé, the same guidelines apply as for theses (see below).

#### *Discussion of the topic proposal*

Please send the documents by e-mail to the secretary's office and ask for an appointment with Professor Corinna Kleinert. For supervision requests to the lecturers affiliated to our chair, please contact the respective lecturers directly via email. Please allow 2-3 weeks for the appointment.

#### **Guidelines for designing and formatting the thesis**

Please observe the following guidelines for the design and formatting of your thesis:

*Paper size:* DIN A4, single-sided

*Margins:* standard setting (left 2.5 cm, right 2.5 cm, top 2.5 cm, bottom 2 cm)

*Font type/size:* common serif font (e.g. Times New Roman, Garamond, Cambria or Calibri) / 12pt; in figures and tables up to minimum 10pt.

*Paragraph settings:* 1.5 line spacing, justification

*Highlighting:* sparing use of single *italic* highlights, no underlining or **bold** markings

*Citation:* Harvard citation style with short references in brackets in the body text

*Citation style:* No default. We recommend the use of a literature management program (Citavi, Endnote, etc.), in which you can set proven citation styles of well-known sociological journals and thus ensure a uniform citation style (e.g. Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie, European Sociological Review, APA).

*Binding:* You are welcome to do without a hardcover binding and instead choose a simple and less expensive adhesive binding with a transparent cover.

*Length:* Bachelor theses: min. 30 and max. 40 pages  
Master theses: min. 40 and max. 60 pages



Justified exceptions, for example in the case of empirical studies in article form, are possible only after consultation with the lecturer. The scope includes all pages with the exception of: title page, table of contents, explanation and appendix. The appendix is to be limited to 10% of the maximum number of pages.

Structure of an empirical paper:

*Title page (Please follow the instructions of the examination office!)*

*Table of contents*

*(List of tables and figures, if necessary)*

1. *Introduction*
2. *State of research*
3. *Theory and hypotheses*
4. *Data and method*
5. *Results*
6. *Summary (and discussion)*

*Bibliography*

*Appendix*

*Affidavit/formal declaration*

Further instructions for the preparation of Bachelor theses as well as information on the registration of Bachelor and Master theses can be found in the respective leaflets on the homepage of the Department of Sociology. The information contained in the information sheet for Bachelor theses on the general procedure, on essential components and the structure of the thesis, its linguistic design, the citation and literature research as well as the general information on possible evaluation criteria also apply to Master theses—unless otherwise agreed with the lecturers.

## **Disputation**

The chair currently does not offer an accompanying colloquium for theses. The thesis is therefore completed with an oral defense, the disputation. This can take place after the thesis has been submitted and at the end of the examination period set by the examination office. Please note that only a few appointments for disputations can be made during the lecture-free period. Please contact the secretary's office independently and in good time in order to find a date.

Master theses only: Before the disputation, prepare a thesis paper (1-2 pages) in which you briefly summarize your work and outline possible limitations and further questions. Send this thesis paper by email to your supervising lecturer at the latest 1 week before the date of the disputation.