



## Guidance on the preparation of written presentations, term papers and final dissertations

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This document is intended to assist you in the preparation of written presentations, term papers and final dissertations for submission to the Diversity Research Institute. It has details on registration and submission rules. In addition, it sets out clearly the assessment criteria we use in grading written work. This document is not intended to substitute for your own study and practice of the techniques of academic writing.

Your lecturers in the Diversity Research Institute may provide you with more detailed guidance. This information will be given to you in the seminar classes or indicated in the seminar plans. For final dissertations, guidance may also be provided through individual consultations with lecturers during their office hours for students.

### Registration and submission

You must register online for the examination in every module using the **FlexNow** system. After the registration deadline has expired, registration is not permitted except in justified exceptional cases. Please speak to your module lecturer who will contact the Examination Office on your behalf.

**Submission deadlines** for term papers and examination dates are communicated through the studip/UniVZ system. Your lecturer will also inform you of these dates in the seminar. Make sure you note these dates carefully. Students with health limitations (e.g. dyslexia) or who are sole care providers for a close relative (including a dependent child) are entitled to additional time for submitting written work. Please ask your lecturers or contact the Examination Office directly. We will assist you in obtaining an extension to the deadline.

Please submit your work both **in hard copy (printed version) and as a digital version** (email attachment is acceptable). Make sure you deliver your work on time and to the correct Institute mailbox.

### Assessment criteria

#### Identification of the issue and structure

The first step should be to **identify the issue**, narrowing down the area to be examined so that your written paper focuses on one central aspect. You should aim to formulate the question to be answered simply and clearly – in no more than three sentences.

You should **structure your writing** to focus directly on this question throughout the paper, developing a detailed argument as you go. You should ensure that your structure is clear and logical, guiding your reader through the text. You may need to adapt your structure as part of the writing process but you should make sure that you stay focused on your research question.

Producing a piece of written academic work requires you to learn how to select and prioritise your material. **Selection and prioritisation means** not writing down everything you know on a particular issue. Instead, you should present only the material which is relevant to the argument and which can be covered within the maximum permitted paper length.

The **outline** of your paper then follows from your (research) question and the aspects that are relevant to your answer.

Sample structure: theoretical paper	Sample structure: empirical paper
Outline	Outline
Introduction	Introduction
Main part <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of research</li> <li>• Presentation of issue</li> <li>• Answer to the initial question</li> </ul>	Main part <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of research</li> <li>• Presentation of issue</li> <li>• Methodical / methodological framework</li> <li>• Answer to the initial question</li> </ul>
Conclusion	Conclusion
Bibliography	Bibliography
(Annex)	Annex

## Content of the individual chapters

*The questions discussed here are simply illustrative of how to construct the introduction, main part and conclusion of your paper.* The introduction and conclusion frame the main part of your work. The main part itself contains the substantive analysis.

The **introduction** provides the background and context to the subject of your inquiry. Briefly introduce the topic of your paper. Identify the debates to which your work relates. What are the main concepts and ideas you are using? *Example: In the area of ... the issue of ... has been heavily debated in recent years.*

Identify the particular academic insight to be obtained through your work. Where is the gap in existing research? In what area will your work make a contribution? What do you want demonstrate with your work? *Example: Within the debates on ... the issue of ... appears for the most part to have been resolved. However, our knowledge on ... is more limited.*

Place the issue to be addressed in your work in the context of the relevant debate(s). *Example: For that reason this paper/dissertation seeks to examine why ...*

Explain the relevance of your work e.g. current events, theoretical debates or societal developments.

*Example: Only when we have an understanding of ... can we ... .*

Finally, provide an outline of how the paper is structured. *Example: To explain why ... this paper will first, in Chapter 2 ... Chapter 3 then ... Chapter 4 analyses ... The conclusion (Chapter X) summarises the findings and identifies areas for further research.*

The **main part** provides a systematic analysis of the issue under investigation. In writing this part, it is crucial to keep strictly to the main argument. You should not digress. Ensure that you remain on topic throughout. Each chapter should build on and make reference to the previous chapter. Use connecting sentences to achieve this. *Example: After it was shown in the previous chapter that ..., this chapter will now ... in order to demonstrate ... .*

Identify the current state of research on your topic. Provide an initial overview. What scientific assumptions and findings exist in relation to your topic? What are important lines of inquiry? What ideas or theories are used in explanation? Are there particularly important aspects or ideas to which ‘everyone’ refers? *Example: The notion of [technical term or concept] ... has been crucial in [debates on] [the analysis of] ... .*

Then explain in detail selected ideas and terms. What terms and ideas from the specialist literature are helpful and important for your analysis? Depending on the scope of your inquiry you may need to extend or restrict these terms and ideas. *Example: In the context of the present inquiry, [term, idea] is particularly important. For that reason, a close examination of [this term] is necessary, focusing on ... However, this understanding of ... does not take account of ... In recognition of this fact, I have expanded my [examination] [analysis] accordingly.*

In this part of your paper, and throughout the work, it is essential that you do not simply describe or list the aspects involved. Instead, you must engage with and discuss the various elements, demonstrating the relevance for your work. Establish a ‘dialogue’ between different arguments. What conclusions do you reach from the results of your discussion? *Example: X argues ... which in our situation implies ... Subsequently, that approach was criticised for having ignored ... This means ..., although it remains unresolved whether ... In these circumstances, it can be concluded that .... Consequently, it can be presumed that ... This would also support the view that ...*

For empirical projects, you should also explain your choice of method and how you implemented this method. Why did you choose this method? What are the benefits of this approach? (Why did you reject alternative approaches?) Describe your process of data collection (and, where necessary, how the data was refined e.g. word for word transcription) and data analysis. Questionnaires, transcripts, etc. should be included as annexes. *Example: The method of ... was chosen because ... The data was analysed on the basis of [evaluation method; statistical procedure].*

You should then present your results and discuss these. Your results provide the answer to your initial inquiry. What answer(s) have you obtained? Is the answer clear? Did you encounter inconsistencies? *Example: This examination of [theoretical approach, empirical material] suggests that ... However, this is*

*inconsistent with the approach taken by ... because ... Consequently, that approach should be extended by ... Thus, in response to the initial inquiry, this analysis has shown ...*

In your **conclusion** you should summarise your results and identify areas for future research. Summarise the answer you have obtained to your research question. *Example: This paper has examined the reasons for ... It was shown that [aspects 1, 2 ...] play an important role in ... [short explanation of the aspects identified].*

You should reflect critically on your approach and results. Does your paper provide a satisfactory answer to your inquiry? In focusing on your specific question, what aspects had to be ignored? Given your experience of the research and writing process, what would you do differently if starting again? *Example: In narrowing down the issue to be examined, ... had to be excluded. The issue of ... could not be discussed further because ... In hindsight, it would have been useful ... It can be learned from the research process that ...*

Your paper represents a small but nonetheless important contribution in improving our knowledge of society. What are the important and interesting issues resulting from your paper which merit further investigation? Which aspects would you like to examine more? *Example: The aspect of ... could not be explored further here because ... [e.g. no studies on this aspect exist]. Therefore, it would be interesting in an empirical project to examine ...*

## **Academic style and language**

In academic papers, the purpose of specialist vocabulary is to identify and describe complex situations. But do not overload your sentences. Using a string of specialist terms makes your text impossible to understand. However, a complete absence of specialist language will leave the paper sounding too colloquial and is inappropriate in the academic context. **Academic writing skills** require development and practice. Consider what stage you have reached in your studies. You should ensure that your writing reflects this.

**Define the terms that are essential to your paper using academic sources.** This does not include Wikipedia, Encyclopaedia Britannica etc.

Ensure that you use **gender-neutral language** (e.g. in listing occupations write 'firefighters' and 'police officers', not 'firemen' and 'policemen').

Please check your work before submitting it. You should check for spelling, grammar and style mistakes. Make sure that you have activated the spellcheck function in your word processing software.

## **Presentation, formatting, bibliography and declaration of authorship**

Please ensure that your work is submitted with a **cover page**. This should include the following details: your name, student number, degree course and current semester, module being examined, email address, seminar title and title of your paper. To record your paper in the FlexNow system, the name of the module is essential. Papers submitted without the module name cannot be processed.

Please make sure that you have **numbered the pages**, starting with the first page of the main text. Your paper should be formatted clearly and **consistently** with a right-hand margin of at least 2.5 cm for comments and corrections. Please set line spacing to 1.5 and use a standard size font e.g. Arial 11 pt or Times New Roman 12 pt.

Wherever you use an idea or explanation taken from someone else's work or an item from your dataset this must be clearly referenced. It is particularly important that you cite your **sources correctly and in full** both in your text and **bibliography**. Correct citation involves consulting the original sources and not relying on other authors, e.g. using the phrase 'cited in'. Every item cited in the text must be included in the bibliography. Likewise, the bibliography should only contain the items referred to in the text. It is recommended that you cite your references in the main text using the Harvard system. Your bibliography should be arranged in alphabetical order (of author surnames). The primary sources used in empirical projects should be included in your bibliography under a separate heading.

Every term paper and every final dissertation (bachelor's and master's thesis) must include a **final page** with a sworn declaration signed by the candidate stating that the paper or thesis submitted is entirely their own work.

### **Further information and support can be obtained from the following advisory services:**

#### ***Advice on writing skills:***

<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/123160.html>

#### ***Advice on empirical projects using qualitative methods:***

<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/423526.html>

#### ***Advice on empirical projects using quantitative methods:***

<http://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/362247.html>

We welcome suggestions on how this document can be improved.

### **Contact person:**

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