Assessment criteria for written work at the Department of Pluralist Economics

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May 22, 2023

All written work at the department is graded according to the grading scheme described below, unless otherwise agreed upon in advance. In principle, the requirements for final theses are higher than for seminar papers. Likewise, Master's theses have higher requirements than Bachelor's theses.

Your work get evaluated in each dimension relevant to it. We assume an average reference value. For special characteristics of the work there are then upgrades or downgrades. Example reasons for such upgrades or downgrades are listed in the table. The examples are intentionally kept general. The requirements, especially concerning the independence, are different for seminar, bachelor and master theses. The different requirements are reflected in easier upgrades or downgrades.

Not all evaluation dimensions are relevant for all types of work. For example, the criterion "Correctness of submitted data/code for replication" is only of interest for empirical papers. If you are writing a purely theoretical paper, this evaluation dimension will be ignored.

The following specifics apply to the overall evaluation of the work:

- A paper that is not graded as at least adequate in dimensions #2 ("clarity and comprehensibility of argument"), #3 ("correctness and accuracy of exposition"), #4 ("formalities"), or #5 ("spelling and grammar") will be graded 5.0.
- If you provide a certificate for diagnosed dyslexia before submitting the paper, dimension #5 ("Spelling and Grammar") will not be considered for grading the paper.
- If the paper receives only a sufficient or satisfactory rating in dimensions #2 ("clarity and comprehensibility of argumentation") and #3 ("correctness and accuracy of explanations"), the overall paper cannot receive a grade than 'sufficient' (4.0) or 'satisfactory' (3.0).

Apart from these special features, the overall rating results from the respective individual ratings in the rating dimensions. The "Weight" column indicates the relative weight of the assessment dimension for the overall assessment. In any case, please refer to the "Notes on writing seminar papers and theses" made available through the department's homepage.

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#	Criterion	Explanation	Weight	Examples for upgrades	Examples for downgrades
		I. General aspects and formalities			
1	**Structure and outline ("red thread")**	– Do the individual parts of the work build on each other in a meaningful way? – Is the structure of the work determined by guiding questions formulated at the beginning? – Does each element of the work contribute to answering the guiding questions?	10	– Explicit cross-references to arguments previously made. – Only claims that are necessary for the argumentation, are made. – Clear table of contents. – Appropriate use of outline levels.	– Too many or too few outline levels – Arguments build on statements that are made only later on – The order of the chapters is not obvious – Many statement that are not necessary for the main argument
2	**Clarity and comprehensibility of the argumentation, esp.: logical stringency**	– Are assumptions, mechanisms, and logical conclusions clearly identified as such? – Do the conclusions follow logically from the assumptions? – Are normative assumptions made explicit as such?	10	– Hypotheses and assumptions about cause-effect relationships are explicitly named as such. – The uncertainty of logical derivations is made explicit. – Assumptions are justified. – The logical structure of the argumentation is clearly seen from the text.	– Own value judgments are presented as facts. – It remains unclear how the conclusions are derived from the assumptions. – Arguments are presented in an overly complex manner. – Incorrect use of technical terms.
3	**Correctness and accuracy of the executions**	– Are the statements made correct in content and accurately reflected upon?	10	– All statements are precisely formulated. – No false statements can be found. – Transparent handling of non-evidentiary statements.	– Statements from the literature are misrepresented. – Statements of questionable origin are reproduced unquestioned.
4	**Formalities: consistent layout; correct citation; etc.**	– Have the formal requirements been met? – Has sufficient and correct citation been given?	5	– Consistent headline and text layout. – Sensible use of format changes such as italics and quotation marks.	– Accidental or arbitrary format changes across the work. – Maximum number of words exceeded.
5	**Spelling & Grammar**	– Is the work free of spelling and grammatical errors? Is the sentence structure understandable?	5	– No spelling mistakes. – Sentence structure facilitates understanding.	– Numerous spelling errors. – Cumbersome sentence structure.

6	**Use of tables and graphics**	– Are figures and tables used to support the core arguments?	5	– Own illustrations.	– Illustrations without reference to the argumentation.
7	**Difficulty (topic/method), degree of independence**	– How difficult is the topic for a student in that phase of study to complete? – Will a separate empirical investigation be conducted?	5	– The topic is highly relevant, but hardly pre-structured; thus, considerable structuring by the authors is required. – In addition to theoretical-conceptual work, empirical data collection is necessary.	– The topic can be handled without problems by resorting to readily available literature. – There are numerous scientific and popular papers with a similar topic available.
	II. INTRODUCTION & THEORY				
8	**Justification and formulation of the research question**	– Has the thesis question been made explicit in an appropriate place? – Was the question appropriately motivated?	10	– The question is written down very explicitly. – The individual aspects of the question are derived by taking into account the existing literature. – The question distinguishes between mechanisms of action and predictions made.	– The research question is too general. – The research question is only implicitly reflected in the text. – The research question is not motivated.
9	**Extent and adequacy of the literature considered**	– Does the paper incorporate literature to an appropriate extent? – Is the literature used scientific? – Is the literature used relevant in terms of content and selected in a balanced manner?	10	– Very recent scientific literature has been included. – The selection of sources is critically reflected upon. – The sources are balanced selected from different paradigms.	– Too much literature used is irrelevant to research question. – Few scientific sources. – Sources are misrepresented. – Only literature from a specific orientation is referenced.
	III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY				
10	**Alignment of research question and research design**	– Does the research design fit the research question?	10	– It is explicitly and convincingly stated how the research design is suitable to answer the research question of the thesis. – Limitations of the research designs are explicitly discussed.	– The research design is not suitable to answer the research questions. – The research design is not justified

11	**Implementation of the chosen method (operationalization, etc.)**	– Was the chosen method implemented appropriately?	7	– The chosen method was implemented following current applications in the literature. – The individual steps were well described and justified.	– There are errors of craftsmanship in the implementation of the method. – The implemented method does not fit the research design.
12	**Documentation of the inquiry**	– Is the course of the investigation presented completely and comprehensibly? – Has the object of study and the sample been described adequately?	8	– The individual steps are made clear by appropriate formatting/outline levels. – The data are well described. – Each step of the investigation is documented.	– Only certain steps of the examination are described. – Study object and sample remain unclear. – It is not apparent what was actually done in the investigation.
13	**Correctness of the submitted data/code for replication**	– Have all the data been submitted? – Can the results of the work be replicated?	5	– All data and code are submitted. – The code is well documented and is traceable. – All results can be replicated via a script.	– Data and/or code are not submitted. – Submitted code is incomprehensible. – The results cannot be replicated.
	IV. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS				
14	**Precision, systematics, and comprehensibility of the presentation of results**	– Were the results systematically described? – Were the results reported in a comprehensible manner?	10	– The results are clearly described. – It is explained how the results were obtained. – Only results relevant to structure the key insights and answering the research question were reported.	– Results irrelevant to the research question and assessment of the method are discussed. – It remains unclear from what the results arise. – The results are interpreted erratically.
15	**Correctness and objectivity/completeness of the evaluation**	– Has the evaluation been done completely? – Were the results presented as objectively as possible?	8	– All relevant results are reported. – The evaluation of the results was strictly separated from the reporting.	– Results are only selectively reported. – The results were reported in evaluative language.

	V. CONCLUSION				
16	**Answering the research question posed in the beginning**	– Has the question posed at the beginning been revisited and answered?	10	– The question posed at the beginning is explicitly taken up again and answered. – It is made explicit which aspects of the question could be answered and which not. – The reasons why the question could (not) be answered were explicitly discussed	– The question answered differs from the question formulated in the beginning. – A lot of text was used for explanations that have nothing to do with the research questions. – It is pretended that the research question could have been answered although this was de facto not possible.
17	**Balanced discussion and classification of the results in the literature**	– Were the results related back to the literature considered at the beginning and classified? – Are the results discussed in light of different points of view?	8	– Blank spaces previously identified in the literature were addressed. – Results are discussed from different standpoints. – The own opinion gets formulated and is identified as such	– The results are not related to the existing literature. – The results are discussed in a very one-sided way. – No own arguments recognizable.
18	**Dealing with limitations & implications**	– Were limitations of the work reflected? – Were implications for future research derived from the results? – Are results discussed with regard to their practical relevance?	7	– Limitations of the work is explicitly mentioned and ways to address them suggested. – The results are reflected with regard to their practical relevance using current examples. – New research questions were derived from the results	– Limitations are not mentioned. – Limitations are dismissed with superficial arguments. – Implications for practice and/or research are not mentioned.
19	**Appreciation of special circumstances (+5 to -5)**	– All possibly relevant special circumstances flow into this dimension	5	– The chosen method was particularly demanding. – The work contains particularly innovative ideas. – The student has reflected and adapted his/her own approach during the work phase.	– The work was not handed in on time. – The student did not work independently. – Feedback given during the work phase was ignored.