

## ***Guidelines for the Master's Thesis***

### **A) General Remarks**

- Use Roman numerals (I, II, III, ...) for the table of contents and bibliography. The cover page is not numbered. Use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, ...) for the main text.

### **I. Cover Page**

The general design is left to the author's discretion. The cover page should include:

- the title of the degree program (Digitalization & Law)
- the title of the master's thesis
- the names of the supervisors (including their academic titles)
- the author's name
- the author's student ID
- the author's current semester of study
- the author's date and place of birth; and
- the semester in which the master's thesis is submitted.

### **II. Table of Contents**

- All headings used in the master's thesis must appear in the table of contents, including the page numbers.

### **III. Bibliography**

- Only works that are actually cited in the master's thesis may be listed.
- All cited legal commentaries, textbooks, monographs, articles in commemorative volumes, and journals, as well as case notes on court decisions, must be included.
- Court decisions do not belong in the bibliography.
- List the cited works in alphabetical order (preferably without subdividing them into categories).
- Indicate: surname and first name of the author, title of the work, year of publication and, where applicable, the edition. For journal articles, state the journal, the year and the first page of the article.

Example: Schmidt, Peter, Das Strafrecht im Lichte der Verfassung, NJW 2004, p. 2289

- As a rule, use the latest edition of textbooks and legal commentaries.
- In the case of multi-volume works, the volume used must also be indicated.
- A citation format is required only if several works by the same author are cited, if an abbreviated title is used in the footnotes, or if ambiguities would otherwise arise.

Example: Schmidt, Peter, Das Strafrecht im Wandel der Zeit – Reformen des materiellen Rechts seit dem 2. Weltkrieg, Würzburg 1987 (cited as: Schmidt, Strafrecht im Wandel).

- Internet sources are generally not included in the bibliography.

## **B) Formal Requirements for the Main Text**

### **I. Length and Layout**

- The master's thesis should comprise approximately 60 pages. This figure covers only the main text, **not** the front page, the table of contents, the bibliography or other preliminary sections (such as a table of abbreviations) or attachments.
- Use 1.5-line spacing in the main text and single spacing in the footnotes.
- Font: Times New Roman, 12 pt. in the main text and 10 pt. in the footnotes.
- Margins: top, bottom and left 2 cm – right 5 cm
- The main text must be justified; footnotes should be left-aligned.

### **II. Structure**

- Structure the work clearly.
- A well-organized outline is essential for the comprehensibility of your arguments.

### **III. Visual Appearance**

- Insert paragraphs at reasonable intervals, but do not overdo it.
- Divide the text into appropriately sized paragraphs, but avoid excessive paragraph breaks. Use bold type sparingly.

#### **IV. Language**

- Use clear and precise academic language. Proofread the thesis carefully before submission to eliminate spelling, grammatical and stylistic errors.

#### **V. Citation Requirements**

- Cite only literature that you have read yourself. Second hand citations may be inaccurate.
- Do not rely on a single legal commentary or textbook throughout the entire thesis. Where possible, cite several authors for a particular view in order to demonstrate thorough research.
- Always cite the original source rather than secondary literature.
- Provide a reference whenever you adopt an author's idea. Even when paraphrasing an extended argument, a reference should be provided for individual sentences rather than only at the end of a passage.
- Verbatim quotations should be used only in exceptional cases. Always try to reformulate the content in your own words. Do not copy textbook passages. If a verbatim quotation is necessary, place it in quotation marks and retain the original spelling. Do not reproduce or closely paraphrase passages from other works without proper reference.
- For journal articles and court decisions, indicate the journal, the first page and the exact page on which the relevant passage appears. The exact page may be placed after a comma or in parentheses. (European) court decisions may also be cited by the ECLI number and by marginal numbers (paragraph numbers).

Example: *Schmidt*, NJW 1985, 1325, 1327 or *Schmidt*, NJW 1985, 1325 (1327)

- Use concise citations. When referring to monographs, do not repeat the full title in the footnotes (this information belongs in the bibliography). If only one work by an author is cited, the author's name plus the respective page or marginal number (paragraph number) is sufficient. If several works are cited, use an abbreviated title and provide a corresponding reference in the bibliography (as explained above).

- Online sources should be used only where they are reliable and academically appropriate. Preference should be given to authoritative sources, such as official publications, academic databases and publications by recognised institutions or identified authors. If an online source is cited, provide the author or institution, the title, the exact URL and the date of access.

### **C) Content of the Master's Thesis**

- A master's thesis generally consists of an introduction, a main body and a conclusion.
- In the introduction, briefly present the topic and indicate what will and will not be discussed (this is also the place to define the scope of the thesis).
- The main part addresses the research question. Focus strictly on the topic, avoid superfluous points and treat the important issues in appropriate depth (set clear priorities).

### **D) Conclusion**

- The conclusion should contain your own reasoned opinion and overall result. Unlike ordinary case-solving exercises, the author's own opinion forms a decisive part of the assessment of a Master's Thesis.

### **E) Declaration of Authorship**

- At the end of the thesis, a declaration of authorship must be attached stating that the work has been written by the author independently and that no sources other than those indicated have been used, must be attached with an original signature.