

Guidelines Concerning the Requirements for a Master's Thesis according to Art. 23 RSL RW of June 21, 2007 (current as of December 15, 2022)

The regulations state:

Art. 23 Master's Thesis

¹ During the Master's degree program, a Master's thesis comprised of 20 ECTS credits must be completed at the Faculty. In agreement with the supervising lecturer, the Master's thesis can be completed in the form of a written assignment of 15 ECTS credits and an oral seminar presentation of 5 ECTS credits.

² The object of the Master's thesis is an issue from a legal field.

³ The thesis must be submitted within fifteen weeks after the assignment of the topic. It is, in general, to be evaluated with a grade pursuant to Article 31 within two months.

⁴ The Master's thesis must earn at least a grade of 4.00. A Master's thesis that has been assessed as insufficient can be repeated once with a new topic. If the Master's thesis is repeated, it must be evaluated by two reviewers. [Version of May 22, 2014]

⁵ The Faculty issues guidelines on the requirements for the scope and form of the Master's thesis.

At its session of May 15, 2008, the Faculty of Law adopted the following guidelines for Art. 23 RSL RW:

1. Scope

- The Master's thesis is generally comprised of a total of 80,000 to 120,000 characters (including spaces and including the cover page, list of sources, footnotes, and the Declaration of Independent Work).

2. Formatting and Structure

- The thesis contains a cover page, table of contents, a list of sources (books, articles, legislative materials, and websites), a list of abbreviations, as well as the actual text and the Declaration of Independent Work according to Article 42(2) RSL RW. The Declaration of Independent Work must be dated and personally signed; in case of electronic submission, a scanned signature is sufficient.
- On the cover page, the following information must be noted: the title of the thesis, the supervising lecturer's name, as well as the name, address, telephone number, matriculation number, and e-mail address of the author.
- Text of the thesis with references in the footnotes: cite sources in abbreviated form in the footnote. All sources must be listed in the list of sources.
- Literal quotations must be marked with quotation marks or indented as a block quote. The source must always be indicated in a footnote. Regarding the citation, as well as further techniques and formalities of the formatting of the text (e.g. structure, headings, paragraphs), refer to the relevant literature (for example, the most recent edition of Peter Forstmoser/Regina Ogorek/Benjamin Schindler, *Juristisches Arbeiten, Eine Anleitung für Studierende*, Schulthess Verlag Zürich/Basel/Genf).
- Three important examples of source citations:
 - (1) Citation of a decision of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court in a footnote:

Decision published in the BGer official reporter	BGE 123 II 9 E. 2 S. 11.
Decision from the internet collection	BGer Decision 4A_65/2020 of February 26, 2020 E. 2.1.
Decision of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court from a journal	Decision of the Swiss Federal Supreme Court of April 3, 1996, E. 4b, in: ZBI 1997, S. 69.

(2) Full citation of a monograph in a footnote:

STEFAN TRECHSEL, Schweizerisches Strafgesetzbuch, Kurzkommentar, 3. Aufl., Zürich 2018, Art. 146 N 1.

(3) Full citation of a collection of works (essay in a journal or edited volume) in a footnote:

ERNST GOTTFRIED MAHRENHOLZ, Freiheit der Kunst, in: ERNST BENDA/WERNER MAIHOFFER/HANS-JOCHEN VOGEL (Hrsg.), Handbuch des Verfassungsrechts, 2. Aufl., Berlin/New York 1994, Rz. 45–56.

- Commonly used abbreviations of everyday language (such as: etc., e.g.) may be assumed to be known and do not have to be included in the list of abbreviations. For German language legal abbreviations, those forms must be used which are listed by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court in each annual volume.
- Thesis supervisors can, within the applicable regulatory framework, set other or additional requirements.

3. Submission

The thesis must be submitted by the deadline in electronic form as a searchable PDF/A file¹, either by e-mail to the supervisor or by uploading it to the ILIAS platform. Upon request of the supervisor, the thesis must also be submitted as a Word file or as a printed version and uploaded by the students to a platform for plagiarism checking (e.g. Ephorus). The thesis must have a reasonable presentation with regard to the font size (at least 12 points), margins, and line spacing.

4. Content

With regard to the choice of topic, supervision, and content requirements for the Master's thesis, and the meeting of deadlines, the responsible lecturers and departments are in charge for their subject area.

¹ The PDF file must be submitted in PDF/A format for archival reasons. To create a PDF/A file in MS Word (Windows) go to "File" and select the menu item "Save As". After specifying the location where you want to save the file, select "PDF" as the file type. Finally, click on "Options...", check the box next to "PDF/A compliant", and then save the file. On Mac (OpenOffice), go to "File" and select "Export as PDF...", check the box next to "PDF/A", and then click on "Export". Specify the location where you want to save the file and confirm with "Save". Using the search terms "Create PDF/A", you will also find other illustrated short instructions on the internet (for Mac and Windows).