



FAQ Bachelor theses in Geography

With these FAQ we want to clarify a few points regarding your BSc thesis, which we are often asked about. Please see the Merkblatt for more detailed guidelines and use also information sources such as the “Online-Leitfaden für wissenschaftliches Arbeiten” (www.olwa.ch)

May I modify my topic?

YES! (within reasonable boundaries) Please be aware that you are allowed to modify your topic within reasonable boundaries. Especially you can decide to narrow or broaden the topic. If you want to modify the topic, please discuss this with your supervisor and make sure to get her/his approval first.

Can I write my thesis in German / English?

You can write your thesis in German or English. In case you chose English when registering and you were assigned to a non-German-speaking supervisor, you have to write the thesis in English, in any other case you are free to write the thesis in German or English. There are good reasons for both and we do not have any general preference. Also for the grading the choice of language will not matter (but the quality of your writing of course will matter!).

How much supervision can I expect? May I send questions per e-mail?

You have the right for one hour of supervision meetings (which can be split in up to 3-4 occasions). For really short questions you can also send an e-mail, but as soon as asking the question or answering it would require more than (very) few sentences a personal meeting is more efficient. Please make use of your supervision time, we are there to help you and look forward meeting you.

May I copy text or use direct translations?

NO! Plagiarism is unpleasant for both you and us. Note that all BSc-theses will be scanned for plagiarism and make sure that you understand the issue of (forbidden) plagiarism! (please see also: <http://www.lehre.uzh.ch/plagiate.html>). Of course you can and should use texts written by other authors. Direct citations need to be put into “quotation marks” also if you translate them (in this case state this behind the reference: i.e. Smith 2012: 14, own translation). The rule is that every reference used in the text must appear in the bibliography and vice versa.

Which style should I use for references?

Please use the Harvard Style for references (i.e., author (year)). See the link to the pdf on the right hand on page of OlWA http://www.geo.uzh.ch/microsite/olwa/olwa/en/html/unit4_kap44.html. There are several variations of this and we do not care which one you use, as long as you are consequent! We suggest you have a look at a style guide of one of the major journals in the field of your thesis (e.g., for hydrology Water Resources Research, <http://publications.agu.org/author-resource-center/author-guide/>). Usually you should not write page numbers in a reference (you usually refer to a thought, method, result, which is not related to a specific line/page) unless you make a direct quote or refer to a specific fact (i.e. numbers).

May I refer to reports or internet pages?

Yes, but you should be aware that there are different types of references/resources. Wherever possible use journal articles (peer reviewed = quality checked) or books. The



next best are other printed resources ('grey literature') such as unpublished PhD theses, BAFU-reports, For such resources (which basically are pdfs of printed versions made available online) you can add information like 'This report can be downloaded from' (Note: it is still the printed version you are referring to, the download-link is just as a service to the reader). Finally, if none of the above resources can be found for a certain aspect, you may refer to online resources. Please see the "Leitfaden für wissenschaftliches Arbeiten", www.olwa.ch or the following pages on how to refer to online resources. All the different types of references should be listed in one list.

How should I refer to a publication, which I cannot access myself?

If you cannot get access to a certain publication some other author is referring to, you should express this by writing "Meier (1862) cited by Müller (2010)" or "Meier (1862) zit. in Müller (2010)". List both references in the reference list, but with "cited by Müller (2010)" in brackets after the author and year of the Meier reference.

How should I identify citations?

Citations should be clearly marked like "... blabla bla." (Müller, 1999: 10) (alternatively (Müller, 1999, p.10) or (Müller, 1999, S.10).

Where should I place figure and table captions?

There are different styles on where to place the text explaining a figure or table. At GIUZ please follow the rule that the caption (text) should be placed below a figure, but above a table.