



**Deutsche  
Sporthochschule Köln**  
German Sport University Cologne

## **M.A. International Sport Development and Politics Guidelines for Writing a Master Thesis**

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Program Directors M.A. International Sport Development and Politics

This outline has been adapted from the guidelines of the M.Sc. Sport Management at German Sport University Cologne.

## **Table of contents**

1	Approach	1
2	Steps to Master Thesis	1
2.1	Topic	1
2.2	Examination regulations of 'Prüfungsamt'	1
2.3	Research Proposal	1
2.4	Supervision	2
2.5	Application	3
3	Structure and Format of Master Thesis	3
3.1	Structure and Content	3
3.2	Abstract	5
3.3	Guidelines on Format	5
3.4	Option A: Using traditional footnote style with regards to referencing	6
3.5	Option B: Using APA style with regards to referencing	8
3.6	Tables	11
3.7	Figures	12
4	General standards and Grading	13
4.1	Affirmation in lieu of an oath	13
4.2	Plagiarism	13
4.3	Grading	14
5	Recommended Literature	15

## 1 Approach

“Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.”

*Winston Churchill*

## 2 Steps to Master Thesis

### 2.1 Topic

There are two different options finding a topic. 1) A concrete research question is given by one of the institutes affiliated to the Master program. If the topic is interesting, the student may come to the office hour of the researcher and discuss the topic with him/her. 2) The student chooses his/her own question according to personal interests. Be aware that you will be working for five months on the topic. It is important to think about an appropriate research question and check what kind of research already had been done on the topic.

### 2.2 Examination regulations of ‘Prüfungsamt’

Check out the requirements of GSU examination regulations for the Master thesis at

[https://www.dshs-koeln.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Englisch/Full-time\\_studies\\_at\\_GSU/Study\\_documents/AM\\_2017-02\\_Master\\_Pruefungsordnung\\_EN.pdf](https://www.dshs-koeln.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Englisch/Full-time_studies_at_GSU/Study_documents/AM_2017-02_Master_Pruefungsordnung_EN.pdf)

### 2.3 Research Proposal

A research proposal needs to be written by each student. It will be approved by the supervisor and has to be handed in with the application of admission for the Master thesis. Length should not exceed 1,500-2,000 words (from Introduction to Timetable).

The research proposal is the foundation for the thesis. It should cover the following sections:

#### Introduction

- Statement of research problem and the purpose of the study
- Background of the study and why it is important or of interest
- Theoretical and practical relevance of your research
- Structure of the proposal

#### Theoretical framework

- Context: Indication from what disciplines the theories derive that will be used
- Provide definitions for the most important concepts/terms
- Framework: Theoretical models/Theories that can be used

### Preliminary review of the literature

- Identification of relevant studies for the research question

### Methodology

- Present your underlying model
- Justification for choice of methodology and methods
- Overview on data collection and material

### Anticipated Structure

- Overview about the main headings

### Timetable

- Overview about the five months in which the thesis needs to be completed

### References

- Full list of references used in the proposal

## **2.4 Supervision**

Supervision plays a major role in postgraduate degrees and is a formal requirement. Collis and Hussey (2009, p. 30) propose the following checklist when choosing a supervisor:

- Does the supervisor have knowledge and interest in your research topic?
- Is the supervisor sympathetic to your proposed methodology?
- Is the supervisor an experienced researcher?
- Has the supervisor got a record of successful supervisions?
- Has the supervisor got a good publication record?
- Has the supervisor got enough time to take on your supervision as well as managing his/her other work?

The selection is a two-way process. The potential supervisor will also assess the student and his/her research proposal. Cryer (1997, p. 10; cited after Collis & Hussey, 2009, p. 30) indicates attributes supervisors are looking for in research students:

- Ability to grasp concepts and reason analytically
- Motivation and perseverance in achieving objectives
- Capacity for independent thought
- Organizational skills
- Independence as a learner
- Self-confidence
- Enthusiasm for the research program

- Nature and extent of any relevant work and life experience
- Nature and extent of any previously undertaken training in research
- Likelihood of establishing good working relationship
- Language skills

### **2.5 Application**

The application of admission for the Master thesis can be downloaded on the university's website (this document also contains some brief formal guidelines concerning the thesis):

[https://www.dshs-koeln.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Englisch/Full-time\\_studies\\_at\\_GSU/Study\\_documents/BA\\_MA\\_Antrag\\_Thesis\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.dshs-koeln.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Englisch/Full-time_studies_at_GSU/Study_documents/BA_MA_Antrag_Thesis_ENG.pdf)

It needs to be filled in by each student and signed by the supervisor as well as the program director.

It has to be accompanied by the approved research proposal and handed in at the *Prüfungsamt*. If the *Prüfungsamt* officially approves the topic, the student will receive a copy of the *Antrag* including the deadline by mail.

## **3 Structure and Format of Master Thesis**

### **3.1 Structure and Content**

Below you find an example for an appropriate structure of a thesis. *This is to be understood only as guideline and is not a categorical structure for all parts.*

Abstract	
Abbreviations	ii
List of Tables	iii
List of Figures	iv
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Relevance and research problem	...
1.2 Purpose statement	...
1.3 Structure	...
1.4 Literature review	
2 Background / Context	
3 Theoretical framework	
3.1 Definition	
3.2 Theoretical Framework	
3.3 Application of theory for research question	
3.4 Hypotheses	
4 Methodology	
4.1 Research paradigms	
4.2 Methods	
4.3 Operationalisation	
5 Empirical Assesment	
6 Analysis / Discussion	
7 Conclusion	...
Bibliography	81
Appendices	

### 3.2 Abstract

Every Master thesis needs to include an abstract in **English and German (!)**, summarizing the main points of the thesis. The abstract should contain a maximum of 250 words and can either be located before the Table of Contents or at the end of the document.

### 3.3 Guidelines on Format

General guidelines:

- Format: one-sided A4 paper
- Left margin: 3-4cm
- Page numbers: right bottom
- The thesis should be presented using adhesive binding (not saddle stitching)
- Use one of the following fonts: Arial, Calibri, Tahoma, Times New Roman
- Font size: 11 or 12
- 1,5 space margin
- Alignment: justified

Page limit:

- Master Thesis: 40 to 80 pages of main text body (including references, excluding table of contents, abstracts, list of tables, bibliography)

Structure of particular pages:

- Master Thesis
  - o Cover: it includes the **exact title** of the Master thesis as confirmed by the Examination Office (Prüfungsamt) on the admission form (no changes must be made!), declares that it is the Master thesis of (student's name), states the university (German Sport University Cologne) as well as the city (Cologne) and the year of submission **(Important: DSHS Logo must not be placed on the cover!)**
  - o Page 1: same as cover
  - o Page 2 (rear page), title, name, and institute of supervisor
  - o Page 3: table of contents

You can find a template under: [https://www.dshs-koeln.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Studium/Organisation/Pruefungsangelegenheiten/Mu-ster\\_Deckblatt\\_usw.pdf](https://www.dshs-koeln.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Studium/Organisation/Pruefungsangelegenheiten/Mu-ster_Deckblatt_usw.pdf)

## Quoting

- When quoting, present the author, year and specific page citation
- If the quote is longer than four lines, display it as a freestanding block of text with margins at the left and right
- Use always quotation marks to indicate a quotation
- The source is presented directly after the quotation
- Direct quotations must be accurate

### 3.4 Option A: Using traditional footnote style with regards to referencing

- **Quotations:** for quotations use double quotation marks, unless they are longer than three lines. Use single quotation marks or inverted commas within the quote. Quotations that are longer than three lines should be set as display quotes: one centimeter indentation on the left side, justification on the right side. Use square brackets to shorten citations, insert words into quotations, or to replace capital letters. For example:

James Kennedy argued that “[t]he actions of the [...] states [were] not only prompting nationalist responses but also shaping their liberal character.”

- If you cite from a source in a language other than English the following two options apply:
  - provide either only the translation and indicate “translated by the author” or
  - also provide the original quote within the footnote as well as the translation within the main body of the text and indicate “translated by the author”.
- **References:** please do not use any endnotes or in-text references but footnotes.
  - Use size 10 for footnotes.
  - References must finish with full stop (.) or can be divided by semicolon (;).
  - Please ensure that the footnote reference mark in the text immediately follows the quote or paraphrase to which it refers.
  - Please use “passim” if the reference is to be found in many places of the same book.
  - Please use “ibid” if the same reference is used several times in immediate succession.
  - Please use “idem” if several sources by the same author are cited consecutively in the same footnote.
  - If there are more than three authors or places of publication, please use “et al.”
  - If no place of publication is given, use “s.l.” (lat. *sine loco*).



- **Short references:** If a title is referred to more than once, please use short references stating author (full name), title (full main title) and pages after the first full citation: "Jonathan Schneer: Ben Tillert: Portrait of a Labour Leader, p. 128."

- **Internet sources:** Please provide sufficient information for sources that are online! (Full reference, URL/DOI, date of accessing)

Otto Bauer: Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie, Wien 1907, republished by Marxist Internet Archive, at: <http://www.marxists.org/deutsch/archiv/bauer/1907/nationalitaet/index.html> (accessed on 24 June 2013).

The Melbourne Anarchist Club: Aims & Principles (Ratified at the MAC Annual General Meeting, 28 October 2007), at: <http://mac.anarchobase.com/about/> (accessed on 25 June 2013).

- **Monograph:** Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Spread and Origin of Nationalism, 2nd ed., London 1991.
- **Book chapter in monograph:** David Harvey: The Right to the City, in: David Harvey: Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution, London 2012, ch. 1.
- **Book with more than one author or editor:** Stefan Berger/Angel Smith (eds.): Nationalism, Labour and Ethnicity, 1870-1939, Manchester 1999.
- **Book chapter in edited volume:** Jie-Hyun Lim: Labour and the National Question in Poland, in: Stefan Berger/Angel Smith (eds.): Nationalism, labour and ethnicity, 1870-1939, Manchester 1999, pp. 121-144.  
Please mention first and final page of the chapter, as well as the particular page number referred to (... pp. 6-20, p. 8).
- **Journal article:** Frank Bongiorno: "Real Solemn History" and its Discontents: Australian Political History and the Challenge of Social History, in: Australian Journal of Politics & History 56:1 (2010), pp. 6-20.  
Please mention volume and issue number if available (e.g. Australian Journal of Politics & History 56:1). Please also mention first and final page of the article, as well as the particular page number referred to (... pp. 6-20, p. 8.).
- **Articles in weekly or daily newspapers:**  
*If author is not stated:*  
Westfälischer Kämpfer: 10 Jahre Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschland, 1 April 1926.

*If author is stated:*

Gerd Höhler: Die Frau in Rot, in: Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (WAZ), 8 June 2013, pp. x-y, p. z.

*If online:*

Aida Eedemarian: Noam Chomsky: 'No individual changes anything alone', in: The Guardian, 22 March 2013, at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/mar/22/noam-chomsky-no-individual-changes-anything-alone> (accessed on 25 June 2013).

Please mention first and final page of the article, as well as the particular page number referred to (... pp. 6-20, p. 8.).

- **Archival material/manuscripts:** Please try to be clear and consistent, so that others will be able to grasp the origins of your primary sources (imagine you are a reader unfamiliar with the sources). Provide full information on the actual source in English; explain the acronym of the archive and its location when you refer to it for the first time.

### **3.5 Option B: Using APA style with regards to referencing**

The following guidelines refer to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (APA, 2010). This manual serves as guideline with regards to referencing. Some important details are listed below, and more information is to be found in the manual (or the association's website). The author-date system is used within the main body of the text. Here are two examples:

The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (1998, p. 567) defines an event as "something that happens especially when it is unusual or important".

„Although there is clearly a connection between sport and tourism, it is important to recognize that the key drivers of the two fields are quite different. (...) The tourism industry tends to regard sport as one of a range of motivators to travel, but there is no obvious connection in the opposite direction" (Deery & Jago, 2005, p. 379).

Sometimes, the primary source cannot be found. These references should be kept to a minimum. An example for an appropriate quotation is given below.

WTO (2002; cited after Pike, 2008, p. 25) defines a destination as follows...

The following table provides an overview about how to format in-text citations.

Table 1: Overview about the correct format for in-text citations (APA, 2010, p. 177)

Type of citation	First citation in text	Subsequent citations in text	Parenthetical format, first citation in text	Parenthetical format, subsequent citations in text
One work by one author	Walker (2007)	Walker (2007)	(Walker, 2007)	(Walker, 2007)
One work by two authors	Walker and Allen (2004)	Walker and Allen (2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)
One work by three or more authors	Bradley, Remirez, and Soo (1999)	Bradely et al. (1999)	(Bradley, Remirez, & Soo, 1999)	(Bradley, et al., 1999)
Groups (readily identified through abbreviation) as author	National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2003)	NIMH (2003)	(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2003)	(NIMH, 2003)
Groups (no abbreviations) as authors	German Sport University (2009)	German Sport University (2009)	(German Sport University, 2009)	(German Sport University, 2009)

Please be aware that there is a difference between quoting and paraphrasing. However, when referring two more than one author, list all author's names in parentheses in alphabetical order. If two publications by one author are mentioned, the author's name is listed once and the second publication is listed after a comma with the year only – or if the year is identical the letters a and b are used (referring to the alphabetical order of the publication's title).

▪ **Reference list**

- Arrange all entries in alphabetical order by the surname of the first author followed by the initials of the first name after the main text (and before the appendices).
- The references that were used need to be listed
- The reader must be able to trace the sources used
- For books: The title used at the first page in the book is decisive
- The title of a book, the name of the journal, and the online source are always set in italic
- If there is more than one place where the book was published, only indicate the first one
- The reference list uses a hanging indentation

▪ **Books**

○ EXAMPLE FOR ENTIRE BOOK:

- The general format should be the following:
- Author, A. A. (year). *Title of book*. Location: Publisher.
  
- Gratton, C., & Taylor, P. (2000). *Economics of sport and recreation* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Spon Press.
- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: The Guildford Press.
- Kotler, P., Haider, D. H., & Rein, I. (1993). *Marketing places. Attracting investment, industry, and tourism to cities, states, and nations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Lewis, D., & Bridger, D. (2001). *The Soul of the New Consumer*. London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

○ EXAMPLE FOR CHAPTER IN A BOOK:

- The general format should be the following:
- Author, A. A., & Author B. B. (year). Title of chapter. In A. Editor, B. Editor, & C. Editor (Eds.), *Title of book* (pp. xx-xxx). Location: Publisher.
  
- Breuer, C., Wicker, P., & Pawlowski, T. (2010). Der Wirtschafts- und Wachstumsmarkt Sport. In G. Nufer & A. Bühler (Eds.), *Management im Sport* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; pp. 27-52). Berlin: Erich Schmidt.
- Ryan, C., & Trauer, B. (2005). Sport tourist behaviour: the example of the Masters games. In J. Higham (Ed.), *Sport tourism destinations. Issues, opportunities and analysis* (pp. 177-187). Oxford: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Smith, A. (2001). Sporting a new image? Sport-based regeneration strategies as a means of enhancing the image of the city tourist destination. In C. Gratton & I. P. Henry (Eds.), *Sport in the City* (pp. 127-148). London: Routledge.

▪ **Periodicals**

○ EXAMPLES FOR JOURNAL ARTICLES:

- The general format should be the following:
- Author, A. A., Author, B. B. & Author C. C. (year). Title of article. *Title of periodical, volume(issue)*, pp-pp. doi: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
  
- Eber, N. (2003). Sport Practice, Health, and Macroeconomic Performances. An Endogenous Growth Model. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 4(2), 126-144.

- Haug, E., Torsheim, T., Sallis, J. F., & Samdal, O. (2008). The characteristics of the outdoor school environment associated with physical activity. *Health Education Research, Advance Access*, published on October 20, 2008; doi:10.1093/her/cyn050
- Stigler, G. J. & Becker, G. S. (1977). De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum. *The American Economic Review*, 67(2), 76-90.
- Taks, M., Renson, R., & Vanreusel, B. (1994). Of Sport, Time and Money: An Economic Approach to Sport Participation. *International Review for Sociology of Sport*, 29(4), 381-394.
- Wolchik, S. A., West, S. G., Sandler, I. N., Tein, J., Coatsworth, D., Lengua, L., et al. (2000). An experimental evaluation of theory-based mother and mother-child programs for children of divorce. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68, 853-856.
- EXAMPLE FOR NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:
  - The general format should be the following:
  - Author, A. A. (year, and exact date). Title of article. *Title of periodical*, pp.
  - Schwartz, J. (1993, September 30). Obesity affects economic, social status. *The Washington Post*, pp. A1, A4.
- **Electronic resources**
  - Author, A. A. (year). Title of article. Retrieved month day, year from url.
  - Homepage (year). Title of page. Retrieved month day, year from url.
  - Orey, H. (2000). *Mental health infosource*. Retrieved August 3, 2001 from <http://www.mhsource.com/>.
- **Examples for unpublished works**
  - Author, A. A. (year). Title of dissertation/thesis (Unpublished Dissertation/Thesis). Name of institution, Location.
  - Kaplanidou, K. (2006). The Impact Of Sport Tourism Event Image On Destination Image And Intentions To Travel: A Structural Equation Modeling Analysis (Unpublished Dissertation). Michigan State University, East Lansing.

### 3.6 Tables

It is key to limit the content of a table to essential material. Tables with a surplus of information are less effective than lean tables. The reader should be able to understand the table without reading the accompanying text.

- Alignment: centered
- Each table has a short, but precise title
- The title is **above** the table
- Table title: font size pitch 10 or 11 (smaller than main text body), italic, single-spaced, justified, ends with a full stop (.)
- Tables are numbered using Arabic numbers
- Table body: depending on content; usually first column alignment left, the other columns centered; column head can be shaded in grey (15 %)
- If the table is reproduced, the source must be mentioned in parentheses following the title

Example:

*Table 2: Number of children and adolescents per sport club across age groups (Breuer & Wicker, 2006, p. 3).*

Age group	Mean	Median
Children up to 6 years	31	2
Children between 7 and 14 years	94	26
Adolescents between 15 and 18 years	38	15
Children 0 to 14 years	125	29
Children and Adolescents 0 to 18 years	163	47

### 3.7 Figures

All illustrations that are not Tables are considered as Figure. Like tables, figures shall be as clear and precise as possible.

- Alignment: centered
- Figures have a frame
- Each figure has a short, but precise title
- The title is **below** the figure (different from tables!)
- Figure title: font size pitch 10 or 11 (smaller than main text body), italic, single-spaced, justified, ends with a full stop (.)
- Figures are numbered using Arabic numbers, the first receives the smallest number
- If the figure is reproduced, the source must be mentioned in parentheses following the title

Example:

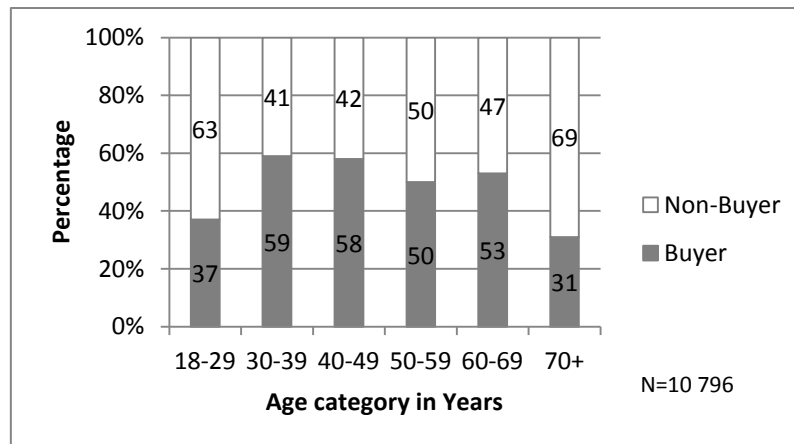


Figure 1: Buyer scope among sporting goods demanders per age category (Breuer & Schlesinger, 2006, p. 184).

## 4 General standards and Grading

The Master thesis must be submitted timely, triplicate, printed and bound to the *Prüfungsamt* or the InfoPoint of the GSU. An electronic form in a pdf-file on a CD or DVD, the documentation of the application of the plagiarism-detection software, and an affirmation in lieu of an oath (Eidesstattliche Erklärung) has to be handed it as well.

### 4.1 Affirmation in lieu of an oath

The candidate is obliged to integrate the following written affirmation in lieu of an oath on a separate sheet of paper at the end of the Master thesis, which has to be signed personally by the respective student.

“Herewith I affirm in lieu of an oath that I have authored this Master thesis independently and did not use any other sources and tools than indicated. All citations, either direct quotations or passages which were reproduced verbatim or nearby-verbatim from publications, are indicated and the respective references are named. The same is true for tables and figures. I did not submit this piece of work in the same or similar way or in extracts in another assignment.”

### 4.2 Plagiarism

It is part of the examination regulations that every Master thesis at the GSU has to be checked by the plagiarism-detection software ‘PlagScan’, which can be accessed via the following page: <https://www.dshs-koeln.de/hochschule/qualitaetsmanagement/plagiatserkennungssoftware/>

The resulting report must be enclosed to the submission of the Master thesis to the *Prüfungsamt* or the InfoPoint of the GSU. The guideline how to use the software provides further information for students and the examiner also in regard of the report's interpretation.

### 4.3 Grading

Collis and Hussey (2009, p.312) have summarized relevant criteria for assessing a thesis.

Table 3: Overview about elements and criteria used to assess a thesis (adopted from Collis & Hussey, 2009, p. 312)

Element	Criteria
Objectives	Clarity
	Relevance
	Achieved
Literature review	Relevant
	Sources
Research design	Appropriate
	Rationale
	Assessment
	Reliable and valid
Data collection and analysis	Primary/secondary
	Relevant to objectives
	Quality of analysis
Discussion	Quality of interpretation and evaluation of results
	Describe relevance of results
Conclusions and implications	Persuasiveness (supported by evidence)
	Any recommendations (feasible/imaginative)
Presentation	Style, use of language
	Clarity
	Use of tables/figures/summaries
	Page limit
Internal consistency	Continuity
	Objectives/conclusions
Integration of academic knowledge	Originality, initiative
	'a learning process'

The following grading system is used (see also Prüfungsordnung Sportwissenschaftliche Masterstudiengänge, §16).



Table 4: Overview about the grading system of GSU

Grade numbers	Grade in words	Description
1	Very good	An excellent accomplishment
2	Good	An accomplishment that is far above the average requirements
3	Satisfactory	An accomplishment meeting the average requirements
4	Fair	An accomplishment that despite some deficiencies is still sufficient
5	Insufficient	An accomplishment that is due to major deficiencies insufficient.

It is possible to amend the grades by adding or deducing 0.3. The grades 0.7; 4.3; 4.7 and 5.3 are impossible.

## 5 Recommended Literature

The following literature has been used to write these guidelines and is recommended:

- APA (2010). *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2009). *Business Research. A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.