Student Handout

The purpose of this document is rather simple: Clarifying how to start working on your thesis and answering questions that students generally ask (or at least should ask) throughout the process of writing their thesis.

1. To simplify communication, we ask you to register to our Mattermost instance. It's basically the same as slack, just for free and running on our own servers.

2. All Information regarding the **bachelor's/master's seminar** can be found here. You should also register for that course.

3. In Particular, you will find the information that you need to hand in a **proposal paper** together with your proposal talk. While this might seem annoying at first sight, it actually is quite useful for you: writing the proposal paper will force you to think about what you want to do in your thesis. It will give you some guarantees that we will not extend your thesis topic to infinity, as we have a paper that agrees on what will be done (and what not!). Lastly, it can help us teach you some things about scientific writing before you start writing your thesis, which will spare a lot of work for both you and your advisor.

4. We have a **template** for your thesis, which you can but do not need to use. You can find it here.

5. If you want to have a repository in our **GitLab** instance (where you found the template), register here and notify us. Of course, you are also free to use other instances of git, but having the code and thesis at ours makes many things, e.g., feedback, a lot easier.

6. Which is not mandatory, but optional and (in some cases highly) recommended, is to agree on a **bi-weekly thesis report** to your advisor. This report should contain both what you did and what you read (and why the latter helped you/did not help you and what you think about it). For your advisor, this has the benefit of having a better overview of your progress (and therefore the option to intervene, if necessary). For you, this has the benefit of having a detailed literature list when it finally comes to writing your thesis. Further, this is some kind of small external pressure system, which some students tell to be very helpful for them. You should use the thesis template for this report.

7. If you have questions regarding the **registration of your thesis**, please address the (correct) examination office. Such things change over time. Thus, if we answer this question, we could give you outdated information, which is the last we want to do.

8. If you need **computing resources**, there are the following options:

   - If you can use your own machine, this is the easiest way for all. Especially for writing, this is your only option - but this should not require too many resources anyway.

   - If you need to run long-time experiments on CPU, we have a student server we can give you access to. It is a Jupyter-server that is accessible through your Browser. You can find it here.

   - If you need to run long-time experiments on GPU, you need access to the faculties' servers managed by Alexander Fauß.

9. Your thesis **advisor's role** is: to advise. Not to decide. Sure, there are some decisions you need to make together/agree on. But generally, it is your thesis! You can ask for advice for specific questions or how to continue when you get stuck, but you should not regularly ask your advisor what to do next. A part of scientific working is to figure exactly that out on your own. Rather present your ideas (and in worst case, your advisor will tell you why they are bad ☺) than regularly ask him what to do.

10. When it comes to **writing your thesis**, there are some aspects you should consider:

   (i) Start early. Especially with the basics/preliminaries/methodology chapters, there is no reason to wait until the working phase of your thesis is done.

   (ii) Gather your advisor's feedback early. Do not wait until you have written multiple chapters. The advice you receive is much easier to consider if you do not need to rewrite whole chapters.

   (iii) If you receive feedback considering the scientific writing, apply it to your whole thesis, not just to the chapter you received it for. We are often advising several students and want to spend our time giving you helpful feedback, not marking the same things over and over again.

   (iv) Present a proper form to your advisor. You want to receive feedback considering the scientific writing and the content you wrote. This is hard to give if your writing contains a lot of typos or other mistakes.

   (v) Do not worry about the alignment and spacings. This is something you do in the very end.

11. In general, you can expect us to **proofread** (and give feedback to) your whole thesis *once*. (Reading it several times is just impossible due to time and reading less is quite unpleasant for you.) Of course, if exceptions like rewriting parts of your thesis occur, we also may read that part again, do not worry. So, there are two things you should keep in mind:

   (i) You generally receive feedback once! So, make sure that the things you give us have a form such that the feedback is valuable for you.

   (ii) Reading takes time! If you give us your whole thesis shortly before the deadline, it is impossible to read it all. So please give us an appropriate time before you need to hand in your thesis.

12. One of the most important things in scientific work is the **reproducibility** of your findings. So make sure to

   - document your code,

   - make it available to your advisors and supervisors, and

   - make it reproducible, e.g., fix random seeds and document them.