

Writing your dissertation with us

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1 General information

So you decided that writing your dissertation is a good choice for you? Wonderful! Get in touch with us and let us work on a research agenda which fits your knowledge, skills and preferences. In general, we advise on dissertations in any of the fields of the chair - urban, regional or international economics. In principle, we only advise dissertations that do some quantitative work, such as descriptive statistics. We have even more fun with ambitious projects which endeavour to do some type of regression. In terms of topics, the range of my own research interests covers:

Applied Microeconomics, International Economics, Digital Trade, International Finance, Urban Economics, Labour Economics, Economic History, Cultural Economics, Sports Economics, Media Economics, Creative Production

2 First meeting

For a successful first meeting we need to know some basics about you:

- What kind of a dissertation would you like to write? Bsc? Msc? Spatial Planning? Economics?

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- Would you like to write in German or English?
- Which courses have you taken that brought you to us in the first place?
- What is your skill level when it comes to data analysis?
- Which topics interest you? What do you envision working on?

3 Tailoring a research agenda for you

Once we have marked the perimeters of your dissertation project we need to become more concrete. At this stage we need to pin down some core information which is going to set the agenda for your work:

1. **What is your research question?** This should be as precise and as interesting as you can make it. As a question that is too broad and your paper is going to be vague and potentially very descriptive.
2. **What is your literature anchor?** I would strongly encourage you to find **two core papers** which will inform and guide you during your own research. These should be written by gurus in the field and either be published in a good journal or be in a working paper stage if the researcher is someone to aspire to. From these core papers you can build a literature foundation for your work to embed your findings in the 'state of the art' of the relevant research.
3. **Which data are you using?** Trace the data source needed to answer your research question. It could be an existing data source or you could go and collate a novel database yourself. Whatever the case may be, by the time you start you want to have access to all your relevant data.
4. **Which theory is your work building on?** You will have to trace out the relevant theories for your empirical work. These could be conceptual if there is no applicable model for your particular research. Nevertheless chances are your research is linked to some economic model in some meaningful way. Find that model and embed it in your paper.
5. **Which estimation strategy will you use?** At the very least your research should aim to present meaningful statistics on your chosen topic. In the best case you

develop a simple (or a very advanced) regression with which you can empirically test your research question.

Based on these guiding questions you will write a research plan for your dissertation and formally register your project with the exams' office and begin working.

4 Where could ideas come from?

A good idea is the core of your dissertation and largely determines the quality of your grade and the fun you will be having writing it.

- Things you have a hunch on and now want to analyse more formally
- Application of an existing model
- New data which is begging to be analysed
- Knowledge of an existing dataset
- An update to an existing study
- Which topics interest you? What do you envision working on?

5 How do we help you?

Usually we are very involved in the early stages of conceptualising your dissertation. However, you are the active part here and we are there to help, guide and answer any possible questions. Do not be shy and use the time and knowledge we have as your resource.

Once you are all set in terms of your research agenda we are available to help by email or in meeting. However, please do approach your designated advisor only to avoid any confusion. Should you run into problems or have a question do not hesitate to get in touch. As a ballpark we usually meet with students once or twice when setting the research agenda and mostly deal with any issues after that by mail.

Of course, the relevant rules and regulations set by the exams' office of the faculty are fully applicable to all dissertations.