



PREAMBLE

According to the Study plan and the **Application Directives**, the Master in Wealth Management includes a Master Thesis. This document provides guidelines about the content of the Master Thesis Project and the content of the Master Thesis.

With regard to prerequisites, deadlines, registration, as well as the evaluation and retake procedure, please consult the **Application Directives**, which are available on the [GSEM website](#).

MASTER THESIS PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In this document, the student will make a proposal for a Master Thesis and suggest a supervisor. The proposal includes a short description of the research question and references to literature sources. The form should, at the bare minimum, contain a basic description of the topic the student would like to work on. The student must follow the online process on the [GSEM Student Intranet](#). Consult the section entitled “*Master Thesis/Internship/Traineeship*,” under “*My studies*.”

GOAL OF THE MASTER THESIS

The Master Thesis is an academic study and should be the crowning achievement of a Master’s degree. The Master Thesis offers students the opportunity to showcase their academic maturity and prove that they are capable of structuring and writing a research paper independently. In their theses, students must also prove that they have understood and assimilated what they have studied throughout the course.

CONTENT OF THE MASTER THESIS

The thesis must satisfy a number of criteria. The students must show that they are capable of:

- Correctly reading and summarizing the literature associated with the subject of the thesis, including determining whether or not an article is relevant.
- Identifying and appropriately describing a research problem that is at once relevant and accessible.
- Defining and describing precise objectives for the research projects.
- Designing an appropriate framework for studying the selected topic.
- Selecting and implementing appropriate research methods.
- Analyzing empirical evidence, drawing appropriate conclusions, and making suitable recommendations.

The requirements of academic quality for the Master Thesis and the internship thesis are the same.

FORMAL ASPECTS

There is no established criterion for the extent of a Master Thesis in terms of page numbers (assuming 11- or 12-point font, normal page margins, and 1.5- to 2-line line spacing). What is critical is the content, not the length. A highly mathematical thesis could be less than 20 pages long, as mathematical formulas often do not occupy that much space.

Every Master Thesis should be of publication quality, meaning that a thesis cannot contain any mistakes of language, form, or intellectual content. Moreover, the best theses may receive an award.

During the publication process, confidentiality issues will be respected, and some cases may be rendered anonymous. The copyright to the work will belong to the author.

Following the Master Thesis guidelines, the thesis should be distributed to the professor responsible for the grading of the thesis and the supervision.

The copyright to the work will belong to the author. The students are to add the following disclaimer on the first page of the Master Thesis: "*The work is the responsibility of the author. In no manner whatsoever does it engage the responsibility of the University, nor of the supervising Professor.*"

EXAMPLE MASTER THESIS

Below is a template which has to be observed with regard to the presentation of the Master Thesis.

ORAL DEFENSE

The oral defense is mandatory and takes place in person. The defense is scheduled as follows:

- A presentation of 20–30 minutes of the Master Thesis, using a set of slides
- A 10–15 minute Q&A by the jury
- Jury composition: Thesis Director and second reader
- Deliberation (the student leaves the room) during which the jury discusses the final grade to be given to the thesis (considering the written thesis and the slides)
- The student is called back into the room after the deliberation and the grade is communicated.

After the defense, the grade is submitted by the jury on the GSEM Student Intranet.

QUESTIONS

All questions may be sent to gsem-masters@unige.ch

The title page should be numbered as page 1, even though the page number should not be marked on this page. The subsequent pages (abstract, table of contents, etc.) are then numbered consecutively.

TITLE OF THE MASTER THESIS

AUTHOR'S NAME, INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION, STUDY PROGRAM AFFILIATION,

DATE

NAME OF THE PROFESSOR WHO SUPERVISED THE THESIS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

1. *Motivation (for example)*
2. *Etc. ...*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The input and help obtained from other persons and organizations should be acknowledged in a preface. The thesis should be honest about its own contributions and limitations. Ideas received from others should be appropriately acknowledged. No confidential information should be published without the source's express consent. When collecting the empirical data, ethical practices should be used. For example, all interviewees should know for which purpose they are being interviewed, and the objectives of the project should be made clear to them. While the recording of semi-structured interviews is recommended, the interviewee should always be asked for permission to record. No direct quotes from individual interviewees should be given, unless the interviewee has given his or her consent, or, alternatively, the identity of the person is concealed. No confidential or unethically obtained information should be used or published.

ABSTRACT

The title page should be followed by an abstract page, which should include, in addition to the information above, English- and French-language abstracts of the thesis. Furthermore, the abstract page should list the thematic keywords of the thesis. The abstract page should not exceed one page, which means that the abstract itself can be up to half a page long.

INTRODUCTION

The first paragraph of every thesis should provide the introduction. Typically, the following structure is used:

- 1.1. Background*
- 1.2. Research Questions*
- 1.3. Objectives*
- 1.4. Methods*
- 1.5. Scope*

The background chapter lays out the domain of the work as well as the broad research problem. What are we dealing with here? Why is it important? What is the general issue? What is known and what remains to be answered?

Specific, tangible research questions should be stated in a separate chapter. What specific questions do we seek to address? Why are they important?

Tangible, measurable objectives should also be listed separately. What are our tangible objectives, and what do we want to achieve? The objectives should be formulated in such a way that it is possible for an external reader to assess whether they have been achieved.

A brief description of the methods, as well as the empirical context and sample, should also be provided.

Optionally, the candidate may also wish to define the scope of the thesis in terms of empirics, issues to be included in the exploration, and issues excluded from the thesis.

The introduction chapter provides the blueprint of the thesis. It lays out the foundation upon which the thesis is built.

The introduction chapter is followed by a literature review: a review of received pertinent academic (and sometimes managerial) literature. The literature review should be well structured and discuss potential sub-themes and potential research streams and underlying theories separately. The literature review should document what is known of the research problem and where the gaps are in received knowledge. Quite often, in master's theses, the candidate creates a summary or a synthesis of the literature, perhaps in the form of a model, structured illustration, or something of the like. The literature review can also produce a set of hypotheses for empirical testing, for example. Whatever the conclusion, it is important for the candidates to add their own intellectual contribution to the literature review and not simply recite received works. The candidates should also demonstrate an ability to critically review received works and provide their own assessment of these. For example, what are the limitations of the received works? What is their domain of applicability? What explicit and implicit assumptions do they build on? What is the significance of the received works for the research problem at hand?

After the literature review, the thesis should proceed to discussing and justifying the choice of the empirical context and the research methods to be applied. For example, why is this context useful for the study of the research questions specified? What is the chosen method, and why is it appropriate? What are its limitations? For multiple case studies, theoretical sampling issues should be discussed. For survey studies, the choice of the empirical population and the sampling strategy should be discussed. For clinical studies, an in-depth description of the case firm, its industry context, and its history should be provided. It is important that the literature review, its synthesis, and the methodological and empirical choices are compatible with one another.

After the method section, the thesis should proceed to discussing the analysis and the findings. The structuring of this section depends on the research method chosen.

The thesis should conclude by discussing the implications of the findings, both for received theory and for managerial practice. What was found, and how does this add to our received understanding of the problem domain? What do these findings mean for theory? And what are the managerial implications? What should managers do? In clinical theses, it is important to provide a clear, tangible action plan and justify the strategies recommended.

The discussion section should conclude by honestly discussing reliability and validity limitations, as well as general limitations of the study. What were the main contributions, and how strong and generalizable are they? An honest discussion of limitations serves to demonstrate the candidate's academic and intellectual maturity.

CONCLUSION

The thesis should conclude by discussing the implications of the findings, both for received theory and for managerial practice. What was found, and how does this add to our received understanding of the problem domain? What do these findings mean for theory? And what are the managerial implications? What should managers do? How does the finding affect the financial institution?

The discussion section should conclude by honestly discussing reliability and validity limitations, as well as general limitations of the study. What were the main contributions, and how strong and generalizable are they? An honest discussion of limitations serves to demonstrate the academic and intellectual maturity of the candidate.

REFERENCES

The thesis should appropriately cite all the articles, books, and internet sources (e.g., texts downloaded from the internet, program codes and syntaxes obtained from the internet) from which information has been drawn. Direct quotations of received sources can be used, but these must be clearly marked as quotations. Chained referencing of sources should be avoided (i.e., if a source article references another article, the candidate should find the original source and use this as reference).

APPENDICES

Appendices should provide the research instruments used (e.g., questionnaires), as well as possible syntax files of statistical software packages. The version number of the software package used should be provided. In empirical theses, also the empirical data, as well as the syntax file, should be included with the thesis so that the analyses can be verified if necessary.