Chair of International Economics

Guidelines for Term Papers

Spring Term 2023

Two Options

Students who consider writing a term paper ("Semesterarbeit") at the Chair of International Economics choose one of the two following options.

A. Empirical macroeconomic country brief
Imagine you are an economist at the IMF, tasked with assessing the "macroeconomic health" of some economy. To do so, you write a so-called "country brief" about a country of your choice. As a good example, consider the IMF's 2019 Albania brief. Clearly, the idea is not that you write an 80-page report. Instead, you provide a short overview of the key macroeconomic variables, identify particularly important "macro health problems," and focus on one of them in more detail (in the case of Albania, this could be the persistent current account deficit).

The core of any country brief is the visualization of macroeconomic data that supports your assessment. Figures have to be produced in R, and the R code is an integral part of your term paper. With the help of the figures, your theoretical training in macroeconomics, and the relevant literature, you identify possible macro problems and risks and explore possible policy changes or reforms that could address the identified issues. Finally, you focus on one particular issue, carry out a more detailed analysis, and then derive a concrete policy recommendation for the country's government (or a relevant international organization).

B. Short research paper
It is also possible to write a short research paper on a relevant scientific question of the student's own choice. A short research paper can be considered a "small" Bachelor's thesis. Students with an interest in that option should consult the guidelines on research proposals for Bachelor's/Master's theses. As under option A, any empirical figures have to be produced in R, and the R code is an integral part of your term paper.

Procedure

The procedure for writing a term paper at the Chair of International Economics is as follows.

1. Submission of proposal
Please send a detailed proposal to paula.sanchez@unilu.ch no later than Sunday, March 19, 2023.[1] Proposals that arrive after this due date will not be considered. Proposals have to be in accordance with one of the two options outlined above and should be no longer than four pages

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[1] This deadline applies to WF students.

(including references). As a rule, the proposal and paper are written in English—except a topic under option B calls for German (e.g., because it relates to a specifically Swiss issue).

2. Review, notification, and kick-off

Proposals will be reviewed based on their quality. Students who submit proposals that are satisfactory will be assigned a supervisor, invited for a kick-off meeting, and permitted to submit a term paper eventually. In the kick-off meeting, students receive feedback on their proposals. Submitters of unsatisfactory proposals will not be permitted to submit a term paper to the Chair of International Economics in 2023. Decisions will be communicated swiftly.

3. Two submission deadlines

In the kick-off meeting, the student and supervisor agree on two deadlines, one for handing in a draft version of the paper and one for handing in the final version of the paper. The draft version gives the supervisor an opportunity to provide feedback and guidance for consideration by the student before the submission of the final version. With the final version, students must also submit the code that produces the figures/tables/statistics in the paper (see below). Please check the grammar before submitting (possibly using free resources like Grammarly or Writeful). As a rule, submitted text documents will be run through a plagiarism checker.

Code Submission

The code file must be saved as *lastname_firstname*.R, and the data must be in the format that matches the data import command in the code (as shown in the example below). Before submitting, students are asked to check whether the code runs without an error message (also on a different computer). The code needs to be commented on (using #) and structured in a way that makes it intelligible to other R users. Here is an example of how the start of the code file could look like:

```r
setwd("") #leave this one empty in your final submission code
getwd()

data <- read.csv("data.csv", sep =";") #if the data file is in CSV format
```

Please submit a Zip folder including the code file and the data file(s) needed to run the code. The Zip folder should be named *lastname_firstname.*zip.

Further Guidelines

Structure

The term paper structure is fairly standard. It includes a title page (indicating the paper's title, the student's personal details, the supervisor's name, and the submission date), a table of contents, a list of figures (and, possibly, tables), a list of abbreviations, an introductory section, a main section (or multiple main sections), a conclusion section, a bibliography, and possibly an appendix. You must also add a signed "Declaration of Independent Work."

Length

The core of the term paper (introductory section, main section(s), conclusion section) should not exceed 25 pages (with a font size of 12 and a line spacing of 1.5). But note quality over quantity!

Figures and tables

As a general rule, figures should be embedded in the text, but figures that are not central to the argumentation can be relegated to an appendix. Figure captions are placed above, and figure notes (including data sources and possible explanations) are below. Number the figures consecutively throughout the paper. The same applies to tables. Regarding tables, please do not simply copy-paste the unformatted output of your statistics software but format tables along the lines of what you typically see in economics journals.

Quotation and referencing

The correct citation of existing sources you use in your term paper is of the highest importance. Keep in mind that plagiarism can have serious consequences, including the term paper being rejected. For instance, when you use an argument or thought developed by another author, provide the corresponding reference—even if you repeat the argument in your own words (paraphrasing). Verbatim citations must be identical to the original and identified with quotation marks. You might want to use the Harvard referencing style and organize your literature with the help of a reference program (like Mendeley or Zotero).

Faculty guidelines

It might also be helpful to have a look at the corresponding faculty guidelines (in German only).

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