



Guidelines for Academic Essays

1. About This Guide

This guide provides an overview of the most important issues to be considered when writing an academic essay. Further guidance and information on how to write legal papers can be found in:

- FOSTMOSER PETER/OGOREK REGINA/SCHINDLER BENJAMIN, *Juristisches Arbeiten, Eine Anleitung für Studierende*, 7. Aufl., Zürich/Basel/Genf 2023
- RYSER BÜSCHI NADINE/SCHLEGEL STEPHAN/PFLAUM SONJA/GLATTHARD MELCHIOR, *Juristische Arbeiten erfolgreich schreiben und präsentieren, Wegweiser zu einer optimalen Arbeitstechnik*, 3. Aufl., Zürich/Genf 2024
- BETSCHART FRANZISKA MARTHA/HAAS RAPHAEL/THURNHERR DANIELA, *Leitfaden zum Verfassen einer juristischen Arbeit*, 5. Aufl., Zürich/St. Gallen 2022

2. Aim of the Academic Essay

The aim of an academic essay is to present a comprehensive analysis of the current state of knowledge (from both legal scholars and case law), and on the basis of that analysis to express your own, more in-depth views:

- Place the topic into a larger context and isolate the issue you intend to analyze in your essay.
- Define the research question and break your analysis down logically into individual sections and subsections.
- Include existing works into the structure; present, contrast and analyze diverging opinions.
- Take a position on the topic based on your analysis of existing opinions and substantiate your views.

Always use the current, valid version of official publications and statutes (national, European and international), and include up-to-date literature and relevant case law. Since the latest scholarly debate is not usually found in textbooks or commentaries, your focus should be on articles in journals.

3. Grading of the Academic Essay

The essay is graded on the basis of content and formal requirements.

Content is evaluated on the basis of structure, breadth and depth of discussion, novelty (scholarly innovation, creativity and new perspectives), research, evaluation and analysis of existing information (legal scholarship and case law), independent reflection and level of complexity.

Formal requirements include consistency in language and layout (including correct citation and references), as well as correct grammar, punctuation and spelling.

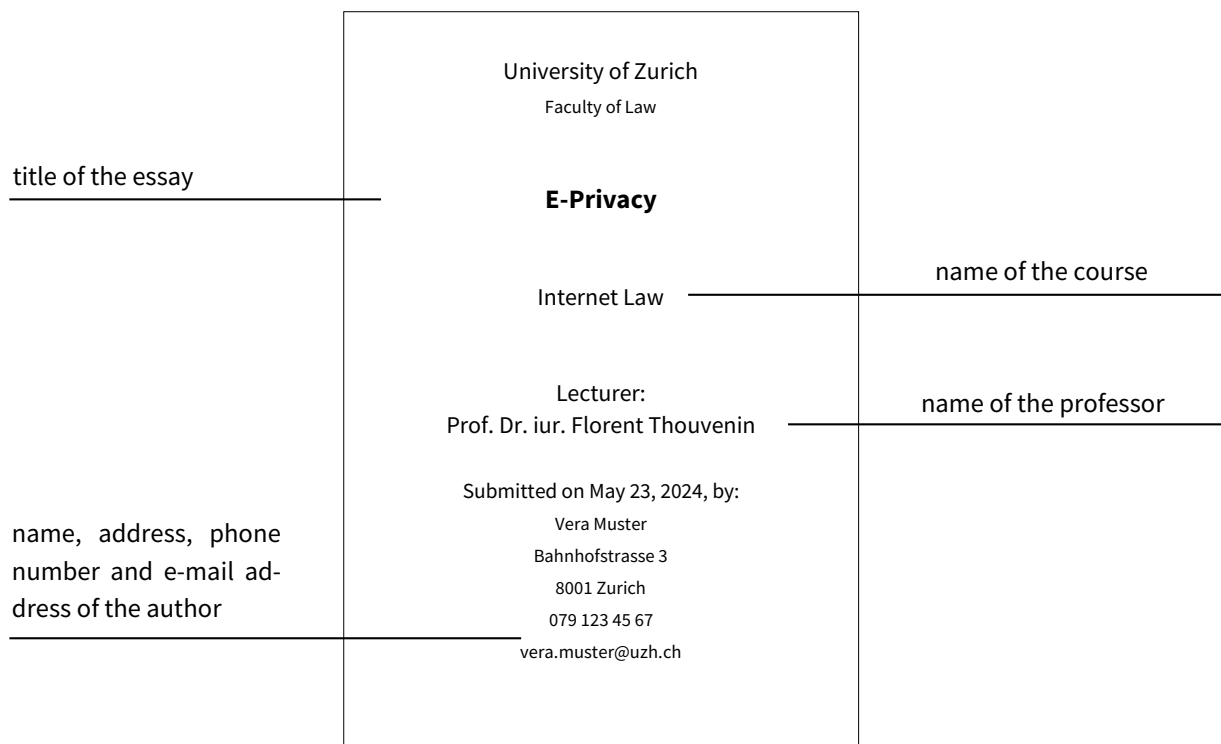
4. Structure

The structure of the essay should be as follows:

- Title page (without page number)
- Tables and lists (Roman numerals: I, II, III etc.)
 - Table of contents
 - List of abbreviations
 - Bibliography
 - If needed: directory of legislative materials and other official publications, list of sources, list of technical aids
- Body (Arabic numerals: 1, 2, 3 etc.)
- If needed: annexes, attachment documenting technical tools (uninterrupted pagination using Arabic numerals)
- Declaration of originality (no page number, not shown in table of contents)

4.1 Title Page

The title page contains the title of the essay, the name of the course, the name of the professor, and the name, address, phone number and e-mail address of the author. The title page is not included in the pagination.



4.2 Table of Contents

The table of contents lists all headings contained in the essay with their respective page numbers. It provides the reader with an overview of the structure of the essay and its topical focus.

With regard to the body, it is recommended to use either the common list style (A./I./1./a)/aa)) or the decimal system (1/1.1/1.2/1.2.1/1.2.2); avoid mixing these two styles. Subdivisions only make sense when there are at least two subitems.

4.3 List of Abbreviations

The **list of abbreviations** explains only those abbreviations used in the essay. The list shall include all abbreviations used in the essay. Common abbreviations can be omitted from this list.

4.4 Bibliography

The bibliography serves documentation purposes, and simplifies citations and references in footnotes. It should contain all works cited or referenced in the essay, and no others. Use the most recent editions, and list all references in alphabetical order by the last name of the authors. The bibliography should only include secondary literature (no acts, statutes, judgements etc.). Individual entries should follow the standard sequence, with commas at appropriate points and no full stop at the end.

For independent works (e.g. systematic presentations), the following information should be included in the bibliography:

- name of the author (without academic titles) in SMALL CAPITALS
- first name of the author in SMALL CAPITALS
- title of the book, subtitle (preceded by a comma)
- edition (if not the first edition); adjectives such as ‘expanded’, ‘updated’ etc. should be omitted.
- Dissertations are listed with ‘Diss.’ and the name of the university (e.g. ‘Diss. University of Zurich’) if the dissertation was only published as a compulsory copy. However, if the dissertation was published as part of a series, that edition should be used; the work should be included in the bibliography like any other monograph, i.e. the information ‘Diss.’ and the name of the university should be omitted. The same applies to habilitations, which are abbreviated as ‘Habil.’.
- place and year of publication

Examples:

- AURELIA TAMÒ-LARRIEUX, *Designing for Privacy and its Legal Framework*, Cham 2018
- POSNER RICHARD A., *Economic Analysis of Law*, 9th edition, New York 2014
- WEITZENBOECK EMILY M., *A Legal Framework for Emerging Business Models, Dynamic Networks as Collaborative Contracts*, Cheltenham/Northampton MA 2012

For dependent works (parts of other publications, such as journal articles or essays in anthologies), the following information must be included in the bibliography:

- name of the author (without academic titles) in SMALL CAPITALS
- first name of the author in SMALL CAPITALS
- title of the article
- reference
- compilations: editor (last and first name followed by the designation ‘ed.’ [or ‘eds.’], no small caps) and title of the compilation (exception: for Festschriften, only the abbreviation ‘FS’ and the name of the honouree are indicated, e.g. ‘FS Hilty’), edition (if not the first edition); omit additions such as ‘revised’ or ‘expanded’; include place of publication and year of publication.

— journals: abbreviation of the journal and year (without volume number, except where not clearly identifiable if volume number is not included)

— page numbers of the article (first and last page)

Examples:

— DERCLAYE ESTELLE, The Status of Three-Dimensional Functional Works Post-*Cofemel*: An Empirical Analysis of the Member States' Case Law, in: Thouvenin Florent/Peukert Alexander/Jaeger Thomas/Geiger Christophe (eds.), FS Hilty, Berlin 2024, 121–138

— HENSELER SIMON/TAMÒ-LARRIEUX AURELIA, Reaching beyond its territory – An analysis of the extraterritorial scope of European data protection law, in: Kosta Eleni/Leenes Roland/Kamara Irene (eds.), Research Handbook on EU Data Protection Law, Cheltenham/Northampton MA 2022, 290–313

— KUENZLER ADRIAN, Regulatory Diffusion Beyond Digital Empires – Searching for a Resilient Competition Law Framework, GRUR Int. 2025, 101–102

If a work was written by multiple authors or edited by other authors, all of their names are listed and separated by a forward slash (/). The same applies to editors:

Examples:

— FOSCH-VILLARONGA EDUARD/VAN DER HOF SIMONE/LUTZ CHRISTOPH/TAMÒ-LARRIEUX AURELIA, Toy Story or children story? Putting children and their rights at the forefront of the artificial intelligence revolution, AI & Society 2023, 133–152

— THOUVENIN FLORENT/PEUKERT ALEXANDER/JAEGER THOMAS/GEIGER CHRISTOPHE (eds.), Kreation Innovation Märkte – Creation Innovation Markets, Festschrift Reto M. Hilty, Berlin 2024

— VOIGT PAUL/VON DEM BUSSCHE AXEL, The EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), A Practical Guide, 2nd edition, Cham 2024

If the bibliography contains multiple works by the same author, an explanation of the citation method used must be provided in brackets at the end for clarity, and the work must be cited in the footnotes with this addition. Works by the same authors must be arranged chronologically within the bibliography.

Examples:

— ALEXANDER KERN, Economic Sanctions, Law and Public Policy, London 2009 (referenced as: ALEXANDER, Sanctions)

— ALEXANDER KERN, European Banking Union, A Legal and Institutional Analysis of the Single Supervisory Mechanism and the Single Resolution Mechanism, European Law Review 2015, 154–187 (referenced as: ALEXANDER, European Banking Union)

4.5 Directory of Legislative Materials and Other Official Publications, List of Sources and List of Technical Aids

Only literature is to be included in the **bibliography**—not laws and legal codes, court rulings, collections of decisions, or titles of journals and collected works. If more than five **legislative materials or other official publications** are used, they must be indicated in a separate list. If a significant number of obscure legal sources or materials are used (e.g. less common foreign laws, legislative materials, statistics) it is advisable to insert a **list of sources** after the bibliography and before the list of abbreviations.

A **list of technical tools** (e.g. ChatGPT, Gemini or Copilot) must be included if more than three such tools have been employed. The use of technical tools must be disclosed when they have been used even partially to autonomously generate text, data, code or visual content. Disclosure is not required for tools used to correct

spelling or grammar, or for the reformulation of individual sentences. However, the use of tools for translating or rewriting an entire paper or substantial parts thereof, or for the generation of footnotes, must be clearly indicated. If fewer than three technical tools have been used, their application should be referenced in a footnote placed at the relevant point in the text where the tool was utilised.

4.6 Body

The body is the core of the essay, though it is not designated as such. It consists of:

- an introduction
- a main body
- a conclusion

The **introduction** introduces the topic and describes the aim of the essay. The topic is differentiated from other related topics, and the method and structure of the essay are stated. The introduction (and indeed the rest of the paper) should not contain comments on the personal efforts made by the author in dealing with the topic or in finding the relevant legal sources. The **main body**, which is not designated as such, covers all the points listed in the table of contents.

Headings should:

- be as short and informative as possible
- not be complete sentences
- be independent from the text (i.e. statements made in the headings are to be repeated in the following text body)
- never end with a full stop

The essay should end with a **conclusion**, including a summary of key elements of the essay and the author's conclusions.

4.7 Appendix

The appendix includes sources that are not publicly accessible but were used in the thesis (e.g. interview transcripts or internal documents of companies, government agencies or other institutions).

The appendix must also document the use of technical tools, as outlined in section 4.5. The relevant passages from the main text must be copied into the appendix, accompanied by a description of how the technical tools were used.

Examples:

- The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) is the official body responsible for intellectual property in Switzerland. Based in Bern, it handles the registration of trademarks, patents, and designs, ensuring compliance with legal standards. The IPI also provides public information on IP laws, contributes to national policy development, and represents Switzerland in international IP matters. Additionally, it promotes understanding of intellectual property within business and society. → Generated by ChatGPT. Prompt: 'Please explain to me in four sentences what the IPI is and what it does.'
- Das Eidgenössische Institut für Geistiges Eigentum (IGE) ist die für das geistige Eigentum in der Schweiz zuständige Behörde. Es hat seinen Sitz in Bern und kümmert sich um die Eintragung von Marken, Patenten und Designs und stellt die Einhaltung der gesetzlichen Normen sicher. Das IGE informiert auch die Öffentlichkeit über die Gesetze zum geistigen Eigentum, trägt zur Entwicklung der nationalen Politik bei und vertritt die Schweiz in internationalen Angelegenheiten des geistigen Eigentums. Zudem fördert es das Verständnis für

das geistige Eigentum in Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. → Translated from English using DeepL.com (free version).

The appendix does **not** count towards the total character count.

5. Citations and References

Every academic essay should analyze the current state of knowledge. On the basis of this knowledge, authors develop and present their own thoughts and ideas. Therefore, it is crucial to indicate sources of information. This not only applies to exact quotes, but also to ideas or thoughts of other authors included in the essay, even paraphrased. When a part of another work is included in one's own essay, it must be placed in inverted commas with the source indicated. Failure to comply with these obligations constitutes plagiarism.

Please note the following:

- All statements in the essay made by others must be referenced.
- Quotes should be avoided, whenever possible. As a matter of principle, all statements should be formulated independently and adapted to one's own style of writing.
- Quotes must only be used when the exact wording of a statement is of relevance, e.g. when a definition is discussed. In such a case, the quotation should be reproduced verbatim and placed in inverted commas.
- References must never be cited without prior verification. A referenced work by another author may relate to other circumstances or may have been misunderstood by the author.
- References should be placed in footnotes on the same page as the text passage to which they belong.

The **citation style** must be consistent throughout the essay. Although there are no binding rules, we recommend the following citation style:

A **footnote** should contain only the author (in SMALL CAPITALS), the exact reference and the citation style stated in the bibliography, if applicable.

References should be as precise as possible (using the smallest available unit): systematic works are cited by page number(s) (without p. or pp.). If marginal notes (e.g. 'n. 412') or paragraph numbers (e.g. 'para. 4.12') are used, only these must be provided instead of the page number(s). If a referenced work is structured into chapters and paragraphs, provide both specifications (e.g. 'ch. 4 para. 12'). Commentaries are always referenced with the relevant article and paragraph, not the page number.

Examples:

- DERCLAYE, 124.
- JOHNSON, PARA. 312.
- NOBEL/WEBER, § 2 PARAS. 132 ET SEQQ.

The abbreviation 'et seq.' and 'et seqq.' are used to indicate that reference is made to either one or more consecutive pages, paragraphs etc.

Examples:

- DERCLAYE, 124
- JOHNSON, paras. 312 et seqq. (= paragraphs 312 and the following paragraphs)

Each footnote starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop.

Author and page number are separated by a comma.

Multiple references are separated by a semicolon.

Example:

— HUGUENIN, para. 455; BK-Kramer, OR 21 para. 26.

Commentaries should be referenced by the abbreviation of the act or statute, the article and the paragraph (no commas).

Example:

— DOERR BIANKA S., CC 28 para. 10.

References to **commonly used private law commentaries** (Basel = BSK, Zurich = ZK, Bern = BK) should also include the respective abbreviation of the commentary as well as the last name of the author of the relevant section separated by a hyphen (BK-/ZK-/BSK-AUTHOR).

Examples:

— BSK-HONSELL, CC 2 para. 10.

— BK-REHBINDER, CO 319 para. 2.

Decisions of the Federal Court should be referenced according to the official index, if possible.

Decisions included in the official index:

— BGE 148 III 305, consideration 5.3.

— BGE 148 III 305 (if the decision as a whole is referenced)

Decisions not included in the official index: Decision of the Federal Court of March 13, 2023, 4A_492/2022, consideration 2.3.

Decisions published in journals: Decision of the Federal Court, sic! 2011, 213.

Official documents are referenced with their abbreviation, the page numbers of the relevant chapter and the exact page number of the reference (without p. or pp). If materials have been included separately in a list of materials with full details and a suggested citation, the latter should be used.

Examples:

— Dispatch on Financial Services Act, Federal Gazette 2008, 455 et seqq., 483.

— Official Bulletin 1998, 268.

Websites are referenced by their full web address (URL) and the date of last visit in brackets. Alternatively, the main page may also be cited, including the site's directory or index.

Example:

— <https://www.ius.uzh.ch/en/staff/professorships/alphabetical/thouvenin/Seminars-Ist-thouvenin.html> [visited on 10.02.2025].

6. Formatting

— Font: Times New Roman

— Font size: 12

— Spacing: 1.5 lines

- Margins:
 - Left: 2.5 cm
 - Right: 4 cm
 - Top: 2.5 cm
 - Bottom: 2 cm
- Alignment: justification with hyphenation
- Format: A4

7. Submission / Declaration of Originality

As a means of ensuring the academic propriety of the author's work, the essay must be submitted electronically (Word and PDF).

The following declaration of originality must appear at the end of the essay, and can be signed electronically.

Title, first and last name of author

I hereby declare that I completed this paper on my own using only the sources listed in the indexes or comments.

Subject to other restrictive requirements by the supervisor of this work, the following applies to the use of technical tools that at least partially autonomously generate text, data, code or image material. Any essentially unchanged adoption of such content must be properly acknowledged. This labelling requirement can be fulfilled by clearly marking all relevant parts in this thesis and by identifying all tools used in the relevant appendices.

I confirm that this paper has not been used for any other assessment, and that I will not use it for any other assessment in the future.

The paper may be reviewed at any time, by means of software, for plagiarism and for parts of the work that can be traced back to the use of the technical tools mentioned. The storage of the work is also permitted, in particular for the purpose of reviewing it later or comparing it with the work of third parties.

[Place] [Date] [Signature]