



## Guidelines for Academic Essays

### 1. About this Guide

This guide shall provide an overview over the most important issues which have to be considered when writing an academic essay. Further valuable tips 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 provide the reader with an informed argument. The starting point is to present a comprehensive analysis of the current state of knowledge (both doctrine and jurisprudence). As far as possible, state and explain your own views on the topic:

- Put the topic into a larger context and isolate the issue you intend to analyze.
- Define the problem and choose a coherent structure which reflects individual aspects.
- Include existing works into the structure. Present diverging opinions and analyze them.
- Take a stand on the topic based on the analysis and substantiate your opinion.

Always use acts and statutes in their effective version and include up-to-date literature and relevant jurisprudence.

### 3. Grading of the Academic Essay

The essay is graded based on its content and formal requirements.

The **content** is evaluated based on the structure, the breadth and depth of discussion, novelty (scientific innovation, creativity, and new perspectives), implementation and analysis of existing information (doctrine and jurisprudence), independent reflection and level of complexity.

**Formal requirements** include consistency in language and layout (including correct citation and references) as well as flawless grammar and orthography.

### 4. Structure

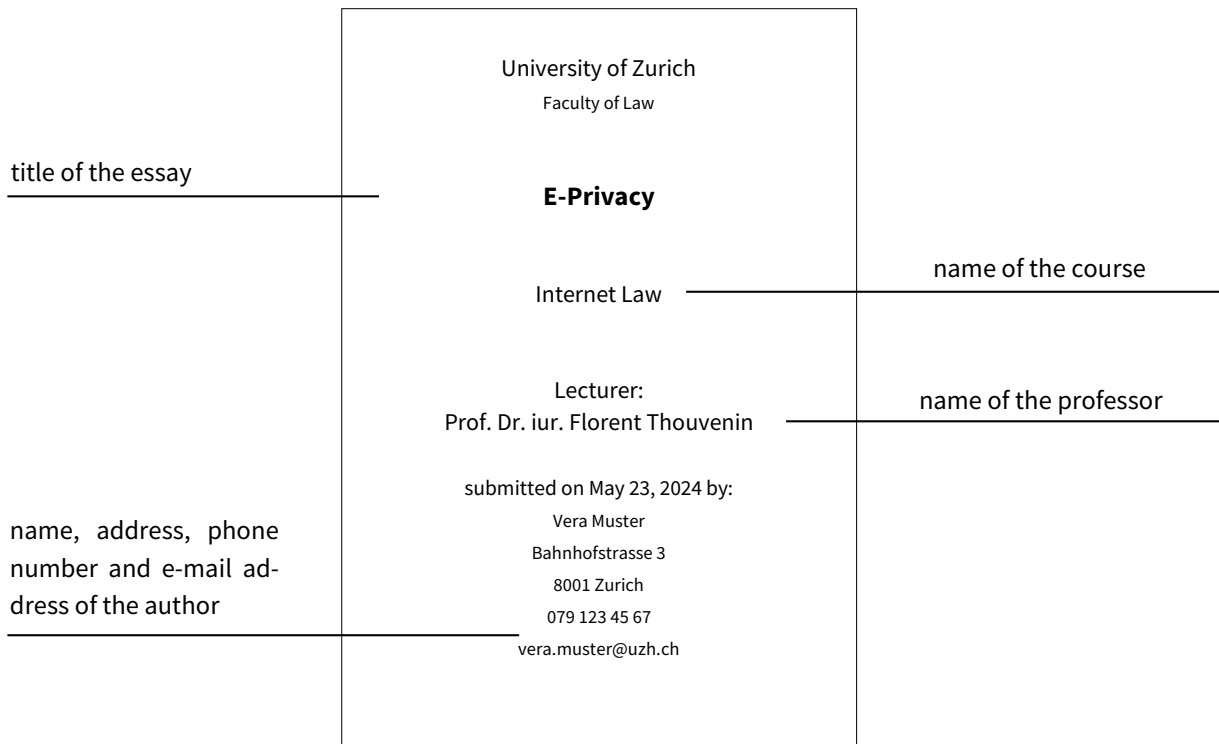
The essay should comply with the following structure:

- Title page (without page number)

- Tables and lists (Roman page numbers: I, II, III, etc.)
  - Table of contents
  - Bibliography
  - List of abbreviations and list of sources
- Body (Arabic page numbers: 1, 2, 3 etc.)
- Annexes if needed (continued Arabic page numbering of body)
- Declaration of originality

#### 4.1 Title Page

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



#### 4.2 Table of Contents

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

### 4.3 Structure

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 a mix of these styles. Subdivisions only make sense when there are at least two sub items.

### 4.4 Bibliography

The bibliography serves documentation purposes and simplifies citations and references in footnotes. It contains all works cited or referenced in the essay. Use the most recent editions and list all references in alphabetical order by the last name of the authors.

The bibliography shall only include secondary literature (no acts, statutes, judgements etc.).

Book by a single author

The following information must be provided 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 (divided by a comma)
- edition (if not the first edition)
- place and year of publication

*Examples:*

- WEITZENBOECK EMILY M., A Legal Framework for Emerging Business Models, Dynamic Networks as Collaborative Contracts, Cheltenham/Northampton MA 2012
- HUGUENIN CLAIRE, Obligationenrecht, 2nd edition, Zurich/Basel/Geneva 2014

#### Chapters in edited books or works in anthologies or edited collections (e.g. journal articles)

The following information must be provided 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 name followed by the designation „ed.“ (or „eds.“), no small caps) and title of the compilation
  - journals: name of the journal and year (without volume number, except if not determinable without)
- page numbers of the article (first and last page)

*Examples:*

- SCHWARTZ PAUL M./SOLOVE DANIEL J., Reforming the concept of personally identified information, U.S. privacy law and PII 2.0, in: Weber/Thouvenin (eds.), Neuer Regulierungsschub im Datenschutzrecht, Zurich/Basel/Geneva 2012, 55–68

#### Multiple authors

The names of multiple authors are separated by a forward slash (/).

*Examples:*

- MARBACH EUGEN/DUCREY PATRIK/WILD GREGOR, Immaterialgüter- und Wettbewerbsrecht, 4th edition Berne 2017
- NOBEL PETER/WEBER ROLF H., Medienrecht, 4th edition, Berne 2024

#### **Multiple works by the same author**

If multiple works by the same author are used, the works shall be designated by an additional term for the avoidance of doubt. The footnotes shall also include this additional term. Works by the same author shall be put in chronological order.

*Example:*

- 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 List of Abbreviations**

The list of abbreviations shall explain abbreviations used in the essay to the reader. The list shall include all abbreviations used in the essay. Common abbreviations can be omitted from this list. In case of doubt, abbreviations should be included.

#### **4.6 Body**

The body consists of:

- the introduction;
- the main part; and
- the conclusion.

The **introduction** introduces the reader to 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 is laid down.

The **main part** deals with the points presented in the table of contents.

Please note the following with regard to **headings**:

- Headings shall be as short as possible.
- Headings shall be descriptive.
- Headings shall not form entire sentences.
- Headings are not part of the text (this means that statements made in the headings are to be repeated in the following text body).
- Headings never end with a period.

The essay shall end with a summarizing **conclusion**. Such conclusion shall allow readers to quickly gain an overview over the key elements of the essay and the conclusions of the author.

## 5. Citation and References

Every academic essay shall analyze the current state of knowledge. Based on this knowledge, the author shall develop and present his/her own thoughts and ideas. Therefore, it is crucial to indicate the sources of information. This not only applies to exact quotes: reference shall also be made when ideas or thoughts of other authors are included in one's own essay even when such parts are paraphrased. The main principle is that all ideas and words of others should be properly and formally acknowledged.

When a part of another work is included in one's own essay, such part shall be put in quotation marks and the source shall be indicated. Otherwise, such action is deemed plagiarism.

Please note the following:

- All statements in the essay made by others shall be referenced.
- Quotes shall be avoided, if possible. As a matter of principle, all statements shall be expressed independently and shall be adapted to one's own style of writing.
- Quotes shall only be used when the exact wording of a statement is of relevance, e.g. when a definition is discussed. In such a case, such statement can be copied word-for-word and shall be put in quotation marks.
- References shall never be copied without prior verification. A referenced work might relate to other circumstances or might have been understood incorrectly by the author.
- Reference shall be put in footnotes on the same page as the corresponding text passage.

The citation style shall be consistent throughout the essay. Besides this basic rule, there are no binding rules but certain common citation styles.

We recommend using the following style:

The footnote shall include the author (in small capitals), the exact reference and the additional term set forth in the bibliography, if applicable.

Generally, references shall be made as precisely as possible: provide the relevant page number(s) (without the prefix p. or pp.). If the paragraphs of the referenced work are numbered, such number shall be provided instead of page numbers. If a referenced work is structured into chapters and paragraphs, provide both specifications (e.g. "§ 3 para. 93" or "chapter 7 para. 41"). Commentaries are always referenced with the relevant article and paragraph (and not the page number).

*Examples:*

- SMITH, 45.
- JOHNSON, para. 312.
- NOBEL/WEBER, § 2 paras. 132 ff.

The abbreviations "f." and "ff." are used to indicate that reference is made to multiple consecutive pages, paragraphs etc.

*Examples:*

- SMITH, 40 f. (= pages 40–41)
- JOHNSON, paras. 312 ff. (= paragraphs 312–316)

Each footnote starts with a capital letter and ends with a period.

Author and page number are separated by a comma.

Several references are separated by a semicolon.

*Example:*

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

**Journal articles** shall be referenced with the name of the journal and the year.

*Example:*

— MAHLMANN, AJP 2013, 1309.

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

*Example:*

— DOERR BIANKA S., CC 28 para. 10.

References to common commentaries (Basel = BSK; Zurich = ZK, Bern = BK) shall further include the 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 shall be referenced according to the official index, if possible.

Decisions included in the official index:

— BGE 132 I 181, consideration 3.2.

— BGE 132 I 181. (if the decision as a whole is referenced)

Decisions not included in the official index:

— Decision of the Federal Court of January 23, 2007, 1A.211/2006, 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 the prefix “p.” or “pp.”).

*Examples:*

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

— Official Bulletin 1998, 268.

Websites are referenced with their full web address (URL) and the date of last visit.

*Example:*

— [www.ius.uzh.ch/en/staff/professorships/alphabetical/thouvenin/mastertheses-1st-thouvenin.html](http://www.ius.uzh.ch/en/staff/professorships/alphabetical/thouvenin/mastertheses-1st-thouvenin.html) [visited on: 10.02.2025].

## **6. Formatting**

— Font: Times New Roman

— Font size: 12

- Spacing: 1.5 lines
- Margins
  - Left: 2.5cm
  - Right: 4cm
  - Top: 2.5cm
  - Bottom: 2cm
- Alignment: Justification with hyphenation
- Format: A4

## 7. Submission / Declaration of Originality

The essay must be submitted electronically (Word + PDF format).

The following declaration of originality has to be added at the end of the essay, it can be signed electronically.

«Title», «First and last name of the author»

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

Subject to other restrictive requirements by the responsible supervisor of this work, the following applies to the use of technical instruments that at least partially autonomously generate text, data, code or image material: The essentially unchanged adoption of such content must be marked. The labeling requirement is to be fulfilled on the one hand by clearly marking all affected parts of the work graphically and on the other hand by listing all the instruments specifically used in the directories.

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

The paper may be reviewed for plagiarism and for parts of the work that can be traced back to the use of the technical instruments mentioned at any time using the corresponding software. The storage of the work is also permitted, in particular for the purpose of checking it at a later point in time or for the purpose of comparing it with the work of third parties.”

[Place], [Date] [Signatur]