1 Application procedure

1.1 In a nutshell

1. Study the research topics in the appendix of these guidelines, read some literature, and think about a possible thesis topic.

2. Write a short thesis proposal.

3. Send your complete application to Christine Le Grand, christine.legrand@econ.uzh.ch.

4. You will receive an answer by e-mail stating whether your proposal is accepted or rejected, possibly with suggestions for more suitable thesis topics.

1.2 Required documents for application

Candidates are requested to send their application in English. The application needs to contain the following documents in a single PDF file:

1. Curriculum Vitae

2. Up to date academic record

3. Major field of study

4. List of previously completed pieces of written works (seminar papers, bachelor’s thesis etc.)

5. A thesis proposal where you discuss your topic, the related literature, and your proposed research approach (data, methodology); in a maximum of three pages

6. Earliest date of start

Your application will be answered by email and you’ll receive further instructions. These may include a revision of your proposal or a rejection. The assessment of the proposal notably takes into account whether the proposal fits with the research topics covered by the chair, and whether the proposed project appears feasible and of high quality.
1.3 Requirements

1. All theses must be written in English.

2. We only accept students from the bachelor’s and master’s programs in Economics that have already passed or are currently attending at least one of the following lectures (titles may differ slightly from past semesters):

   - Bachelor’s program:
     1. Intermediate Econometrics
     2. Labor Economics (Arbeitsmarktoekonomik)
     3. The Economics of Gender
     4. Development Economics

   - Master’s program:
     1. Labor Economics
     2. Economics of Health and Well-Being
     3. Program Evaluation and Causal Inference

1.4 Formal structure of the thesis

Your thesis should be structured as follows:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- Main text of the thesis, divided into several sections (starting with Introduction, ending with Conclusion)
- References (list of cited sources)
- Appendix (if applicable)

Bachelor’s theses should not exceed 40 pages and master’s theses are at a maximum of 50 pages. We require you to make use of the text processing system \LaTeX (or the free \LaTeX-based text editor LyX) which will give you easy assistance in formatting the thesis. Concerning citations, references and footnotes, you are expected to follow roughly the standard of the American Economic Review (see Anne Brenøe’s webpage for example articles).

1.5 General requirements of the faculty

Besides the requirements listed above, there are several general requirements of the Faculty of Economics which have to be considered. These can be found here: http://www.oec.uzh.ch/studies/general/theses/oec_en.html
2 Supervision procedure

2.1 Supervisor
An assistant from the chair is assigned to each candidate to supervise the thesis. Students should contact this advisor when they have major questions. However, it is expected of you to deal with the thesis in an autonomous fashion.

2.2 Procedure
The supervision procedure for each thesis consists of five sequential steps. Students contact their advisor whenever they have completed each step. The steps are as follows:

1. The first step starts with a successful application and ends with the kick-off meeting. At this point, students should already have a broad idea of the literature, methodology, and data that the thesis plans to build on. After the meeting, advisor and students have agreed on the broad topic and research approach of the thesis, as well as on the starting date.

2. Based on the kick-off meeting, the advisor formulates the exact title of the thesis and sends it to the Dean’s office. At the starting date, students can pick up their topic at the desk of the Dean’s office, where they’ll also receive the exact date at which the thesis has to arrive at the Dean’s office.

3. After at most a sixth of the working time, the students send their advisor an extended table of contents. This document contains all sections of the thesis as well as the bibliography. In each section, the student gives a brief summary of the section’s intended content, and the work steps that the student plans to obtain that content. The advisor gives a short feedback.

4. Not exceeding two thirds of the working time, students send their advisor a preliminary draft of the thesis. All sections and main results of the thesis should already be worked out, even though in a preliminary fashion. Advisors give students feedback.

5. Students hand in the thesis at the Dean’s office before the date specified when picking up the topic (Requirements how many copies etc. to hand in can also be found on the webpage specified above).

3 Evaluation criteria
The thesis will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Focus: Each paragraph of the thesis should be focused on the stated research topic.

2. Literature: Students should show that they have understood and selected the most relevant literature for the thesis topic.
3. Methods: Students should demonstrate that they can correctly apply the empirical and/theoretical methods that they were taught during their studies. They should explain how they use those methods. They should be critical: why are those methods best adapted to answer the research question at hand? What are their limitations?

4. Argument and interpretations: The students should develop an independent, structured, innovative argument and interpret their results in a logical and coherent way. We expect an analysis that goes beyond a simple literature summary or overview of existing statistics.


4 Research Areas and Topics

Listed below are the research areas into which the proposed thesis topics should typically fall. These indicated topics give you an idea of Professor Brenæe's interests. If you have a topic not listed here that seems like it would fit, you should feel free to propose that topic.

1. Family Economics and Child Development
   - skill formation (cognitive and socio-emotional skills)
   - family composition (birth order, sibling gender, family size)
   - family structure/demography (fertility and marriage)
   - parenting (parenting style and parental involvement)
   - infant nutrition (breastfeeding and supplementary food)
   - early childhood conditions (shocks during pregnancy, infant health)

2. Economics of Education and Labor Economics
   - educational inputs
   - educational outcomes
   - field of study
   - gender differences/gender norms
   - occupational choice