

Selected Topic Papers in the MEG

An informal guideline

The MEG study regulations provide the possibility to write a short scientific paper (“Selected Topic Paper”, STP). With a STP, you can replace an *elective* module (but not a core module, which – by definition – is an obligatory part of the MEG curriculum).

Writing a STP earns you, like a “normal” module, 5 ECTS points. Hence, the workload of this exercise should correspond to the workload of 3 weeks of course work.

Important: You can partake in a maximum of two selected topics during your MEG studies.

When to write an STP?

Writing a STP can be a helpful option in various instances, e.g. if you want to study a topic of your interest more in depth, but also if you just want to exercise your scientific writing skills in the “run-up” to the Master Thesis or to get familiar with the standards and expectations of a potential thesis supervisor.

Registering

You have to register a STP at the Examination Office by submitting the form “*Formular Aktuelle Themen / Selected Topic*”¹, available on the website of the Examination Office. In order to complete the form you need to state the topic (at least, in the form of a “working title”), give a submission date, and provide the signature of your supervisor.

Supervision

During the work on your STP, you will need to be supported by an academic supervisor. The supervisor has to be a member of our faculty. All professors and their co-workers (“assistants”) are eligible as supervisors.

The exam regulations do not allow to involve officially an external supervisor. If you wish to work with an external supervisor nevertheless, it works only when the MEG programme director supports your topic and external supervisor and is willing to sign the registration form, instead of the external supervisor.

¹ <http://www.unr.uni-freiburg.de/studium-lehre/master/pruefungsamt-msc/msc-uwe-fowi-meg-aktuelles-thema-projekt-selected-topic.pdf>

Before taking on the role of a supervisor, potential supervisors may want to see a short exposé, stating your research question, methodology, major sources and expected outcome.

Please note that it is *your* responsibility to develop a research question and to find a supervisor. The MEG coordination team can, of course, assist you in identifying possible supervisors that may “fit” with your planned topic.

Time frame and submission

It is up to you to decide when you want to do the STP. You can work on it during the time slot of the elective which you want to replace or at any other time, e.g. during the semester break. However, it is important that you register before starting and that you set a submission date on the registration form. The time span between registering and submitting the paper is not fixed, but it should be negotiated with the supervisor and it has to be within the semester in which you registered for the STP.

At the latest by the agreed upon date, you should submit your STP in the determined format (email, hardcopy) to your supervisor. He or she will then communicate your grade to the examinations office and a short feedback to you.

Length of an STP

There is no formal prescription concerning the length of a STP, because what an “appropriate” length is very much depends on the chosen topic and methodology. The grading will, anyhow, not be based on quantity, but rather on the content of the paper, writing style, conciseness and other formal criteria. So, be as precise and short as you can! However, the topic and the final paper need to reflect three weeks of work and will therefore probably not be shorter than 2,000 words.