

**Guidelines  
for  
Writing Research Papers  
and Theses**



**Graduate School of Economics,  
The University of Tokyo**

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## **Introduction**

At the Graduate School of Economics, students are expected to maintain high ethical standards in the conduct of research. The instructions in this booklet provide the minimum standards to be observed when writing research papers and theses.

The Guidelines consist of two parts: Part 1 outlines the general instructions for writing research papers and theses that are generally applicable across all fields in economics; and Part 2 describes the specific instructions in different fields of research, which reflect the diverse approaches taken at the Graduate School of Economics.

We wish you all the best for writing great research papers and theses in accordance with the Guidelines.

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Graduate School of Economics, The University of Tokyo

## **Part 1: General Instructions**

### **Avoiding plagiarism**

When you publish an academic paper, you should give proper reference to prior studies, and distinguish your study clearly from them by demonstrating your originality. An academic paper is evaluated on the basis of its originality. For that reason, it is essential that your research paper or thesis **makes a clear distinction between your original contributions and the citation of prior studies.**

Presenting ideas and findings which have been previously published by other researchers as if they are your own may constitute plagiarism, and, consequently, may be subject to punishment. It is needless to emphasize that you should avoid intentional plagiarism by all means. You must also prepare your research paper or thesis carefully in order to avoid inviting suspicion of unintentional plagiarism. Papers written in the English language in particular require closer attention than papers written in your native language.

The following conduct may be considered plagiarism:

- (1) Description of any part of a prior work which does not use a form of quotation (that is, presenting it as your own without identifying the source). There is no need to explain that this may be considered intentional plagiarism.
- (2) The source of a prior work is identified but the body text contains a similar expression without enclosing it in quotation marks. A sentence which is not enclosed in quotation marks will be deemed to be the author's original contribution. Using text written by another

author by making minor changes of words or expressions and without enclosing it in quotation marks may be considered plagiarism (even if you have clearly indicated that you are introducing a prior work and identified the source in the references).

- (3) Citation of figures, tables, data, statistical analysis, theorems and propositions of prior works without identifying their source.

In order to avoid suspicion of plagiarism described in Paragraph (2) above, the following are recommended:

- (i) Quote an expression from a prior work by enclosing it in quotation marks and identifying its source. If a significant term represents a unique concept proposed by a prior work, enclosing the term in quotation marks is recommended. Failure to enclose such a significant term in quotation marks may cause the misunderstanding that you are asserting the term to represent your own idea. If, however, the significant term has become the common property of an academic society, it is not necessary to enclose it in quotation marks every time it appears.
- (ii) If you wish to introduce a prior work without enclosing it in quotation marks, you must identify the source clearly, and significantly alter its expressions so as to make the sentence completely paraphrased and different from the original.

What is important is to demonstrate clearly that you appreciate the merits of prior work by highlighting your marginal contributions relative to the existing literature. Failure to do so may cause your quotation of prior work to be regarded as inappropriate. In order to avoid encountering these

unintentional problems, you should maintain a well-organized list of your reference materials.

You may refer to “Academic Integrity” (in particular the section under the heading of “How to Avoid Unintentional Plagiarism”) published by Drew University Theological School

(<http://www.drew.edu/theological/academics/policies-regulations/academic-integrity>, downloaded on March 2, 2011) which provides concise description in this regard.

## **Part 2: Specific Instructions**

### **A. Statistical or econometric analysis**

1. You must clearly identify the source of data used in your research paper or thesis. If you used data which was in the public domain or purchased by you, identify the source or the vendor. If you collected the data yourself, describe clearly how the data was collected.
2. Protection of privacy: If any of the data used in your research paper or thesis contains personal information which may identify an individual, you must present it in a form which will protect the identity of the individual, such as the use of a pseudonym, when you publish the research paper or thesis. Any data containing personal information must be kept under strict control.
  - \* For how to fulfill the requirements in Paragraphs 1 and 2 above, refer to latest papers published in internationally acclaimed journals, such as *American Economic Review*.
3. You must take all necessary steps to ensure that your statistical or econometric analysis can be replicated and confirmed by a third party. Some academic journals may require authors to furnish the data and the statistical program used at the time of the submission of a paper for publication. Even if you are not required to furnish such data and program, you must readily maintain them for disclosure to a third party upon request. (It should be noted that any data containing personal information, or the disclosure of which to a third party is restricted, must either be disclosed in a form which prevents the identification of

the individual, or with a notice to the third party of the restriction on disclosure.)

4. When you collect data which require ethical considerations, you must apply for an ethics review by the Office for Life Science Research Ethics and Safety of the University of Tokyo. (For details, see Section B.)

## **B. Economic experiments**

For guidance on planning and procedures for an economic experiment, you can refer to several guide books in publication (e.g. D. Friedman and A. Cassar, *Econometrics Lab*, Routledge, 2004).

For guidance on writing a research paper or thesis using experiments, you can refer to the guidelines provided by *Econometrica* (<http://www.econometricsociety.org/submissions.asp#Experimental>).

When you conduct an experiment or collect data using human subjects, you may be required to apply for an ethics review by the Research Ethics Committee of the Office for Life Science Research Ethics and Safety of the University of Tokyo. Although a request for an ethics review is not necessarily required in all cases, researchers are expected to make an appropriate decision on their own account and request a review without fail if they have determined that one is required. Submission of such a request will not be required under normal circumstances in economic experiments that are unlikely to cause psychological, physical or economic harm to human subjects. If, however, any of the following is applicable, you must submit a request for an ethics review:



- An ethics review and approval by Research Ethics Committee are required by law or guidelines (e.g. under the Ethical Guidelines for Clinical Studies, Ethical Guidelines for Human Genome/Gene Analysis Research, etc.);
- A questionnaire or interview survey requires ethical considerations;
- A study which requires safety considerations for study subjects;
- A study which analyzes and stores information or data which may be detrimental to certain socially disadvantaged populations;
- A study which requires the informed consent of its participants; or
- A study for which an ethics review by Research Ethics Committee is required by academic journals.

When there is any doubt in respect of judgment, you should consult the Office for Life Science Research Ethics and Safety of the university headquarters ([lifescience@adm.u-tokyo.ac.jp](mailto:lifescience@adm.u-tokyo.ac.jp)).

### **C. Interview records**

When you carry out interviews of the parties relevant to your research, you must take note of the following:

- (1) Obtain the unequivocal consent of the interviewee in advance;
- (2) Explain the purpose of the interview clearly to the interviewee;
- (3) If the interview needs to be recorded, obtain unequivocal consent of the interviewee;
- (4) Obtain unequivocal consent in respect of the format in which the interview will be published: whether the entire

content of the interview may be published, a part of it be quoted, or only be used as evidence for your assertion (not be quoted);

- (5) Maintain accurate information of the interviewee, his or her position, and date, time and place of the interview. Obtain an agreement as to the extent of the inclusion of the interview results in your research paper or thesis (e.g. whether the name or initials should be used, or his or her employer can be identified, etc.) Even when the entire content of the interview cannot be included in your research paper or thesis, you must keep it ready for presentation as evidence to the extent which does not breach the agreement with the interviewee, if required by a third party; and
- (6) Obtain an agreement as to whether the interviewee can review your research paper or thesis prior to publishing.

You should keep in mind that a breach of the above conditions will cause problems for not only yourself but other researchers who wish to conduct subsequent research (e.g. refusal to grant an interview).

It should be noted that there is no assurance that the information given in an interview necessarily be the objective truth. Accordingly, the use of the information requires your due attention.

The use of records of a field study of a factory requires the same consideration. If you obtain special data, or were allowed a special observation, upon a promise of confidentiality, you must comply. Taking photographs requires careful attention (that is, you must refrain from taking photographs where it is prohibited, or obtain prior permission whenever there is a concern).

You are advised to refer to the following literature for guidance:

- Takahiro Fujimoto, et al. *Research Mind: Study of Business Management*, Yuhikaku, 2005 (in Japanese).
- Kazuo Koike, *Etiquettes for Conducting Hearing Surveys*, Toyo Keizai Inc., 2000 (in Japanese).
- Kazuo Koike and Haruo Horaguchi, eds., *Field Research of Business Management*, Nikkei Inc., 2006 (in Japanese).
- Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Third Edition, Sage Publishing, 2003.

#### **D. Historical materials**

1. When you use historical materials which are publicly available in archives, you must keep records of the names of the archives and the material, as well as their reference number so that researchers conducting subsequent research can refer to them. If the use of the material, which is deposited in archives, is permitted on the condition that you would submit your draft research paper or thesis to the depositor for a review in advance and receive his or her approval, you must comply with the condition.
2. When you will do statistical or econometric analysis with the data you obtained from archives, refer to the instructions in Section A. "Statistical and econometric analysis" above.
3. If you have received a special permission from an individual or corporation allowing you to examine materials, you must obtain prior agreement as to the extent of disclosure of the materials (including the name of the owner of the material) or disclosure of personal

information in your research paper or thesis, and comply with the terms of the agreement. Whether any facts revealed by materials for which ownership cannot be revealed will be generally acceptable, however, is another matter.

The following publication provides useful guidance in respect of this issue:

Kanji Ishii, Akira Hara and Haruto Takeda, eds., *History of Japanese Economy: 6. Introduction to Study of the History of Japanese Economy*, The University of Tokyo Press, 2010 (in Japanese).