Brno Autumn School of Legal Writing and Related Global Legal Skills

List of Exercises for the module "Introduction to Academic Legal Writing"

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UNIT 1: What does it mean to write an academic text in law?

EXERCISE 1: Possibilities to reflect on preliminary knowledge and own ideas

- **10 minutes of spontaneous writing on your topic**

  – Within 10 minutes, write down spontaneously what comes to your mind when thinking of your topic (write in whole sentences!).

  – Alternatively, you can also chose to write a formal letter to a close friend or relative, telling about your new task of writing an academic paper/a thesis. Think of what you have to give the recipient an idea of what are things you have to do and observe now.

EXERCISE 2: Possibilities to reflect on preliminary knowledge and own ideas

- **writing lists**

  – Note down why you have chosen a particular topic.

  – Note down all key words that come to your mind when you think of your topic.

EXERCISE 3: Questions to reflect further on your points of departure as regards knowledge of your topic

  – What do I already know about my topic?

  – What do I need to find out, what do I need to deepen?

  – How can I do so (looking for literature, talking with colleagues)?

  – How can I proceed with this, what about my time?

EXERCISE 4: Time Management

- **Create a time framework for your writing task; consider the individual steps of the writing process according to the available time (submission deadline) and use it for self-evaluation and control (Have I achieved what was planned for the various steps?)**

  – points of departure and their reflection

  – collection of materials

  – gaining an overview

  – establishing a framework (prel. table of content)

  – writing the individual chapters

  – correction, final draft

UNIT 2: Where does the information come from & Where to search?

EXERCISE 5: Materials for your Work

– Please list the 3 most important books and the 10 most important articles you intend to use for (the current part of) your work.

– Shortly explain for each of them why they are so important (in general; for a specific part of your work; how did you get to know/how did you find these texts)

EXERCISE 6: Citation Rules

– Cite the following sources first according to OSCOLA and second according to Bluebook rules …

UNIT 3: How to process the information? – Gaining and keeping an overview

EXERCISE 7: Gaining an Overview (on the basis of the key-word list out of Unit 1)

– Highlight those key words that are of special importance for your topic or are of special interest to you.

– Note down relationships between your key words and reflect on what has to be observed when deepening each of the key words.

– By taking into consideration what you have noted down out of your reflection, what are potential related research questions that come to your mind in line with the core set of key words?

– What kind of 'method' do you want to follow in order to give an answer to your research questions?

EXERCISE 8: Keeping the Overview

• **Pick one article from your list with the most important texts for your work, read it and write down the following considerations**

– What do I think about it? Do I know what others think about this article? If yes, are there differences between my opinion and that of others on what the author of the article writes?

– How can I include my opinions about it in my own paper? To which part does it fit? Is it in line with other thoughts I have on other texts that I use for this part of my work?

UNIT 4: An academic legal text – structure & content

EXERCISE 9: How to Draft an Outline?

– Have a look on your list of key words; try to bring them into a coherent order (chain of associations forming a sort of „red line" guiding through your topic): Which ones belong to a general introduction into the core questions of my topic? Which ones to central parts of my reflections planned to form individual main chapters? Which ones form sort of umbrella terms combining several aspects I want to touch? – Which ones are connecting two or several other key words? Note down this chain of associations in a coherent order.

– Try to group your key words according to these three categories and write down how key words in each of these groups are related to each other.

– Note down all aspects coming to your mind when thinking of your topic (association chain).

– Note down what you want to know about your topic (research interest).

– Note down, what you should describe, in order to allow others to understand the crucial aspects of your topic.

– Collect (in writing) all aspects as regards content.

– Choose priorities.

– Formulate all emerging questions.

– Argue the logical relation of your classification

EXERCISE 10: Framing your Thesis – Table of Content – Best Practice Examples

- **Have a closer look into a couple of books and articles on your list of most important titles for your thesis and decide on one book and one article with the best structure and shortly describe (in writing) the following:**

  – Why are the chosen texts the best examples for a well done structure? What are the advantages of the chosen example in comparison to lesser ideal structures?

  – Which elements of these model structures could you use for the structure of your own text?