



How to Write a Thesis/Seminar Paper: Guidelines

Scope

The usual length of a thesis/paper (+/- 10%) is

- Bachelor Thesis: 37.500 characters (incl. blanks; equal to approx. 15 pages),
 - Seminar paper in Bachelor's degree: 22.500 characters (incl. blanks; equal to approx. 9 pages),
 - Seminar paper in Master's degree: 30.000 characters (incl. blanks; equal to approx. 12 pages), and
 - Master Thesis: 125.000 characters (incl. blanks; equal to approx. about 50 pages)
- (not including cover page, table of contents, list of abbreviations, list of symbols and bibliography).

Layout and Design

Please use the following formatting rules:

- Left margin: 3 cm, right margin: 3 cm,
- Top margin: 2,5 cm, bottom margin: 2 cm,
- Line spacing: 1,5,
- Font size: 12,
- Line spacing: before paragraph 6 pt.,
- Font: Times New Roman.

Please use hyphens and justify your text. In addition, the text should be continuously written, i.e. there should be no page breaks before or after a chapter. Remember to structure the paper, not only in chapters, but also in paragraphs. Related thoughts have to be in the same paragraph, new thoughts in different ones. Papers without paragraphs will not be accepted.

Try to avoid footnotes – important content should be included in the text. Use footnotes only if the included explanations are not needed for the understanding of the main text. Footnotes start with a capital letter, end with a full stop and are written with font size 10.

To manipulate the number of pages using a different kind of font or font size is noticeable and will be prosecuted.

General Structure

We recommend the following structure:

- Cover Page
- Table of Contents (incl. page numbers)
- List of Abbreviations/Figures/Symbols/Tables (if necessary)
- Main content (incl. introduction and conclusion)
- Appendix (if necessary) – Graphs and tables should be included in the main part.
- List of References

Cover page

The cover page should include:

- Type of paper (Bachelor Thesis, Master Thesis, Seminar paper, ...),
- Title,
- Name, email address, matriculation number,
- Date of submission.

In case of Master theses, please consider the requirements by the examination office.

Table of Contents

- It shows the structure of the thesis/seminar paper, but does not already reveal the argumentation.
- Each section helps to understand the topic and to approach the research question.
- Include all sections and their corresponding page numbers.
- An excessive number of sections should be avoided.
- Recommendation: Use 1, 1.1, 1.1.1 etc. for numbering your sections.
- The headlines should be meaningful and not too extensive.

Page numbering

Use Roman numerals for the Table of Contents and the List of Abbreviations/Figures/Symbols/Tables (before the main body). Use Arabic numerals for the main body and all pages that follow it.

Introduction

The introduction leads the reader towards the actual subject and clearly defines the topic of the paper. Even though this is the first piece of writing the reader comes to, it is often best to leave its preparation to last as, until then, you will not be absolutely sure what you are introducing. The main role of the introduction is to signpost the content of the rest of the thesis/seminar paper. Formulate your research question explicitly in order to make sure that the following sections are relevant for answering your question. Include why the chosen topic is highly relevant, which scientific methods you will use and the “value added” from your thesis to the existing literature. The “value added” will obviously be smaller in Bachelor Theses or Seminar papers, and should be greater in Master Theses. Also include how you will proceed in the following sections.

Main body

You develop the central idea that you formulated in the introduction. You should do this systematically, presenting one main point at a time and providing evidence and examples in support of each main point. You must ensure that each main point is related to your central idea. This will give unity and coherence to the text, and enables you to develop a convincing argument. It is important that the argument flows smoothly and logically towards the conclusion. To achieve this, you should construct a well-structured essay, consider how each point relates to the previous one and the next, as well as to the central idea and select relevant evidence and/or examples to support each point. At the end of a larger section, it might be useful to draw a preliminary conclusion.

Conclusion

Don't simply summarize your thesis/seminar paper. Still, it is highly important that you answer the research questions from the introduction. Single aspects do not need to be mentioned again. In addition, put your results into context of existing research results and critically assess the content and the methods used.

Content-related requirements

Do not copy from other papers! It is important that you present your ideas and arguments in your own way. This includes using your own words instead of long citations. Referencing on other papers does not substitute the own argumentation. Consider and compare different sources, i.e. do not rely on one single source only. In order to evaluate the content of your thesis/seminar paper, the independence of your own results are crucial. These requirements increase with the length of the thesis/seminar paper. Reduce the number of footnotes to a minimum.

Language

Within the text, argue in economic terms and not with variables. Formulate clear (and short) sentences. Try to avoid passive wording. Try to use (exclusively and only if necessary) typical abbreviations. Orthography, grammar, and style are also taken into account while grading!

References

If you refer within your text to tables or graphs, they should be numbered. Even though you introduced them in your list of abbreviations or symbols, it is necessary to explain them in the text the first time you use them.

We expect you to honor the guidelines of correct scientific conduct. That particularly includes correct referencing of the sources used. You can choose the citation style you use, but please still make sure that you use one way of citing consistently.

- References to existing literature have to be made clear. Direct quotes have to be put into quotation marks (e.g. "...growth ...") and the corresponding source has to be mentioned before or after, e.g. Müller (2002, p. 20) states "... " or "... " (Müller 2002, p.20).
- If there are authors with the same last name, add the first letter of the author's first name to clarify.
- If there are several sources by one authors from the same year, add an "a, b, c, ..." to the year to clarify.
- If there is literature by three or more authors, name the first one and use "et al.", e.g. Mayer et al. (2017, p. 97) state "... " or "... " (Mayer et al., 2017, p 99).
- It is not necessary to quote scientific basics.

If you use literature and do not reference it, you will fail the course/class!

Bibliography

All sources and references cited in the paper must be included in the bibliography. At the same time, please do only cite references in the bibliography which are also used in your paper. Your bibliography should be in line with the following guidelines:

Books:

Neus, W. (2018): Einführung in die Betriebswirtschaftslehre, 10th ed., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Journals:

Fama, E./Jensen, M. (1983): Separation of Ownership and Control. *Journal of Law and Economics* 26, 301-325.

Articles in a compilation:

Schmidt, K. (2000): Anreizprobleme bei der Finanzierung von Wagniskapital. In: Franz, W. (ed.), *Ökonomische Analyse von Verträgen*, 248-284, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Manuscripts:

Mendicino, C./Nikolov, K./Suarez, J./Supera, D. (2019): Bank Capital in the Short and in the Long Run. European Central Bank, Working Paper No. 2286, May 2019.

Internet sources:

Villeroy de Galhau, F./Weidmann, J. (2019): Towards a Genuine Capital Markets Union, <https://www.bundesbank.de/en/press/contributions/towards-a-genuine-capital-markets-union-793028>, accessed on May 15, 2019.

Alternatively, you can use a citation style of relevant literature. Please make sure that all references are consistently formatted.

Signed Statement of Authorship

Please attach a signed statement of authorship to your thesis/seminar paper:

I hereby certify that this thesis/seminar paper has been composed by me and is based on my own work, unless stated otherwise. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in this thesis/seminar paper. All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted, and all sources of information, including graphs and data sets, have been specifically acknowledged.

Tuebingen, [date]

Signature

When writing a Master Thesis, please consider the requirements given by the examination office.

Submission

- Bachelor Thesis, Seminar paper: Please hand in one paper copy of your thesis/seminar paper (one-sided printing). Additionally, please send the final pdf-version via email to your supervisor.
- Master Thesis: Hand in two bounded versions of your thesis at the examination office. Enclose a CD-ROM and consider other requirements by the examination office. The CD-ROM must contain the final pdf-version of your thesis. In case of empirical work, additionally include all data files that show how you conducted your analyses (e.g., Excel or Do files).