EBERHARD KARLS
UNIVERSITÄT
TÜBINGEN

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences

School of Business and Economics
Chair of Strategy
Prof. Dr. Timo Sohl

Notes on Academic Writing

Chair of Strategy
(Last updated: November 14, 2026)

1 Formatting guidelines

Font style
- Times New Roman
- Font size 12pt for body text, 13-14pt for headings (Exception: tables and footnotes may be written in font size 10pt)

Margins
- Top, bottom, left, and right: 2.5 cm each

Layout
- Full justification
- Line spacing 1 ½ (Exception: tables and footnotes may be written with single line spacing)

Page numbering
- Arab page numbering starts with the main body of the text
- All pages before the main text (i.e., table of contents) are numbered with Roman numerals
- Figures and tables are numbered sequentially

2 Content-related structure of the thesis

Order of the sections of a thesis (*optional):

- **Cover page** (template at the end of this document)
- **Table of contents** (We recommend that you follow the structures of publications in renowned journals)
- **Main Text**
- **References**
- Appendix*
- **Formal declaration** (content of the declaration can be found in the general provisions of the respective exam regulations as of 2021 in §28 (5))

3 Figures and tables

3.1 Appendix vs. main text

- Important figures and tables should not be moved to the appendix merely because of space constraints. Only supplementary information that is not necessary for understanding the text may be part of the appendix. An illustration or table that clarifies essential parts of the text should, therefore, be inserted at the corresponding text passage.
- Tables and especially figures must be self-explanatory. However, they also must be referred to in the text.

3.2 Outputs of statistical models

- Outputs of statistical models (e.g., regression outputs) must contain all relevant information (e.g., estimate, standard deviation, p-value, R-squared, ...). You also must report effect sizes whenever possible.
- We recommend following the table styles used in renowned journals (e.g., Academy of Management Journal, Management Science, Organization Science, Strategic Management Journal, …)

4 Length requirements

The main text (as defined above) of a thesis is subject to the following manuscript length restrictions, unless explicitly stated otherwise:

- Master seminar paper: 12 pages
- B.Sc. thesis: 12 pages
- M.Sc. thesis: 30 pages

5 Language

- **Grammatical, spelling, and punctuation mistakes** will negatively affect your grade.
- Strive for **objectivity and simplicity**. An academic paper is not an essay. Your language should be simple, clear, and precise. Avoid the use of unnecessary foreign words.
- Avoid **abbreviations**. You can use standard abbreviations (“e.g.“, “i.e.“, “etc.“, …) without additional explanation.

6 Use of sources and references

It is less relevant *which* of the numerous citation styles you use. However, it is more important that you apply the citation style of your choice in an accurate, unambiguous, complete, and *consistent* way. Hence, you should view the following notes as recommendations. Further, we recommend following the citation styles used in renowned journals. However, while most journals do not cite with page numbers, we require you to use page numbers when giving a citation.

6.1 Indication of sources in the text

For example, citations in the text can have the following structure: *Author(s) year of publication, page(s)*.

Example:

- Studies have shown that corporate diversification exhibits an inverted U-relationship with firm performance *(Palich, Cardinal, and Miller, 2000, p. 165).*

  or:

- Palich, Cardinal, and Miller *(2000, p. 165)* show that corporate diversification exhibits an inverted U-relationship with firm performance.

6.2 Quotes

- **Direct quotes** should be avoided. You should only use them if an author uses language that is perfect for your purpose. Otherwise, you might create the impression that you are merely repeating prior work without adding anything.
- Indicate exact, verbal quotes with **quotation marks**.
- Quotes must be reproduced in their **original wording**. Possible changes are indicated by dots ([…]).

6.3 References at the end of a thesis

List your sources and references in **alphabetical order** of the authors' names. Make sure that your list of references is **complete**:

- Each source that is referred to in the main text needs to appear in the bibliography. (But not more – do not list sources that you have read but that you have not directly used in the text.)
- References to the literature must contain all information that the reader needs to be able to find the source without problems. Here, again, we recommend that you stick to formats used in renowned journals.

7 Submission

- **Bachelor theses:** Turn in 1 copy that is bound using a "Heftstreifen" (no hard or soft cover). In addition, upload your thesis as a word or PDF file to the respective ILIAS course. For quantitative approaches, put your thesis, code, and data into a ZIP file and upload the ZIP file. Name your file according to your name (e.g., B372_Mustermann_Max.zip).
- **Master seminar paper:** Upload your paper as a word or PDF file to the respective ILIAS course. For quantitative approaches, put your paper, code, and data into a ZIP file and upload the ZIP file. Name your file according to your name (e.g., StrategyMSc_Mustermann_Max.zip).
- **Master theses:** Turn in two copies in bound and digital form (hard or soft cover, no spiral binding) at the examination office as well as a digital version (pdf file) by email to: ma-arbeiten@wiso.uni-tuebingen.de. The PDF file is to be sent by the student (ideally from the student email address) by 11:59 pm on the day of submission. Both the file and the subject of the email must be filled with the following data: Student ID Number, Last Name, and First Name. If you send the PDF file via email, you don't have to submit a USB stick with your thesis unless you have written an empirical thesis. That is, for empirical theses, include all code and data on an appropriate medium (USB-Drive/…) and submit them with your thesis. Please consult the examination office for the most up-to-date formal regulations.

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences
University of Tübingen

Bachelor thesis / Master seminar paper / Master thesis

“Title of the thesis: Example title page”

(“Focus”)

“Title of the seminar” (if applicable)

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Timo Sohl

Winter/Summer Term (Year)

Heike Mustermann

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Date of submission: D/M/Y

You must attach a statutory declaration to your work, signed by hand (in bound form). The declaration reads as follows:

Statutory declaration
I hereby declare that I have drawn up the present paper [or: thesis] on my own and without using other than the allowed means. All parts which are taken out directly or indirectly from other published or unpublished works are recognizable as such. This thesis/paper has not been submitted before in this form or similarly or in excerpts within another examination. I hereby agree that my thesis will be tested automatically with a plagiarism detection tool. The review takes place anonymously and with permanent data storage in the database of the plagiarism detection tool.

Use of AI
I am aware that the use of texts or content generated by generative AI does not guarantee their quality, and I bear the responsibility if the use of such tools leads to inaccurate content, violations of data protection law, copyright law, or scientific misconduct (such as plagiarism).

I also affirm,

- that I have only used generative AI tools as an aid and that my own creative contribution predominates in this work,
- that I have specified which generative AI tools I have used, for what purpose, and to what extent.

Regarding the second bullet point, please attach a tabular list in the appendix documenting the section in the thesis (paper), the AI tools used in each section, and the manner in which they were utilized (type of application, such as translation, text generation, or creation of graphics).