

Thesis Guidelines

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Introduction

Dear Student

Thank you for considering me as your thesis supervisor. As this is probably the first (or second) time you are writing a substantial academic work, you will very likely be searching for some guidelines and advice. In this document, you will therefore find useful information on how to select a thesis topic, how I see my responsibilities as your supervisor, what I expect you to deliver and how I will evaluate your work. You will also find answers to frequently asked questions.

In order to get a full overview of the formal procedures and regulations regarding your thesis, please check the following webpage with faculty information related to thesis projects:
<https://www.th-wildau.de/hochschule/fachbereiche/fachbereich-wirtschaft-informatik-recht/dokumente-und-ordnungen/>

How to choose a topic

As your potential future thesis supervisor, I will not propose concrete topics for your thesis myself. It is up to you to propose a topic and/or field of interest from which we can work together to make the topic more concrete if necessary.

The following questions may foster your brainstorming sessions to select a topic:

1. What did I like so far about my studies? Which modules were particularly interesting?
2. Did I encounter an interesting field in the past years (e.g. through volunteering, internships, student jobs...), on which I could work? Do I still have contacts to these fields?
3. What are my plans for the future? In which field would I like to get active after my studies?
4. What are the big trends affecting society? Which items are currently being debated/discussed in the media? In public opinion? Do these have an impact on business/organisations?
5. Which topics have other students worked on before? Check the university library!

What I deliver

Consultations & feedback

Before you register your thesis online, we will meet and discuss your concept. Once you start writing your thesis, you can ask for more consultations if necessary. We can meet at my office, but also through Webex. Please note that if you send me your work and ask for feedback, I will not edit every single paragraph but will rather give feedback on the work as a whole. Please also note that I cannot give feedback to your written work on the spot/during in-person consultations. I do commit myself to passing you my comments within one week after you sent me your work.

Language

I supervise theses written in German or English.

Evaluation

I will hand in my final evaluation four weeks after you submitted your work at the very latest. If you need the evaluation faster (e.g. because of applying for a job or different study programme), please let me know. I will usually be able to accommodate your request.

What you deliver

Concept, research question and schedule

If you want me to supervise your thesis, you will have to come up with a basic idea/topic you would like to work on before getting in touch with me. I do not expect you to come up with a full research question yet, but you should at least have something in mind that you find appealing.

We will then meet and discuss your ideas, and work together towards fine-tuning your research question.

After we met, you will work on the outline/structure of your work. You will think about the concrete hypothesis and the sub-questions that should be answered in your thesis, and the order in which these should be dealt with. You will also prepare a schedule for your work: which specific things should be completed, and by when? Once the research question, outline/structure and schedule are set, you can register your thesis on the university portal, and officially start writing.

Regular (monthly) updates

During the writing process, you provide monthly updates via e-mail. Every update shall include an overview of the items already completed, a to-do list and - obviously - any questions/issues which are blocking you from moving on.

The thesis

Your work shall have the following structure:

1. Abstract
*Includes a summary of your research question/methods/outcomes.
Shall be written in German and in English.*
2. Overview of the abbreviations, graphs and tables used
*You can choose the way you list up abbreviations.
You can choose whether to add the author of the graphs and tables in the overview. Be coherent!*
3. Several chapters with the content of your work
*E.g. introduction, literature review, case studies, analysis, outlook,
Structure these chapters as a funnel: begin with more general items and work towards the concrete answer(s) on your research question.*
4. Bibliography
*Includes an overview of all the materials used, structured in a coherent way.
You can choose the way you cite and set up your bibliography.*
5. Declaration of authorship (*Eigenständigkeitserklärung*)
To be signed after printing the thesis.
6. Annexes
Don't forget to also add the relevant annexes (e.g. Excel sheets with calculations) to the digital copy of your work.

Evaluation

Academic work

Your thesis is a piece of academic work; therefore, a wide variety of sources must be used. Please do not stick to German sources only, but look at materials available internationally. The chance to find relevant information in English might be higher depending on the topic of your work! Do not stick to one type of source: make sure to use primary, secondary and tertiary information sources in your work.

Evaluation Criteria

Your work will be evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Topic of your work
Is the topic defined (very) concretely? Is this a topical issue?
2. Content
Which literature is used? Are the right methods used?
Do you demonstrate sufficient knowledge about the topic? Can the outcomes be implemented?
3. Scientific work
Is the structure of the work meaningful? Did you add all relevant graphs, tables, insights?
Did you take up a proactive role in writing this thesis?
4. Formal requirements
Are the citations and references included in the work correctly?
Are formal requirements met (length, deadlines)?

Plagiarism

Any case of plagiarism will be graded 5,0.

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I use a specific citation style for my thesis?

No. Please choose a style yourself. Make sure you use the style of your choice throughout the entire work. If you do not have any preferences regarding how to cite in your thesis, I would suggest you to use the APA (American Psychology Association) citation style (Edition 6). You will find plenty of information about how to apply the APA citation guidelines both in the university library and online.

Are there any requirements regarding the font and/or layout used in my work?

No. I trust you are able to figure out a decent style for your work on your own.

How many pages should the thesis count?

Bachelor theses are usually around 30 to 40 pages. Master thesis are twice as long. Make sure you make your points, but avoid writing more than necessary.

Am I allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for my thesis?

Wikipedia is usually a good tool to get a first impression/overview of a topic that is completely new to you. However, the information on Wikipedia has not (always) been reviewed by editors and crosschecked or peer-reviewed by other people. Therefore, I strongly suggest you not to use Wikipedia as a direct source for your work. Use it to get some basic information and understand main ideas, and then look at the underlying bibliography and sources and use these for your work if relevant.

Should I put the images and tables I used in the annexes, or should these be in the text?

If the images and/or tables help the reader to understand the point(s) you are trying to make, please put them in the text. If these are merely illustrative and supporting materials, put them in the annexes.

I made a table or graph based on my own findings. How do I make clear that I did this myself?

If you develop something completely on your own, without using any external data: after the title of your table or graph, please add “(own creation)”.

If you develop a graph or table on your own, using (some) external data: after the title of your table or graph, please add “(own presentation, based on [external source])”.

Do you want a paper copy of the thesis, or is the digital version sufficient?

I prefer reading hard copies of theses. Please make sure to submit a paper copy of the thesis for me, and ask the other supervisor if he/she wants a paper copy as well.

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