



LEUPHANA
UNIVERSITÄT LÜNEBURG

**Otto Group Chair of Strategic Management
Style Guide for Scientific Papers**



Contents

1	What Is an Academic Paper?	2
2	Types of Scientific Papers	3
2.1	Seminar Paper	3
2.2	Essay	4
2.3	Master Thesis	4
3	General Requirements	5
3.1	Number of Copies	5
3.2	Volume	5
3.3	Form of Binding	5
3.4	Plagiarism Check	5
4	Structure and Layout	6
4.1	Layout	7
4.2	Front Page	7
4.3	Pagination	9
4.4	Table of Contents	9
4.5	Abbreviations	9
4.6	Figures and Tables	9
4.7	Footnotes	10
4.8	Citations	10
4.9	Quotations	11
5	Bibliography	12
5.1	Order	12
5.2	Elements within the Bibliography	12
5.2.1	Books	12
5.2.2	Periodicals	13
5.2.3	Chapters in Books and Annuals	13
5.2.4	Unpublished Works	14
5.2.5	Electronic Documents	14
6	Evaluation Criteria	14
7	Concluding Remarks	15
8	Further Readings	16

1 What Is an Academic Paper?

A substantial part of a student's academic trajectory is to independently accomplish a scientific piece of work. In this sense, an academic paper is defined as an in-depth study of a specific and distinct topic. Besides mere factual research from a wide variety of sources, a paper implies the writer's interpretation of that research. The overall aim is to convey a body of ideas, arguments, and information about a particular subject while accounting for the theoretical and methodological state-of-the-art in the respective knowledge field.

Writing academic papers involves organising your work, retrieving literature, engaging in critical reasoning, and developing communication skills as well as meeting strict deadlines.

In sum, the experience of academic paper writing can be regarded as the most challenging, essential, and rewarding part of one's academic education.

The challenge starts with the search for an intriguing topic or research question. The best approach is to draw on personal experiences, interests, and comprehensive literature research.

Choose a subject that fits both your academic identity and future career ambitions. The subject should be interesting, engaging, significant, and ideally enduring.

Having identified an interesting subject, you are asked to review relevant publications addressing the field you intend to study. An ongoing overview and critical reading of key literature is crucial for further conceptual development and the specification of boundaries related to the subject domain. Do not underestimate this stage of your project, as you will be overwhelmed by the masses of literature that must be analysed in order to find a handful of suitable articles.

A critical review of literature provides information about the interplay of empirical evidence and theoretical explanation. By synthesising contributions with theoretic influence on your area of interest and empirical publications you should get clarity about your own methodological approach. Methods, be it quantitative or qualitative, are the basis of the trustworthiness and significance of your empirical claims. Hence the rigour with which data were gathered and analysed is part of the evaluation process your paper will have to undergo. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses, but a thoughtful choice and awareness of possible limitations can support a positive feedback.

When starting to write, think of your paper as a contribution to a wider academic conversation. Imagine having the attention of your audience – but only for a moment. You come up with a novel idea. The next logic step is to provide evidence for your claim. But before you have to answer a larger question: "So what?" Thus consider to sell your ideas by emphasising their significance for a particular academic context. This is realised by translating your ideas into a credible and clear line of argument. In this sense, make sure your audience understands your claims and propositions. Using the particular vocabulary of the discipline can help you to convince your readers of the relevance of your work. Refer to specific constructs, arguments, and definitions from the appropriate literature. Thereby adopt an adequate citation style that is common in your field of inquiry.

In the first place, the research project examines your knowledge as well as the strength of your evidence. Nevertheless your paper should read well. Your words should flow smoothly and logically from one idea to the next. Hence guide your readers through your paper with a comprehensible structure, precise wording, style, and argumentation.

In addition to this, scientific work is characterised by an impeccable implementation of guidelines depicting you the proper formal structure of your paper, including the right citation form as well as the design of your bibliography and other directories.

The following guidelines intend to reduce uncertainty by giving you an orientation regarding formal requests for writing seminar papers, essays and master theses.

Please do not hesitate to contact our team in case of further questions about the right application of these guidelines.

2 Types of Scientific Papers

You will encounter a variety of possible examination formats during your studies. Beside written and oral exams, scientific papers are the most common option to test students on a subject matter. Seminar papers, essays, and master theses differ substantially in categories like volume, weight, depth, and preparation time.

But all kinds of papers should share a general approach with regard to outlining, writing, and reflecting. In this sense, you should begin with the skeleton or outline of your work summarising the order and logic of your paper. Be sure to structure your arguments well so that readers are able to understand each written sentence without having read anything else before. Allow for some extra time for in-depth research of the scientific literature, for organising your arguments, for writing, and editing it. Reflect every written sentence whether it really contributes to your main theme in terms of content and context. Therefore you should spend a good portion of your time on reworking your manuscript and checking structure and articulateness.

The following descriptions offer you an overview of the aforementioned different types of scientific papers and their respective formal requirements.

2.1 Seminar Paper

In general, a seminar serves the absorption of a selected group of themes. When writing a seminar paper it is your task to analyse a problem set by your lecturer or identify and formulate a problem (or question) and offer the reader a well-grounded position. Based on the background literature and/or case material, you have to find an interesting issue you would like to explore further in your paper. The issue has to be formulated and justified as relevant, interesting, impactful, etc. While some seminars may be designed as team projects, others demand that each student has to hand in his or her own individual paper.

Together with one of our academic advisors you have to discuss relevant issues in detail and create an appropriate outline of your paper. An appropriate outline reflects the thematic structure of your paper. For this it is inevitable to have read the respective background literature. Otherwise we will be unable to guide your inquiry.

We offer consultation hours, where you will get further information, e.g. additional literature or important thematic aspects on your topic. For this it is crucial to participate in the consultation hour and prepare for this by reading the respective literature on your topic that was given to you prior the meeting.¹ Problems that may occur during a preceding processing stage of your work can also be discussed with your academic advisor.

¹ Please notice that the basic literature given only presents an introduction to the respective topic. To assure an adequate elaboration of your topic we want you to search for more detailed and relevant literature yourself.

At the end of your seminar papers you need to confirm in writing that you wrote your paper single-handedly and that you didn't use any other sources or auxiliary means than stated in your paper².

2.2 Essay

One option that is used quite often is to set several essays instead of a seminar paper as an examination to make up for a seminar paper. Thus, an essay can be regarded as a special, abridged form of a seminar paper. The general approach equals the one that underlies a seminar paper. Repetition of case facts is not enough to make an accomplished paper, neither with regard to essays nor seminar papers. It should deal with an issue that you believe is interesting and relevant for understanding the case. It should try to convey a well-substantiated point by reasoning and evidence, especially including appropriate examples and confirming citations from any particular text or sources your argument involves.

Your first effort should be to formulate and justify the question(s) you will seek to answer in your essay. Next, develop a provisional thesis by thinking, reading, and drafting. There are many ways in which any particular argument may be well presented, but an essay's line of argument – how it begins, develops, and ends – should be designed to present your point clearly and convincingly within a very limited extent. (Keep in mind: The order in which you discovered the parts of your argument is seldom an effective order for presenting it to a reader.)

When writing an essay, please set up your page according to the suggested layout within these guidelines (font size, margin, pagination, line spacing etc.) and adhere to the rules regarding citations, quotations, abbreviations, footnotes, figures and tables. But, as an essay offers you only two to three pages to formulate your ideas, you do not need to consider aspects of binding, indexes, appendixes, a front page, and abstract.

2.3 Bachelor / Master Thesis

A bachelor or master thesis signifies your ability to link your knowledge about practice related contents with the scientific experiences and competencies, which you have accumulated during your studies. In sum, you show that you are able to work independently on a complex issue and demonstrate the reflective application of scientific methods and theories within a predefined deadline. Please have a look in your respective examination rules for further formal details.

After the agreement on a specific topic with us, you have to hand in a project proposal about your work. This proposal conduces to structure your topic and to give you certainty about the specific content of your thesis before registering at the registrar's office.

The project proposal encompasses three to five pages (plus appendix, i.e. literature, proposed structure, and table of content etc.) and should contain the problem statement (guiding questions: why is your topic of general and scientific interests? What is the state of the art in your respective field? What issues or questions are still not resolved justifying your academic work?), the objective of your research (what is your contribution to the existing academic discussion?), the methodological approach (keep in mind that scien-

² Sample Affirmation: „I hereby affirm that I wrote the present seminar paper without any inadmissible help by a third party and without using any other means than indicated. Thoughts that were taken directly or indirectly from other sources are indicated as such. This seminar paper has not been presented to any other examination board in this or a similar form, neither in Germany nor in any other country.“

tific rigour involves conceptual precision, testability, and the search for evidence) as well as a list of references.

At the end of your thesis you need to confirm in writing that you wrote your thesis single-handedly and that you didn't use any other sources or auxiliary means than stated in your thesis.

3 General Requirements

We would like to inform you about the variety of appropriate literature that deals with writing scientific papers. Those can give you an idea of the formal requisites, which good scientific papers should exhibit. We recommend the literature mentioned at the end of our paper for more detailed information on scientific work.

Soon you will recognise that there are many different kinds of formal styles. For this reason, it is pivotal to strictly keep at your chosen style throughout the whole paper or thesis.

Nevertheless, we would like to give you established standards that you should stick with in order to allow for unity and simplicity. Moreover, we would like to highlight certain formal rules that correspond to typical mistakes. Any article/paper should be prepared according to this guideline.

3.1 Number of Copies

Seminar papers and essays are to be submitted on schedule at least in digital form (.doc). Bachelor and Master theses have to be handed in on schedule as a hard copy in duplicate as well as in digital form (.doc).

3.2 Volume

If not otherwise specified, the respective scientific papers encompass the following amount of words (excluding title pages, indexes, annotations, bibliography, and footnotes):

- Master thesis: approx. 27.000 (*60 pages*)
- Bachelor thesis: approx. 13.500 (*30 pages*)
- Seminar paper (per ECTS credit): approx. 1,400 (*3 pages*)
- Essay: approx. 800 (*1,5-2 pages*)
- Presentation (essay complementing a presentation per ECTS credit): approx. 900 (*2 pages*)

3.3 Form of Binding

Bachelor and Master theses have to be bound solidly. Seminar papers – if handed in as a hard copy - are to be punched and bound with a file fastener (Heftstreifen). Please do not use folders or clear plastic binders – just punch and simply bind your papers. Essays as hard copies have to be stapled.

3.4 Plagiarism Check

Regardless of intent, the failure to provide proper acknowledgment of your use of another's work constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of work, in any form, that is not a stu-

dent's own, without acknowledgment of the sources. With specific regard to papers a simple rule dictates when it is necessary to acknowledge sources. If a student obtains information or ideas from an outside source, that source must be acknowledged. Another rule to follow is that any direct quotation must be placed in quotation marks, and the source immediately cited. To avoid the most common forms of inadvertent plagiarism, you should develop the habit of citing sources not only when you execute the final draft of a scholarly project but also as you take any preliminary notes for it.

By submitting your academic work, you agree that your paper may be checked for plagiarism with an automatic software programme. Students found guilty of plagiarism will fail the paper or thesis. Moreover, plagiarism is a serious case of academic misconduct, which will not be tolerated and may have further more serious consequences.

4 Structure and Layout

The logical structure of your paper should be already transparent in the outline of your work. Your thoughts and ideas should be easily comprehensible at any time.

When structuring your master or bachelor thesis, and seminar paper, the following components should be exhibited:

- Front page and title
- Abstract
- Index
- List of tables and figures where necessary
- List of abbreviations where necessary
- Text body (Introduction, main part, conclusion)
- Appendices where necessary
- Bibliography
- Affirmation

The **title** of a scientific paper has to represent the whole. It should trigger interest in reading the work in its entirety. Metaphors, puzzles, a play on words, and even a song title are attractive ways of reaching your audience. First, try to generate several viable alternatives. Thus, you learn a lot about the paper you want to write. Discuss your list with others and then choose the most suitable one.

The **abstract** is a summary encompassing no more than 100 words, which offers the reader a short overview of the paper's objective, approach, and result(s). Try to convey as much essential information on your paper as possible. Do this by writing the abstract in a single passage and using the present tense, short sentences, simple constructions, and no more than two instances of the same word. It should be understandable without any kind of valuation or recourse to the complete paper. Please add your name and address at its end.

The title and abstract initially attracts your readers; the **introduction** (chapter 1) should strengthen their interest in your work. A good introduction establishes the direction and critical content of your paper. It is composed of a description of the research question or problem, objective, and approach. The problem depicts your paper's general theme, its relevance, and the current state of research. It is to be integrated within a greater thematic context and simultaneously delineated with respect to other problems. The description of the problem leads to a further formulation of the underlying objective. Within this part, you can

call attention to special difficulties and their consequences coming along with your work. Finally, the approach outlines and rationalises the thematic structure.

The **main part** constitutes the core of your work. Here, you are discussing the particular problem or research question. A successful work is characterised by conclusiveness, thematic constancy, plausibility, and the right application of scientific methods. Adherence to definitions and a consistent way of analysing the problem or research question is indispensable.

The **conclusion** includes a discussion and review of the underlying research question, approach, and results. Apart from possible limitations regarding results and approach, a prospect for additional research demand may be pointed out. In sum, the conclusion should remind readers of your contribution. If necessary, add some last thoughts, which enhance the paper's significance.

Additional information, for example essential methodological details, which are too extensive but help verifying certain results or replicating a study, have to be summarised within an **appendix**. Be concise and avoid exact repetition of surveys. Label appendixes "APPENDIX A," "APPENDIX B," and so forth. A substantive title, such as "Items in Scales," should follow. Label tables within appendixes "Table A1," "B1," and so forth. Prefix a list of contents while continuing your page numbering.

4.1 Layout

If not otherwise specified, the following information refers to the entire text:

- DIN A4 paper in portrait format
- Margin: Left: 4 cm; right: 2 cm; top/bottom: 2,5 cm
- Write on one side of the paper
- Font: Times New Roman
- Font size: 12pt
- Line spacing within text: 1,5
- Line spacing within tables: 1,0
- Full justification (Blocksatz)
- Hyphenation
- Hanging indentation within directories or indexes
- Assume automatic settings regarding footnotes
- Pagination
- Within bibliography additional space of 12pt after each paragraph or reference

4.2 Front Page

The front page should be designed like the following page.



Otto Group Chair of Strategic Management

<Course name (for seminar papers only)>

Master Thesis / Seminar Paper

<Title>

<German Title (in case your Master Thesis is written in English)>

<Name of lecturer / first reviewer>

<Name of second reviewer (only for Master Thesis)>

Submitted by:

<Last name>, <First name>

<Matriculation number>

<Address>

<Post Code>

<City>

<E-Mail>

<Handover Date>

4.3 Pagination

Place page numbers in the upper right corner. Directories before the actual text have to be paged in Roman style (I, II, ...) starting from the index. The text (introduction, main part, and conclusion), appendix, and bibliography are to be paged in Arabic style (1, 2, ...).

4.4 Table of Contents

The index in front of your paper is supposed to give information on the structure, content and it reveals your way of reasoning. It refers to the respective number of the page of the paragraph. Please be sure to structure your index clearly and well balanced in order to avoid overlapping contents.

Ideally, use no more than four levels of headings. Use bold face for all four. Don't skip steps, meaning no second-level headings before first-level headings. Use second-, third-, and fourth-level headings in sets of two or more. Thus, a second sub-chapter has to follow necessarily after a first one (i.e.: If you have chapter 1.1, at least a second chapter 1.2 should follow - otherwise you have only chapter 1.). You should assure that the headings match exactly the wording in the text. Besides, each chapter or title is followed by text, meaning that there are never titles following each other with no continuous text in-between.

Directories as well as appendices are not part of the index. Construct a list of tables and figures as well as a list of abbreviations used and place it after the index.

The numeration of chapters does not end with a full stop.

4.5 Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be applied parsimoniously and thoughtfully. They are recommendable if it is common use or substantial space can be gained, as long repetitions are avoided. Avoid using them for the names of concepts. Abbreviations that can be found in common dictionaries do not need to be included in the list of abbreviations. Whereas, any other thematic and specific terms have to be abridged as follows:

Example:	...Resource-Based-View (RBV)...
	...The RBV is...

According to this illustration an abbreviation has to be introduced in brackets right after the first mention of the term. Then the abbreviation is applied only.

4.6 Figures and Tables

Tables display numeric or verbal information in a clear and compressed way. Every table is part of the text but should be comprehensible on its own. Any other forms of graphic illustrations rank as figures (schemes, diagrams etc.).

Tables and figures have to be numbered consecutively (one series for tables and another one for figures) and named appropriately. For each table or figure, centre "**TABLE**" or "**FIGURE**" with a number ("1," "2," etc.) at the top of the table or figure. Put the title underneath, also centred and boldface, but in upper- and lower-case letters.

Add the source of a figure or table in brackets right after the title. Differentiate between

- your own illustration, which is composed of neither an external content nor graphic form used by another author: (Source: Own illustration)
- an illustration, which you have designed by partly drawing on external contents or graphic ideas (Source: Following <author>, <year of publication>: <page>)
- an illustration, which is entirely extracted from another source: (Source: <author>, <year of publication>: <page>)

Example:

TABLE 1
Add your Title This Way (Source: Own illustration)

Each table or figure has to be introduced in your text.

Figures have to be drawn within a frame.

Please list all tables and figures in a suitable index at the beginning of your paper (after the index).

4.7 Footnotes

Footnotes comprise essential and complementary information. Their format is to be adopted from the automatic setting of your text processing programme (usually font size 10pt, single spaced, hanging indention etc.). Besides, footnotes have to be numbered consecutively with raised Arabic digits and separated from the text by a horizontal line at the bottom of the page. Within the text, footnotes are marked right after the full stop. If a footnote refers to a text within brackets or dashes, it is to be placed before the closing bracket or dash.

4.8 Citations

Positions, original thoughts and other important demonstrations that you make use of in your paper have to be proved by citation. You can choose to either reflect what authors wrote or quote directly.

Reflect what authors said by adhering to the following guidelines:

- I. Citations are made by short indications covering the author(s) last name(s) and the respective date of publication. Every reference has to be found within the bibliography and vice versa.
- II. Order citations *alphabetically*. Designate two or more works by one author (or by an identical group of authors) published in the same year by adding “a,” “b,” and so forth, after the year.
- III. If a paragraph or argument you are using refers to a specific passage within a source, mark this by adding the respective page numbers right after a colon within the citation.
- IV. If a work has two authors, give both names every time you cite it. For *three through six* authors, give all names the first time, then use “et al.” in citations. For *seven or more* authors, use “et al.” even for the first citation. (But the corresponding reference should give all the names.)

- V. For an article with no author, cite the periodical as author.
- VI. For reports, handbooks, and the like, cite the “corporate author” that produced them.
- VII. Use a regular citation (author, year) if you can identify an author of one of the types discussed above (human, periodical, or corporate). If not, give the Web address that was your source in parentheses.

- Examples:**
- I. But Van Dorn and Xavier (2001) presented conflicting evidence.
 - II. Several studies (Adams, 1994; Bernstein, 1988, 1992; Celas, 2000a, 2000b) support this conclusion.
 - III. Writing a book is “a long and arduous task” (Lee, 1998:3).
 - IV. **First citation**— (Foster, Whittington, Tucker, Horner, Hubbard, & Grimm, 2000).
Subsequent citation—(Foster et al., 2000).
 - V. Analysts predicted an increase in service jobs (*Wall Street Journal*, 1999).
 - VI. Analysts predict an increase in service jobs in the U.S. Industrial Outlook (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992).
Or
According to the 1999 *U.S. Industrial Outlook*, published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, service jobs will increase.
 - VII. This view was supported by FT.Com in 2007 (<http://www.ft.com/home/europe>).

4.9 Quotations

Quotations are literally adopted text lines from external sources. In general, direct quotes should be used sparingly and only if the exact wording appears to be important or strongly linked to the subject.

Short quotations containing no more than 40 words have to be marked by inverted commas and the respective citation (name of the author, year of publication, and page number) within your text.

Quotations with more than 40 words have to be justified as a separate and indented passage. The indentation equals a side margin of 1,25 cm. The quote is to be written within inverted commas by using font size 10pt and single-space. Please remember the respective citation at the end of the quote (between the inverted comma and full stop).

Direct quotes need to be identical with the original text, in wording, orthography, and punctuation. In case you need to change certain parts within the quotations, please adopt the following approach:

- I. Omissions within the quote have to be marked by brackets and three suspension marks in between.
- II. Insertions, supplementations, explanations, and clarifications are added within square brackets.
- III. Own accentuations are italicised and followed by [Accentuation by author] (Herv. v. Verf.).
- IV. If mistakes within the original text are likely to lead to misconceptions, add the word *sic* in square brackets directly after the respective passage.

5 Bibliography

A bibliography at the very end of your paper summarises all references used in alphabetical order. Every single citation within your text has to be named within the bibliography. The literature mentioned within this list is to be cited in an absolutely correct and complete form.

5.1 Order

Alphabetise references by the last name of a sole author, a first author, or an editor, or by the name of a corporate author (for instance, U.S. Census Bureau) or periodical (such as the *Wall Street Journal*) if there is no human author or editor. Order works by an identical author by year of publication, listing the *earliest first*. If the years of publication are also the same, differentiate entries by adding small letters (“a,” “b,” etc.) after the years. Repeat the author’s name for each entry.

5.2 Elements within the Bibliography

The formation of references, such as title or publication form, depends on the existing elements within a bibliography.

The following description gives an overview about the correct form of references.

5.2.1 Books

If the reference in question is a book, follow this form:

- Last names, initials (*separated by a space*)
- Year
- **Title** (*Boldface italic, capitalise only the first letter of the first word and of the first word after a long dash or colon*)
- City where published: Name of publisher.

Examples:

Granovetter, M. S. 1965. *Getting a job: A study of contracts and careers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kahn, R. L., & Boulding, E. (Eds.). 1964. *Power and conflict in organizations*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. 1978. *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

National Center for Education Statistics. 1992. *Digest of education statistics*. Washington DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

5.2.2 Periodicals

If the reference you want to add is a periodical, please refer to the following form:

- Authors' last names, initials.
- Year.
- Title (regular type; same single-capital rule as for books).
- ***Name of Periodical*** (boldface italic, title-style capitalisation),
- Volume number (issue number, *if needed*—see below): page numbers.

Include an issue number *only if every* issue of the referenced periodical begins with a page numbered 1. (Look at more than one issue to check). If an article has no author, the periodical is referenced.

Examples:

Shrivastava, P. 1995. The role of corporations in achieving ecological sustainability. *Academy of Management Review*, 20: 936–960.

Nonaka, I. 1991. The knowledge-creating company. *Harvard Business Review*, 69(6): 96–104.

Business Week. 1998. The best B-schools. October 19: 86–94.

Harvard Business Review. 2003. How are we doing? 81(4): 3.

5.2.3 Chapters in Books and Annuals

Follow this form when referring to specific chapters in books or annuals:

- Authors' last names, initials.
- Year.
- Title of chapter (regular type, single-capital rule).
- In Editors' initials and last names (Eds.),
- ***Title of book***: Page numbers.
- City (same rules as above): Publisher.

Examples:

Levitt, B., & March, J. G. 1988. Organizational learning. In W. R. Scott & J. F. Short (Eds.), *Annual review of sociology*, vol. 14: 319–340. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.

Dutton, J., Bartunek, J., & Gersick, C. 1996. Growing a personal, professional collaboration. In P. Frost & S. Taylor (Eds.), *Rhythms of academic life*: 239–248. London: Sage.

5.2.4 Unpublished Works

Unpublished works include working papers, dissertations, and papers presented at meetings. Please adhere to the following examples.

Examples:

Duncan, R. G. 1971. *Multiple decision-making structures in adapting to environmental uncertainty*. Working paper no. 54–71, Northwestern University Graduate School of Management, Evanston, IL.

Smith, M. H. 1980. *A multidimensional approach to individual differences in empathy*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin.

Wall, J. P. 1983. *Work and nonwork correlates of the career plateau*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Academy of Management, Dallas.

5.2.5 Electronic Documents

With electronic documents, please remember to save them as PDF. Include the following data:

- author's name, if known;
- the full title of the document;
- the full title of the work it is part of;
- the ftp, http, or other address;
- and the date the document was posted or accessed.

Example:

Purdue University (2009). *The owl at purdue*. Online <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>>. Effective 12.10.2009.

6 Evaluation Criteria

An outstanding scientific work is characterised by a rich and significant content, an efficient and adequate use of literature, and a rigour and intelligible methodology.

The following categories summarise the general evaluation approach at our Chair:

Content

- Structural Coherence (convincing and clear line of argument, ability to substantiate and discuss various statements)
- Originality of the content (development of something “new”)
- Reference to the state of the art within the subject domain
- Significance and relevance of the content, i.e. abstracting and introducing one’s work as an important contribution to the respective scientific discussion (answer to the question “So what?”)
- Depth and consistency of claims (involving various sources and perspectives)
- Rigour Methodology (accurate application of research methods)
- Conclusion and deduction of workable implications as well as limitations

Use of literature

- Appropriate documentation of all researched information (within text and bibliography)
- Adequate citation of other’s work (regarding punctuation, spelling, and grammar)
- Relevance and quality of literature used (A journals vs. non-authored internet sources)
- Variety of literature (not overly dependent on one source)

Method

- Thoughtful and comprehensible choice of methods (constitute research methods, awareness of respective strengths and weaknesses)
- Clear articulation of theoretical grounding and derivation of propositions and hypotheses
- Adequate description of data collection, analysis, and interpretation
- Consideration of validity and reliability aspects

7 Concluding Remarks

The underlying guidelines help you structuring and writing in accordance with international scientific style guides. Keep in mind that the quality of your scientific paper is highly contingent on a consistent compliance with formal requirements as well as an appropriate structure. Thus it is worth the time to carefully craft your line of argument.

Constantly reviewing and reworking your paper is crucial. Attract your audience for your ideas and contributions to the literature. Put yourself in their place. Accentuate the dominant features of your work right from the outline of your work.

At the end you should reflect on some basic questions:

Are the headings informative when read on their own?

Are tables and figures comprehensible without consulting the text?

Is the paper’s basic message clear?

Is the paper easy to read or are there any typographical details impeding the flow of reading?

Another important aspect of scientific work is the quality and appropriate amount of **literature** used.

One of students' main problems that occur especially within their first scientific paper is the reproduction of different sources of literature they read. Particularly basic and popular topics that offer literature in a broad range bring those problems about. But please resist from frequent direct citation, because your paper should be more than a summary of others' thoughts and phrases. This would only show that you are able to search the appropriate literature, but it would not prove that you are capable of elaborating basic issues on your own and question them critically if necessary.

For this reason, it is worth arranging enough time to study the respective literature and formulate one's own ideas. Otherwise you might tend to just copy the authors' phrases. First, reflect the literature and then try to work up the different manners of presentation. This helps you to build up an own "mind map" that you think is appropriate for your topic.

Beside the general application of literature within your text, it is vital to regard your references with respect to quality and quantity. There is no general recommendation for the quantity of sources. But experience has shown that the quality of cited sources far better reflects the quality of the respective paper. "Good" references show a sophisticated approach to the topic. But in order to get a profound idea of the subject, a certain number of sources is necessary, because only one who has read through many different texts can relate them and reveal those of higher quality.

The basic literature given by your lecturer is a good starting point for researching further literature. It is, however, just a starting point and *not* sufficient for your paper since the particular research of qualified sources is expected as a basic personal contribution. Please keep in mind to prove your argumentation by means of high-quality scholarly sources. Scholarly sources are those that are read by experts in the field. In this sense, you are expected to understand, reflect, and utilise high quality scholarly sources.

A first rough proxy for the quality of a journal is its rank in established journal rankings. While you do find good scholarly articles even in lower ranked outlets, it is still fair to say that on average the quality is higher in the top in comparison to the lower ranked journals. In the following, we list some more established rankings.

The Journal Quality List von Anne-Wil Harzing (probably the most comprehensive list)

<http://www.harzing.com/jql.htm>

Handelsblatt Journal Ranking

<http://www.handelsblatt.com/bwl-journals/>

Journal Ranking of the Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien

<http://bach.wu-wien.ac.at/bachapp/cgi-bin/fides/fides.aspx/fides.aspx?journal=true;lang=DE>

Journal Ranking des Verbands der Hochschullehrer für Betriebswirtschaft (VHB)

<http://pbwi2www.uni-paderborn.de/WWW/VHB/VHB-Online.nsf/id/EB24EF9AF51F72D2C125709600494116>

Finally, it is of paramount importance to remark that the underlying guidelines represent a living document. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact us in case you may find any mistakes or obscurities. In addition to this, our instructions should only be used in combination with your respective examination rules, which can be found on the Leuphana homepage.

8 Further Readings

For further readings, we highly recommend the following sources:

Academy of Management Journal (2008). *Academy of management journal – Style guide for authors*.

Online <http://www.aom.pace.edu/amj/style_guide.pdf>. Effective 12.10.2009.

Huff, A.S. 1999. *Writing for scholarly publication*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Huff, A.S. 2009. *Designing research for publication*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Purdue University (2009). *The owl at purdue*. Online

<<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>>. Effective 12.10.2009.

Starbuck, B. 1999. *Fussy professor starbuck's cookbook of handy-dandy prescriptions for ambitious authors*. Online <<http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~wstarbuc/Writing/Fussy.htm>>.