

General Guidance for Academic Thesis Development and Writing

Please note that all final thesis work for the CSM must be written in English

A How to approach your work

- 1 Formulate your topic very precisely as a question. When formulating the question (with a question mark; not just describing the topic) keep in mind that you will be writing an **analytical**, and not a descriptive, work.
- 2 Keep a clear focus for your research question and write between a quarter and half a page justifying your motivation in examining this topic.
- 3 Survey the **literature** (including statistics, legal sources, etc.):
 - Review the literature (also in class reading lists) and recent issues of relevant journals. Make use of multiple library catalogs and databases. See what literature, including international journals, is available in the library.
 - Read thoroughly a recent textbook on the topic, a recent handbook article, or an introductory article (e.g. a literature review). For topics with current relevance, search online newspaper archives.
 - Use citation management software (e.g. Citavi) to organize your literature sources and even your quotations (with page number) in a database. This will save time when you are writing your thesis and compiling your references.
- 4 For **empirical work** based on written surveys or interviews, design the questionnaire or interview questions and – **at an early date** – discuss it with your supervisor before sending it out. Do the analysis of your data after consulting the appropriate literature or talking with an advisor at the Leuphana Center for Methods.
- 5 Make a **provisional outline** of your proposed work and discuss this, along with your plan for gathering empirical data (see A4), with your supervisor. If you are writing a final thesis (bachelor and master thesis), you will need to submit a 5-page paper called a thesis proposal. Normally it will be reworked several times. The **thesis proposal** should contain:
 - The central question you will be answering in your work
 - The title, topic and scope (after narrowing topic)
 - Planned approach to writing the thesis
 - Provisional timeline
 - Relevant literature identified so far
 - Your motivation for dealing with the chosen topic
 - A preliminary rough outline

- 6 Meet with your **supervisor** to discuss your thesis proposal, and then revise it. You must submit your thesis proposal to your supervisor and receive her or his explicit approval before beginning work on your thesis.
- 7 Read the literature carefully and make use of other libraries (e.g. University of Hamburg). It is especially important that you thoroughly read the literature in **international journals**.
- 8 Use your reading to **refine your outline** and, if necessary, speak with your supervisor again.
- 9 Write a first **draft** of the thesis. Do not exceed the maximum number of pages: Remember that quality is more important than quantity!
- 10 **Give your draft “a rest”** so that you can see it in a new light (1-2 weeks if possible).
- 11 Turn your rough draft into a **final draft** and then carefully proofread your work (checking hyphenation, formatting, grammar, spelling, etc.).
- 12 Submit the thesis to the Prüfungsamt as per the guidance at www.leuphana.de/college/studium/pruefungen.html

B Document design

The look of your final text creates a first impression of your thesis and may also determine how it is read. (Remember a professional presentation creates “goodwill” among your readers.)

1 Title page

The following information should be on the title page:

- Title of your thesis
- Your name, address, email and student ID number
- Type of work (e.g. master’s thesis), name of your lecturer/supervisor, and if appropriate, name of the module
- Date

2 Formatting

Line spacing: 1.5. Margins: 2.5 cm (above, below, left and right). Chose and stick with one font.

Sans serif fonts: 11-point Calibri or 11-point Arial.

Serif fonts: 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Georgia.

3 Length

Unless the examination regulations specify otherwise, a master’s thesis is 50 pages long with a maximum length of 120 pages (without appendices) and a bachelor’s thesis 30 pages with a maximum length of 50 pages (without appendices). Do not attempt to reduce the length of the text by placing important text passages, figures or tables in the appendix. Instead, you should write concisely and to the point. In general, footnotes are not used. Either the information is important – in which case it is an integral part of the text – or it is not – and has no place in your work.

4 Outline

Write an outline that clearly shows the development of your thesis. You should have a heading or sub-heading every 2-3 pages in your text.

5 Tables, figures and appendices

Tables and figures that support important claims belong in the text. Within figure images, use a sans serif font with a type size between 8 and 14 points. When describing the table or figure, include a reference (for example: see Table 1). Tables, figures and other documents that would impede

reading and are not extensively commented on in the text should be placed in an appendix. If you have more than one appendix, they should be numbered.

6 Proofreading

Make sure that your text does not contain any language errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization etc.). Consistently follow either British or American spelling rules.

7 Citations

Every passage in your text that is derived from another person's work must be attributed to that person in an in-text citation referring the reader to your source (do not put the reference in a footnote). If you use someone's exact words, then you must put these in quotation marks followed by an in-text citation with a page number. Tables, graphs, images, etc. must also include a citation. If you have made, for example, a graph yourself, please refrain from making the unnecessary citation ("own graph"). All material that is not attributed to someone else is, of course, your own work. Detailed information about the source is found in References at the end of the text. There are a number of conventions to follow in citing your sources, please follow **the APA Style rules**:

- In-text citations for direct quotations from someone else's work: the quoted text is in quotation marks, followed by the author's last name, the date of publication and the page number in parentheses.
Example: "Not every improvement of eco-efficiency is equal to an improvement of environmental performance." (Strecker & Jacobsen, 2009, p.20).
- In-text citations for referencing information or ideas from another person's work: Do not use quotation marks, but do follow the passage with a citation, including the page number when appropriate.
Example: (Weber & Schäffer, 2001).
- If there are more than two authors to a work, name the first author and follow it with "et al." (Latin *et alii* meaning "and others").
Example: (Müller et al., 2004, p.45.).

8 References section

The references listed under the title "References" at the end of your text contain bibliographic details of all of the sources cited in your text. They are listed in alphabetical order by lead author. Do not subdivide your references into books, journals, legal texts etc. However, interviews, personal conversation etc. are listed separately after the References.

9 Reference details

As a general rule, all citations should allow the reader to unambiguously identify and locate the sources you have used in your work and they should follow a consistent style. **Follow the APA Style** (<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>). Please ensure to include DOI references for journal articles where available. Do not put a period after a DOI or URL because it may interfere with link functionality.

- **Books:** Last name, Initial of first name (Year of publication). Title: Subtitle. Location of publisher: Publisher, Edition (only if not the first edition).
Example: Freeman, R.E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Marshfield Mass.: Pitman, 2nd edition.
Note: The edition is given in the language of the source text. If there is more than one place of publication use only the first one listed in the publication.
- **Journal articles:** Last name, Initial of first name (Year of publication). Title of article: Subtitle. *Name of the journal*, Volume number or year(Issue), Article pages. DOI address

Example: Donaldson, T. & Preston, L.E. (1995). The stakeholder theory of the corporation: concepts, evidence, and implications. *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20(1), 65-91.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/258887>

Note: Volume and issue number are given in the language of the source text.

- *Chapter in edited books*: Last name, Initial of first name (Year of publication). Title of the chapter. In: Last name, Initial of first name (Ed.), *Title of the edited book* (pp.XX-XX). Publisher.

Example: Lüdeke-Freund, F., Bohnsack, R., Breuer, H. & Massa, L. (2019). Research on Sustainable Business Model Patterns: Status quo, Methodological Issues, and a Research Agenda. In: Aagaard, A. (Ed.), *Sustainable Business Models – Innovation, Implementation and Success* (pp.25-60). Palgrave Studies in Sustainable Business in Association with Future Earth.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93275-0_2

Note: The publisher is given in the language of the source text.

- *Newspaper articles*: Last name, Initial of first name (Year of publication, Date). Title of the article, Name of the newspaper, link.

Example: Abboud, L. (2019, September 25). British farmers face uncertainty despite ‘green Brexit’ promises. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/6e159a24-be7d-11e9-9381-78bab8a70848>

- *Theses and dissertations*: Last name, Initial of first name (Year of publication). Title: Subtitle. Academic institution: Type of thesis.

Example: Jensen, T. (1989). External Control of Organizations. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill: PhD thesis.

- *Webpage*: Last name, Initial of first name (or organization) (Year of document, Date). Retrieved date, from online address.

Example: Umweltbundesamt (2019, September 27). Klimaschutz in Unternehmen: Diskussion zu Klimamanagement. Retrieved October 7, 2019, from <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/klimaschutz-in-unternehmen-diskussion-zu>

When reference details are missing, you should use the following terms in parentheses. For “No author”: (anonymous); for “no year of publication”: (no date); For “no page numbers”: (no pages). In case of several publications without author please add “a”, “b”, “c”, etc. for clear identification.

10 Figures, tables and abbreviations

Separate lists of figures, tables and abbreviations follow the table of contents.

C Evaluation criteria

Academic work at the CSM is evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Does your work address the topic?
- Is your coverage of the topic complete?
- Does the structure of your work show a clear and balanced development of the thesis?
- Do you treat the literature in its breadth and depth? Is it well integrated in the text?
- Does your work show independent thinking in analysis and argumentation? Is there an innovative use of concepts?
- Is your argumentation clear and logical?
- Is this clearly a piece of academic work? Does it conform to the expectations regarding your academic level, e.g. bachelor’s or master’s degree student?
- Does the presentation of your work show care in formatting, language use, punctuation, citation style etc.?