

**Writing a Bachelor & Master Thesis –**

**A Guideline**

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Dear students

Within this Kick-off Package, you find many very helpful readings on the topic of writing a thesis. Please, do not get threatened by the number of references at first sight. Start with the readings that are marked with an “\*” in each section. These references will be the most useful one’s for you to start reading and thinking about the specific topic. Then, when you want to deepen your understanding of the topic, you can dive the other readings. Of course, not every topic may be of equal importance to you. On some topics you may already be an expert, while in other areas you have still greater potential for improvement. In any event, these readings provide insightful advice on how you can write a great thesis.

On page 10, you will find a sample “Kick-off Page.” This page is intended to help you structuring your thesis project. Before getting officially started, this document will be the guideline for further discussing your thesis with me (if we have not agreed on another procedure).

If you know of other helpful readings on the topics listed below or you think that topics are missing, please write me an email (stefanie.habersang @leuphana.de).

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(I thank and hereby give credit to Benjamin Bader and Christoph Seckler and Hannah Trittin-Ulrich who developed this guideline

in the first place and graciously allowed me to adopt their template for my own needs.)

# Introduction

The primary purpose of any thesis (Seminar paper, bachelor thesis, and master thesis) is to train the student in the process of scholarly research and writing under the direction and supervision of an experienced faculty member. Still, it is the student’s responsibility to work on the subject independently, creating own ideas and arguments in a certain subject. A major goal is for the student to prove that they are able to successfully work on an academic problem, choosing and applying appropriate methods, and to present the results in a way that they are qualified to contribute to the generation of new knowledge. Writing an academic paper is both challenging and beneficial at the same time. Of course, it demands a lot of time, effort, sometimes struggling, but the final result should be a manuscript, one is satisfied with and proud of. It expresses one’s very own thoughts and the solution to an academic problem, and sometimes is the start of a promising academic career.

A motivated and ambitious student and an equally engaged supervisor are the basis of a successful, interesting thesis. In this Kick-off package you find guidelines on how to find a topic, actually write your thesis, how to point out your contribution and many more things. While there are also certain formal requirements, which can be looked at the end of this document and are presented in the seminar or your individual thesis Kick-off, the first part is intended to help you ensuring an orderly, uniform presentation of vital information – your research! These requirements apply to all kinds of theses. Overall, your work should be written in clear, grammatically correct English or German (depending on the agreement with your supervisor). Words need to be spelled and divided correctly. Your sentence structure must be clear and appropriate to the standards of academic writing.

Please note that while this guide focuses on issues of actually “creating” the thesis, for the process of submitting the thesis, the rules of the examination authority (Prüfungsamt) apply. It is your responsibility to make sure that you obey to the General Examination Rules as well as the discipline-related appendices. In case of doubt, bring any issues up ahead of time by asking your supervisor and/or the staff of the examination authority (Prüfungsamt).

# Types of Academic Papers

During your study time, depending on what major and minor you chose and whether you are obtaining a master’s degree on top of your bachelor degree, you will be required to write and turn it a certain number of academic papers. From the very first paper in your phase to the final graduation project, your thesis (or maybe a PhD later on), the standards will vary. The next part of this guide is intended to outline the specific demands and formal requirements of these types of academic papers.

## **Seminar Paper**

Broadly speaking, a paper is the most common form of an academic paper and you will write quite some of them during your studies. Typically, the thesis will be based on the topic worked on in the seminar and you will develop your ideas over the time of the course. This can either be as a group work or you will be solely responsible, depending on the respective setting. In any event, several students will write a thesis in a common research area and often also present their work (milestones as well as final results) in the seminar.

Before starting the actual paper, you will develop your research question(s) and craft an outline, all supervised by your academic advisor. At that point you are already familiar with the respective literature and choose and apply appropriate methods to solve your problems. Typically, a seminar paper contains approximately 3 pages (1,400 words) per ECTS credit rewarded for the seminar (but please review class specific instructions). In each seminar Kick-off, the exact requirements in terms of word-count will be outlined again, to also account for possible other parts (e.g. presentation) and group work, that affect grading and the amount of pages required in a seminar paper.

## **Bachelor Thesis**

The bachelor thesis is the final piece of academic work that, assuming you meet all other requirements in your examination regulations and do not fail, rewards you with your first academic title. This is a great achievement and should be documented in your thesis. It proves that you are able to solve a problem on your own, correctly applying appropriate methods, and present the results in a way that suits academic standards. You may make use of all your knowledge you acquired during your studies and are invited to present own ideas and arguments.

In contrast to a seminar paper, you will either choose from a topic from the website or come up with an own idea for a bachelor thesis. During your writing time (currently 9 weeks), you will be guided by experienced academic staff and can make use of the office hours in case you need further assistance. However, you are in charge of your thesis and it is your responsibility to proactively work on the assigned topic. Appointments with your advisor should be used for discussing ideas and issues based on your input, it is not a Q&A session where the advisor dictates your paper.

## **Master Thesis**

When you write your master thesis, you probably have written quite many papers before, including your bachelor thesis. Therefore, you are already experienced in the field of academic writing and now, as the final piece of your studies, you will have six months in order to do a deep, profound analysis of a specific topic. This is both, a great chance as well as a lot of work. From finding the idea, crafting your first outline, perhaps doing an empirical analysis, and finally holding the result in your hands (and after the thesis being graded receiving your master degree!) it is a long process, usually with ups and downs. However, when looking back, most students are quite happy with what they achieved and some of them even decide to stay in academia.

Regardless of your future plans, your master thesis project starts with finding a topic. As said before, you will be engaged in a six months full-time project! This gives you enough time and freedom to investigate a topic you are interested in from almost every perspective. As with the bachelor thesis, you will either choose from a topic from the website or come up with your own idea. Again, you will be guided by experienced academic staff who is there for you if you need further assistance.

In contrast to your bachelor thesis though, you will most likely see your supervisor more often, especially when you are conducting empirical research. Even though this guide is intended for any thesis project, the master’s thesis is probably the kind of project it is most useful for. In the following sections, there are many important pieces of support in any phase of your project. Take the time to go through this guide, read the relevant literature and, in case you have problems or questions, contact your supervisor to work out a solution.

However, again you are in charge of your thesis and it is your responsibility to proactively work on the assigned topic. You will present the final result and you determine how much (or little) effort you put in this work and you will be the one who will receive the consequences in terms of grading, good or bad. You are writing the thesis for yourself, to finish your studies, please keep that in mind. If you give your best and are highly involved in your thesis project, the result is typically rewarding for both, you and your supervisor who ideally is a mentor and sparring partner for your ideas, rather than a co-author.

# Examination Rules and Final Statement

Your bachelor or master thesis closes with a signed statement where you confirm (with your signature) that you wrote the thesis on your own, without any help not mentioned in the text, and also not using any other sources or auxiliary means then stated in your thesis. A prepared template of such statement can be found on the website of the general examination authority (Prüfungsamt).

For both kinds of theses please again consider: details concerning the official submission can be found in your respective examination regulations and in case of doubt should be looked up there.

# A Note on Plagiarism and AI

Plagiarism is defined as the use of another person’s ideas, knowledge, or language without appropriate crediting of the source. Plagiarism is theft of intellectual property, and therefore is a serious offense. It cannot be tolerated in academic work. Any evidence of plagiarism in a student paper will result in a failing grade for the course. It is also inappropriate to use very long quotes from an author even if the material is properly cited and enclosed in quotation marks. Such a practice raises the possibility that students do not really understand the material they are quoting. Ideas should be expressed in the students’ own words except for the occasional use of quotations from other sources to highlight or support specific points. For further information see the Harvard Guide for Using Sources and its guidelines on avoiding plagiarism: <https://www.extension.harvard.edu/resources-policies/resources/avoiding-plagiarism>

In the realm of Bachelor's and Master's theses and any seminar paper, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software (for example Chat GPT) has become increasingly prevalent. While these AI tools can offer support for data analysis, grammar checks and content creation, their usage for any of these purposes needs to be transparently declared in your thesis, including the specific prompts or algorithms employed. This transparency not only ensures academic integrity but also allows for the reproducibility and scrutiny of findings. Moreover, students must diligently guard against plagiarism by properly citing the sources of AI-generated content and rigorously verifying the originality of their work.

Furthermore, is crucial to exercise caution when inputting data into AI systems, particularly sensitive or

confidential information, to safeguard against breaches of privacy and confidentiality. For example, you cannot upload interview transcripts into AI software, as this violates an agreement of informed consent. The following website provides additional information:

https://www.leuphana.de/lehre/weiterbildung/details/das-ist-chatgpt-studierende-informiert-zu-

reflektiertem-gebrauch-anregen.html

# A Guide to Relevant Literature & Writing your Thesis

The next part is intended to guiding you through the process of writing your thesis – at any stage. From the very beginning when looking for a topic, to different methodological approaches, actual writing of your thesis and structuring your arguments, to finally presenting the result, there is useful material to support you out there and you are more than welcome to use it!

## **Finding an interesting topic**

\*Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. 2007. Constructing mystery: Empirical matters in theory development. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4): 1265-1281.

Alvesson, M. & Sandberg, J. 2013. *Constructing research questions: Doing interesting research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.

Colquitt, J. A. & George, G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ—part 1: Topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(3): 432-435.

\*Davis, M. S. 1971. That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1(2): 309-344.

## **Choosing an appropriate research design**

\*Bono, J. E. & McNamara, G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ—Part 2: Research design. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(4): 657-660.

Edmondson, A. C. & McManus, S. E. 2007. Methodological fit in management field research. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4): 1155-1179.

## **Conceptual research design**

Cornelissen, J. 2017. Editor’s comments: Developing propositions, a process model, or a typology? Addressing the challenges of writing theory without a boilerplate. *Academy of Management Review 42*(1): 1-9.

Mintzberg, H. 2005. Developing theory about the development of theory. *Great minds in management: The process of theory development*: 355-372.

\*Smithey Fulmer, I. 2012. Editor's comments: The craft of writing theory articles—Variety and similarity in AMR. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(3): 327-331.

Whetten, D. A., Felin, T. & King, B. G. 2009. The practice of theory borrowing in organizational studies: Current issues and future directions. *Journal of Management*, 35(3): 537-563.

## **Qualitative methods design**

\*Bansal, P. & Corley, K. 2012. Publishing in AMJ—Part 7: What's different about qualitative Research? *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(3): 509-513.

Corley, K. 2011. The coming of age for qualitative research: Embracing the diversity of qualitative methods. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(2): 233-237.

Flick, U., von Kardoff, E. & Steinke, I. (Eds.). 2004. *A companion to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

\*Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G. & Hamilton, A. L. 2013. Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational research methods*, 16(1), 15-31.

Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989. Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 532-550.

Eisenhardt, K. M. & Graebner, M. E. 2007. Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1): 25-32.

Langley, A. 1999. Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 691-710.

Locke, E. A. 2007. The case for inductive theory building. *Journal of Management*, 33(6): 867-890.

Siggelkow, N. 2007. Persuasion with case studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50(1): 20-24.

\*Suddaby, R. 2006. From the editors: What grounded theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4): 633-642.

## **Structuring your argument**

\*Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G. & Williams, J. M. 2003. *The craft of research (2 ed.)*: University of Chicago press. PART III.

## **Drafting your thesis**

\*Bem, D. J. 1987. Writing the empirical journal article. In M. P. Zanna & J. M. Darley (Eds.), *The complete academic: A practical guide for the beginning social scientist*: 171-201. New York: Random House.

\*Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. 2003. *The craft of research (2)*: University of Chicago press. PART IV.

Grant, A. M. & Pollock, T. G. 2011. Publishing in AMJ—Part 3: Setting the hook. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54(5): 873-879.

Peyton Jones, S. 2013. *How to write a great research paper: Seven simple suggestions*. In Cambridge University (Ed.), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3dkRsTqdDA.

## **Improving your writing style**

Huff, A. S. 1999. *Writing for scholarly publication*, Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage.

\*Ragins, B. R. (2012). Editor's comments: Reflections on the craft of clear writing. *Academy of Management Review*, *37*(4), 493-501.

Starbuck, W. H. 1999. *Fussy professor Starbuck's cookbook of handy-dandy prescriptions for ambitious academic authors*: www.stern.nyu.edu/wstarbuc/writing/Fussy.htm.

Williams, J. M. & Colomb, G. G. 2012. Style: *The basics of clarity and grace (4th ed.)*. Boston: Longman.

## **How to reference properly**

\*Campion, M. A. 1997. Rules for references: Suggested guidelines for choosing literary citations for research articles in applied psychology. *Personnel Psychology*, 50(1): 165-167.

## **What is your theoretical and practical contribution?**

Bacharach, S. B. 1989. Organizational Theories: Some criteria for evaluation. *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4): 496-515.

Corley, K. G. & Gioia, D. A. 2011. Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, 36(1): 12-32.

Cornelissen, J. P., & Durand, R. 2014. Moving forward: Developing theoretical contributions in management studies. *Journal of Management Studies, 51*(6), 995-1022.

Feldman, D. 2004. What are we talking about when we talk about theory? *Journal of Management*, 30(5): 565-567.

Geletkanycz, M. & Tepper, B. J. 2012. Publishing in AMJ–part 6: Discussing the implications. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(2): 256-260.

\*Locke, K. & Golden-Biddle, K. 1997. Constructing opportunities for contribution: Structuring intertextual coherence and "problematizing" in organizational studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(5): 1023-1062.

Suddaby, R. 2014. Editor's comments: Why theory? *Academy of Management Review*, 39(4): 407-411.

## **Presenting your thesis**

Davies, G. 2010. The Presentation Coach. UK: Capstone Publishing Ltd. Chapter 1-7.

\*Great Link to Video on Principles of Power Point Presentations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iwpi1Lm6dFo

## **Ethical considerations**

Autor, D. H. 2011. Correspondence. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25(3): 239–240.

Bedeian, A. G., Taylor, S. G., & Miller, A. N. 2010. Management science on the credibility bubble: Cardinal sins and various misdemeanors. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(4): 715-725.

\*Senat der Leuphana Universität Lüneburg. 2009. Richtlinie der Leuphana Universität Lüneburg zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis und zum Verfahren zum Umgang mit wissenschaftlichem Fehlverhalten. *In Leuphana Universität Lüneburg (Ed.)*. Lüneburg.

\*Harvard Guide for Using Sources and its guidelines on avoiding plagiarism: [http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do? keyword=k70847&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup106849](http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?%20keyword=k70847&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup106849)

# The Kick-off Page

The Kick-off Page is intended to structure the first discussion with your supervisor. Thus, the notes can still be rough. To help you preparing the Kick-off Page and your thesis, use the readings in the Kick-off Package.



# Other Useful Information

## Finding Literature

The following links are very helpful for finding literature:

Google Scholar: http://scholar.google.de/

Web of Knowledge: https://apps.webofknowledge.com/

Leuphana Library: http://katalog.leuphana.gbv.de/DB=1/LNG=DU

## Use A Reference Programm!

It is highly recommended to use a citation program for writing your thesis. This way you will have less trouble with the references and bibliography (especially at the end of your thesis). There are quite many reference programs out there, examples are EndNote, Citavi, or Mendeley. Which one you use is up to you, however, use it from the very beginning in order to get the most out of it. While the first two are commercial solutions (for Citavi there exists a Campus License for our students), Mendeley is a free, open-source software (www.mendeley.com).

# Highly Regarded Journals in the Field of Management and Organization

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Journal** | **Abbreviation** | **Impact Factor** | **5-Year Impact** |
| 1 | ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW | AMR | 10,631 | 14,170 |
| 2 | ACADEMY MANAGEMENT ANNALS | AMA | 12,283 | 18,616 |
| 3 | JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT | JOM | 8,080 | 8,027 |
| 4 | ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL | AMJ | 4,974 | 11,891 |
| 5 | JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY | JAP | 5,067 | 6,952 |
| 6 | ORGANIZATION SCIENCE | OS | 3,257 | 4,975 |
| 7 | JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDIES | JIBS | 7,724 | 5,534 |
| 8 | ORGANIZATIONAL RESEARCH METHODS | ORM | 4,918 | 5,713 |
| 9 | JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES | JMS | 5,839 | 5,196 |
| 10 | JOURNAL OF BUSINESS VENTURING | JBV | 6,000 | 4,571 |
| 11 | JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR | JOB | 2,986 | 4,734 |
| 12 | STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL | SMJ | 5,471 | 7,859 |
| 13 | MANAGEMENT SCIENCE | MS | 4,219 | 3,935 |
| 14 | ORGANIZATION STUDIES | OS | 3,941 | 3,355 |
| 15 | ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY | ASQ | 7,313 | 8,391 |
| 16 | ORGANIZATION | ORG | 2,701 | 3,949 |
| 17 | ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT LEARNING AND EDUCATION | AMLE | 3,271 | 4,902 |
| 18 | LONG RANGE PLANNING | LRP | 4,041 | 4,365 |
| 19 | ACCOUNTING ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETY | AOS | 3,412 | 4,806 |
| 20 | HUMAN RELATIONS | HR | 3,632 | 4,659 |

Teilrating: Allgemeine BWL: <https://vhbonline.org/fileadmin/user_upload/JQ3_ABWL.pdf>

Teilrating: Organisation/ Personal: <https://vhbonline.org/fileadmin/user_upload/JQ3_ORG_PERS.pdf>

Teilrating: Strategisches Management: <https://vhbonline.org/fileadmin/user_upload/JQ3_SM.pdf>

# Style Guide

## **Submitting your thesis**

Typically, bachelor and master theses will be submitted directly to the examination authority (Prüfungsamt) and then distributed to your supervisors. They can be submitted virtually. For seminar papers, the rules differ. The following procedures are intended to give you an idea how the process works. As pointed out before, for the official regulations and requirements, please consult your examination authority ([bachelor Prüfungsamt/](https://www.leuphana.de/college/kontakt/administration-und-pruefungen.html) [master Prüfungsamt](https://www.leuphana.de/services/studierendenservice/ansprechpartner-im-studierendenservice/gs.html)). These are the ones that are legally binding!

* Seminar theses will be handed directly to your supervisor. Please submit via MyStudy. The due date will be announced in the seminar, failure to deliver on time will result in a deduction of your grade or in failing the seminar.
* For bachelor and master theses, a virtual copy has to be submitted to the examination authority by the due date. The due date will be officially announced to you by the examination authority. Failure to deliver on time will result in failing in your thesis.

## **Cover Sheet**

Each thesis has to contain a cover sheet. Basically, you are free to design your own cover sheet, however, it must contain the following information:

* Name of the Professor supervising your thesis, in this case, Prof. Dr. Habersang
* If not supervised by Prof. Dr. Habersang herself, in addition name of your academic supervisor
* Title of your thesis
* Type of thesis (Seminar, bachelor, master)
* Your name, matriculation number, address, and Email address
* Date of submission

On the next page, you will find a sample.

## **Sample Cover Sheet**

****

Bachelor’s / Master’s / Seminar Thesis

<TITLE>
<German Title, in case thesis written in English>

**Prof. Dr. Stefanie Habersang**

Institute of Management and Organization

Professor for Business Administration, particularly Digital Transformation

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

<Name of first reviewer, usually Prof. Dr. Stefanie Habersang>

<Name of second reviewer>

Supervised by <Name of supervisor>

Submitted by:

<Last name>,<First name> <Handover Date>

<Matriculation number>

<Address>

<ZIP Code> <City>

<Email>

## **Abstract**

Each thesis starts with a 100-200 word abstract, which includes a brief summary of the content and the main findings of the thesis. The abstract is mandatory. In the abstract, try to be as “reader-friendly” as possible, so that also non-specialists will grasp the core of your study. Also, do not use any references in the abstract. Typically, the abstract is written at the end of your research process. Please also add six keywords to your abstract, just the way you know it from journal articles you read. This way you provide the reader with a short summary of your work, also indicating in which academic sub-fields the thesis can be classified.

## **General Structure**

A systematic structure is the core of your thesis. When compiling your final document, make sure to include all parts in the right order. The following structure is, in general, valid for any academic paper and kind of thesis. For further information, please refer to the respective literature referenced above.

1. Cover sheet
2. Abstract
3. Table of Content
4. List of Figures
5. List of Tables
6. List of Abbreviations
7. Body (your “actual thesis”)
8. Reference list
9. Appendix
10. Interviews, including transcripts (when doing qualitative research)
11. Surveys, including code book (when doing quantitative research)
12. Declaration of Authorship / Final Statement

The Table of Content reflects the structure of your thesis. Make sure that your (sub-)topics are mutually exclusive and, if important for the thesis, collectively exhaustive. Your headlines should be precise and succinct. Avoid “one-word-headlines” as well as long-winding phrases. The Table of Content is essential and basically the “backbone of your research” – so invest enough time in crafting it and make sure that it reflects the actual content of your paper as well as the focus of your research. The literature referenced above will help you on this topic.

## **Table of Content**

A typical traditional research thesis is usually broken into four to six chapters, including a short introduction and conclusion. The chapter structure helps break the thesis into manageable parts and ensures progression from one theme to another. The introduction spells out the focus of the study and its objectives or research questions, explaining why these were interesting to the author and 'locating' them in the field. It should also include an outline of the subsequent chapters. The introduction is then followed by a theory section, outlining the theoretical framework and specifying the status quo of knowledge and research gaps regarding the topic. Whether your methodology is empirical or literature-based, there is usually a separate chapter providing an account and justification of the research design and methodology adopted. After the findings are presented, the discussion should reflect on the implications of your ‘findings’ for wider theory and where relevant, for practice, picking up themes about the rationale of the study in your introduction. How the substantive chapters are organized will depend on personal preference and the nature of the research. However, you must ensure that your treatment is sufficiently analytical, integrating conceptual and empirical material. The IMO guidelines provide more detail on this (see website).

## **Thesis Structure**

Specifically, a thesis contains the following elements in the order in which they are mentioned:

The cover sheet should contain the following information: Title and subtitle of the paper, name of the supervising professor, name of the author, name and location of the university, institute, course of study, aspired academic degree, and month and year of thesis submission. The relevant examination must be considered. The IMO guidelines provide you with the cover sheet layout.

Formally, the table of contents represents the structure of the thesis. It should thus have already a numeration. However, the first text page is numbered 1.

* The structure of the thesis should ensure a logical flow of thoughts from the introduction to the end. Incoherent individual paragraphs and/or sections should be avoided. The individual outline points should be in a logical relationship to the sub-points; i.e. the sub-points assigned to an outline level must also belong to the same content level
* For logical reasons, each outline level for which subitems are created must contain at least two subitems ("Who says A, must also say B").
* The form of the outline is not prescribed; any form of outline can be chosen which brings the items in a logical relationship to form a structure.

The structure is followed by a list of figures and tables and a list of abbreviations. These are only

recommended if the number of figures/tables or abbreviations used is high and you consider it useful for the sake of clarity. In general, abbreviations should be avoided because they disturb the flow of reading in the paper.

In the body of the thesis, care must be taken to ensure that all points in the outline also appear as headings. In general, the text begins with an introduction, in which the question and the relevance of the topic are explained, and the structure of the paper is introduced. In the second part, the theoretical or conceptual framework is elaborated, necessary definitions of terms are made, and theoretical models and concepts are introduced. The main part of the thesis consists of an independent theoretical or empirical treatment of the research question. In the case of an empirical paper, this also preludes with a chapter on methods. In the final part, the most important results are summarized, the limits of the findings are discussed, and suggestions for further research are made. The main text is typically structured by using the first-level chapters indicated. Chapters should be mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. It helps

you to secure a comprehensive discussion of your research question and at the same time helps you focus and avoid redundant content.

A typical structure for empirical work is as follows:

1. Introduction

1.1. Phenomenon/problem and relevance

1.2. Research goal and research question(s)

1.3. Structure of the work

2. Conceptual and theoretical foundations

2.1. Concept A

2.2. Concept B

2.3. Theoretical perspective

2.4. (Preliminary) Conceptual framework

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

3.3. Data collection

3.4. Data analysis

4. Results/Analysis

5. Discussion

5.1. Summary

5.2. Main discussion points related to core results

5.3. Future research

5.4. Practical implications

5.5. Limitations

6. Conclusion

A typical structure for conceptual work is:

1. Introduction

1.1. Phenomenon/problem and relevance

1.2. Research aim and question(s)

1.3. Structure of the work

2. Theoretical and conceptual foundations

3. “Main part”

3.1. X

3.2. Y

3.3. Z

4. Discussion

4.1. Summary

4.2. Main discussion points related to core results

4.3. Future research

4.4. Practical implications

4.5. Limitations

5. Conclusion

The bibliography must include the name (surname and full or abbreviated first name) of the author or editor, the title of the papers and the place of publication (title of the journal with issue number and page number or book title with geographical place of publication and, if applicable, page numbers) as well as the respective year of publication. Internet sources must be marked with the date of the page call. There are different options for formatting the bibliography (see examples from academic journals such as Academy of Management Journal). The important thing is uniformity.

Additional information or large tables/illustrations may be included in the appendix. Typically, content units in the appendix are numbered A.1 or A.I, A.2 or A.II etc. These must include a declaration on oath (after the cover page) that the author has prepared the thesis independently and exclusively with the help of the sources indicated (including the use of AI tools for any purpose).

## **Specific Body of the Thesis**

According to the time, you have to work on your thesis, the lengths is adjusted. Basically, a seminar thesis is the shortest version, the bachelor thesis is in between, and the master’s thesis is the longest. When judging the length, only the actual body of the thesis is counted, appendices, for instance, are not included. In order to be fair, all equal types of theses need to be of equal length. Often, it is harder to produce a short text rather than a long one – while still delivering the same context, of course. So please avoid both, too short and vacuous theses as well as overloaded, long-winding ones. **The goal is to meet the specifications below, with a tolerance of +/- 10 per cent.**

* Seminar papers are somewhat special. They can be written in groups or by individuals, as the only study achievement you receive credits for as well as part of a bigger examination system, for instance in addition to a presentation. Therefore, the length will be announced in the seminar Kick-off by your respective supervisor.
* A bachelor thesis is about 15,000 words in length, which equals 30 pages (single line spacing).
* A master thesis is about 22,500 words in lengths, which equals 45 pages (single line spacing).

If not specified otherwise, use the following layout for the entire thesis.

* DIN A4 paper in portrait format (single pages can be landscaped if necessary, e.g. for bigger tables)
* Margins: 4cm left, 2cm right, 2,5cm top and bottom
* Font: Times New Roman
* Font size: 12pt
* Line spacing within text: 1.5
* Line spacing within tables: 1.0
* Full justification (Blocksatz)
* Hyphenation
* Hanging indention within directories or indexes
* Pagination, lower right corner
* Print on both sides

# Administrative aspects and deadlines for supervision of Bachelor/Master thesis

Please read carefully the following instructions, if you are interested in being supervised in your bachelor/master thesis by Professor Dr. Stefanie Habersang.

#### Contact

You may reach me via email: stefanie.habersang@leuphana.de

If you are contacting me for the first time, please provide the following information: Your name and what you study, my courses that you may have attended, what (broad) topic you want to address in your thesis, what is your general timeframe, and why do you think I am the appropriate supervisor for your thesis.

#### Supervision

I only supervise thesis that fall into my area of expertise and are based on qualitative methods. This includes topics relating generally to the following topics:

* Digitalization & Sustainability
* Digital-ecological transformation
* Platform work
* Platform organizing
* Strategy & Digitalization

Mandatory deadlines

Deadlines Summer Term

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| February  | Sign up in mystudy for module “Abschlussarbeiten schreiben”You will receive information about when this is possible through the study service(newsletter or email)! The course will be listed under the previous winter term.Talk to your desired supervisors first, ideally in December/January!Then sign up with the course of the respective supervisor. |
| March | Reach out to your supervisor with first ideas |
| April | Develop an exposé and include feedback on exposé by supervisor. |
| End of April | Formally register to write your thesis.After submission, you have five months for completion. |
| End of September | Submit your thesis |

Deadlines Winter Term

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| August  | Sign up in mystudy for module “Abschlussarbeiten schreiben”You will receive information about when this is possible through the study service(newsletter or email)! The course will be listed under the previous winter term.Talk to your desired supervisors first, ideally in July/August!Then sign up with the course of the respective supervisor. |
| September | Reach out to your supervisor with first ideas |
| October | Develop an exposé and include feedback on exposé by supervisor. |
| End of October | Formally register to write your thesis.After submission, you have five months for completion. |
| End of March | Submit your thesis |

Before registering your thesis, you must develop an exposé. The exposé (3 -4 pages) contains:

* Introduction and problem description/relevance of topic (1 paragraph – ½ page)
* Motivation of the research (what’s the problem/puzzle?) including the (overarching) research question and theoretical background (2 paragraphs – 1 page)
	+ Which theories and concepts are used to address this question and why?
	+ What is the state of the field in theoretical and empirical research (theories, empirical results and research gap/issue)
* Method (2 paragraphs – 1 page)
	+ Research design
	+ Data collection
	+ Data analysis
* Preliminary structure of thesis
* Expected timeline
* Core references