Chair of Sustainability Management and Assessment

Guidelines for Term Papers and Final Theses

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Introduction

We are happy that you have chosen to write a term paper or final thesis at our junior professorship. To provide you with the best possible support, we have prepared these guidelines and recommendations. Please take a moment to read them carefully.

Academic papers play a crucial role in your studies. They allow you to apply your knowledge, gain new insights, and contribute to academic discourse. By addressing a research question or problem, you will deepen your understanding and develop important skills such as critical thinking, identifying connections, and drawing well-founded conclusions. These skills are valuable not only during your studies but also for your professional development.

Writing an academic paper requires careful attention to both content and formal requirements. In terms of content, you should identify a relevant problem, research and discuss the state of the art, define a clear research question and objective, and select and apply suitable methods to address this question. Your work should follow a clear structure, and your arguments and conclusions should be logical and comprehensible.

Formal requirements are equally important. These include, for example, adhering to the correct citation style and formatting guidelines. Be sure to check if your course or supervisor specifies additional requirements that differ from these guidelines.

We wish you much success and enjoyment in your academic work. Use this opportunity to enhance your skills and gain new perspectives.

Tips on writing academic papers

Literature

At our professorship, we strive for high scientific quality. The quality of your work is closely tied to the quality of the sources you reference. Journal rankings can serve as a useful guide. The VHB, FT50, and ABS rankings are particularly reliable tools for assessing journal quality. The process can be somewhat automated with tools like the "Rapid Journal Quality Check" extension for Chrome or Edge.

We advise caution when using research articles published in MDPI journals (e.g., Sustainability). If you choose to reference articles from this publisher, their scientific quality must be thoroughly scrutinized, particularly if want to base your research question on them. This caution stems from concerns that these journals may accept articles with a less rigorous peer-review process and other controversies. A list of MDPI journals can be found here.

To keep your work organized and your literature management efficient, we strongly recommend using tools like Zotero or Citavi from the very beginning.

Additional training

To further enhance your academic writing skills, we encourage you to take advantage of relevant trainings. The TU Dresden offers free support through its Writing Center, and additional courses are available at the SLUB.

Formal guidelines

When writing term papers and final theses at our professorship, you are required to adhere to specific formal guidelines. **Please follow the current standards set by the American Psychological Association (APA)**, available at www.apastyle.org/ or the latest edition of the *Publication Manual of the APA*. Besides specifications on correct citation and bibliography, you will also find many other relevant guidelines, for example on the design of tables and figures or on writing style.

However, the following **exceptions** apply to our junior professorship:

Formatting

— **Font:** Use either 11-point Calibri or 11-point Arial for the entire text of your paper. Other fonts are not permitted.

— **Line spacing:** Use 1.2 line spacing for body text. In tables and self-created illustrations, however, use single line spacing.

— **Page margins:** The top, left, and right margins are 2.5 cm, while the bottom margin is 2 cm.

— **Indentation:** The first paragraph after a heading is not indented.

Headings
Headings are essential for structuring your paper. Please follow these formatting rules:

— **Numbering:** All headings should be numbered to show a clear hierarchy in your work. When structuring a section into subsections, at least two subheadings are required. Avoid having only one subheading in a section.

— **Formatting:** Headings should be left-aligned, bold, and without indentations or terminal dots. Do not use italics or underlining.

— **Subheading levels:** Use no more than three levels of subheadings to maintain clarity.

— **Font size:** Use the following font sizes for the different levels of headings:

  ▪ Level 1: 14 pt

- - Level 2: 12 pt
  - Level 3: 11 pt
- **Spacing:** Insert a 6 pt space before and after Level 1–3 headings for readability. This provides a visual separation and improves readability.
- **Capitalization:** In German-language papers, avoid title case; capitalize only according to standard grammar rules.
- P**lacement of headings and body text:** Ensure that all headings are separated from the subsequent text by a hard line break to maintain a clear distinction. Additionally, use the Word features "Keep with next" and "Keep lines together" to ensure headings and their corresponding body text remain on the same page.
- **Hyphenation:** Avoid hyphenation in headings for improved readability.

Hyphenation

Enable automatic hyphenation for body text, but check its grammatical accuracy. Hyphenation is not permitted in headings.

Page numbering

- Begin numbering on the first page of body text with Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).
- Preceding sections such as the table of contents are numbered with Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.), starting with I.
- The cover page remains unnumbered.

Figures and tables

- Figures and tables are numbered consecutively and the designation is separated from the title and description by a colon.
- References, if needed, can be included in a note below the figure/table or at the end of the title/description. Ensure these references are excluded from the list of figures or tables.

Cover page

Include the following details on the cover page of your paper:

- Type (e.g., project report, term/course paper, bachelor thesis, …)
- Title of the term paper or final thesis
- Your first and last name
- Matriculation number
- Email address
- Date of submission
- Name of the supervisor

Structure

Your term paper or final thesis should follow this structure:

- Cover page (template available on our website)
- Table of contents (maximum three levels)
- List of figures (only if there are three or more figures)
- List of tables (only if there are three or more tables)
- List of abbreviations (if needed; include specialist terms only, not common abbreviations)
- Body text (including relevant tables and figures)
- Bibliography

- — Appendix (if needed)
  - — Declaration of independence

Style sheets
For consistent formatting, we recommend using style sheets. You can either create your own or use the Word template provided on our website.

Citation:
Follow the APA guidelines for citations. Note that for indirect citations from monographs, the page number should be included in the in-text-reference. For edited volumes, cite the relevant chapter and not the entire volume.

Bachelor and Master theses

The final thesis is a significant milestone in your academic journey, allowing you to showcase the knowledge and skills you have acquired during your studies. It provides an opportunity to independently address a research question, apply scientific methodologies, and contribute to a broader field of knowledge. Writing a final thesis requires and promotes critical thinking, project management, and academic writing skills which are valuable competencies for both academic and professional careers.

We strongly encourage student to write their thesis in English. The choice of language depends on the level of the thesis (Bachelor's, Master's, Diploma) and the respective supervisor.

Exposé

Preparing an exposé, or research proposal, is a crucial first step in the thesis process. It helps you define and structure your research project while demonstrating its relevance and feasibility. If you did not participate in our Bachelor or Research Seminar, you are required to submit an exposé to apply for supervision. This ensures a fair and transparent process. We prioritize students with excellent grades in courses relevant to our research areas and research proposals that closely align with our expertise to ensure high-quality supervision. You can find current thesis topics on our website.

Approaching your thesis with a well-crafted exposé not only increases your chances of approval but also sets the stage for a more focused and efficient writing process. The exposé should include the following components:

  - — The problem statement: A clear description of the issue and its relevance.
  - — State of the art: A brief overview and discussion of the existing academic literature on the topic
  - — Objective and research question: The aim of the thesis and the specific research question derived from the state of the art
  - — Methods: The methods you plan to use to address the research question.
  - — Optional: A draft outline of the final thesis.
  - — Optional: A time and work schedule and discussion of potential challenges

The exposé should be 2–4 pages of body text, unless stated otherwise.

Specific requirements for final theses

Length:

  - — Bachelor thesis: 35 pages (+/- 10%), excluding cover page, table of contents/tables/figures, bibliography, and appendices but including tables, figures, and in-text references
  - — For master's theses, please consider the following as your guidance: As long as necessary as short as possible. In general, you can draw on the typical length of a scientific paper in your subject area and method for orientation (check the journal's website). Be aware that the thesis is about

the content, not the length. Writing a short paper concisely is more difficult than writing lengthy texts.

Formatting:

— Line spacing: Use 1.5 line spacing

— Mirror margins and page numbers for double-sided printing

Abstract: Include an abstract in the same language as the thesis

Submission of the final thesis

To complete your thesis submission, you must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Printed and Digital Copies: Submit **two bound, double-sided printed copies** to the Examination Office of the Faculty of Business and Economics. Ensure interview transcripts are included in the appendix and thus part of the bound copies.
   Additionally, upload **one digital copy** in both PDF and DOCX formats to a designated folder in OPAL: https://bildungsportal.sachsen.de/opal/auth/RepositoryEntry/43186028544. Name the folder using your matriculation number (e.g., 1234567).
   Uploaded files can only be downloaded and deleted by our professorship and are protected from third-party access. Immediately after your notification, the data is downloaded by us, stored locally on TUD servers, and deleted from OPAL.

2. Additional Documentation: Alongside the thesis, provide any supplementary materials such as screenshots of online sources, raw data, audio files, or MAXQDA files. These should be uploaded electronically via the OPAL platform.

3. Submission Confirmation: Please notify us of your submission by sending an email to sustainability@tu-dresden.de.

Declaration of independence

All submitted term papers and final theses must include a hand-signed declaration of independence. Please use one of the following templates without modifications.

German version:

Ich erkläre hiermit ehrenwörtlich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommenen Gedanken sind als solche kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit wurde bisher in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt und noch nicht veröffentlicht. Ich bin mir bewusst, dass eine unwahre Erklärung rechtliche Folgen haben wird.

Ich erkläre mich damit einverstanden, dass die Arbeit mit Hilfe eines Plagiatserkennungsdienstes auf enthaltene Plagiate untersucht wird.

_____ _____

Ort, Datum   Unterschrift

English version:

I hereby declare that I have prepared this manuscript independently and without the use of any other than the specified aids. The thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources are marked as such. The work has not been submitted to any other examination authority in the same or a similar

form and has not yet been published. I am aware that an untrue statement will have legal consequences.

I agree that the work will be examined for plagiarism with the help of a plagiarism detection software.

_____   _____
Place, Date   Signature