

Academic paper writing

Formal requirements for bachelor/master theses and seminar papers

Scope

- Seminar papers should consist of not more than 12 pages (+/- 1), bachelor theses should have 18 pages (+/- 2) and master/diploma theses should not cover more than 25 pages (+/- 3), always excluding cover page, table of contents, references and annex. The main body of your paper can contain the most relevant graphs and figures. Complementary input can be placed in the appendix.
- An academic paper consists of the following parts: cover page; table of contents; list of figures (if more than 3) and separate list of tables (if more than 3); list of abbreviations (if more than 3 non-standard abbreviations); list of symbols (if more than 3 non-standard symbols); introduction; main text; conclusion; references; if necessary: annex; at the end the statutory declaration (signed and without page-number).

Style

- An academic paper has to be consistent. Hence, throughout the whole work, the same font style and font size are used.
- The font for standard text is 12 pt Times New Roman with 1.5 lines spacing. Footnotes should not be smaller than 10 pt.
- The margins to be used are: 3 cm on the left side, 2 cm on the right side and 3 cm at the top and at the bottom.
- The middle of the footer contains the page number, 1.5 cm away from the bottom of the page.

Structure

- The cover page includes: university, faculty, chair; professor and assistant supervisor; title of the academic paper; your name, address and e-mail; study-program/ course, matriculation number and number of semesters studied; date of submission.
- Figures and tables may appear in the main part or in the annex. Those ones central to your argument should be part of the main body.
- Page numbering includes all parts of your thesis: the title page (counted but not

marked with a page number), all directories, e.g. the table of contents (in Roman numbers: I, II, III) as well as the main text including bibliography, annex, etc. (in Arabic numbers).

- The captions of the sections and subsections of your thesis should be structured using Arabic numbers (e.g. 1, 2, 2.1, 2.2, 3). A page should not conclude with a caption, better use the next page to start with the new section.
- Symbols and shortenings need to be explained the first time used.
- All figures and tables should be numbered continuously and should have a unique title as well as a figure/table footnote at the bottom of the figure/table explaining it (such that the figure/table is “self-explanatory”). It is also important to mention and explain a figure/table explicitly in the text. If an existing figure/table is used/altered, the source has to be revealed underneath the figure/table.
- Equations should be numbered continuously. This applies to theoretical and regression equations. Regression equations should have the relevant subscripts and be well explained in the text.
- The annex includes important information, which would render the main part too complex. Only provide information in the annex in case you refer to it in the main body of the thesis. The annex should neither be abused to optically shorten the main text nor to artificially blow up an argument.

Sources and citation

- The references of all the sources quoted in the thesis have to be included in the list of references (in alphabetical order). For different publications by the same author from the same year, small Arabian letters in addition to the year may be used, e.g. (2010a). Please use a consistent citation style throughout the thesis, e.g. Harvard style.
- Direct and indirect quotes have to be accompanied by a footnote revealing the source. Direct quotes should be marked with quotation marks, indirect quotes are written without them. The footnote related to the indirect quote begins always with “See”. Secondary quotes should be avoided, since they are not regarded as good academic style. The footnote contains: Author (year), page number(s). For example¹.
- Only sources which are publicly accessible can be quoted. Thus, diploma/bachelor/master theses cannot be used as sources. Sources not yet published may still be quoted if the author’s permission is obtained.

¹ See LastName (Year), p. XX.

- If a published journal article is available, please refer to this one instead of the older working or discussion paper version.
- Further details on the use of AI tools will be outlined in the introductory session. General rule: If you use AI, you have to indicate it. The main text should be written by yourself and you should refer to original sources such as academic studies, do not copy whole paragraphs from AI tools.

Paper Submission

The paper or thesis has to be submitted on time. For bachelor and master theses, two print as well as an electronic copy of the paper have to be handed in directly to the examination office (as specified in your study regulations). Please send a pdf version of your thesis directly to your supervisor.

Good luck!