

University of Münster

School of Business and Economics

Center for Management

Institute for Innovation, Strategy and Organization

**Guidelines for writing scientific papers at the
Institute for Innovation, Strategy, and Organization**

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Disclaimer

These guidelines are intended solely as a guide for writing academic papers at the Institute for Innovation, Strategy and Organization. They do not constitute binding regulations. In cases of doubt, the guidelines of and agreements with the respective supervisor apply.

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GUIDELINES FOR WRITING SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the formal requirements and basic approaches for writing Master's, Bachelor's and seminar papers at the Institute for Innovation, Strategy and Organization at the University of Münster. In addition, it offers helpful approaches and tips that should make it easier for you to write your thesis. We therefore ask you to read the document carefully and attentively. You can of course discuss any ambiguities or deviations from the guidelines with your supervisor at the Institute at any time. The agreements with the supervisors are always decisive and the guidelines only represent the basic framework conditions.

Keywords: Theses; Term papers; Guidelines; Approach; Tips

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of writing an academic paper is to systematically prepare a specific topic for the expert reader. The topic should be presented in a problem-oriented manner. In the following, the formal, content-related and stylistic requirements for a scientific paper at the Institute for Innovation, Strategy and Organization at the University of Münster are listed in detail. The written work should meet these requirements.

2 PREPARATION

2.1 Time planning

Good time planning is of crucial importance when writing an academic paper. It is therefore advisable to start in good time. Allow sufficient time for the literature analysis, methodology and writing of the paper. We also recommend regular consultations with your supervisors to avoid extra work due to close coordination.

2.2 Literature research

The starting point for every academic paper is a thorough literature search. The core of the research should be English-language journals that are classified as B, A or A+ in the VHB Rating 2024 or are listed on the Financial Times 50. English-language textbooks (i.e. classics or method books) should only be used in exceptional cases. Students at the University of Münster can access the online and offline resources of the university libraries free of charge¹. To search for academic sources, it is best to use Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.de/>) in combination with the literature management software Zotero (www.zotero.org), which systematically and automatically records sources, saves documents and backs everything up via a cloud service. Zotero is

¹ A VPN connection must be established when a private computer accesses the databases.

available for Windows, Mac OS and Linux and the free version can be used for these and seminars.

Once a suitable source for the respective topic has been found, it is recommended to search for further suitable literature using the backward search (in the document in the references or on Google Scholar) or forward search (only on Google Scholar). Backward search means searching through the cited sources. Forward search means identifying articles that cite the article in question. In general, the original sources should always be read and cited.

3 FORMAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Basics

The following guidelines apply in principle to all academic papers. Individual regulations that only apply to Bachelor's, Master's or seminar papers are indicated below. Academic papers can be written in either German or English. The same guidelines apply to both forms of work, with a few linguistic exceptions. In English, for example, it is good style to use active language and the personal pronouns of the first form singular or plural. In German, a passive form is often chosen and the speaker is not named.

3.2 Layout

Please use the respective template that can be downloaded from Learnweb to prepare your paper. This template uses the following layout. Bachelor's, Master's and seminar papers are to be written in Times New Roman font, size 12 with double line spacing; only the references is to be written in size 12 with single line spacing. A 2.5 cm (1 inch) margin must be left at the edge of each page. Furthermore, justified text is to be used. The first sentence of each paragraph is indented by 1.25 cm (0.5 inches). No line spacing is used after a paragraph. We recommend that you always work in paragraphs of 8 to 12 lines to improve the structure of your arguments and to improve readability. An

argument can be presented very well in these paragraphs without running the risk of losing focus or becoming too fragmented.

Bachelor's theses are a maximum of 25 pages (+/- 10%) and Master's theses a maximum of 50 pages (+/- 10%) long. This refers to the text including tables, figures, references, title page, abstract, table of contents, and, if applicable, list of figures and abbreviations. Appendices as well as affidavit and declaration of consent for plagiarism check are counted separately. The title page must contain all the minimum information required in the template. The scope of seminar papers depends on the course. Please refer to the relevant course page for this information. Footnotes must be in font size 10 with single line spacing and not indented. The page numbers are listed with Arabic numerals at the bottom of the page, flush right. The cover page has no page number. All other pages are numbered consecutively and have a page number. However, the table of contents and the title page with abstract should be given Roman page numbers. In general, you should try to keep the number of footnotes as low as possible or even do without them altogether. The following rule of thumb applies: Important content should be edited in the text. Unimportant content should be left out completely. Tables and graphics should be integrated into the text. In order to emphasize certain aspects or to place their significance in the foreground, a part of the text/word can be *italicized*. Please use this formatting sparingly for important or central concepts.

3.3 Structure of the paper

3.3.1 General

The structure of a scientific paper should be logical, free of contradictions and repetitions. It should provide the reader with initial information about the main content of the paper. Each heading in the text should be repeated in the table of contents. The respective position in the table of contents must be provided with the corresponding page

numbers in the text and correspond to the corresponding headings in the text. A maximum of three levels of structure is recommended. It should also be noted that a subordinate bullet point may not stand alone. This means, for example, that a subsection 2.1 must be followed by a subsection 2.2.

3.3.2 Bachelor's thesis

Bachelor's theses are generally written as systematic literature reviews.

Bachelor's theses have the following structure at the top level:

1. Introduction (approx. 2 - 3 pages)
2. Theoretical Background (approx. 4 - 5 pages)
3. Methods (approx. 2 - 4 pages)
4. Results (approx. 4 - 6 pages)
5. Discussion (approx. 4 - 6 pages)
6. Conclusion (max. 0.5 pages)

Bachelor theses should contain an abstract after the title page. More information on the structure on page 10.

3.3.3 Master's thesis

Master's theses can be either quantitative or qualitative empirical. Deviations from these regulations must be agreed with the supervisors. The two Master's thesis types have the following structure at the top level:

Type A: quantitative-empirical

1. Introduction (approx. 3 pages)
2. Theoretischer Hintergrund / Theoretical Background (approx. 5-15 pages)
3. Hypotheses (approx. 5-10 pages)
4. Methods (approx. 4-8 pages)
5. Results (approx. 4-8 pages)

6. Discussion (approx. 4-8 pages)

7. Conclusion (max. 0.5 pages)

Type B: qualitative-empirical

1. Introduction (approx. 3-4 pages)

2. Theoretical Background (approx. 5-15 pages)

3. Methods (approx. 4-8 pages)

4. Findings and Propositions (approx. 10-15 pages)

5. Discussion (approx. 5-10 pages)

6. Conclusion (max. 0.5 pages)

Master's theses should contain an abstract after the title page. More information on the structure can be found on page 10.

3.3.4 Text section

When writing a scientific paper, it is important to use precise and comprehensible wording and technical language. At this point, we would again recommend that you work in paragraphs with a length of 8 to 12 lines. This will improve the structure of your arguments and the readability of the chapters. Please avoid complex sentence constructions (i.e. nested sentences). If you are writing your paper in German, also avoid the "we" and "I" forms. If the paper is written in English, formulations in the "we" and "I" form are common and acceptable. Figures and tables are part of the text. Explicit reference must be made to each figure, table and formula in the text. Intermediate text between the headings above and below is possible if it seems appropriate.

In the *text section*, it is generally important to use scientific wording. For the argumentation in particular, this does not mean stringing together results/studies by other authors, but rather recognizing key topics and linking them with each other in terms of

content. In addition, key terms should be defined clearly and meaningfully in the paper. The reader must be able to recognize a "common thread".

3.3.5 Abbreviations

Abbreviations should be used as little as possible in the text. Abbreviations commonly used in specialist fields, such as log, SME or R&D, are permitted. When used for the first time, the terms should always be written out in full and the abbreviation mentioned in brackets. In the following, only the abbreviation is to be used.

3.3.6 Labels

If figures or tables are used in the text, they must be labeled. Figures and tables must be labeled and explained in such a way that they are comprehensible in themselves. The figure caption should be aligned to the left, listed above the figure and labeled "**Figure number**. Title figure". The table caption is also aligned to the left, placed above the table and should begin with "**Table number**. Title table". The figures and tables must be numbered consecutively. Tables can be created using single line spacing in Times New Roman font size 10. You should ensure that they are legible and consistent. The mean and standard deviation must be specified in the descriptive statistics table. The minimum and maximum values may also be relevant. Correlations should be rounded to two decimal places. In addition, explicit reference must be made to each table or figure in the text. Titles of figures and tables must be listed in the list of figures and tables with their page number. The lists for the list of figures, tables and abbreviations must be created for theses with three or more entries. Figures and tables in the appendix must also be labeled. Labels are to be labeled with "**Figure A#**. Title Figure" (example: **Figure A1**. Working time models for university graduates in German companies) or "**Table A#**. Title Table" (example: **Table A1**. Correlation matrix). Figures and tables should have black borders. Furthermore, figures and tables must be cited as follows:

- Adoption of a figure or table from a source should be marked with "Source: Source reference in short title citation"
- Development of a figure or table based on a template is marked with "Figure/table based on: Source reference in short citation style"
- Development of own figures or tables marked with "Own presentation"

3.3.7 Formulas

Formulas are to be integrated into the body text, in which the variables and the context are also explained. The formulas themselves are placed in the middle of a separate line and are numbered flush right with Arabic numerals in brackets so that direct reference can be made in the text.

Example:

The regression is calculated using the formula

$$y_i = -0.24 + 0.17x_{(1)} - 0.68x_2 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

is described.

3.3.8 Citation

The valid citation style is based on the Academy of Management Journal (AMJ). We recommend using the citation program Zotero (www.zotero.org). Here the AMJ citation style can be loaded from the style repository and set directly. It can also be found under the following link: <https://aom.org/research/publishing-with-aom/author-resources/editorial-style-guides>

In the case of *analogous quotations*, there is no literal reproduction of the text, only a reproduction of the content. The quotation is therefore not placed in quotation marks, but the source is also indicated in brackets after the reproduction of the content. The place in the text where the source is cited must clearly indicate the extent to which it has been quoted. If the source refers to several sentences, the source is cited in the

introductory sentence of the section or before the end of the relevant sentence. The author's name can either (1) appear in the text or (2) be part of the parenthesis: (1) As defined by Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, and Pastorelli (1996), this term refers to cognitive processes that, when operating, disengage moral values from overt actions. (2) Harm to the natural environment refers to diminishing the intrinsic value of the physical world (Muehlebach, 2001).

In the case of *verbatim quotations*, sentences, parts of sentences, terms etc. are adopted one-to-one in their respective wording and the language used. Quotation marks must be used at the beginning and end of each literal quotation. In addition to the author and year, the page number must also be given for verbatim quotations: Such self-regulation, then, is the source of moral agency that causes people to generally "refrain from behaving in ways that violate their moral standards" (Bandura, 1999: 193).

Literal quotations are only to be integrated in the language of the running text. A scientific paper written in German should not contain any direct English quotations and vice versa. If you nevertheless wish to quote verbatim, please use a literal translation of the quotation in the text and add the original in brackets after it.

For sources without an author, such as company reports or websites, please choose a meaningful abbreviation: Volkswagen (2021), BASF (2020) or BCG (2019).

3.3.9 Gender-equitable wording

Both women and men must be mentioned. All genders are made visible by adding the gender colon (:.) and gender diversity is expressed.

Nouns: students, professors

Pronouns: he:she, his:her

Example sentence in the singular: The student enriches the discussion with his:her contributions.

Example sentence in the plural: The students enrich the discussion with their contributions.

3.4 References

The AMJ citation style is also used in the references (font size 12, single-spaced):

- Bendig, D., Foege, J. N., Endriß, S., & Brettel, M. 2020. the effect of family involvement on innovation outcomes: the moderating role of board social capital. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 37(3): 240-272.
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- Jung, C., Foege, J. N., & Nüesch, S. 2020. Cash for contingencies: How the organizational task environment shapes the cash-performance relationship. *Long Range Planning*, 53(3): 101885.
- Schäper, T., Foege, J. N., Nüesch, S., & Schäfer, S. 2021. Determinants of idea sharing in crowdsourcing: Evidence from the automotive industry. *R&D Management*, 51(1): 101-113.
- Schäper, T., Jung, C., Foege, J. N., & Nüesch, S. 2020. Measuring open innovation through textual analysis: An assessment of nonlinear performance implications. *The Proceedings of the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS)*, published online.

3.5 Affidavit and declaration of consent for plagiarism check

At the end of every seminar paper, Bachelor's or Master's thesis, the author signs an affidavit. This affidavit can be found in the download area of the Examinations Office of the School of Business and Economics or [here](#). In addition, a declaration of consent to the plagiarism check must be submitted, which must be included in the thesis after the affidavit. This declaration of consent can be found in the download area of the Examinations Office of the School of Business and Economics or [here](#).

4 CONTENTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS

Note: As described in chapter 3.4, the structure varies depending on the type (Bachelor's / Master's thesis and qualitative vs. quantitative).

4.1 Abstract

An abstract is a short section of text that freely summarizes the main features of the scientific work. It describes the basic motivation and question(s) (or hypotheses) and describes the results and possible implications. The abstract is to be written in the language used in the thesis and comprises a maximum of 150 words. It is not part of the manuscript, but summarizes it on the title page. The abstract is followed by three to five informative keywords.

Keywords: Theses; Term papers; Guidelines; Approach; Tips

4.2 Introduction

The introduction of a scientific paper serves as an introduction to the respective subject area. It is a central component of every academic paper, as the introduction in particular arouses interest in the paper and provides an overview of the content. The following points are set out in the introduction: Problem definition, theoretical and practical relevance, objective and research question, results and contribution of the academic paper to the literature. See also "Part 3: Setting the Hook" from the AMJ series "Publishing in AMJ" (Grant & Pollock, 2011). To emphasize the scientific (theoretical) contribution of the work, it is recommended to look at the document from the SMJ "A practical guide for making theory contributions in strategic management" (Makadok, Burton, & Barney, 2018). This information is also relevant for the theoretical implications (see section "Discussion").

4.3 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background sets the *conceptual framework*. This serves to introduce and discuss the theories used and the theoretical mechanisms. In this chapter, basic terms are set and defined. In addition, the study is embedded in previous considerations and studies. A frequently used element in the theoretical background is a table that provides a systematic overview of the current state of the literature.

4.4 Hypotheses

In the *hypothesis derivation*, the hypotheses (assertions) to be made in the thesis are derived on the basis of theory. For this purpose, the contents of the existing research are linked. For orientation, please refer to the document of the AMJ series "Part 4: Grounding Hypotheses" (Sparrowe & Mayer, 2011).

4.5 Methods and Results

Methods and results are two chapters that are very closely interlinked. *The analysis/methods section* provides information about the (methodological) approach of the work. The *results* are also presented descriptively and without interpretation. The presentation is therefore descriptive. For further impulses, see "Part 5: Crafting the Methods and Results" from the AMJ series "Publishing in AMJ" (Zhang & Shaw, 2012).

4.6 Discussion

In the *discussion*, the significance of the results should be critically interpreted and further considerations presented. Here, explanatory approaches for the results should be provided and these should be evaluated with regard to the theoretical background. Your own considerations should also be included here. In addition, the limitations of your own study should be mentioned. Implications for research and practice should be given on the basis of the results. The discussion includes these components: (1) interpretation, (2) theoretical implications, (3) practical implications, (4) limitations & future research.

There is also a short commentary from the AMJ series "Publishing in AMJ" that deals with the implications: "Part 6: Discussing the Implications" (Geletkanycz & Tepper, 2012).

4.7 Conclusion

Finally, the *conclusion* of your work follows. This chapter briefly (0.5 pages) summarizes the main results of your work and the findings from the discussion. The conclusion is not a summary of the entire thesis. Together with the introduction, the conclusion forms the framework of your work. Therefore, no new content is introduced in the conclusion.

5 REFERENCES

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