



University of Potsdam · August-Bebel-Str. 89 · 14482 Potsdam

Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences

Chair of Public and Non-Profit Management

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Information Sheet

Formal Layout of Theses

This information sheet will provide general advice on developing and writing theses at the Chair of Public and Non-Profit Management. Further and more detailed information can be found in various books and booklets on “academic research and writing” (see references).

Students whose **thesis** is being supervised by the Chair of Public and Non-Profit Management are obliged to take part in the seminar “**Colloquium for Theses**” before, during or after writing your thesis. The seminar is offered every semester.

After the completion of your thesis, it has to be handed in **before/on the due date** to the Central Examination Office via **PULS**.

The **length** of the written parts (introduction, main part, conclusion – excluding references and appendices) should be

- Around **8000-9500 words** (about 25-30 pages) for **Bachelor’s theses**
- Around **16.000 words** (about 50 pages) for **Master’s theses**

and should not exceed or fall below these numbers considerably. Tables and graphics can be excluded.

LAYOUT

The layout has to fulfill the following standards:

- The following **parts** have to be included:
 - Cover Page
 - Table of Contents
 - Potentially indices of tables, figures, abbreviations and/or appendices
 - Affirmation and consent to the checking for plagiarism (see below)
- **Font size:** 10-12 (compliant with font)
- **Font:** optional (e.g. Cambria, Calibri, Garamond, Times New Roman)
- **Line Spacing:** 1.5 as a maximum
- **Orientation:** justification (do not forget to turn on hyphenation)
- **Margins:** left: at least 3.5 cm; right: at least 3 cm; top and bottom: at least 2 cm
- Leave spacing of at least 6 before a **new paragraph**. Choose spacing that is smaller than a full line.
- Number **headlines**
- All pages have to be **numbered continuously**. Roman letters can be used for indices.
- To achieve the specified layout, students are expected to use the appropriate features in programs such as **Microsoft Word** or **LaTeX** (especially formatting styles, automated indices, and page numbers).

COVER PAGE

The cover page should at least provide the following information:

- **Title** of thesis
- **Type** of thesis (Bachelor's or Master's thesis)
- Name, matriculation number, address and email address of the **author**
- **Specific Course and Examination Regulations (Studienordnung)** of author
- Name of **first and second supervisor**
- **Official editing time**

CITATION STYLE

Only **in-text citation** should be used ("author-date style"). Do not use citations in foot- or endnotes. The citation style (APA, Harvard, etc.) is optional. However, the following things need to be considered:

- The same format needs to be used within the entire work,
- The cited entries should be assignable,
- The author/creatorship should be recognizable in the reference.

When you are unsure of what citation styles are common and how different types of sources are being cited, we recommend the use of the so-called **Chicago Style**. The Chicago Manual of Style offers extensive documentation of this style with examples for all possible types of sources.

Independently from the chosen citation styles, it applies that a citation at the end of a sentence is placed **before the period**. The list of references should not be divided by different types of sources and not organized by bullet points. Instead (slight) paragraphs or indentations should be used.

Furthermore, we recommend the use of a **reference management system** such as **Citavi**. This program is available free of charge at the ZIM (Centre for information technology and media management at the University of Potsdam) and offers, for example, a template for the Chicago Style (*CMOS Chicago Manual of Style, 16th ed. (Author-Date, German)*).

USE OF AI IN THE PREPARATION OF THE THESIS

Traceability and disclosure of used materials, data, and methods are fundamental pillars of scientific work. Similarly, the primary function of a thesis, or any other written work such as seminar papers, is to assess the competencies of the students. In the case of a thesis, this primarily concerns the students' ability to handle the state of research, develop a theoretical framework for a research model and hypotheses, select and appropriately apply methods, present results in a transparent, understandable, and traceable manner, as well as critically discuss the implications of their findings for practice, theoretical models, and further research needs.

With the use of AI, however, the student's own thoughts and efforts may not be presented, but rather AI-generated and AI-supported content in the thesis.

It is considered improper—and therefore inadmissible—to use AI tools not merely as supportive aids, but to generate essential elements of the thesis, as this would lead to the assessment of the quality of the AI rather than the competencies of the student.

However, it is permissible to use these tools as a support to create one's own content, analyses, and text. For example, a "critical dialogue" with AI, such as ChatGPT, is allowed, e.g., when ChatGPT is used to assist in outlining the structure of the thesis, suggest potential theoretical approaches, or provide initial overviews of the research landscape. Similarly, writing support tools like DeepL, which help correct grammar and writing mistakes, are also considered permissible. AI assistance in programming evaluations is also allowed.

What is not allowed, however, is copying or paraphrasing entire passages of text generated by AI, or entire analysis evaluations that have not been independently questioned, adapted, and refined.

The AI tools used should be listed in an appendix to the thesis in a separate directory (table), specifying which AI application was used, and for each program, the purpose and extent to which AI contributed at each stage should be briefly described.

AFFIRMATION AND CONSENT TO THE CHECKING FOR PLAGIARISM

At the end of the thesis, an **affirmation** should be placed. The following text is recommended:

I hereby confirm that solely I am the author of this thesis and have not used other sources and resources than the ones cited.

The thesis on hand is free of plagiarisms. All information that has been extracted directly or indirectly from other works is marked as such and listed in the table of references.

This work has not been handed in as an assessed assignment with another examiner and has not been published before.

Below the affirmation should be your **consent to your thesis's checking for plagiarisms through a plagiarism detection software**. For this the following text is recommended:

I have been informed that a plagiarism detection software will be used in order to check my thesis for its legitimacy. I am aware that my anonymized thesis will be analyzed in a secure domain of a server outside of the European Union and is temporarily saved there. For this, no personal data will be transmitted.

I hereby consent to the checking of my thesis through a plagiarism detection software under the before mentioned conditions.

The affirmation as well as the consent to the checking for plagiarisms has to be dated and **signed**.

LITERATURE RECOMMENDATIONS

BASICS

Booth, Wayne C.; Colomb, Gregory G.; Williams, Joseph M. (2008): The craft of research. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Metzger, Christoph (2010): Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien. Ein Fachbuch für Studierende an Universitäten und Fachhochschulen ; (mit beigelegtem Fragebogen). 11., überarb. Aufl. Oberentfelden/Aarau: Sauerländer (WLI-Hochschule).

QUOTATION

Disterer, Georg (2011): Studienarbeiten schreiben. Seminar-, Bachelor-, Master- und Diplomarbeiten in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften. 6., vollst. überarb. und erw. Aufl. Berlin: Springer (Springer-Lehrbuch).

Ludvig, Alice (2005): Zitieren, Stand 12.03.2014, verfügbar unter: http://homepage.univie.ac.at/alice.ludvig/Zitieren_folie1.pdf.

Lück, Wolfgang; Henke, Michael (2009): Technik des wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens. Seminararbeit, Diplomarbeit, Dissertation. 10., überarb. und erw. Aufl. München: Oldenbourg.

Turabian, Kate L. (2013): A manual for writers of research papers. Chicago Style for students and researchers. Kate L. Turabian. Eighth edition. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

Universitätsbibliothek Freie Universität Berlin (2014): Richtig zitieren: Zitierregeln für konventionelle und elektronische Medien – Linksammlung, Stand 12.03.2014, verfügbar unter: www.ub.fu-berlin.de/service_neu/einfuehrung/bookmarks/zitieren.html

RESEARCH DESIGN

De Vaus, D. A (2001): Research design in social research. London, Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE.

Kellstedt, Paul M.; Whitten, Guy D. (2009): The fundamentals of political science research. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Plümper, Thomas (2012): Effizient schreiben. Leitfaden zum Verfassen von Qualifizierungsarbeiten und wissenschaftlichen Texten. 3., überarbeitete Auflage. München: Oldenbourg.

EVALUATION TABLES

The evaluation of **empirical** Bachelor's/Master's theses follows this table:

		1	2	3	4	5	
Research Question	Convincing presentation of scientific and practical relevance of research question						No convincing presentation of scientific and practical relevance of research question
	Clear, focused, specific						Unclear, unfocused, general
	Feasible in the existing frame						Not feasible in the existing frame
	Causal-analytical; aims for an explanation						Descriptive; does not aim for an explanation/ identification of antecedents
	Operationalized; it is explained what empirical observations are needed in order to answer the question						Not operationalized; it stays unclear what empirical observations are needed in order to answer the question
	Is answered in the end; based on theoretical and/or empirical explanations the paper provides						Unanswered or answer is not based on theoretical and/or empirical explanations the paper provides
Structure (central idea)	Structure allows to follow argumentation and thoughts; sections build upon each other and are connected						Structure makes it difficult to follow the argumentation and thoughts; sections are not build upon each other and are not connected
	Structure reflects the content of the paper systematically						Structure is not reflecting the content of the paper systematically
Argumentation	Easy to follow						Difficult to follow
	Argumentation results in comprehensible answers to the question						Argumentation results in incomprehensible answers to the question
	Concentrates on what is essential in order to answer the question						Is not focused and points to irrelevant aspects in order to answer the question
	Consistent, logical, coherent						Inconsistent, illogical, incoherent
	Theory-driven, analytical and explanatory						Without theory, descriptive and not explanatory
	Adequately proven through empirical studies						Inadequately proven through empirical studies
	Independent thinking and critical discussion of theoretical arguments and empirical statements						Merely reporting of thoughts and statements of others
Literature Discussion	State of research clear and comprehensive						State of research not clear or incomprehensive
	Research gap derived from literature						No research gap shown
	Literature is up-to-date, relevant and international						Literature is mainly in German and/or not relevant and up-to-date
	Literature is actually discussed						Literature is not discussed; just strung together
Theories/ Concepts	Correct reproduction of theories/ concepts						Incorrect reproduction of theories/ concepts
	Use of relevant primary sources						Only secondary sources
	Representation and discussion of theory/ concept is related to the original question						Representation and discussion of theory/ concept is not related to the original question
Method	Method is made transparent						Method is not made transparent
	Choice of method is reasonable and justified						Choice of method is not justified
	Method is appropriate to answer the research question						Method is not appropriate to answer the research question
	Justification of case selection/ sample is transparent and comprehensible						Justification of case selection/ sample is not transparent and not comprehensible

	Method was skillfully implemented					Method was not skillfully implemented
Empiricism	Results are comprehensible described/ illustrated					Results are not comprehensible
	Results are discussed; based on the theory					Results are not discussed; not based on the theory
	Results are compared to the empirical results of other studies					Empirical results of other studies are ignored
Conclusion	Results are summarized at the end					Paper ends abruptly/unexpectedly
	Limitations of own work are shown and discussed					No limitations are shown
	Indications for further research are given					No indications for further research are given
Scientific Form	Correct use of technical terms					Incorrect use of technical terms
	Definition of central terms where necessary					Definition of central terms are missing
	Citation as well as literature and sources meeting scientific standards					Citation as well as literature and sources are not meeting scientific standards and are inconsistent
Linguistic Expression	Clear, comprehensible, concise					Unclear, incomprehensible, inaccurate
	Scientific diction					No scientific diction
Linguistic Form	Correct spelling, punctuation and grammar					Incorrect spelling, punctuation and grammar
Outer Form	Formatting and layout facilitating readability					Formatting and layout making readability difficult
	Guidelines for final papers/ theses are fulfilled (citation, font and font size etc.)					Guidelines for final papers/ theses are not fulfilled (citation, font, font size, etc.)
	Number of words does not substantially fall short or substantially exceed the set standard					Number of words substantially falls short or substantially exceeds the set standard

The evaluation of **literature oriented** Bachelor's/Master's theses follows this table:

		1	2	3	4	5	
Research Question	Convincing presentation of scientific and practical relevance of research question						No convincing presentation of scientific and practical relevance of research question
	Clear, focused, specific						Unclear, unfocused, general
	Feasible in the existing frame						Not feasible in the existing frame
	Causal-analytical; aims for an explanation						Descriptive; does not aim for an explanation/ identification of antecedents
	Operationalized; it is explained what empirical observations are needed in order to answer the question						Not operationalized; it stays unclear what empirical observations are needed in order to answer the question
	Is answered in the end; based on theoretical and/or empirical explanations the paper provides						Unanswered or answer is not based on theoretical and/or empirical explanations the paper provides
Structure (central idea)	Structure allows to follow argumentation and thoughts; sections build upon each other and are connected						Structure makes it difficult to follow the argumentation and thoughts; sections are not build upon each other and are not connected
	Structure reflects the content of the paper systematically						Structure is not reflecting the content of the paper systematically
Argumentation	Easy to follow						Difficult to follow
	Argumentation results in comprehensible answers to the question						Argumentation results in incomprehensible answers to the question
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	Consistent, logical, coherent						Inconsistent, illogical, incoherent
	Theory-driven, analytical and explanatory						Without theory, descriptive and not explanatory
	Adequately proven through empirical studies						Inadequately proven through empirical studies
	Independent thinking and critical discussion of theoretical arguments and empirical statements						Merely reporting of thoughts and statements of others
Literature Discussion	State of research clear and comprehensive						State of research not clear or incomprehensive
	Research gap derived from literature						No research gap shown
	Literature is up-to-date, relevant and international						Literature is mainly in German and/or not relevant and up-to-date
	Literature is actually discussed						Literature is not discussed; just strung together
Theories/ Concepts	Correct reproduction of theories/ concepts						Incorrect reproduction of theories/ concepts
	Use of relevant primary sources						Only secondary sources
	Representation and discussion of theory/ concept is related to the original question						Representation and discussion of theory/ concept is not related to the original question
Conclusion	Results are summarized at the end						Paper ends abruptly/unexpectedly

	Limitations of own work are shown and discussed					No limitations are shown
	Indications for further research are given					No indications for further research are given
Scientific Form	Correct use of technical terms					Incorrect use of technical terms
	Definition of central terms where necessary					Definition of central terms are missing
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Linguistic Expression	Clear, comprehensible, concise					Unclear, incomprehensible, inaccurate
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	Number of words does not substantially fall short or substantially exceed the set standard					Number of words substantially falls short or substantially exceeds the set standard

CHECKLIST THESIS

Before you hand in your thesis please check if the following points are included/fulfilled:

- **Layout Requirements:**
 - **Font size:** 10-12 (compliant with font)
 - **Font:** optional (e.g. Cambria, Calibri, Garamond, Times New Roman; no Arial)
 - **Line Spacing:** 1.5 as a maximum
 - **Orientation:** justification (do not forget to turn on hyphenation)
 - **Margins:** left: at least 3.5 cm; right: at least 3 cm; top and bottom: at least 2 cm
 - Leave spacing of at least 6 before a **new paragraph**. Choose spacing that is smaller than a full line.
 - Number **headlines**
 - Page numbers
- Required word count/length adhered?
- **Cover page with:**
 - Title of thesis
 - Type of thesis (Bachelor's or Master's thesis)
 - Name, matriculation number, address and email address of the author
 - Specific Course and Examination Regulations (Studienordnung) of author
 - Name of first and second supervisor
 - Official editing time
- **Table of contents** and if required other indices
- **List of references**
- **Affirmation**
 - Signed
- **Consent to the checking for plagiarism**
 - Signed