

Guidelines for writing a bachelor's thesis

As part of the single-subject bachelor's program of Sociology at the University of Potsdam, the Bachelor's thesis must amount to 18 ECTS/LP. In the dual-subject bachelor's program the thesis must amount to 6 ECTS/LP. You need to meet certain criteria in order to register your thesis. The formal guidelines for the single- and dual-subject bachelor's programs of Sociology can be found below – for all other programs, please consider your study regulation.

The students are expected to work on a topic independently. The skills to do that are acquired in the courses Introduction to scientific working and writing (incl. self-reflection and self-management) (BSKSOZ110). We also recommend attending the colloquium for the writing of final theses (BKOSOZ110) of Prof. Dr. Verwiebe. There, you will have the opportunity to share and discuss your ideas and outline.

Choice of Topic

You can propose a topic yourself or choose from options given by your counselor or their academic unit. Empirical assessments can be part of a bachelor's thesis. If more writing time is needed because of empirical research, it can be applied for at the examination board (e-mail to Dr. Kletzin including a statement of agreement by the counselor). The extension lasts one month. Two and more students can write a bachelor's thesis together only if responsibilities for each part are explicitly stated. The students are assessed individually. The work load increases with every additional student.

Subject Areas (selection)

- Social inequality, social change
- Poverty, deprivation, income inequality
- Labor market, professions, atypical employment
- Migration, forced migration, spatial mobility, transnational mobility
- Health and quality of life
- Urban sociology and change
- Change of values and attitudes, social recognition
- Digitization, social media
- Discrimination and social exclusion
- Family, change of family structures
- Change of Gender roles
- Global inequality, comparison between countries
- Religious identities
- Life and work circumstances of released prisoners

Counselors

Prof. Dr. Verwiebe, Dr. Nina-Sophie Fritsch and Dr. Lena Seewann are responsible for supervision. Furthermore, Steffen Hagemann can be chosen as an external second reviewer.

Procedure

Once you have decided on both a subject area and a (rough) research question, please contact the secretariat (sozialstruktur@uni-potsdam.de) to make an appointment for a first meeting.

First meeting

In order to receive a binding confirmation and to hold a first meeting, you need to submit a written exposé of three to four pages. It should include a short summary of the research project, the research question, a preliminary table of contents and bibliography, a title page and, lastly, the anticipated schedule.

After receiving the binding confirmation and holding the first meeting, you can discuss your research topic, its realization and possible support more closely with your counselor (who is usually your first reviewer). The confirmation is limited to six months – approximately the time needed to finish a bachelor's thesis. If you need more time, terms need to be arranged with your counselor.

Further procedure

- Agree upon the topic and the thesis' title with your counselor and choose a second reviewer in accord with your counselor.
- Let both reviewers sign the form *Verbindliche Mitteilung der Betreuer/Zweitgutachter für Bachelor- und Masterarbeiten*.
- Pass said form to Dr. Kletzin.
- Add your final topic/the title of your thesis to the form *Themenvergabebogen*.
- Both reviewers sign said form which the Chair for Inequality Research and Social Stratification Analysis then hands to Dr. Kletzin.
- The examination board approves the application by signing it.
- The research topic can be picked up timely at the examination office at Neues Palais – on to the registration.

Registration of the thesis at the examination office

Once the examination board has approved your application, you can register your thesis:

- When your research topic is approved, you need to register your thesis at the examination office within a week.
- If you miss the deadline, a new research topic needs to be approved.
- If you register your thesis in person at the examination office, the registration will be immediately recorded in the examination system.
- The due date will be determined and disclosed.
- The form *Themenvergabebogen* is handed back to the student including both registration date and submission deadline.

Final meeting

Three weeks prior to submission, you should meet your counselor to discuss the final version of your thesis. Afterwards, you can give your thesis its finishing touches. This mandatory final meeting is as important as the first meeting (see above).

Writing the bachelor's thesis

Formal Guidelines

Single-subject-bachelor of Sociology

„(1) Once the student has attained 126 ECTS/LP, she or he is entitled to the immediate allocation of a topic for her or his bachelor's thesis. (2) The bachelor's thesis amounts to 12 ECTS/LP. A disputation is not planned. Thirty pages DIN A4 should not be exceeded. Furthermore, § 26 BAMA-O applies.“

translated and paraphrased from: Auszug aus den Amtlichen Bekanntmachungen Nr. 11 vom 21.6.2017 – pp. 338 – 352

Dual-subject-bachelor of Sociology

„(1) Once the student has attained at least 120 ECTS/LP, she or he is entitled to the immediate allocation of a topic for her or his bachelor's thesis. Should the appointment of ECTS/LP be delayed, it is sufficient to both have attained 90 ECTS/LP and be enrolled in examinations that according to § 9 Abs. 4 or Abs. 5 BAMA-O total another 30 ECTS/LP. (2) The bachelor's thesis amounts to 12 ECTS/LP. A disputation is not planned. Thirty pages DIN A4 should not be exceeded. Furthermore, § 26 BAMA-O applies. (3) Students majoring in sociology who write their bachelor's thesis in their minor subject can attend another course from an elective module instead of a colloquium.“

translated and paraphrased from: Auszug aus den Amtlichen Bekanntmachungen Nr. 16 vom 11.9.2014 – pp. 1197-1220

Remember to adhere to the Chair's citation guidelines. All theses are checked for plagiarism through the software Turn-it-In. The screening for plagiarism follows the corresponding guidelines of the University of Potsdam from October 20, 2010.

A **statement of authorship** has to be included in every university work and has to be signed by the student. You can find further information (e.g. regarding team work) in your study and examination regulations. With this statement the student affirms that she or he has acted in scientifically correct manner, has written the thesis independently and only used the references listed in the bibliography. More information can be found in the plagiarism guidelines (abridged version in English).

Evaluation of the bachelor's thesis

The bachelor's thesis will be evaluated within four weeks. The following content-related and formal criteria are referenced in evaluation.

Content-related criteria	Formal criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accomplishing the goal of the thesis (answering the research question) - Independence (developing and arguing for a distinct position) - Good structure, straight reasoning (common thread) - Proper use of professional terminology and sound choice of sources - If applicable: quality of empirical research (knowledge and use of methods, analysis and interpretation of findings) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completeness (title page, table of contents, bibliography, if applicable list of tables, illustrations and appendix) - Clarity (general structure, structure of chapters) - Linguistic and orthographic accuracy - Proper use of sources - Adhering to the citation guidelines

The examination office forwards your thesis to your reviewers. They examine the thesis, grade it and provide written explanations and feedback. If the second reviewer approves of the first assessment, she or he will sign it. If both assessments differ by more than 2.0 or if one assessment is worse than 4.0, a third reviewer is assigned by the examination board.

Submission of the bachelor's thesis

The thesis is to be **handed in both timely and threefold** bound as a hardcover (either at the examination's office during office hours or via mail – the stamped date counts). Further it is to be handed in on an electronic medium (e.g. CD, USB stick) both in word and PDF format. If the thesis is written in any other language than German (for which the consent of both reviewers is needed), a short summary in German is to be included.

Due to the pandemic final theses can be send as an e-mail only to the examination office (no other handing in is needed).

Tips and helpful links:

- Information about how to work academically (from generating ideas to research, citation etc.) can be found on the website of the central study board
- Please use the University Library for your research
- Relevant documents can be found at the examination office of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences