

Guidelines for writing seminar papers and theses at the Chair of Financial Management and Capital Markets

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1. Preface

Scientific papers have important requirements with regard to format and content. Adherence to the following format and citation rules is therefore a prerequisite for the success of a seminar paper or a thesis. Failure to adhere to the format rules or misuse of the citation regulations can result in downgrading. In extreme cases the content of the seminar paper/ thesis will not be evaluated and will be graded as “failed”.

In the following, diploma, master and bachelor theses are to be treated equally, if not stated otherwise. They will be referred to as “thesis”.

These guidelines are also applicable to project studies (“Projektstudien”) and seminar papers.

2. General Information

2.1. How to Submit the Seminar Paper / Thesis

[Formal requirements for submission](#) are set by the School administration. Whenever possible the Chair requests a pdf copy only and a USB key containing data and code used for production of empirical results for your thesis. The USB key should be marked and contain your full name, matriculation number and the date of thesis submission. Please do not submit hard copies of your thesis unless explicitly requested by the School administration.

2.2. Layout

Please write the thesis in LaTeX or Word format only. The chair provides for a template in both formats. General format requirements include appropriate margins (2.5cm left, 2.5cm right, 2.5cm top, 2cm bottom), 1.5 line-spacing, and appropriate fonts, e.g. Times New Roman pt. 12 or Arial pt. 11.

2.3. Length

Bachelor-Thesis: 35 pages (+/- 5 pages) of text and tables/figures (plus appendix)

Master-Thesis: 55 pages (+/- 5 pages) of text and tables/figures (plus appendix)

For all other theses specific information will be provided.

2.4. Language

Theses can be written either in German or English. Students are supposed to clarify this in advance with their supervisor. Master theses must be accompanied by a summary in the other language (i.e. an English summary for a German thesis and vice versa).

2.5. Structure of Seminar Papers or Theses

2.5.1. General Remarks

A seminar paper or a thesis consists of the following parts. The order of the items is mandatory:

- Cover page
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- List of tables
- Table of attachments
- List of abbreviations
- List of symbols
- Text content
- Appendix
- References
- List of interview sources
- Statement of academic integrity and adherence to the requirements of the department

(only theses)

Sample cover pages for seminar papers and master theses are attached. The list of figures, tables, abbreviations and symbols are only necessary when corresponding items are used in the paper. As long as they are not pertinent to the content, attachments to seminar papers or master theses are not necessary. Illustrations have to be inserted in the text and are not attachments.

Use the decimal system to structure the items (i.e. 1, 1.1, 1.1.1).

2.5.2. Text Body

The text body of the seminar paper or thesis usually consists of three parts: Introduction, main part and conclusion. Additionally, the paper / thesis may also contain an appendix. All parts should be written in your own words. The paper or thesis must not be an accumulation of citations.

The introduction should introduce the topic, motivate and state why it is important for the scientific or business community. The overall topic can be narrowed down to certain aspects and main definitions can be introduced. Formulate a clear objective and research question. Furthermore, give a short outline of the paper or thesis. The outline of the paper should not only introduce the main paragraphs but also make clear why the course of action is taken. The introduction is usually about one page for a seminar paper and two to three pages for a thesis.

The main part consists of several reasonable structured paragraphs to deal with the problem of the seminar paper / thesis. Ideas and concepts should be presented in a concise way and should be critically assessed. Thorough literature review should be used to check whether an idea has already been conceived by a different author: Absence of quotes means that the author of the paper / thesis is the intellectual originator of an idea. If this is not true, it is a case of plagiarism (which means the candidate fails on the paper / thesis in severe cases)!

The conclusion summarizes the main findings and results of the seminar paper or thesis. It should answer the problem statement mentioned in the introduction. The conclusion should assess the paper / thesis from a critical point of view. If possible, the conclusion may provide an outlook on future research or future developments in the respective field.

The appendix is not a mandatory part of the paper / thesis. It contains supplementary information (protocols of interviews, data, additional figures, explanations on calculations) that is not necessary to understand the main part but still worthwhile to share with the reader.

2.5.3. Figures and Tables

Figures and tables should complement the text in a short and concise manner. They serve to visualize and thus clarify complex structures or enumerations. Don't use figures and tables that are not explained or referred to in the text.

Figures and tables are to be integrated into the text by referring to them. They have to be numbered consecutively and have to be assigned a caption. The caption is to be on the same page as the figure/table. All figures/tables in the text should be listed in the table of figures with their number, title and page. If necessary, they have to contain notes in order that the reader can directly understand the figures/tables without referring to the main body of the text. In case a table presents results of a statistical analysis, it should contain a larger note section that explains the definition of all variables and other abbreviations used in the table. Moreover, it should also be explained briefly in the notes what type of statistical analysis has been undertaken.

If figures are based on sources, these sources have to be indicated in a corresponding footnote. If figures are directly taken from a source, the footnote should begin with "based on ..." or "taken from ...". If figures are taken from a source but modified (e.g. extended or shortened), the footnote should start with "modified, taken from ...". If figures are based on the student's own thoughts, the footnote should mention "own source". The same applies to tables.

2.5.4. Abbreviations

You can use commonly used abbreviations, such as i.e. or e.g. It is not required to list them in the list of abbreviations. Other abbreviations should be held to a minimum.

Abbreviations have to be defined when used the first time throughout the text, for example "Venture Capital (VC)". Additionally, they have to be listed in the list of abbreviations. Abbreviations for convenience such as "w/o" for without or "info" for information are not allowed.

For references in the footnotes or in the list of references the following abbreviations are common and must not be listed in the list of abbreviations:

Cf. (Confer Latin for compare), Cp. (compare), Ed. (Edition), ed. by (edited by), eds (editors), f. (following page), p. (page), pp. (pages), Vol. (Volume), Iss. (Issue) and No. (Number).

2.5.5. References

In the list of references all literary sources you quoted throughout your paper have to be included. They must be arranged alphabetically by author. Do not use any other subdivision within the list of references (except for laws, regulations, and governmental guidelines, see section 3.4.8). Several publications of the same author are chronologically listed – starting with

the oldest publication. Literature reviewed while working on the paper but not quoted in the paper is not to be included in the list of references.

To structure your references, use a commonly accepted reference style, such as APA, Chicago, Harvard (using the English or German version of these styles). Available citation tools at the University are [EndNote and Citavi](#), including Add-Ins for Microsoft Word. In LaTeX, for example, it is possible to use BibTeX.

2.5.6. Referring to other sources

Authors of scientific papers build on the relevant ideas of other researchers. This method is called citing or quoting. Referring to other sources can be used to shorten the descriptions that are already written elsewhere.

Whenever you quote, you must have read the original source to make sure not to change the meaning of a sentence/ idea by separating it from its context. Besides seldom exceptions, it is not tolerable to base whole pages or an entire section on only one source.

Do not use sources without quoting them. Whoever does not cite a source is guilty of stealing intellectual property (plagiarism) and the seminar paper/ thesis will be graded as “failed” in severe cases.

All theses will be checked for plagiarism.

2.5.7. Footnotes

Footnotes are primarily used to indicate a source quoted in the text. Footnotes consist of two parts: The reference number and the explanation.

The reference number of a footnote is inserted in the text as a small number at the end of the sentence (right behind the punctuation sign). In case only a part of a sentence refers to an external source the footnote number should be placed behind the respective part of the sentence. A footnote at the end of a paragraph without any preceding footnote in this paragraph means that the whole paragraph is based only on this source.

Footnotes can also be used to provide additional information that is not relevant enough to be included in the text but worthwhile for the reader to know. This additional information can be combined with a reference. In this case, the reference comes first and is separated by a semicolon from the additional information, which starts with a capital letter.

All footnotes must end with a full stop “.”. Footnotes containing additional information should not be used excessively.

The format of entries in the footnotes and in the list of references differs according to reference style. Be consistent here.

2.6. Declaration of Academic Integrity (English / German)

The Declaration of Academic Integrity is mandatory and should look as follows:

Hereby, I declare that I have composed the presented paper independently on my own and without any other resources than the ones indicated. All thoughts taken directly or indirectly from external sources are properly denoted as such.

This paper has neither been previously submitted to another authority nor has it been published yet.

Place, Date

Signature

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit erkläre ich an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorgelegte Diplom- / Bachelor- / Masterarbeit selbstständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Gedanken, die aus fremden Quellen direkt oder indirekt übernommen wurden, sind als solche gekennzeichnet.

Die Arbeit wurde bisher in gleicher oder ähnlicher Weise keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt und auch noch nicht veröffentlicht.

Ort, Datum:

Unterschrift: