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## **Guidelines Bachelor Theses**

### **Chair of Sustainable Business**

Dear student,

we are delighted that you are interested in completing your bachelor thesis at the Chair of Sustainable Business! To make matters clearer, this guideline sums up some basic information on the process and regulations for a bachelor thesis at our Chair.

If any aspects remain unclear or if you would like to discuss further details, feel free to contact us.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

The Team of the Chair of Sustainable Business

## **1. Before You Start**

### **1.1. Finding a Topic**

Typically, bachelor theses at our chair are theoretical in nature (i.e., you will work with existing literature and are not required to collect data) and tie in with current research interests at our chair (see our website for information). Please contact us if you want to find out more about potential topics. Furthermore, it is also possible to propose your own topic if it is related to the research area of sustainable business.

If you are interested in writing a thesis at our chair, please apply by sending us a transcript of your grades together with a maximum one-page synopsis of your topic. You can register your thesis via the academic office only once you have received the confirmation of a supervisor. The scope and time to complete your thesis are regulated in the examination regulations.

### **1.2. Registering Your Thesis**

Please note and follow the [requirements of the examination office](#) (Studienbüro).

## **2. Writing, Citing, and Formatting**

### **2.1. Language**

You are welcome to write your thesis in either English or German. This is your choice.

### **2.2. Length**

Theses at our Chair must adhere to paper-style (i.e., be written in a manner similar to papers that are published in academic journals). This includes a concise writing style. In accordance with the faculty's regulations, the number of pages is limited to 30 to 50 pages *including* tables and illustrations, but *excluding* the title page, bibliography, and all appendices. Exceeding the page limit by more than 10% is not permitted and may result in a grade reduction.

## **2.3. Structure**

The following sections should be part of your bachelor thesis.

### ***2.3.1. Title page***

The first page of your thesis is a title page, including the title of your thesis, your name and matriculation number, the date of submission, and the Chair and supervisor assigned to you.

### ***2.3.2. Tables***

Please always include a table of contents in your thesis. If you use abbreviations within your thesis, please explain them in the main text when you use them the first time and also include a table that lists and explains all abbreviations. In case you have any tables and/or illustrations, please also include two separate tables listing all of these.

### ***2.3.3. Abstract***

The abstract provides a short summary of your thesis. It gives the reader an idea of the problem you dealt with, its relevance and what the most important findings were. It should not exceed 250 words.

### ***2.3.4. Introduction***

In the introduction, the reader gains an idea of what you are going to do in your thesis and why that is so. By giving a brief overview of existing literature, the introduction highlights the relevance of the problem or research question as well as previous research and relevant theory in the area.

### ***2.3.5. Main Part***

The main part of your bachelor thesis typically includes an overview over the literature and theory on your topic. Here, you can present all the material that you have viewed regarding your topic and the conclusions that you draw from the joint reflection of this material. Please

make sure that you are following a clear idea and relating different sources and information to each other and to your topic/research question. Do not simply describe one finding/source/theory after the other, but make sure to connect them and to align them to a general argumentative structure. You are welcome to divide this part in several sections and to name them with subtitles if this makes sense for the structure and argumentation that you are following. Also, you may consider using a table or illustration to concisely present the current status of the literature, and to indicate the gap in the existing research.

### ***2.3.6. Discussion***

The discussion offers the opportunity to evaluate and interpret your thesis. Typically, the discussion begins with a summary of results that clearly summarizes what your main conclusions and findings are. The discussion then also addresses limitations of your thesis by discussing aspects that may be problematic or remain unclear, for example when the literature on some aspects is contradictory or not sufficient. Lastly, the discussion typically turns to the relevance of the study by pointing out its contribution to theory and research, its implications for further studies and for practitioners.

### ***2.3.7. Bibliography***

Your thesis must contain a bibliography, in which every source that you referred to throughout the thesis must be listed. Please take care in creating your bibliography! For further information, see 2.4.

### ***2.3.8. Appendices***

Material that may be helpful for the reader but that is too lengthy or distracting for inclusion in the main body (i.e., a long table) may be included in an appendix. Typically, this will not be necessary for a bachelor thesis, but if so, you may add an appendix. If you prefer or if the appendix is very lengthy, it may be handed it digitally instead of in print.

Please note that according to the faculty's regulations, you are only permitted to include information in the appendix that is not strictly necessary to follow the reasoning of your thesis (i.e., you should not try to use the appendix as a way to circumvent the maximum number of pages).

### **2.3.9. Declaration**

Your thesis must include a signed declaration assuring that the thesis is entirely your own work and does not contain plagiarism. See the Appendix of this guideline for the required wording of the declaration.

## **2.4. Using References and Citing**

In the process of arguing your standpoint and approach, you will depend on the ideas and knowledge of others. Whenever you use background information, definitions, arguments, data, or any other information created by others, you must then cite this source appropriately. By citing, you confirm that you have read the original source, and that you are repeating its contents to the best of your knowledge. This must be true whenever you include a reference!

For your bachelor thesis, there is no minimum (or maximum) number of references to be included. There are also no rules regarding the type of reference that may be used. Typically (but not necessarily!), the most useful sources are recently published research papers in highly ranked journals. Depending on the topic, useful sources may stem from areas other than business such as psychology, sociology, etc. Most scientific papers, and hence also paper-style theses, rely on journal articles (rather than, for example, books, media reports, dissertations etc.) as main sources. To identify highly recognized journals, you can view journal rankings such as [FT50](#), [UTD Top 100](#), or [VHB Jourqual](#).

All references must be made according to the guidelines of the APA. Also, please note that “recycling” written material that you yourself have created some time earlier (e.g., in other

academic work) is also plagiarism unless you officially cite yourself. For details, see the Publication Manual of the APA. There exists extensive online documentation on the APA guidelines as well. Please take care when using references and citing. Not giving credit to sources is a serious mistake and may lead to suspicions of plagiarism, which the university does not tolerate.

In order to simplify citing, you have the option to use the software Citavi (licenses are provided for free by the university, see <https://www.rrz.uni-hamburg.de/services/software/rahmenvertraege/citavi.html>) or any other reference management program. Most of these programs are capable of accurately and efficiently implementing APA reference style. However, it remains your responsibility to check the references' correctness.

## **2.5. Formatting**

Your thesis shall be formally produced and submitted in an impeccable form. If not otherwise stated in this section, formatting must fulfill the requirements of the APA. For details, see the Publication Manual of the APA or the APA website (<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines>).

Regardless of the APA requirements, the following aspects must be considered during the preparation of your bachelor thesis:

- 1.5-spaced manuscripts
- Times New Roman font, 12 pt.
- Justification (“Blocksatz”) with hyphenation
- Margins top and right: 2.5 cm
- Margin left: 2.5cm + 1 cm for binding
- Margin bottom: 2 cm
- Running head with title and page number

- Use Arabic numerals throughout for text pages. Use Roman numerals for table of contents, list of abbreviations, list of tables, bibliography, and appendix.
- Use active tense whenever possible.

### **3. Handing in your thesis and grading**

Please note and follow the [requirements of the examination office](#) (Studienbüro) for handing in your thesis.

Your supervisor will assess the following aspects when grading your thesis:

- The structure and quality of your reasoning, for example regarding the following criteria:
  - Does your thesis address a relevant research question?
  - Does it adequately present the existing research?
  - Does it clearly outline the research gap that you are addressing?
  - Is the methodological approach to investigating that gap adequate?
  - Are the results presented clearly?
  - Are the implications and limitations of the thesis discussed appropriately?
- The degree to which you searched, presented, integrated, and effectively evaluated/discussed existing literature and findings on your topic.

The quality of your scientific work concerning correct procedures for citing and displaying the work of others.

#### **4. Declaration**

Your thesis must include the following declaration (including the date and your signature) in either German or English:

##### **Ehrenwörtliche Versicherung**

Ich versichere hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und nur unter Benutzung der angegebenen Literatur und Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. – Wörtlich übernommene Sätze oder Satzteile sind als Zitat belegt, andere Anlehnung hinsichtlich Aussage und Umfang unter Quellenangabe kenntlich gemacht. – Die Arbeit hat in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch keiner Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen und ist nicht veröffentlicht.

Hamburg, [Abgabedatum]

[Unterschrift]

##### **Statutory declaration**

I hereby declare that I have developed and written the enclosed thesis completely by myself and have not used sources or means without declaration in the text. Any thoughts from others or literal quotations are clearly marked. The thesis was not used in the same or in a similar version to achieve an academic grading or is being published elsewhere.

Hamburg, [Abgabedatum]

[Unterschrift]