

Guidelines for writing Bachelor or Master Theses

These are some basic guidelines for writing bachelor or master theses. They are a minimum requirement rather than an exhaustive manual.

1. Number of pages

A bachelor thesis contains 35 pages $\pm 10\%$ and a master thesis 45 pages $\pm 10\%$. This refers exclusively to text pages (without front cover, table of contents, lists of abbreviations/symbols/figures/tables/references and appendix). Figures and tables are no direct parts of the text, so including many figures and/or tables may well exceed the specified number of pages of a thesis.

2. Formal document characteristics

- Font type: Times New Roman size 12 (footnotes size 10) or Arial size 11 (footnotes size 9).
- Line spacing: 1.5 (footnotes 1).
- Margins: 2.5 cm at the right, top and bottom and 3.0 cm at the left.
- Alignment: create an even right margin by using 'justification' (except for headings).
- Page numbers: appear in the footer.
- Headings
- Classify sections and subsections with Arabic numerals according to the decimal classification system (1, 1.1, 1.1.2, 2, ...).
- Highlight headings in bold.
- Font size for main section headings (1, 2, ...) are two points larger than the rest of the text.
- All other headings are font-sized like the text.

- Tables to be numbered with Arabic numerals (Table 1, Table 2, ...). The table heading above the table should be as concise as possible. Below the table, provide the source.
- Figures to be numbered with Arabic numerals (Figure 1, Figure 2, ...). The figure caption below the figure should be as concise as possible. Below the figure provide the source.

3. Structure

A bachelor or Master thesis usually contains:

- a front cover,
- a table of contents,
- lists of abbreviations/symbols/figures/tables (optional),
- the text body,
- a list of references,
- an appendix (optional),
- an affidavit.

3.1 Front Cover

The front cover requires:

- the emblem of the University of Kassel,
- the title(s) and name(s) of the chair(s) supervising the thesis,
- the title of the thesis,
- your personal information (name, address, phone number, email address, current course of studies, matriculation number, current semester) and the date of submission.
- For bachelor and master theses the front cover has to be prepared in line with the template provided by the examination office!

3.2 Table of Contents

The table of contents indicates the structure and all elements of the thesis. It summarizes all sections and subsections of the text body with section number, section title/heading and the initial page of each (sub)section. The table of contents and the lists of abbreviations/symbols/figures/tables are shown with Roman, text sections with Arabic numerals.

Example:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table of contents | I |
| List of abbreviations..... | II |
| List of symbols | III |
| List of figures | IV |
| List of tables | V |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Heading of the second section | 2 |
| 2.1 Heading of the first subsection of the second section | 4 |
| 2.2 Heading of the second subsection of the second section | 6 |
| 3. Heading of the third section | 10 |
| 4. Conclusion | 15 |
| References | 20 |
| Appendix | 22 |

3.3 Lists of abbreviations/symbols/figures/tables (optional)

- The list of abbreviations includes all abbreviations used in the text body in alphabetical order. Commonly used abbreviations such as “e.g.” do not have to be included.
- The list of symbols includes all symbols used in the text body with their respective definition.
- The list of figures includes all figures used in the text body and the appendix with the number of the figure, the title and their respective page number.
- The list of tables includes all tables used in the text body and the appendix with the number of the table, the title and their respective page number.

3.4 Text body

3.4.1 Introduction

The main body of the thesis starts with an introduction that provides information on the topic, the research objectives and the methodological approach of your work. The introduction should not exceed two pages and usually includes:

- Relevance of the topic: At the beginning you should arouse the interest of the reader by presenting the topic of the thesis and pointing out its relevance.

- Definition and distinction of the thesis objectives: Define the central question and goal of your thesis. The main question serves as a framework which guides through the thesis and should be answered in the conclusion.
- Overview and methodological approach: Complete the introduction by illustrating your methodological approach in detail, give a preview of the main insights, and briefly outline the structure of the thesis.

3.4.2 Main body

The main part of the thesis contains the core element: the elaboration of the chosen topic. It follows a consistent and comprehensive argumentation by examining the formulated research question. The main body of the thesis is divided into sections and subsections with precise titles.

The number of chapters and sections and the depth of the hierarchical structure should be proportionate to the length of the thesis. The length of each chapter should reflect its importance within the thesis. Make sure the reader can follow your train of thoughts. Explain equations, figures or tables in the main text. Explain every abbreviation when used for the first time. Be clear and concise. Avoid repetitions. Use professional technical terms and avoid colloquial expressions. Choose an appropriate style and use correct grammar and orthography. A presentation free of your personal valuations is absolutely necessary; it is recommendable to avoid statements in the first person and impersonal third person (one..., I..., we...).

External thoughts, notions and ideas have to be marked as citations and references by using the Harvard Citations Style. Thus whenever you directly or indirectly quote sources from external literature, statements or ideas, these references must be indicated right in the text and right after the quote in short form by using the following pattern: last name of author(s) and year of publication. The reference must always be related to the source you actually used, even if the author used a quotation himself. Every source that has been used needs to be found in the list of references, providing more details about the place of origin.

3.4.3 Conclusion

The conclusion takes up the initially formulated research question which represents the central purpose/goal of your thesis, includes a critical reflection of its contents and results, and summarizes its main outcomes. Do not provide new data or facts in the conclusion. However, do not simply review the arguments stated before. The conclusion covers max. one and a half pages.

3.5 List of references

The list of references catalogues all sources used in the thesis in alphabetical order of the authors' last name(s). This includes books, contributions to collective volumes, articles in scientific and non-scientific journals and newspapers as well as dissertations and Bachelor and Master theses. Internet sources have to be tagged with the exact link and the date of download. Each reference includes the essential bibliographic data (name of author(s), title of the publication, edition, place and year of publication). Several sources of the same author in a given year are indicated with small letters after the year (e.g. 2015a, 2015b).

Primarily use academic literature (journal articles, books). Newspapers, magazines, periodicals and encyclopedias are not considered appropriate sources for academic research and should only be used in selective cases, e.g. if they represent an important source for data, public options or exact definitions. Wikipedia is not considered a reliable source and should not be quoted.

Remember to always acknowledge any use of someone else's arguments, ideas, figures and data. Not only direct copies of someone else's ideas without giving credits to the original author are considered plagiarism but also re-wording. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will have serious consequences. Every submitted thesis handed in to the chair takes a software-based plagiarism test.

- Journals articles

Name, Initials (Year), Title of the article, *Title of the journal*, Volume (Issue), page numbers.

Example:

Pastor, J. T. and Lovell, C. (2005), A global malmquist productivity index, *Economics Letters*, 88 (2), 266–271.

In text:

As noted by Pastor and Lovell (2005) ..., "Direct quote" (Pastor and Lovell, 2005, p. 268)

- Books and independent publications

Name, Initials (Year): *Title*, edition, place of publication, publisher.

Example:

Braudel, F. (1982), *The Wheel of Commerce*, 2. ed., London, Collins.

In text:

Braudel (1982) argues ..., "Direct quote" (Braudel, 1982, p. 78)

- Contributions to collective volumes

Name, Initials (Year), Title of the article, in: first name(s) of the editor (editor(s)): *Title of the collective volume*, place of publication, publisher, pages.

Example:

Levich, R.M. (1985), Empirical Studies of Exchange Rates: Price Behavior, Rate Determination and Market Efficiency, in: R.W. Jones and P.B. Kenen (eds.), *Handbook of International Economics, Vol. II, International Monetary Economics and Finance*, North-Holland, Amsterdam, p. 979-1040.

- Internet sources

Name, Initials (Year), Title, entire URL. Accessed: date.

Example:

Academic Skills Tutors/Librarians, Information Services (2013): Harvard Quick Referencing Guide,

https://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CC8QFjAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.staffs.ac.uk%2Fassets%2Fharvard_quick_guide_tcm44-47797.pdf&ei=hXdWVfjyL8u-AUZ_WgbAF&usg=AFQjCNH5Wr7xqGWNBUld-kQpU8zmwA2rUvg&sig2=IUJrRH59feEeA-UBbG5MGQ&bvm=bv.93564037,d.d24&cad=rja. Accessed: 16 May 2015.

3.6 Appendix (optional)

The appendix contains supplementary material (detailed description of the data set, additional tables and figures) providing helpful information to the reader. It only includes secondary material without direct relation to the main body, but nevertheless with enough significance to be mentioned.

3.7 Affidavit

The affidavit is located at the very end of your thesis. It has to be included in German language to be legally binding, but can additionally also occur in English. You have to sign the affidavit indicating the date of signature.

„Hiermit versichere ich an Eides Statt, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig und ohne die Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus veröffentlichten und nicht veröffentlichten Schriften entnommen wurden, sind als solche kenntlich gemacht. Die Arbeit ist in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form oder auszugsweise im Rahmen einer anderen Prüfung noch nicht vorgelegt worden.“

„I hereby confirm to the best of my knowledge that this thesis is solely my original work and that I have only used the sources and materials indicated. All quotations from other works as well as paraphrases or summaries of other works have been identified as such and properly acknowledged in the thesis. This thesis or parts thereof have not been submitted to an educational institution in Germany or abroad as part of an examination or degree qualification.“