

Thesis Guidelines (for Bachelor's and Master's Thesis)

June 2021

English version based on the following German guidelines:

Prof. Dr. Christopher Almeling: Merkblatt für Masterarbeiten (März 2021).

Prof. Dr. Matthias Knoll: Empfehlungen für die Erstellung einer schriftlichen Abschlussarbeit (Mai 2021).

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1. General Information

The following sections are guidelines for writing a thesis (Bachelor's and Master's thesis). They are not binding for all theses in all degree programmes and only apply if these guidelines are approved by your thesis supervisor.

A thesis must be registered (by form). After registration, the topic can only be changed in exceptional cases. In this case you must fill out an application and the examination committee will decide after a hearing of all parties involved.

The thesis must be submitted on time by handing in two bound copies and one electronic copy (CD with pdf-document of the thesis and, if applicable, supplementary material such as Excel documents, screenshots). If the thesis is not submitted on time, it will be graded "insufficient". The personal submission to the "Training Unit", the responsible examination secretariats or the date of the postal stamp is considered to be on time.

2. Formal Guidelines

Ensure a clean print image (laser printer or high-resolution inkjet printer, DIN A4; printed **one-sided**).

2.1 Contents of a Thesis

A thesis is structured as follows:

1. Title page
2. Confidentiality clause (optional)
3. Abstract (optional or required by some examination regulations)
4. Table of contents (including page numbers)
5. List of abbreviations, figures and tables (according to use)
6. Preface/ acknowledgements (optional)
7. Text of thesis (introduction, main text, conclusion)
8. Appendix (according to use)
9. Glossary (optional, only when large number of technical terms are used)
10. Index (optional)
11. List of Reference
12. Declaration of Authenticity

2.2 Title Page

The cover page contains at least the following information (text is centred, content according to thesis):

Darmstadt University of Applied Sciences Darmstadt Business School
Type of Work (Bachelor/Master) Topic/Title
Full name, Matriculation number
First Supervisor Prof. XX
Second Supervisor: Prof. XX
Name of the company where the thesis was written Name of the supervisor(s) in the company (optional if written with a company)
Thesis written from

2.3 Confidentiality Clause

The confidentiality clause is issued without any formalities. It restricts the dissemination of the thesis or parts of it and, if necessary, explicitly refers to the rights of the author or the company. It can also be inserted on one of the first pages of the work if there is no space on the cover page.

Example: "This bachelor thesis contains confidential data of *Company name*. This work may only be made available to the first and second reviewers and authorized members of the board of examiners. Any publication and duplication of this master thesis - even in part - is prohibited. An inspection of this work by third parties requires the expressed permission of the author and the company *Company name*."

2.4 Abstract

The abstract provides a short and concise overview of the thesis. After reading the abstract, the core substance and results should become evident. It normally is about 1 page in length and contains three main parts:

- Short description of the research background
- Brief description of the overall structure and research methodology
- Condensed summary of the findings of the study

2.5 Table of Contents

This section provides an overview of the different parts of the thesis, especially the chapters with their subsections. Headings of subsections should be indented in order to clarify the hierarchical structure of the thesis. For each heading, indicate the page on which the text of the heading begins. Each section or subdivision of the text needs to represent an important logical division of the topic.

The pages that do not belong to the actual text of the thesis are numbered using roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.). The actual text of the thesis is numbered using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.).

The table of contents needs to include all headings exactly as they appear in the text without exception. Each heading has to show a page number in the table of contents. The hierarchical rank of a heading can be indicated by an appropriate visual design (e.g. font size, bold print). The title page serves as page „I“, but does not include the page number.

Example:

Main section: 1, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2, 2.1, 2.2, etc. (Please note that if there is a section 1.1 in chapter 1, it must be followed by section 1.2).

Appendix: Appendix A, A.1, A.2, A.3, Appendix B, etc.

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The importance of the individual parts of the paper should be reflected in the structure. The main part of the paper is more subdivided and takes up more space than the introductory section. The type of thesis determines the appropriate structure. In particular, a distinction should be made between:

- theoretical or conceptual work, which is based on literature and research results of third parties;
- empirical theses, that report on empirical studies conducted by the author;
- project-oriented work in which - in addition to the work itself - a further result is produced, e.g. a computer programme or prototype.

In the last two examples companies or organisations outside the university are often involved.

The text of the individual sections should be as concise as possible (mainly nouns). If possible, abbreviations should not be used in headings; exceptions are allowed if technical terms that are not usually written out are used (e.g. DSL, ERP).

2.6 List of Figures, Tables and Abbreviations

The list of figures lists all illustrations, maps, charts and graphs that are part of the paper in chronological order. All visual material except tables are to be considered a figure. All figures are consecutively numbered with Arabic numerals throughout the thesis and are given a title. Similar to the table of contents, the list of figures indicates the respective page numbers for each figure.

The list of tables lists all information that is provided in a tubular form. It follows the list of figures and appears in the same format.

The list of abbreviations aims to provide a collective overview of uncommon abbreviations used in the thesis. Established abbreviations, such as "i.e.", "e.g." or "cf." do not need to appear in the list of abbreviations.

2.7 Preface

The preface is optional and may contain personal remarks, such as the explanation of personal interest regarding the topic. It is also possible to acknowledge and give thanks to contributors, supporting institutions or interview partners. The preface is a "cover letter" that the author sends along with his or her work. In the preface – and only in the preface – the author can use "I".

2.8 Main Text of Thesis

The thesis should prove that the candidate is able to work independently on a task within his or her degree programme using scientific methods within a set period of time.

2.8.1 Layout

Fonts:	Times New Roman or Arial
Font size:	11pt
Font style:	Regular
Line spacing:	1,25
Arrangement:	Full justification (block)

Margins:	left: 2.5 cm
	right: 2 cm
	upper: 2 cm
	lower: 2 cm

2.8.2 Linguistic style

The writing style should be scientifically factual and precise. Use clear main sentences with simple subordinate clauses. Avoid using "I" and "we", as well as phrases such as "the author is of the opinion". After all, the work is written by you. All thoughts that are not supported by literature are automatically your thoughts. Justify them - otherwise they are considered hypotheses. Furthermore, avoid general statements such as "it is generally known ...".

After reviewing the literature, the text should be written in your own words. Avoid stringing together literal quotations. In passages where you refer to the literature, you should clarify any ambiguities of the literature and supplement it with your own examples and/ or graphics. If you use articles by several different authors on the same topic, you should check whether they use

the same definition of the respective technical terms; in case of deviations, a corresponding note (e.g. in a footnote) or your clear justification for the choice of a certain definition is necessary to avoid misunderstandings. Once you have defined a particular issue, this definition should be used throughout the paper. Critically question contexts.

2.8.3 Scope of Thesis

The usual length of the text (without indexes and appendices) is - unless otherwise agreed - about **50-60 pages** for a **Bachelor's thesis** and about **80-100 pages** for a **Master's thesis**. One page comprises on average about 200 - 400 words. These figures are guidelines and may vary depending on the topic.

Exceeding this limit is possible at any time by arrangement, and may even make sense in some cases in order to be able to deal with the topic appropriately, for example if numerous illustrations have to be included for comprehension.

A reduction in length requires a justification in advance or during the preparation. In the text the problem has to be addressed in detail (i.e. all important arguments have been presented) and it should be understood by a reader who is not specialised in the relevant sub-area. In principle, a comprehensible and detailed presentation of selected sub-areas of a topic is preferred to a superficial examination of a large number of sub-areas.

Pay attention to the structure, the central theme, and balance the focal points in terms of quantity: The main focus of your paper must also be apparent from the scope of the section(s) in your thesis.

2.8.4 Visual Information

The use of graphs, tables and other figures is welcomed and recommended. Each graph, table or figure has to be labeled. The term "figure" is commonly used for pictures, maps, charts and graphs, while "table" is used for tables. Both figures and tables need to be numbered and labeled with a title and - if necessary - with a reference.

Important: It is not sufficient to include only a figure or table; it is required to describe it in the text - including the main message that is derived from it.

2.8.5 Footnotes

The text of the footnote is placed at the end of the relevant page (font size 9 - 10 points, single-line spacing). Footnotes should be numbered consecutively. Footnote references in the text are placed at the end of the sentence or at a term or part of sentence to be explained in more detail.

Footnote references at the end of a sentence follow the punctuation mark. Several footnote references in a row are not permitted. In such cases, the different aspects are to be explained appropriately in the footnote text.

Reference footnotes:

Reference to the source from which literal or indirect quotations, facts (e.g. figures) or graphs were taken.

Text footnotes:

Contain remarks that supplement the text but are of secondary importance. In case of doubt, refrain from such remarks in favour of a precise formulation in the text itself.

2.8.6 Introduction

This section contains information on facts that are important for the reader's orientation and relate to the topic and the goal of the thesis, the method(s) used, the structure of the thesis and the origin of the material used. The reader should be introduced to the topic of the thesis and the problems addressed. The chapter title "Introduction" is not very meaningful; try to find a catchy heading with a concrete reference to the topic. This is often easier if the introduction is written at the end.

2.8.7 Conclusion

In the conclusion, particular reference should be made to future developments and/ or unresolved problems in the subject area dealt with. A mere summary is not sufficient.

2.9 Appendix

The appendix should always include documents, which, due to their size, would go beyond the scope of the main text of the paper, but are nevertheless part of the paper. E.g. complete programme listings, questionnaires or empirical findings (raw data and extensive tables). Of course, important excerpts can (and should) be quoted in the text.

If a large appendix with lots of different documents is included, it shall be preceded by a list of appendices. The individual components of the appendix must be clearly marked with regard to content and source. In the text, reference shall be made to the appendix at the appropriate places.

In the case of studies/surveys, the questionnaires and the complete results are to be added in the appendix or CD. The study must be referenced in a footnote at the appropriate place within the thesis.

2.10 List of Reference

The list of references is an integral part of the thesis. It lists the detailed references for all sources used in the thesis. Only sources that are actually cited in the thesis should be listed. Other supporting literature that is not included in the final text does not appear in this section. The sources are listed in alphabetical order. Try to use literature that is as up-to-date as possible, especially contributions from current issues of relevant journals.

There is no number of necessary sources, but the list of reference should not be less than two pages (30 sources) for a Bachelor's thesis and four pages (60 sources) for a Master's thesis. The rule of thumb "one source per page" has proven itself. Pay attention to a balanced composition of sources (books, journals; age, proven authors in the respective subject area). Avoid excessive use of company publications and comparable "unscientific" sources or sources that may not be accessible to the general public, as well as online sources.

The online sources (internet) should be listed in a separate section (with date of access). They are only to be used if the document cannot be obtained in other form. In cases of doubt, you should clarify the use and citation of such sources with your supervisor in advance. These sources usually do not meet the requirements of a scientific method of working, because, for example, a WWW page can be deleted or changed. Sometimes these sources are necessary, for example when they contain manufacturer information.

Each source has to be presented by indicating:

- Name(s) of author(s), without academic title
- Title of source
- Volume/ Publ. Edition
- Publisher
- Year of publication
- Location of publication
- Articles: Page numbers

There are different ways to format sources correctly. You can also use formatting that differs from these examples if it clearly indicates the source. The most important thing is that you use the formatting consistently and check the format you use with your supervisor.

For textbooks and monographs:

The name (and first name) of the author(s) followed by the year of publication (in brackets); the title; if applicable, volume and edition; publisher, place of publication.

Family Name, First Name [, additional names] (Year): Title [: Subtitle] [Edition]. Publisher, Location

For journal articles:

The name (and first name) of the author(s) followed by the year of publication (in brackets); the title of the article; the title of the journal, the year, the issue number (only if there is no continuous page count); the first and last page of the article.

Family Name, First Name [; additional names] (Year): Title [: Subtitle]. In Title of journal, Year, [Issue Number], Page X-X

For newspaper articles:

The name (and first name) of the author(s) followed by the year of publication (in brackets); title of the article; name of the newspaper; number of the issue; date of publication; page reference

Family Name, First Name [; additional names] (Year): Title [: Subtitle]. In Title of Newspaper, Year, Issue Number of Date of Issue, Page X-X

For online sources

If the online source is an electronic version of a text that has also appeared in print: Citation as described above. In addition, the complete internet address and the date of the last access must be given.

If only an electronic version exists:

The name (and first name) of the author(s) followed by the year of publication (in brackets); title of the source, the complete internet link and the date of the last access

Family Name, First Name [; additional names] (Year): Title [: Subtitle], URL Link, Access Date: DD.MM.YYY

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia

Many articles and contributions in the Free Online Encyclopaedia Wikipedia have achieved high or very high quality. They may therefore be used in written work within reasonable limits. An essay should never be based exclusively and unreflectively on these sources.

Wikipedia articles are licensed under the GNU Free Documentation License (GNU FDL); this must be observed when citing. Since the authors of the individual articles are not named individually, citations are available for the respective keyword in the Wikipedia system (accessible via the permanently available main navigation in the outer left column of each page).

Example:

Wikipedia contributors. (2021, March 4). Information management. In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved 17:09, May 4, 2021, from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Information_management&oldid=1010206804

If individual details are missing from the publication:

If there is no author, the work's title comes first.

If there is no date of publication, place (no date) directly after the authors name. However make sure to include the accessed date when citing a web page.

Declaration of Authenticity

A personally signed declaration of authenticity must be added at the end of the paper. Example: "I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own."

(date, place and signature)

3. Additional Information when working with a Company

3.1 General Information

The documents to be included in the thesis are to be agreed upon with the supervisors and the company. At request of the company, the content of the work can be treated confidentially (confidentiality clause on the cover page). The requirements regarding content are to be agreed with the supervisors and the company.

In addition to these requirements, a practice-oriented thesis (depending on the topic or task) must include:

- Company portrait: e.g. industry, number of employees, legal form, owner.
- Organisational integration of the unit in which the thesis was written (e.g. organisational chart)
- Hardware/software situation
- Theoretical context of the topic in the relevant subject area
- Experiences (why was the described procedure chosen, what caused problems, lessons learned)
- Limitations to own performance (did anyone else work on the project, what was your contribution etc.)

3.2 Use of In-house Material

Valuable information on the topic can also be obtained from internal company sources (presentations, work instructions, other internal documents). However, the reader usually cannot access these documents. An internal company document is therefore not a source in the sense of a scientifically verifiable finding. For this reason, it should be mentioned, but included in a separate section of the list of reference.

The corresponding materials should be cited (if possible) with the name of the author, the title if applicable, with reference to the source, e.g. presentation, intranet, manuals, other (project) documentation, and of course with the (creation or access) date.

As a rule, it is not necessary to include the sources on the CD or to print them out. Only if the source is of considerable importance for understanding it should be attached. Please use common file formats (pdf, html, png, jpg etc.)

4. Citation Guidelines

The **careful documentation of sources is crucial** for an academic paper. Whenever you refer to the work of another person or institution, you must document your source (try to cite the author who expressed it first and do not use secondary literature if possible). If secondary literature is unavoidable because the source cannot be obtained within the time frame or for other justifiable reasons, they are to be indicated by the note "cited from" with reference to the secondary source. You do not have to cite standard knowledge from textbooks or scripts. The relation between the reference and your own reasoning should be apparent from the context.

Verbatim quotations should be used very sparingly and only where the author makes an especially memorable statement. Verbatim quotes are to be marked with quotation marks. If you remove or modify words in a quote, you have to label this change (e.g. with [...] if you do not want to reproduce an entire sentence). These quotes are cited without a "cf.", while analogous quotations and references are preceded by a "cf."

There are different ways to reference the source. You can either refer to the author directly in the text or apply footnotes. It is important that you use the form of referencing consistently throughout the entire thesis.

If you use footnotes:

Sources in footnotes are always cited in short form, i.e. with the author's last name, the year of publication (in brackets) and the page number (e.g. Meyer (2011), p. 432). The exact source is cited in the list of reference. In the case of several cited publications by the same author in the same year, the year numbers should be marked with lower case letters (e.g. Meyer (2011a), p. 432 or Meyer (2011b), p. 45).

Footnotes should be numbered consecutively - i.e. not by page. In the text, the footnote sign is placed in superscript to distinguish it from the text. Headings do not contain footnotes.

If you refer to the author directly in the text (Harvard referencing):

There are different versions of Harvard referencing. This guideline gives a brief overview of one of these versions. Always check with your supervisor if you have questions about the style you should be using.

A Harvard in-text citation appears in brackets beside any quotation or paraphrase of a source and does not use footnotes. It gives the last name of the author(s) and the year of publication. For publications up to three authors, all names are mentioned in the source. In publications with three or more authors, only the first author is listed and the other authors are referred to by "et al." (Latin for "and others"; the full stop is only used after the abbreviated "al").

Examples:

One author:	"...(Meyer, 2011)." "Meyer (2011) summarises the importance of..."
Two authors:	"...(Meyer and Hofmann, 2011)."
Three authors:	"...(Meyer, Hofmann and Schmidt, 2011)."
Four or more authors:	"...(Meyer et al., 2011)."

If no author is named, use the title of the text instead of the name. If there is no date of publication, exclude this information and just use the name.

The list of reference must also be adjusted according to Harvard style, i.e. the first name is not spelled out and the used pages are listed, when applicable:

Examples:

Books:	Last name, First Initial. (Year). Title. City: Publisher, Page(s).
	Last name, First initial. and Last name, First initial. (Year). Title. City: Publisher, Page(s).
Journal (Print):	Last name, First initial. (Year). Article title. Journal, Volume (Issue), Page(s).
Journal (Online):	Last name, First initial. (Year). Article Title. Journal, [online] Volume (Issue), pages. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].
Website:	Last name, First initial (Year). Page title. [online] Website name. Available at: URL [Accessed Day Mo. Year].

5. Literature for Scientific Work

American Psychological Association (2020): Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition.

Bahr, J. und Frackmann, M. (2011): Richtig zitieren nach der Harvard-Methode, Solothurn, Institut für Praxisforschung.

Cite This For Me (no date). Harvard Referencing: Guide. [online] Available at: <https://www.citethisforme.com/harvard-referencing> [Accessed 01.06.2021].