

## **Guidelines for writing academic papers: bachelor's and master's theses**

February 2024

### **What is an academic paper?**

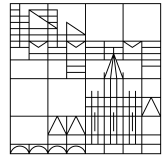
An academic paper is a piece of writing that addresses a well-defined research topic, using available sources of information, such as existing academic articles, case studies, surveys, interviews, data, and experiments.

A paper can be “theoretical” or “empirical”. A theoretical paper can be either a systematic survey of the academic literature on the chosen topic or a development of a formal mathematical model that illustrates an economically relevant phenomenon. An empirical paper addresses the chosen topic by analyzing a piece of data using an appropriate research method.

Whatever type of academic paper you choose, it must be written well. This means: a clear statement of the research question, good use of existing literature, and a clearly visible, well-argued own perspective on the topic based on the surveyed literature or results of the data analysis. You may find the guidelines below helpful for writing a good paper.

### **Format**

- Number of pages:
  - Bachelor's thesis:  $20 \pm 5$
  - Master's thesis:  $45 \pm 10$
- Margin: 4 cm left, 2 cm right/top/bottom. A4 Format.
- Type face and size: Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Row alignment and spacing: Justified, interval 1.5 line spacing.
- Footnotes only: Times New Roman, 10 pt., justified, single line spacing.
- Page Numbers: Excluding the cover sheet, all pages have to be numbered. The information pages preceding the main text (content list, symbol list and list of illustrations) have to be numbered with Roman numerals. For all the other pages, use Arabic numerals.



## Citations

An academic paper must build on existing literature, which must therefore be appropriately cited. Please use APA citation style. Every citation must be found in the reference list, and must be verifiable. Citations that are not explicitly identified as such may cause a negative assessment up to “inadequate” if they constitute verifiable plagiarism. Direct citations begin and end with quotation marks. Indirect citations (i.e. the thoughts of an author are analogously transferred) are not marked with quotation marks. References to publications are generally not submitted as footnote, but within the ongoing text, i.e., “...Moral Hazard...(Holmström, 1982).”

## General structure of a paper or thesis

Cover sheet:

Follow the guidelines of the Examination Office.

Contents table:

The numbering and caption within the text and content list have to coincide.

Symbol list (does not apply if symbols are not used):

The symbol list includes all used symbols and variables with definition.

List of illustrations (if any):

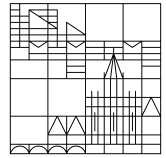
The list of illustrations mentions all illustrations with numbers and caption.

Main text:

The following structure is recommended. First, the introduction leads the reader to the subject of the paper. It states the research question and motivates it (why is it important to study the research question addressed in the paper?), outlines the structure of the work and briefly summarizes the results. A good introduction is meant to grab the reader's attention and persuade them to read on.

The next sections deal with the subject in greater detail. Their purpose is to give the reader sufficient knowledge to understand the topic of the paper. Depending on the type of the paper and its focus, this might include sections summarizing relevant theoretical concepts, providing background or historical information, describing the empirical and/or experimental methods that are used, or describing the data. This part will also include a literature review.

The next section is “Results”. Depending on the paper, it may contain empirical results (e.g., regression estimates from the empirical models described in the previous sections, or theoretical results (e.g., solutions of the previously outlined theoretical model), or literature review findings.



Finally, the paper will end with sections discussing the results in light of the research question, what implications the results have for policy, and a conclusion. It should also note the limitations of the paper (e.g., limited data or issues with the theory or literature analysis) and, where appropriate, directions for further study.

Equations, tables and figures:

The above objects, when used in the paper, have to be numbered consecutively and referred to by their number.

Appendices:

— An appendix may or may not be included. Its purpose is to report on the results or data that may be helpful but are not essential. Do not expect every reader to read the appendix, so do not put any important results there. Examples of information that may be put in the appendix: derivation of the formulae, details of how the data were obtained, pictures of experimental materials or lab (where appropriate).

List of references:

— The alphabetically sorted list of references should be put at the end of the paper and should contain only those publications that are referred to in the text.

Different sources (i.e., journal articles, book chapters) must be cited differently. Please use APA citation style.

Affidavit:

There has to be an affidavit end of each Bachelor- and Master thesis, followed by the author's signature and date. Follow the guidelines of the Examination Office.

### **Academic papers assessment criteria**

- Is the subject interesting and relevant?
- Has its relevance been sufficiently established/argued?
- Is the research question clearly defined?
- Does the work shows its author's familiarity with the existing research on the chosen topic?
- Has the research question(s) been adequately addressed? That is, has the author used the right method or, in case of literature review, cited the right literature?
- Does the paper provide "additional value" or does it only list up well-known facts?
  - "Additional value" means either (or all): new theory, new data or empirical results, new application of the existing theory/method/problem, new method, or newly discovered substantial problem with the existing theory/method/finding.
- Is the paper well-written?
- Have the formal guidelines, presented in this note, as well as the applicable University regulations been observed?