



**Faculty of Economics and
Management**

CHAIR OF ECONOMICS,
APPLIED ECONOMICS

Formal Requirements for Academic Paper Writing: Bachelor/Master Theses and Seminar Papers.

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1 Guiding Principles

- Ensure to clarify which key questions you want to answer in your paper and which auxiliary questions may be supportive.
- Generally, a scientific paper is divided into an introductory section, a main section and a concluding section. In the introduction, the core auxiliary questions (scientific objectives) of the work are described and an outlook on the main part is provided. At this stage, the underlying basic literature is briefly presented. The main part is built upon the differing lines of argumentation with respect to the assignment and the research question. The concluding section summarizes the main findings of the analysis.
- Ensure that the central theme of your work is always recognizable for the reader throughout your argumentation. That is, in each section must prevail to what extent it contributes to answering your research question. Focus on the core characteristics of your topic and avoid “what could also be interesting“ remarks.
- Only write about what you have entirely understood. Any lack of knowledge and understanding will become evident at the time of presentation, at the latest.
- Acquire a thorough and confident comprehension of the economic intuition behind the topic. The basic idea of your work must prevail even without the use of complex formulas. The reader must be able to follow the development of your thoughts without having to personally read the respective original articles. Particular emphasis should be put on the elaboration of the economic intuition. To accomplish that, you may rely on a formal model. In doing so, ensure that all calculation steps are coherent. Complex derivations must be placed in the appendix. Note that mathematics is not an end in itself; however, it serves as a tool to explain the economic reasoning.
- Graphs and tables can support your argumentation in a meaningful way. Nevertheless, they are not self-explanatory. Thence, the prevailing components of all tables and graphs need to be explained adequately in either the text or a legend. Only information that is relevant to your research question should appear in tables and graphs. Photocopies and scans of graphs and tables from books or articles, in most cases, do not suffice or live up to the desired standards.

Therefore, it is recommended to design figures and tables individually whenever possible, using for instance, Excel or Corel Draw.

- To simplify the reading flow, position graphs and tables within the text where you take reference to them and do not just place all of them in an appendix!
- If possible, theoretical models should be accompanied by empirical findings that support the models' factual insights.
- Remember to point out your argumentation's implications for policy formulation.
- Remember to save the results of your work regularly, in particular the written text itself (and make backups!). Technical problems cannot be considered a valid reason for an extension of the preparation time.

2 Time Management

- A common mistake in academic paper writing is time mismanagement. Often, the time required for conducting a sound literature review as well as the actual writing process is largely underestimated. Writing a scientific paper requires much more time than writing, for instance, a school essay or a letter. Moreover, the final editing process is analogously extensive.
- The actual amount of time that is attributed towards research, writing etc. depends strongly on the respective student's capabilities. A preliminary structure and proposed time schedule should be discussed with your supervisor at your earliest convenience.

3 Literature Research

- Get started by searching for basic literature on your topic (e.g. review articles).
- Your supervisor will assist you if you require help. After you have read the basic literature, proceed in a two-pronged manner: On the one hand, use articles and books that are cited in the basic literature to gain a broader understanding of the topic by “digging gradually to its roots”. Repeat this process several times. On the other hand, new aspects in reference to your research topic may arise in your basic literature search, offering helpful keywords which can be used for further related searches via library databases (see subsequent bullet point) or internet search engines (e.g. econlit, JSTOR, Google Scholar).
- It is highly recommended that you make use of the library catalogues (e.g. OPAC) and databases (e.g. DBIS) offered at the Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg.
- Wikipedia does not constitute an academic source and may under no circumstances be cited.
- If a paper has been published in a referred journal, the published version needs to be cited rather than any earlier discussion papers available to you (i.e. if you wish to use a discussion paper as a source for your academic paper, always check whether it has been published since and use the publication accordingly).
- Newspaper articles may be quoted if appropriate, however, they should not be used extensively (e.g. may be used to support your argumentation in the introductory section).

4 Style

- Formulate your text with care. Pay attention to correct spelling and punctuation.
- The paper must be written in a clear and concise manner. The reader must be able to understand and follow your thoughts, such that, it is unnecessary for them to refer to the relevant sources cited.
- Part of an objectively formulated text is that certain linguistic figures (particularly euphemisms, hyperboles and neologisms) are avoided.
- Furthermore, avoid colloquialisms and platitudes. Terms such as “possibly”, “maybe” and “somehow” suggest uncertainty and should be used only in rare exceptions. Likewise, pretentious phrases should be avoided.

4.1 Citation

- The use of intellectual property has to be indicated by a precise reference in the text. References should be as short as possible. More precisely, the citation should solely provide name, year of publication and where applicable the page number of the source used. For example: Kvasnicka (2010, p. 56) or Bundeswirtschaftsministerium (2012).
- Direct quotations may be used, however, as rarely as possible, since they often constitute a breach with the individual student’s writing style in the remaining text of the academic paper. Nevertheless, if this is considered to be necessary, the direct quote has to be put into quotation marks.
- If you include somebody else’s thoughts in your argumentation, it has to be indicated, even if they are not quoted word-for-word, as long as their content is used (indirect quote).

Two possible variants are:

1. Short reference version within the text (see Kvasnicka 2013) or (see Kvasnicka 2013, p. 56).
2. Indicating references using footnotes at the bottom of the page. For example:

This is an exemplary sentence.¹

¹ See Kvasnicka (2013, pp. 12-13).

Note: The citation style you use has to be consistent throughout the entire academic paper!

- If quotes from secondary sources are used (this should be the exception!), the actual source is to be cited with the remark "Cited by..."
- If you cite more than one reference which has been published by the same author in the same year, a small Latin letter is attached to the year of publication for identification in the text and the bibliography, e.g. Kvasnicka (2012a), Kvasnicka (2012b).
- Moreover, consistent and accurate citation is required when presenting data. If several data from different sources are used for one single table or graph, the appropriate source for each data series must be indicated. If own calculations are conducted, it must be described from which data bases the underlying raw data have been obtained.
- Legal sources are cited in the following manner (direct/indirect):
 - “Die Volljährigkeit tritt mit der Vollendung des 18. Lebensjahres ein.“
(§ 2 BGB)
 - „Der Allgemeine Rat der Welthandelsorganisation vertritt die Ministerkonferenz zwischen deren Sitzungen (see Article IV, Paragraph 2, WTO-Ü).“

4.2 Bibliography

- a) **Books and articles in books** should be referenced as follows:

Kvasnicka, Michael (2005): *Temporary Agency Work in Germany*, Aachen: Shaker Verlag.

Kvasnicka, Michael (2009): "Does Temporary Help Work Provide a Stepping Stone to Regular Employment?" in: David Autor (ed.), *Studies of Labor Market Intermediation*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 335-372.

- b) **Journal articles** are referenced as follows:

Burda, Michael C. and Michael Kvasnicka (2006): "Zeitarbeit in Deutschland: Trends und Perspektiven", *Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik*, 7(2): pp. 195-225.

- c) **Unpublished works**, e.g. Discussion Papers, are referenced as follows:

Bauer, Thomas K., Braun, Sebastian and Michael Kvasnicka (2013): "*Distant Event, Local Effects? Fukushima and the German Housing Market*", Kiel Working Papers, No. 1857, Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

- d) **Internet sources** are cited like print media, just that the respective URL appears at the end:

Bundesagentur für Arbeit (2012): *Umfassende Arbeitsmarktstatistik - Arbeitslosigkeit und Unterbeschäftigung*,
[http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/ Unterbeschaeftigung-Schaubild.pdf](http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statischer-Content/Unterbeschaeftigung-Schaubild.pdf).

Although it might be difficult to detect an exact title or author on some websites, you should try to meet the specified style (author, year, title, URL) as closely as possible.

- All authors cited in the text must be indicated in the bibliography in alphabetical order. Multiple articles or books of an author have to be ordered chronologically:
Braun, Sebastian and Michael Kvasnicka (2013a): "Men, Women, and the Ballot: Gender Imbalances and Suffrage Extensions in the United States", *Explorations in Economic History*, 50(3): pp. 405-426.
Braun, Sebastian and Michael Kvasnicka (2013b): "National Sentiment and Economic Behavior: Evidence from Online Betting on European Football", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 14(1): pp. 45-64.

Burda, Michael C. and Michael Kvasnicka (2006): "Zeitarbeit in Deutschland: Trends und Perspektiven" *Perspektiven der Wirtschaftspolitik*, 7(2): pp. 195-225.

- If there are more than two authors, only the first author is specified when citing the source in the text, e.g. Bauer et al. (2013). However, in the bibliography, all authors should be listed (without academic title or occupational title):
Bauer, Thomas K., Braun, Sebastian und Michael Kvasnicka (2013): "*Distant Event, Local Effects? Fukushima and the German Housing Market*", Kiel Working Papers, No. 1857, Kiel Institute for the World Economy.
- Indeterminable information may be replaced by:
 - Place of publication: "s. l."
 - Author: "n. a."
 - Year of publication: "n. d."

5 Formal Requirements

- The academic paper should be written in clear, concise and understandable English. Note that the layout and orthography are considered part of the evaluation process, and hence, impact on the final grade to be awarded. Therefore, always pay attention to correct spelling and punctuation.
- Tables and graphs are numbered continuously. Likewise, each page receives a page number (except the cover page and statutory declaration).
- Graphs obtained from other articles or books should be scanned only in exceptional cases. Whenever possible it is recommended to generate the graphs yourself by using Excel or a graphics program (e.g. CorelDraw).
- A list of abbreviations and a list of symbols are usually helpful when many abbreviations or symbols are used throughout your work. The variables have to be introduced and explained when they first occur in the written text. Example:
- “In the following model, the demand for product G is a function of investment in advertising W . The function is denoted by $G(W)$.”
- Each table and graph receives its own heading. Beneath the element, its source has to be directly revealed.
- Margins, font size and line spacing:
Margins: left 3 cm, right 2 cm, top 2.5 cm, bottom 2.5 cm
Line spacing: 1.5, font size: 12 pt, font: Arial or Times New Roman
Alignment: justified (“Blocksatz”)
Footnotes: line spacing: 1.0, font size: 10 pt
- Scope:
 - 10 CP Seminar papers: about 16 pages (+/- 1)
 - 15 CP Seminar papers: about 18 pages (+/- 1)
 - Bachelor thesis: about 20 pages (+/- 2)
 - Master thesis: about 50 pages (+/- 5)

A page consists of 2,500 characters including blanks (exclusive of footnotes, tables and graphs)
- The pages to be counted exclude the title page, table of contents, bibliography and appendix. More precisely, the pages are counted beginning with page 1 from the introduction onwards. If you believe that you need to exceed the page limit stated above, please consult your supervisor.

- The paper is to be structured as follows:
 - *Empty cover sheet (applicable for Bachelor- and Master Thesis)*
 - *Title page [without page number]*
 - *Table of contents [beginning with page number II]*
 - *If applicable: List of figures,
List of tables,
List of abbreviations,
List of symbols*
 - *Introduction [beginning with page number 1]*
 - *Main part*
 - *Conclusion*
 - *Bibliography*
 - *If applicable: Annex*
 - *Statutory declaration*
- } Roman page numbers
- } Arabic page numbers

- The title page should feature (see sample page below):

- Name of the University
- Faculty (you may use the official logo)
- Chair
- Title (topic)
- Examiner's name
- Student's personal data
 - Name
 - Matriculation number
 - E-Mail address
 - Postal address
 - Study program
 - Current study semester
- Date of submission



FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

CHAIR OF ECONOMICS,
APPLIED ECONOMICS

Bachelor Thesis

TITLE OF THESIS

Examiner: Prof. Dr. Michael Kvasnicka

If applicable name of Supervisor

Submitted by: **Forename Surname**
Street House Number
Postcode Place

Matriculation Number: 214352

E-Mail: **forename.surname@st.ovgu.de**

Study Program: International Business and Economics

Study Semester: 6

Date of Submission: 05/06/2014

- The **Table of Contents**:
 - Subitems of the main text are continuously numbered using Arabic numbers
 - Restrain to a maximum of three sublevels
 - If a sublevel is introduced it must refer to at least two corresponding subsections
 - Example:

Contents

List of Figures	III
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2 Main Part	2
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2.2.1 Subsection 1	7
2.2.2 Subsection 2	8
2.2.3 Subsection 3	10
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Statutory Declaration	

- Below each subitem belongs a text, i.e. two subheadings may never be directly stated underneath each other.
- If you begin writing on a first level subitem (i.e. main heading) start a new page.
- The word-processing program Word offers useful tools for citing as well as templates for setting up index lists.

6 Submission

- When signing the list of participants, students bindingly register for their participation in the seminar. The binding registration is a requirement for entitlement to receipt of a topic. If a student withdraws from the seminar after having received a topic, a grade of 5.0 (letter grade: Fail) will be awarded.
- The Bachelor/Master Thesis has to be submitted as follows to the Academic Records Office:
 - Starting in the Summer Semester 2026 theses are handed in exclusively in digital form.
 - Please check the additional documents you need to attach to the email for the examination office:
<https://www.fww.ovgu.de/fww/en/Faculty/Examination+Office/Examinations/Final+Theses/Guideline+Procedure+Final+Thesis+from+SoSe+26+%28BA+MA%29-p-88385.html>
 - The Thesis has to be submitted as follows to the chair's assistant (Pia Scholz):
 - An electronic version (preferably in PDF format) via E-Mail (pia.scholz@ovgu.de) on the day of submission

The team at the Chair of Applied Economics wishes you all the best for your work. Your supervisor will be at your disposal during preparation time. It is highly recommended that you make an appointment with your supervisor, in order to discuss a plan of action and your preliminary structure, shortly after receipt of the topic.