



# Guide Academic Writing

as of February 2020

## 1. Structure and organisation of the thesis

A thesis contains the following elements in the order in which they are mentioned:

The **cover sheet** should contain the following information: Title and subtitle of the paper, name of the supervising professor, name of the author, name and location of the university, institute, course of study, aspired academic degree, and month and year of thesis submission. The relevant regulations of the admission office must be observed. An example of cover sheet and structure of the thesis can be found on the [JKU master thesis website](#).

Formally, the **table of contents** represents the structure of the thesis. It should thus have already an enumeration. However, the first text page is numbered 1.

- The structure of the paper should ensure a logical flow of thoughts from the introduction to the end. Incoherent individual paragraphs and/or sections should be avoided. The individual outline points should be in a logically relationship to the sub-points; i.e. the sub-points assigned to an outline level must also belong to the same content level (e.g. 2.2. Organization design - 2.2.1. The origins of organization design would fit; whereas 2.2.1 History of open innovation would be logically incoherent).
- For logical reasons, each outline level for which subitems are created must contain at least two subitems ("Who says A, must also say B").
- The form of the outline is not prescribed; any form of outline can be chosen which brings the items in a logical relationship to form a structure. As an example, two forms are mentioned here:

Example 1: Mixed Classification    Page

A. ....	...
I. ....	...
1) ....	...
a) ....	...
b) ....	...
2) ....	...
3) ....	...
II. ....	...
B. ....	...

Example 2: Decimal Classification Page

1 .....	....
1.1 .....	....
1.1.1 .....	....
1.1.2 .....	....
1.1.3 .....	....
1.2 .....	....
2 .....	....

The structure is followed by a **list of figures and tables** and a **list of abbreviations**. These are only recommended if the number of figures/tables or abbreviations used is high and you consider it useful for the sake of clarity. In general, abbreviations should be avoided because they disturb the flow of reading in the paper.

In the **body of the thesis**, care must be taken to ensure that all points in the outline also appear as headings. In general, the text begins with an introduction, in which the question and the relevance of the topic are explained and the structure of the paper is introduced. In the second part, the theoretical or conceptual framework is elaborated, necessary definitions of terms are made, and theoretical models and concepts are introduced. The main part of the thesis consists of an independent theoretical or empirical treatment of the research question. In case of an empirical paper, this is also precluded with a chapter on methods. In the final part, the most important results are summarized, the limits of the findings are discussed, and suggestions for further research are made.

The **bibliography** must include the name (surname and full or abbreviated first name) of the author or editor, the title of the papers and the place of publication (title of the journal with issue number and page number or book title with geographical place of publication and, if applicable, page numbers) as well as the respective year of publication. Internet sources must be marked with the date of the page call. There are different options for formatting the bibliography (see examples from academic journals such as *Academy of Management Journal* or *Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaftliche Forschung*). The important thing is uniformity. Some examples can be found below under 3.

Additional information or large tables/illustrations may be included in the **appendix**. Typically, content units in the appendix are numbered A.1 or A.I, A.2 or A.II etc.

Theses must include a declaration on oath (after the cover page) that the author has prepared the thesis independently and exclusively with the help of the sources indicated. Furthermore, the paper must not have been submitted to any other examination authority. At JKU this declaration is as follows:

**STATUTORY DECLARATION**

*I hereby declare that the thesis submitted is my own unaided work, that I have not used other than the sources indicated, and that all direct and indirect sources are acknowledged as references.  
This printed thesis is identical with the electronic version submitted.*

*Place, Date*

*Signature*

## 2. Citation

The most important rules are complete and uniform citation: There are many different styles of quoting, but within a paper only one and the same style should be followed consistently! Any use of external information must be indicated by a precise reference in a footnote (or in brackets in the text)!

If possible, only a few direct quotations should be given; in particular, the adoption of longer literal quotations should be avoided. In the case of these direct quotations, no changes of any kind may be made to the text; minor omissions within the cited passage are to be indicated by three dots; attention is to be drawn to subsequently inserted or omitted emphasis in the footnote (e.g.: emphasis by the author). Texts taken over literally are to be enclosed in quotation marks and marked as quotation ...to be identified ("...").

If a thought is not quoted directly but in terms of content, this is also to be indicated by a reference in the text or in a footnote. In the text the reference is made by a reference to the source (e.g.: see Heinen 1991, p. 7) or by a superscript (...<sup>1</sup>) at the end of the adopted thought. If a longer paragraph or even an entire bullet point is based on a reference, this is to be noted at the beginning of the adoption of the idea (in the Text... <sup>1</sup>; in the footnote: 1. the following after ...).

In case of second-hand citations, the reference or footnote must be given next to the original source with the words "quoted after". As a general rule, these kinds of citations should be avoided.

Footnotes do not always contain references to literature; they can also, for example, refer to differing opinions or "secondary thoughts".

It is recommended to quote within the text. The author and the year of publication of the publication paper as well as the number of pages, enclosed in brackets, should be cited in the text (Harvard citation style; example: "The temporal uniformity obviously relieves the burden, while the similarity of the tasks probably favours monotony" (Rüssel1999, p. 191). In this case, all further information are found in the references. In the case that several publications of an author from the same year are cited, these are to be marked accordingly by additional letters. ... (Kirsch 1970a, p. 88 ff.) ... In the Harvard citation style, remarks going beyond the source reference are added to the footnote.

A common format is the APA reference style, which can be found here:

[https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/apa\\_reference\\_style\\_0.pdf](https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/apa_reference_style_0.pdf)

But different journals use different styles. You can use any one of them, as long as you stick to one style consistently.

## 3. Formatting

- DIN A4 pages proceed with standard text processing software (e.g. Microsoft Word)
- Margin: left and top 4 cm, right and bottom 2 cm
- Text formatting: 1 1/2-line normal font (e.g. Times New Roman, 12 point), justified text
- Page numbers: The title page is not numbered. The table of contents and, where applicable, the list of figures, tables and abbreviations are numbered in Roman numbers. The following text and the appendix and the bibliography, if required, are numbered with page numbers in Arabic numerals. Page numbers are inserted in the bottom right-hand footer in Times New Roman, 10 point, single-line.

- Footnotes: must always be placed on the page to whose text they belong; within the footnote, they must be written on one line (normal font, 10 points, justified text, single line)
- Figures and tables: Always label; indicate from which source the figure/table was taken or whether it is a self-created figure/table. Figures and tables that take up one page or more should be placed in the appendix.

#### **4. Literature**

An introduction to work with scientific literature is offered by the University Library (database training, EndNote training). Furthermore, video tutorials, short guides and manuals, as well as other information material can be found on the library's website.

Please do not only use textbooks or anthologies as a basis for your literature research but work mainly with articles from scientific journals. The library portal EBSCO database is suitable for literature research (see also eResources at JKU)

Examples of high-quality management journals in English:

- Academy of Management Journal
- Academy of Management Review
- Academy of Management Annals
- Administrative Science Quarterly
- Human Relations
- Industrial and Corporate Change
- Industry & Innovation
- Journal of Management Studies
- Organization Science
- Organization Studies
- Organization
- Research in the Sociology of Organizations
- Research Policy
- Strategic Management Journal
- Strategic Organization

## 5. Literature on academic writing

- Dunleavy, Patrick (2003): *Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Dissertation or Thesis*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pinker, Steven (2014): *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*. Viking.
- Skern, Tim (2009): *Writing Scientific English: A Workbook*. facultas wuv

## 6. Evaluation criteria

What makes a good thesis?

- **Topic:** relevance, clarity, and derivation of the research question, formulation of a concrete research question, classification and delimitation of the topic, justification of the research approach/theory, precision and depth of the topic (focus)
- **Structure:** clarity, structure logic, thematic reference, meaningfulness of headings, own structure, balanced weighting of the topics, red thread
- **Content:** clear introduction and introduction, presentation and transparency of the argumentation, use of clearly and appropriately defined terms, consistent use of chosen terms, embedding of the terms in concepts/theories, topic coverage, correctness of content, consistency of argumentation, and justification of the argumentation in the literature
- **Connection** and mutual reference of the sections
- **Novelty:** originality and own thoughts, statements; critical approach to theory, methodology and, if applicable, empirical material; transfer from theory to empirics
- **Formal aspects:** consistent citation style, correct punctuation/ spelling, style and expression, completeness and uniformity of bibliography, overall form (e.g. margins and visual support by illustrations)
- **Literature:** scope and relevance of sources, independence in literature review, skill in processing literature

## 7. Useful tips

After an initial literature review, develop an exposition including a draft title and outline. The following points should be clarified in the exposition:

- Question: What is the research question investigated in this paper and why is it relevant?
- Theoretical framework: Which theories and concepts are used to address this question and why? Approach: How is the research question addressed in this paper? Do you work empirically and if so, what data is collected and analysed? Do you work conceptually and if so, how do you design the literature review and the structure of the argument?

Then create a schedule. Do not underestimate the importance of good style (grammar, spelling) and proper formatting. Therefore, make sure to have the paper proofread! Ask your friends and acquaintances or contact professional service providers to set a time frame for proofreading. You should also proofread the pre-final version paper again. Please note that even scientific papers can be written in a stimulating way and should arouse interest in reading!