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Examples and Formal Criteria for Writing Scientific Theses

Seminar Thesis / Bachelor Thesis / Master Thesis

in the context of the seminar “Process Mining and Compliance” (only for Seminar Theses)

at the Chair for Information Systems and Supply Chain Management

(Universität Münster)

Annotations

Please choose the type of thesis from the three listed above that pertains to your work, by erasing the ones that do not apply. Note that the sentence “in the context of…” is only relevant for seminar theses. Please do not use this for either Bachelors’ or Masters’ works.

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Annotations

If no tables are used in the work, then the list of tables is to be removed. Likewise, the list of figures and tables can be displayed on one page for a few entries.

# Abbreviations

CES Cooperative Extension Service

dpi dots per inch

NYT The New York Times

RFP Request for Proposal

SSA The Social Security Administration

UAF University of Alaska Fairbanks

VBA Visual Basic for Applications

Annotations

The list of abbreviations includes all abbreviations that are not generally used. Abbreviations such as "etc.", "e.g." and "i.e." do not belong in the list.

Abbreviations such as "e.g.", “i.e.” are to be provided with a protected space ([Ctrl]+[Shift]+[Space]). The protected space becomes recognizable as "°" after pressing the "¶" button in the toolbar. The AddNonbreakingSpaces macro can also be used for this purpose.

# Symbols

C0 total inital investment costsAnschaffungsauszahlung in t = 0

Ct net cash inflow during the period tKapitalwert

E Market value of equity

E(Ri) Expected return in asset i

E(Rm) Expected market return

D Market value of debt

i the interest rate

n number of period

P Market value of preferred stock

r discount rate

rf Risk-free rate of return

t number of time periods

βi Beta of asset i

Annotations

A sorting of the (marked) entries is possible via "Table/Sort". A list of symbols is not necessarily required in every work.

# Introduction

In this section of the paper, the goal is formulated, placed in a larger context, and distinguished from other topics. The most important terms of the topic have to be defined within the context; a careful formulation is particularly important here. Furthermore, first insights on the used research methodology can be given. The structure of the work should be explained. Thus, the first chapter contains the following points:

1. Motivation
2. Objective of the work
3. Structure of the work

For seminar papers, the introduction should not exceed one page; for graduation theses, the introduction consists of one to three pages. Usually there is no further subdivision; for longer papers, it may be useful to subdivide the introduction into sections such as "Relevance of the topic, Classification of the topic, Course of the investigation".

* It may be useful to insert a graph at the end of the chapter, which summarizes the structure, the argumentative sequence or important core statements of the work.
* Experience shows that the introduction should be formulated at the end of the work. This avoids repeated changes to the text.

# Main Section

## First Subsection

All passages in the text should be formatted with their own format template, i.e. the use of Word's own format template "Standard" is completely waived. The text of the work is defined with the style sheet "Basic text". For special formatting, one of the derived formatting styles may be used.

* In this document, notes are formatted as enumerations using the format template "Basic Text (List)" as an example.
* There are other special formats for indented text (Basic Text (Indentation)), numbered lists (Basic Text (Numbered List)) or SQL listings (Basic Text (SQL)).

The Basic Char style sheets can be used to highlight individual words.

* When highlighting, the Basic Char. (Italic) template is preferable to theBasic Char. (Bold) template.
* Basic Char. (Small Capitals) highlights Authors’ Names in the continuous text.

## Second Subsection

The document can be subdivided by useful headings. Different levels are available for this purpose. If a heading is followed by less text, e.g. a single paragraph, a subheading may be more suitable (*Subheading 1* or *Subheading 2*).

# Use of Illustrations

When incorporating several illustrations, one of the main formal requirements is the uniformity of the used font sizes. Two graphics created in the same or similar notation should also use the same font size. The additional requirement of the readability of all fonts used in the graphic makes it very difficult to resize the graphics to the correct size with the scaling function of Word. As far as possible, images should therefore be scaled 100% into the text.

If possible, graphics should be created by yourself. Graphics taken from other works should only be included in a scanned version if they are highly complex and the quality of the scan is sufficiently good.

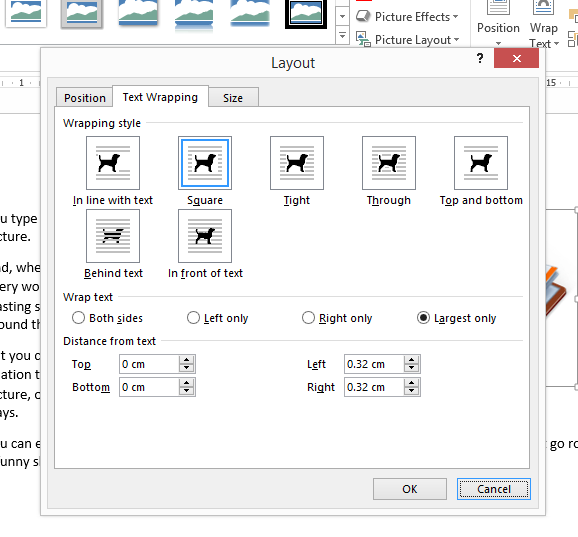
   
Source: Microsoft Microsoft 365 Word (2025)

Figure 3.1 Layout options in Microsoft 365 Word

After inserting a graphic, the associated macro can be used. The macros are located in Microsoft 365 Word in the "View" tab (see Fig. 3.2).

Ein Bild, das Text, Screenshot, Schrift, Diagramm enthält.

KI-generierte Inhalte können fehlerhaft sein.Source: Microsoft Microsoft 365 Word (2025)

Figure 3.2 Macros in Microsoft 365 Word

The macro formats the image with the correct style sheet (Image) and adds a caption and a line for the source information.

Table 3.1 illustrates the three possible combinations of referencing figures using an example.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples of references** | **Remarks** |
| Source: Becker, Schütte (2004), p. 399 | The illustration has been adopted without changes. It is identical with the original (and even contains possible spelling mistakes of the original source). |
| c.f. Becker, Schütte (2004), p. 399. | Changes or additions have been made to the illustration. These may contain corrections or additions to the content as well as formal changes (language, spelling mistakes, etc.). |
| {own source} | The illustration is a separate representation created by you. It is in no way based on the graphic representations of other authors. |

Table 3.1 References for illustrations

# Use of Tables

Tables can be imported from a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel or created directly in Word. The latter variant is particularly suitable for tables that do not contain any calculations, since the contents of the table fields can be designed much more flexibly.

When creating Word tables, the format template "Basic Text (Table)" should be applied to all cells. Column headings can also be created with the format template "Basic Char. (Bold)" can be formatted in bold. The default font size of 10pt is only a recommendation; depending on the size of the table, the size can be adapted to the usual font size of 12pt or reduced to 8pt. When using several tables, as with graphics, the greatest possible similarity should be ensured.

Tables are labeled using the corresponding macro. Information on the sources applies analogously to graphics.

# Citation

A formal main criterion in the writing of a scientific work is the correct citation.

At the Chair Hellingrath the American Psychological Association (7th ed.) style guide is used: [See Link.](https://www.cogitatiopress.com/doc/APA%20Style%20Guide%20(7th%20ed.).pdf)

## APA-Style

Citation takes place in the text, not in footnotes. The following format must be used here (Smith, 2003) or (Smith, 2003; Bonini, 1963) or (Chenhall & Romano, 1989) or (Broadbent et al., 1996).

* If the quotation only refers to a specific page or is a literal quotation, the page must also be specified. Example: (Jones et al., 1995, p. 17).
* If the quotation refers to two consecutive pages, this must be marked with "f.". Example: (Jones et al., 1995, p. 17f.)
* If the quotation refers to several consecutive pages, these must be explicitly indicated. The use of "ff." is not permitted. Example: (Jones et al., 1995, pp. 17-20).

The listing in the literature list must be complete. All references listed in the text must appear in this list and vice versa. When formatting the list of literature, you can refer to the following examples.

## Examples

Ackoff, R. L. (1961). “Management Misinformation Systems,” Management Science (14:4), December, pp. 147-156. https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.14.4.B147

Bonini, C. P. (1963). Simulation of Information and Decision Systems in the Firm, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. https://doi.org/10.1177/00222437640010021

Broadbent, M., Weill, P., O’Brien, T., and Neo, B. S. (1996). “Firm Context and Patterns of IT Infrastructure Capability,” in Proceedings of the 14th International Conference on Information Systems, J. I. DeGross, S. Jarvenpaa, and A. Srinivasan (eds.), Cleveland, OH, pp. 174-194.

Chenhall, R. H., and Romano, C. A. 1989. “Formal Planning and Control Presence and Impact on the Growth of Small Manufacturing Firms,” in Job Generation by the Small Business Sector in Australia, W. C. Dunlop and A. J. Williams (eds.), Newcastle: Institute of Industrial Economics, pp. 71-89.

## Citation the results of Generative AI tools

Current AI programs and systems cannot fulfill the requirements and principles of academic work because the information generated can be incorrect, incomplete, misleading, questionable in terms of copyright, or non-transparent. The adoption of erroneous text passages and information can lead to considerable quality deficiencies in the work and examinations concerned. As you are responsible for the integrity and accuracy of the content generated by the AI tools, content and text passages must therefore be carefully checked and validated by you. In addition, content generated with the help of AI must be carefully and conscientiously labelled, which also applies if the information and text passages have been reformulated. Thus, the following rules apply to the usage of Generative AI tools in your research:

* If Generative AI tools have been used in your research, you have to describe how you used the tool and what effects these tools had on the work results in your Method section or in a comparable section of your thesis.
* Content like pictures, data, and text passages created with Generative AI must be clearly labelled with citation information. This applies both to the direct adoption of text and the paraphrasing of the output by you. In this seminar, we will follow design guidelines for dealing with the citation of Generative AI from APA (https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt).
* To fulfil scientific quality requirements, in particular transparency and traceability, the complete prompts as well as the corresponding results and answers of the Generative AI tool must be attached to the respective seminar thesis in the form of an appendix. If the programs and systems used make work results or chat histories available to third parties via links, the corresponding content can also be verified by means of these direct links.
* The use of generative AI as an aid for correcting spelling, expression, or translations is currently permitted and does not require comprehensive documentation.

The following are examples of how to cite the results of a Generative AI tool.

The first example includes the prompt being used.

When prompted with “What is the purpose of Generative AI?” the ChatGPT-generated text stated that “The purpose of Generative AI is to create new content by learning patterns from existing data. It mimics human creativity to produce outputs such as text, images, music, code, and more.” (OpenAI, 2025) [1].

Reference: OpenAI [1]. (2025). ChatGPT (o4).

Appendix:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number | Generative AI Tool | Usage | Prompt | Date |
| [1] | ChatGPT (o4) | Generation of text | What is the purpose of Generative AI? | 23.05.2025 |

The second example refers to the rephrasing of the results of a prompt.

ChatGPT answered a question about the purpose of generative AI by referring to the creation of new content based on existing data. The generation of this content mimics human creativity. A number of examples were also given. (OpenAI, 2025) [2].

Reference: OpenAI [2]. (2025). ChatGPT (o4).

Appendix:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number | Generative AI Tool | Usage | Prompt | Date |
| [2] | ChatGPT (o4) | Generation of text | What is the purpose of Generative AI? | 23.05.2025 |

# Conclusion

At the end of the paper, a summary of the research results can be given in the last part. Additionally, the outlook on further - still unsolved - questions in connection with the topic may be presented. No quotations and hardly any footnotes are used in this last chapter.

# References

The bibliography is an integral part of every scientific work. Precise and meaningful information facilitates possible research for the reader. The use of quotations or ideas from other works or from other sources without clear reference to their origin is one of the most serious academic offenses. A scientific work in which this error is repeated (and thus most likely consciously) is called plagiarism. Such a work is evaluated with the grade "not sufficient". This reference has often not been taken into account in papers, therefore again for clarification:

A paper, a bachelor’s thesis or a master’s thesis without references to scientific literature automatically receives the grade "unsatisfactory".

A bibliography lists all works cited in the thesis alphabetically sorted by author name. It is not necessary to categorise the entries according to the type of works cited. Only for longer works such as dissertations can paragraphs be formed according to the initial letters of the author's name (A for all works whose authors begin with A, B to Z according to).

# Appendix

Usage of Generative AI Tools

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Number | Generative AI Tool | Usage | Prompt | Date |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this Seminar Thesis titled “Examples and Formal Criteria for Writing Scientific Theses” is my own work. I confirm that each significant contribution to and quotation in this thesis that originates from the work or works of others is indicated by proper use of citation and references.

I am aware that the use of texts or content created using generative AI does not guarantee their quality and that I am responsible if the use of such tools results in incorrect content, violations of data protection law, copyright law, or scientific misconduct (e.g., plagiarism).

I also assure that I have used generative AI tools only as an aid and that my creative influence predominates in the present work, and that I have indicated which generative AI tools I have used, for what purpose, and to what extent.

Münster, 21 August 2025

John Doe

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