

Guidelines for Writing a Thesis or Seminar Paper at QBER (Last updated: 24.04.2018)

1. Scope

- Number of pages of the main text (including figures and tables):
 - Seminar Paper: 11-12 pages
 - Bachelor Thesis: 23-25 pages
 - Master Thesis: 27-30 pages + detailed documentation of mandatory empirical work (step-by-step bullet points about data manipulations in the appendix and documented/commented files)
- What to hand in:
 - Always: One digital copy (PDF)
 - Always: All data and clearly documented executable scripts that allow us to replicate every result that is your own work (i.e. raw data, R/Matlab/Stata/Excel files, etc.)
 - Always: All your Internet sources, like working papers or blog posts (PDF)
 - Seminar Paper: One printed copy (stapled) to QBER
 - Bachelor or Master Thesis: Two bound copies (adhesive binding) to the examination office (Prüfungsamt)
 - All digital files mentioned above must be on a CD, DVD or USB stick that is enclosed with one of the printed copies of the thesis

2. Formal Guidelines

- The paper must include (in the listed order):
 - Title page: name of the university and faculty, title, semester, student id, supervisor, field of study, your name, your address and e-mail address
 - Table of contents
 - List of tables, list of figures, table of abbreviations, table of symbols (if necessary)
 - Main text
 - References
 - Appendices (if necessary)
 - A signed and dated Declaration of Authorship:
 - I hereby declare that I have composed my thesis titled “...” independently using only those resources mentioned, and that I have as such identified all passages which I have taken from publications verbatim or in substance. I am informed that my thesis might be controlled by anti-plagiarism software. Neither this thesis, nor any extract of it, has been previously submitted to an examining authority, in this or a similar form. I have ensured that the written version of this thesis is identical to the version saved on the enclosed storage medium.
- Paper size: DIN A4
- Margins: top and bottom: 3cm each, left: 6cm, right: 2cm
- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt (for footnotes and captions: 10pt), justified formatting
- Line-spacing: 1.5 (footnotes and captions: 1.0)
- Footnotes and formulas should be numbered continuously
- Tables and figures should be numbered continuously, labeled and integrated in the text

3. Literature

- Clearly mark every line of thought that is not your own as a citation by either
 - using footnotes, e.g., “Cf. Gneezy et al. (2003), p. 822.” or
 - using in-text citations, e.g., “... (Rouwenhorst, 1998, pp. 277-279).”
- Use your own words when you describe others’ lines of thought! It is not enough to exchange single words or change the order of the original sentence. It is also not enough to simply translate a source from a foreign language (for example English to German).
- Be consistent with your citation style.
- Indicate the page(s) which you are citing from.
- Direct (literal) quotes must start and end in quotation marks and should be used scarcely!
- All cited references must appear in the References section at the end of the paper.
- Examples:
 - For journal articles: Bernheim, B. D., Shleifer, A., and Summers, L. H. (1985). “The Strategic Bequest Motive,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 93(6), 1045-1076.
 - For working papers: Daniel, K., and Moskowitz, T. (2013). “Momentum Crashes,” Working Paper.
 - For Books: Friedman, M. (1957). *A Theory of the Consumption Function*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
 - For articles in collections: DeBondt, W. F. M., and Thaler, R. H. (1995). “Financial decision-making in markets and firms: A behavioral perspective,” in Jarrow, R. A., Maksimovic, V., and Ziemba, W. T. (eds.): *Handbooks in Operations Research and Management Science*, Vol. 9, 385-410. North Holland, Amsterdam.
 - For Online-Documents: Socio-economic Panel (2007). “Household Question Form,” http://panel.gsoep.de/soepinfo2010/quests/pdf/en/q2007h_en.pdf (last accessed, December 18, 2013).
- If we detect plagiarism (and we actively look for it) you will fail!

4. Content

- The golden thread (line of thought, “roter Faden”) is the key to a good paper! Make sure the reader always understands what you are writing and why you are writing it.
- Every sentence counts! The purpose of each sentence should be comprehensible. Only write things that help answer your research question. Do not digress. Be concise.
- Every claim needs justification! Do not claim things or assume they are self-evident. Justify and, if possible, cite sources that support your claim. If available, also cite contrasting opinions and reason why you side with what position.
- A critical discussion of the literature is essential! Do not just recite uncommented positions from the literature.
- Avoid long and complicated sentences and use simple, understandable language.
- Include figures and tables in the main text. Only put them in the appendix if they are supplementary. Long mathematical derivations also go in the appendix.
- Add a caption to each table and figure which explains all variables and acronyms appearing in the table/figure. It should be possible to understand tables and figures without going back to the main text.