

## **Guidelines for the preparation of final theses**



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# Foreword

Dear students,

During your main study program, you will have the task of writing academic theses. You must fulfil the following requirements in order to successfully complete them:

1. critical and creative work in an intellectual sense and
2. the careful formal preparation of your work in a more technical sense.

The first task is clearly the more demanding and interesting one, which is also the main focus of the evaluation of a scientific paper. However, you should by no means neglect or underestimate the second task. An inadequate form will affect the meaningfulness of the content of your work and will be reflected in the overall assessment.

You will receive assistance with questions of a substantive nature as part of your supervision. This guide is intended to answer questions of a formal nature.

These guidelines will help you with many questions that arise during the preparation of an academic paper. It has been designed in such a way that it can be used as an example for the formally correct organisation of an academic paper at the Chair of ABWL and Service Management. It contains the various elements of an academic paper, e.g. verbatim and analogous quotations, illustrations, bibliography, footnotes and appendix. Should these guidelines leave any questions unanswered, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ingolstadt, April 2026

Prof. Dr. Jens Högrove

## **Abstract**

The thesis must be preceded by a short summary of the aim of the work, the procedure and the results in the form of an abstract (max. 400 words).

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Problem definition**

Students have to complete various examinations during the course of their degree programme. Written assignments are of particular relevance. While only relatively rough guidelines have to be observed in written examinations, more stringent formalities have to be observed in academic papers in the form of worksheets, seminar papers and theses. The aim of these guidelines is therefore to clarify formal issues that arise during the preparation of an academic paper by providing information and examples.

## **1.2 Course of the investigation**

This thesis consists of nine parts. After this introduction, the second part of the thesis deals in detail with the processing time and the scope of the thesis depending on the degree programme. The third part explains what to look out for

to pay attention to during the meeting dates as part of the schedule. The fourth part deals with the basic, more technical requirements for academic theses. The content and structure of a scientific paper as well as information on the individual areas are presented in Part 5 of the paper. The sixth part focusses on citation. Chapter 6.1 deals with the citation method for literal quotations (section 6.1.1) and for quotations in the sense of the original (section 6.1.2). Chapter 6.2 deals with the use of the short reference, which is necessary for the Harvard citation style. Part 7 introduces the use of footnotes. Experience has shown that the evaluation of a scientific paper (Part 8) is of particular interest to students. The guide ends with a brief conclusion.

## 2 Schedule for final theses

	Dates	Documents to be prepared	Deadlines
<b>Bachelor thesis</b>	Outline discussion (before submitting the paper!)	Exposé (1 page) 1. draft outline Reference list	3 working days before the appointment
	Review of the reading sample	2. draft outline Reading sample (max. 5 coherent pages)	1 week before the appointment
<b>Master thesis</b>	Outline discussion (before submitting the paper!)	Exposé (2 pages) 1. draft outline Reference list	3 working days before the appointment
	Review of the reading sample	2. draft outline Reading sample (max. 10 coherent pages)	1 week before the appointment
	Two dates for questions on data collection and analysis	Documents for data collection (e.g. questionnaire, study model) and data analysis (e.g. SPSS output, analysis protocol)	3 working days before the date in digital form

Fig. 1: Schedule for final theses  
Source: Own illustration.

Depending on the type of thesis (Bachelor's or Master's thesis, conceptual or empirical work), different meetings are offered. The table above provides an overview of the typical course of supervision appointments for the final thesis. However, deviations are possible at any time. It is advisable to discuss with the respective thesis supervisor in the first meeting which further appointments should be attended.

Two meeting dates are recommended for **Bachelor theses**:

1. First draft outline incl. reference list and one-page synopsis
2. Second draft outline and reading sample. The reading sample comprises a maximum of five pages.

Up to four meetings are recommended for **Master's theses**:

1. first draft outline incl. reference list and two-page synopsis and
2. second draft outline and reading sample. The reading sample should not exceed ten pages..
3. two appointments to discuss the data collection (e.g. the questionnaire or research model) and to discuss the data analysis (e.g. the results).
4. Presentation followed by a discussion/feedback session

The requirements for the individual meeting dates are explained in more detail below:

- **Exposé:** The exposé should briefly and concisely (BA: 1 page, MA: 2 pages) present the problem of the thesis, explain the research gap addressed, name the research question(s) (up to three research questions depending on the topic) and explain the intended methodology and approach in your own words. (up to three research questions depending on the topic) and explain the intended methodology and approach in your own words. Existing literature on the chosen topic area must be appropriately addressed. Important to know: The first draft of the synopsis does not usually correspond to the final version. In most cases, the final exposé is created in several iteration rounds after you have received feedback from your supervisor. Only then can the thesis be officially registered with the examination office.
- **1. Draft outline:** The first draft outline should be submitted together with the synopsis. It should be a first, appropriately detailed draft outline. This may of course change in the further course of the work.
- **2. Draft outline:** It should present the updated structure and take into account the proposed changes from the first meeting.
- **Reference list:** It includes all sources researched so far that are relevant to the thesis. The sources should be given in the correct format.
- **Reading sample:** The chapter can be chosen freely. It should be a coherent part of the thesis. The current outline and the corresponding sources must be submitted with the reading sample.
- **(If applicable) Master's thesis colloquium:** As a rule, we offer Master's theses the opportunity to present the current status of their work to the chair team once per semester in order to obtain feedback. In general, the aim is to optimise the further procedure and research methodology, if necessary. There is also the opportunity to present initial results and receive feedback on the approach taken so far. In the case of quantitative work, the presentation can also serve to introduce the research model. There is one central date per semester for the presentation of the final thesis, to which you will be invited by your supervisor.

### 3 Processing time and scope of the thesis

The following diagram provides an overview of the different processing times for theses and the maximum possible number of pages of text including illustrations. There may be a maximum deviation of two pages upwards or downwards. Any deviations beyond this will result in a corresponding deduction of marks.

Study programme	Degree	Processing time	Max. Number of pages
<b>Business Administration<sup>1</sup></b>	Bachelor	2 Months	30 Text pages (+/- 2 pages)
<b>DICE</b>	Master	3 Months	35 Text pages (+/- 2 pages)
<b>MBA</b>	Master	6 Months	50 Text pages (+/- 2 pages)
<b>Business Administration<sup>2</sup></b>	Master	6 Months	50 Text pages (+/- 2 pages))

Fig. 2: Processing times and maximum number of pages for theses in various degree programs

Quelle: Own illustration

Even if the page numbers mentioned initially sound extensive, many students often find it difficult to adhere to them during the course of their work. Many students are therefore faced with the question of which areas of their thesis they should shorten in order to be able to adhere to the maximum number of pages. Especially for Master's theses, a frequently asked question in this context is: how long should the theory section of my thesis be and how long should the methodology and results discussion section be? There is no universal answer to this question, as the weighting can vary depending on the topic. As a rule of thumb, you should roughly aim for a 50:50 weighting. This means that for an empirical Master's thesis, the introduction, theoretical foundations and hypothesis should make up around 50% of the thesis, while the chapters on methodology, analysis and discussion should also make up around 50% of the thesis. Slight deviations from this rule of thumb are of course possible and even necessary depending on the topic and chosen methodology.

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<sup>1</sup> see § 17 (3) of the examination regulations for the Bachelor's degree programme in Business Administration at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt dated 7 May 2007

<sup>2</sup> see § 17 (2) of the provisional examination regulations for the Master's degree programme in Business Administration at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt dated 7 February 2011

## 4 Formal Requirements

These guidelines for writing academic papers are basically based on an article by Thomas (1987).<sup>3</sup> However, some chair-specific changes have been made. For a comprehensive explanation of the preparation of academic papers, please refer to the current edition of ‘Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten’ by Manuel R. Theisen is recommended.

In the humanities, there are various types of written elaboration of scientific findings (Theisen 1993, p. 6 f.). The explanations in this guide refer to the following types of manuscript:

- Seminar papers
- Final theses

The final thesis is a comprehensive written examination with the aim of providing ‘proof of the ability to carry out independent academic work’ (Theisen 1993, p. 10). The following notes on spelling, grammar and punctuation should be taken into account when writing your thesis: werden:

- All written work should be written in accordance with the new spelling rules.
- Options such as punctuation should be exercised uniformly.
- Colloquial language is only permitted in exceptional cases and should be avoided.
- Filler words and empty phrases should be avoided. The same applies to relativisations such as „certainly“, „presumably“ oder „surely“.
- Despite numerous counterexamples in the literature, the sentences should be formulated clearly and precisely. In other words, they should not be longer than three lines.
- In the case of references, e.g. in relative clauses, it must be ensured that it is clear which object is referred to in the preceding sentence.

For the technical preparation of theses, various guidelines must be observed, which can be found in Figure 2. These guidelines are binding for all written theses submitted to the Chair of ABWL and Service Management, unless other instructions are given.

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<sup>3</sup> In doing so, Thomas is largely based on an article by Kaiser (1978 b).

	Seminar papers	Final theses
<b>Number of copies</b>	One copy for the organiser of the event by e-mail and as a hard copy.	Two printed and bound copies incl. USB stick with electronic version of the paper (PDF and Word) and all sources as PDFs. In the case of qualitative empirical work, the interview guidelines and the interviews must also be submitted electronically. In addition, the electronic version of the thesis must be sent as a Word document and as a PDF by e-mail to the supervisor. to the supervisor.
<b>Stitching/binding</b>	The worksheets are to be stapled with a loose-leaf binder.	Final theses must be bound and provided with a hard cover.
<b>Type of paper</b>	A4 sheets must be used, which may only be written on one side. It is not necessary to use heavy paper (> 80g/m <sup>2</sup> ).	
<b>Font</b>	The thesis must be written in Times New Roman font.	
<b>Font format</b>	The work is to be formatted in justified text with hyphenation.	
<b>Edge width</b>	Leave a margin of 2 cm on the left-hand side of the sheet and 2 cm on the right-hand side. The distance at the top should be 2.5 cm, while a distance of 2 cm must be maintained at the bottom.	
<b>Linespacing</b>	The work must be written one and a half lines apart. A blank line must be inserted before new paragraphs.	
<b>Headings</b>	For first-level headings, the font size is point 16 and the font style is bold. The bold font style applies to all headings. The font size for second-level headings is point 14. For section and paragraph headings, font size 12 is used. No blank line is inserted between the heading and the following paragraph. New main chapters (first-level headings) do not have to start on a new page.	
<b>Footnotes</b>	The font size for footnotes should be 10 points. Each footnote begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. The footnotes should be formatted in justified text with single line spacing and should be numbered in Arabic numerals. In general, footnotes should be used sparingly.	

<b>Organisation scheme</b>	Title page, Repetition of the question, Content, appendix if applicable, List of references.	Blank sheet, Title page (see Appendix 1), table of contents, list of figures (if applicable), list of abbreviations (if applicable), contents, list of appendices (if applicable) and appendix,
		Bibliography, possibly list of expert interviews, blank sheet.
<b>Page numbering</b>	The blank sheets and the title page are not to be labelled with page numbers. The page numbering begins with the table of contents. The table of contents, list of abbreviations, abbreviations, list of figures, appendix, list of appendices, list of expert  The table of contents, list of abbreviations, list of figures, appendix, list of expert discussions and bibliography are to be numbered consecutively with Roman numerals, while the text is to be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals. If the appendix comprises several parts, each part should be labelled with a code letter in the corresponding appendix heading and numbered separately.	

Fig. 3: Formal Regulations

Source: Based on Thomas 1987, S. 367 f.

## 5 Content and structure of a scientific paper

To make it easier for you to format your thesis correctly, you will find a format template on our chair's website that can be used. This guide also serves to illustrate the correct formatting.

### 5.1 Front page

The title page should include the following information (see Appendix 1 for an example):

1. Name of the chair
2. Topic of the work
3. Deadline 4. Supervisor
5. First name, Name, Street, Postal code, Place, Phone number, Matriculation number of the Student.

### 5.2 Abstract

The thesis must be preceded by a short summary of the aim of the work, procedure and results in the form of an abstract (max. 400 words).

### **5.3 Table of contents**

The table of contents contains the outline with page numbers, which allows the reader to gain an initial overview of the structure of the academic paper. References to the list of abbreviations and figures, the list of expert interviews (if applicable), the list of appendices, the appendix (if available) and the bibliography are also given in Roman numerals.

The outline should show how the topic has been understood and dealt with. It must reflect the logical structure, i.e. the ‘central theme’ of the thesis. For this reason, the outline points must be formulated in a comprehensible manner and the following considerations must be taken into account:

- The individual points of the outline must be labelled with the corresponding page numbers.
- They must correspond to the headings in the text and reflect their content concisely and accurately.
- In the text, it can be useful to insert connecting and structuring sentences between a main point and the subordinate sub-point.
- As a rule, a bullet point should not be shorter than half a page.

#### **Form:**

- A consistent and self-contained structure is also evident in a formal and logical structure. When subdividing, it is important to ensure that, for example, subsection 1.1 is followed by subsection 1.2.
- Sub-items should not be a verbatim repetition of the parent item.
- Headings in the text can be emphasised in bold according to their importance.

A clear and generous arrangement of the bullet points in the table of contents, e.g. by indentation, facilitates the overview. Subdivisions that are too deep (fourth subdivision level and deeper) should be avoided in the interests of clarity.

To classify the outline points, the use of a numerical structure according to the gradation principle is suggested (see Figure 3). The subdivision should be as follows: Parts (e.g. 1), Chapters (e.g. 1.1), Sections (e.g. 1.1.1.1).

1	Problem definition
2	Conceptual foundations
3	First main part
	3.1
	3.1.1
	3.1.2
	3.2
4	Second main part
	4.1
	4.2

Fig. 4: Example of a numerical structure according to the gradation

Source: Based on Theisen 1993, S. 97.

## 5.4 List of figures and illustrations

Graphics and tables are uniformly labelled as figures and must be listed in the list of figures. The advantage of an illustration is often to visualise complicated facts for the reader of a scientific paper. This is only possible if the figure itself is easy to read and understand. In formal terms, this means choosing an appropriate font size. The font size should therefore be at least point 10. All illustrations must be provided with a frame of identical width. Scanned images are not recommended due to loss of quality. Furthermore, illustrations should only be produced in grey scale. Deshalb sollte die Schriftgröße mindestens Punkt 10 betragen. Alle Abbildungen sind mit einem Rahmen von identischer Breite zu versehen. Von eingescannten Abbildungen ist aufgrund von Qualitätsverlusten abzuraten. Darüber hinaus sollten Abbildungen nur in Graustufen erstellt werden.

Secondly, care must be taken to ensure that the content of the figure is comprehensible and that all elements of the figure are explained in the text. This would not be the case, for example, if the axis designations were missing from a diagram. The checklist in Figure 5 serves as a rough guide for creating suitable illustrations.

Test criteria	Fulfilled?	
Does the signature provide information on the questions: What? Where? When? Have superfluous words been eliminated??	Yes	No
Are all details and symbols clearly distinguishable or can they be fully identified by the explanation at the end of the presentation?	Yes	No
Is the reference available and complete?	Yes	No
Is the labelling clearly legible (even after a necessary reduction in size)?	Yes	No
Have the scales and proportions been chosen in such a way that any consciously or unconsciously distorting reproduction is excluded?	Yes	No
Aren't there too many superfluous details?	Yes	No
Isn't the situation described trivial?	Yes	No
Isn't the situation described trivial? Does the description fulfil the requirements of completeness, accuracy and clarity?	Yes	No

Fig. 5: Checklist for the creation of illustration

Source: Based on Riedwyl 1987, S. 11.

The title of the illustration and the source citation must be inserted directly below the illustrations. The reference ends with a full stop. References for illustrations that have not been adopted 1:1 are introduced with 'based on'. Figures that have not been taken from the literature should also be labelled with a reference. Such illustrations should be labelled 'Source: Own survey' or 'Own illustration'. A 12-point blank line with single line spacing must be inserted before and after figures. The figures must be numbered consecutively. In scientific papers, it is necessary to refer to the figures in the text. The number of the figure must be stated. The statements in the figures must always correspond to the statements in the text. Folded figures and figures in landscape format should be avoided.

## 5.5 List of abbreviations and abbreviations

Abb.	=	Abbildung
Anm. d. Verf.	=	Anmerkung des Verfassers
Aufl.	=	Auflage
Bd.	=	Band
Diss.	=	Dissertation
et al.	=	und andere
f.	=	folgende (Seite)
ff.	=	fortfolgende (Seiten)
Hab.	=	Habilitationsschrift
Herv. durch den Verf.	=	Hervorhebung durch den Verfasser
Hrsg.	=	Herausgeber
hrsg. v.	=	herausgegeben von
Jg.	=	Jahrgang
Nr.	=	Nummer
o. J.	=	ohne Jahresangabe
o. Jg.	=	ohne Jahrgang
o. V.	=	Ohne Verfasserangabe
S.	=	Seite
s.	=	siehe
Sp.	=	Spalte
zit. nach	=	zitiert nach

Fig. 6: Abbreviations for references

Source: Thomas 1987, S. 369.

Abbreviations should be avoided in the running text. Only abbreviations unknown to the reader should be explained in the list of abbreviations. This includes all abbreviations not explained in the Duden dictionary. The first time an abbreviation is used in the text, the full word should be inserted first, followed by the abbreviation in round brackets. If the abbreviated word is used again later in the text, only the abbreviation should be used. Abbreviations that may only be used when citing sources are shown in Figure 6.

For these abbreviations, **no list of abbreviations** should be created or they should not be explicitly listed in the list of abbreviations.

## **5.6 Content**

Although the presentation of content is not the main focus of this guideline, the content is of central importance for the organisation of the paper. It is therefore advisable to organise the content at a point in time when the author has already developed all the essential principles by working through the existing literature and knows how they want to present their topic.

Factual comments on the subject, aim and methodological structure should be dealt with in the first, introductory bullet point. In this context, the topic should be interpreted, narrowed down in terms of content and justified. In addition, the practical and theoretical relevance of the study should be demonstrated and the topic should be placed in a wider context. This point does not necessarily have to be called 'introduction' or 'problem definition'. In any case, it must introduce the problem underlying the topic.

Topic-related headings are preferable to generic headings such as 'Main part'.

The outline should describe the way in which a problem is dealt with. It should serve as a guide for the reader, while forcing the author to check the coherence of the structure when writing the text. This is followed by the first main section, which usually deals with the theoretical foundations of the work, i.e. definitions of terms, differentiation from related constructs and (in the case of empirical work) the theoretical derivation of hypotheses.

In the case of empirical work, this is followed by a description of the chosen methodology and an explanation of the evaluation steps. This is followed by the presentation of the results obtained. These must be compared with existing findings from the literature and discussed appropriately. The final part of the thesis contains concluding considerations: a summary of the results, a brief presentation of the theses in the form of a conclusion or an outlook on unresolved problems and future research needs.

## **5.7 List of notes and appendix**

The main components of an appendix are supplementary materials such as larger tabular and graphical representations, interview guidelines or questionnaires. In the context of empirical work, the appendix often also serves to illustrate additional statistical analyses such as SPSS outputs. Protocols of any expert interviews conducted should also be listed in the appendix.

The figures in the appendix are numbered consecutively. The numbering **does not depend** on the figures used in the text. The appendix must always be preceded by an index.

In terms of content, the appendix should only contain what is not absolutely necessary for understanding the text. Under no circumstances should the appendix be used to circumvent the page limit. If there are no relevant facts, the appendix can be omitted completely.

## 5.8 List of references

The list of references includes only those sources that are referred to in the text with a short reference. They are listed in alphabetical order according to the author's name. The individual details for the designation of sources in the list of references are to be taken from the sources themselves. In principle, each reference contains four main components:

- the name(s) and initials of the first name(s) of the author(s). If no author is known, the source in question must be categorised alphabetically under 'o.V.'. Academic degrees and titles are not mentioned
- the year of publication
- the title of the article and
- Other bibliographical references (see examples in Appendix 3 and the list of references).

The following principles should be observed when compiling the list of references: Bei Büchern ist die jeweils aktuellste Auflage zu verwenden.

- For books, dissertations etc., only the first place of publication needs to be stated. In the case of two or more places, the reference is 'et al.', e.g. Berlin et al. ▪ The publisher is not required.
- The other bibliographical details of English and other language literature are given with the corresponding German equivalent, i.e. '3. Jg.' corresponds to 'Vol. 3' and 'Nr. 2' corresponds to 'No. 2'.
- In English magazine titles, all initial letters are capitalised except for prepositions.

### 5.8.1 Citation of sources for books and series of publications

When referring to monographs, the following information must be given in the order in which it is explained in the list of references:

- Name of the author: Firstly, the surname and - separated by a comma - the initials of the first name(s) are given. Organisations and institutions can also be considered as authors if no more precise details can be found. Author names can be emphasised in bold.
- Year of publication: The author's name is followed by the year of publication in round brackets. The year of publication can be emphasised in bold.
- Title of the book: The title must be written out in full. Subtitles should also be included. In the case of anthologies, the title of the contribution should be stated first, ending with a comma. This is followed by the reference 'in:', followed by the authors and the title of the anthology. The names of the authors should be followed by '(ed.)' to identify them as the editors of the anthology
- Edition and volume: The edition must always be stated unless there is only a first edition. The volume, consisting of the volume number and title, is only necessary if a work has been published in several volumes.
- Place of publication: If there are several places of publication, it is sufficient to state the first place of publication with the addition 'et al.'. The publisher may be omitted
- Page: For edited volumes, the first and last page of the article must be given in the list of references.

If some information is missing, it must be provided in an appropriate form, e.g. by noting 'o. V.' (without author), 'o. O.' (without place) or 'o. J.' (without year). An example of the source citation for anthologies can be found in Figure 6

<p><b>Hogreve, J.; Sichtmann, C. (2009).</b> Dienstleistungsgarantieren als Instrument zur Steuerung der Kundenintegration, in: Bruhn, M.; Stauss, B. (Hrsg.). Kundenintegration, Wiesbaden, S. 343-358.</p>
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Fig. 7: Example of the references of anthologies

Source: Own illustration.

### 5.8.2 Citing sources for magazines and newspapers

Sources from journals also begin with the author's name, the year of publication and the title of the article. The titles of journals must always be written out in full.

In addition, the volume, issue number and the first and last page of the cited article must be stated

**Kunz, W., & Hogreve, J. (2011).** Toward a Deeper Understanding of Service Marketing: The Past, the Present and the Future. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 28(3), 231247.

Fig. 8: Example of source for magazines and newspapers

Source: Own illustration

The citation of articles in scientific journals shown corresponds to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) and is to be understood as a recommendation. Citation styles stored in reference management programmes such as Citavi often differ slightly from the form shown. In principle, slightly different citation styles are permissible as long as all the central components of the citation are present (authors, year, title of the article, title of the journal, volume, issue number, page numbers) and a standardised citation style is used throughout the list of references.

When quoting from newspapers, the author of the article should be named if possible. If this is not possible, the reference 'o.V.' should be used instead of the author. The newspaper is referred to with the addition 'in:' is added. This should be followed by the publication date dd.mm.yyyy and, if possible, the year and issue number. Examples of source citations for magazines and newspapers can be found in Figure 7.

### 5.8.3 Citing the source of electronic information media

One problem with the use of Internet sources is the bibliographical verification of electronic sources. On the one hand, there are still no generally recognised rules for citing electronic media, and on the other hand, the permanence of electronic sources is not yet guaranteed (Alberth 1998, p. 1368 f.). The latter statement contradicts the principles of academic work, as it is often no longer possible to verify the source after a short time. Therefore, electronic sources should only be used if the source is not available in another form. The following information should be included when citing internet sources:

- Name and initials of the author(s). If no author is known, the source in question must be categorised alphabetically under 'o. V.' in alphabetical order. Academic degrees and titles are not mentioned,
- Year of publication,

- Title of the contribution,
- Further bibliographical references if possible
- Unique Resource Locator (URL) and
- Date of search.

**Fließ, S.; Högreve, J. (o. J.).** Mit Dienstleistungsgarantien zur Service Excellence, elektronisch veröffentlicht unter der URL: <http://www.mendeley.com/research/mit-dienstleistungsgarantien-zur-service-excellence/>, abgerufen am 15.09.2011.

Fig. 9: Example of the source citation for electronic media

Furthermore, information (e.g. articles) that has **only been published electronically** must also be submitted in consultation with the thesis supervisor when submitting the thesis. Otherwise, the principle applies that the paper version of a literature source should be used as the basis for citation

### **In general:**

When selecting the right literature, the focus should be on English-language journal articles in an A+, A or B journal rated according to the VHB ranking (can be found at <http://vhbonline.org/vhb4you/jourqual/>). Only if no suitable literature can be found here should you resort to anthologies. Textbooks, encyclopaedias or websites should be avoided as sources of literature and lecture notes should never be cited. Depending on the subject area, you may deviate from this rule of thumb. If in doubt, talk to your supervisor.

## **5.9 List of expert interviews conducted**

Depending on the topic, it may make sense to interview experts as part of a thesis. For example, expert interviews can be conducted as part of a pre-test or in the exploratory phase of a survey. Important results of these interviews can be cited in the thesis with reference to the relevant interview. It is important to create a list of the expert interviews conducted..

The following information is required:

- Surname and first name of the dialogue partner (also possible in anonymized format),
- function of the dialogue partner, if applicable,

- Name of the institution or organisation and
- Place and date where the interview took place.

## 6 Citation method

‘Much of what you say in a paper is not the result of your own thinking. Whoever borrows from others must do justice to the people whose thoughts, concepts, models, procedures, measurement techniques, etc. he adopts as his own’ (Dichtl 1996, p. 218) and thus refer to these sources by citing them.

As a general rule, the following applies: Foreign ideas must be recognised as such. Quotations must be used in such a way that the meaning given by the author is preserved. The original source, i.e. the publication in which a fact was first published, should always be cited. When writing a paper, you should refrain from citing secondary sources, i.e. citing sources from other sources. Only if the original source is not available may the secondary source be cited. It must be recognisable in the corresponding short reference that this is a secondary source. The addition ‘cited from’ must therefore be included. Both the primary and secondary sources must be included in the bibliography.

### 6.1 Forms of quotation

#### 6.1.1 Literal quotations

Literal quotations are placed in inverted commas (‘...’). Single inverted commas are used for quotations within literal quotations (‘...’). Citations and references require literal accuracy, so any special formatting by the author should be retained. Additions to the original should be clearly marked by square-bracketed additions ([...]) with a note, e.g. ‘Author's note’. Emphasis in the quoted text should always be included. The omission of a word (several words) is indicated by two (three) dots, e.g. (...). If the quotation contains an error, this should be indicated in the appropriate place with ‘(sic)’. This is necessary so that no incorrect citation is assumed during correction

**Important:** Extensive and frequent verbatim quotations give the reader the impression that the author has analysed the literature but has not reflected on it sufficiently. Literal quotations should therefore only be used sparingly and only when they describe an issue particularly aptly. Literal quotations are

also suitable for short foreign language quotations in the original version. Quotations in another foreign language require a translation, stating the name of the translator. As a rule, quotations from English sources do not need to be translated. A literal quotation should generally not exceed two to three sentences. If longer quotations appear to be unavoidable, they should be indented in the text and written single-spaced.

### **6.1.2 Analogous quotations**

A quotation by analogy is when the thoughts of others are adopted or when reference is made to other authors. This is not a literal reproduction of a text. The scope of a quotation must be clearly recognisable

The following three rules can be summarised:

1. **Immediacy**, i.e. the quotation should be taken from the primary source (original source).
2. **Appropriateness**, i.e. the quotation should contain exactly and only what the quoting author wants to prove with the quotation.
3. **Accuracy**, i.e. the references are sufficient and clear enough to make it easy to find the source and the cited passage.

## **6.2 Use of the short citation**

At the Chair of ABWL and Service Management, the so-called ‘Harvard citation method’ and ‘APA citation’ are permitted, in which a short reference (Theisen 1993, p. 138 f.) is inserted at a suitable point in the text. The citation refers to the original source in the bibliography. The short reference includes the author's name, the year of publication of the book or essay in question and the page number. This page number should be as precise as possible. References such as ‘ff.’ should be omitted. Instead, the area should be precisely delimited by specifying the first and last page.

In the case of analogous quotations, ‘cf.’ is not used in the short reference. If a source is limited to two consecutive pages, it is sufficient to cite the first page with the reference ‘f.’. By using the short reference, the reader is able to find the exact source in the bibliography (see Appendix 3). If several articles by one author are cited that were published in the same year, a further distinguishing feature must be added in addition to the year to clearly identify the source (example: Fliess/Hogreve 2005 a, p. 312). The author's publications must be labelled accordingly in the bibliography. For sources with up to three authors, all authors should be named. If there are more than three authors, the addition ‘et

al.’ can be used in the short reference after the first author. All co-authors must be listed in the bibliography. Figure 9 shows an example illustrating the Harvard citation style.

In den letzten Jahren werden Dienstleistungsgarantien in Management und Wissenschaft als ein innovatives Marketinginstrument angesehen, mit dessen Hilfe Dienstleistungsanbieter Wettbewerbsvorteile sichern und ausbauen können (Wirtz/Kum 2004, S. 159).

Fig. 10: Text fragments to illustrate the Harvard citation style

Source: Hogleve 2007, S. 1.

### 6.3 Information on the use of AI-based tools

A short disclaimer and a table on the use of generative AI and other related tools must be attached to the thesis. You can find a template below: (based on HTW-Berlin 2024)

*I have listed all AI-based resources in the appendix of my thesis. These are listed with product names and a detailed description of use in an AI directory. I confirm that I have not used any AI-based tools whose use has been explicitly excluded in writing by the examiner. I am aware that the use of texts or other content and products generated by AI-based tools does not guarantee their quality. I am fully responsible for the adoption of any machine-generated passages used by me and bear responsibility for any incorrect or distorted content generated by the AI, incorrect references, violations of data protection and copyright law or plagiarism. I also affirm that my creative influence predominates in this work.*

<b>Areas of contribution</b>	<b>AI system(s) used</b>	<b>Detailed description of AI use and purpose separately by chapter of the work</b>
Ideation and development of the research project	<i>Example:</i> ChatGPT v5.0 (OpenAI)	<i>Example:</i> Foundational Work: Brainstorming and defining a clear problem statement.
Literature Review		
(Preparation of) Data Collection		
Data Analysis		
Writing and editing of the manuscript		
Further contributions		

Fig. 11: Table for GenAI usage declaration

Source: Own illustration

## 7 Footnotes

Factual comments by the author that go beyond the actual content of the paper should be included in footnotes. Footnotes are separated from the text part of the page by a short line. At least a one-line space should be left between the text and the footnotes. A single space should be left between the individual footnotes. If the footnote refers to the whole sentence, the number of the corresponding footnote follows the punctuation mark. If the footnote only refers to the immediately preceding word or group of words, the number is placed directly after the word or group of words (Drosdowski et al. 1996, p. 67). Footnotes always begin with capital letters and end with full stops. Footnotes should generally be used sparingly.

## 8 Evaluation of a scientific paper

The following criteria are used to assess the theses. The conceptual and material requirements for a thesis are significantly higher than for seminar papers.

### Topic:

- Presentation of the problem to be addressed,
- Relevance of the topic in practice and science (identification of the research gap),

- particular difficulties in dealing with the topic and the demands placed on the researcher,
- The chosen research approach and the quality of the justification for this choice.

**Conceptual structure:**

- Correct coverage of the topic,
- Appropriateness of thematic restrictions,
- basic logic of the structure,
- correct weighting of the individual parts with regard to the overall topic,

**Content:**

- Clarity and consistency of the argumentation,
- Quality of the theoretical foundation,
- own research initiatives (e.g. empirical study),
- Independence of the conclusions,
- Originality of presentation, level of reflection, critical faculty, methodological suitability.

**Formal aspects of the presentation:**

- Precision and scientific orientation of the language style,
- Mastery of language rules (grammar, spelling, punctuation),
- Citation style,
- Appearance (e.g. visual support through illustrations).

**Literature:**

- Scope and relevance of the sources used,
- Independence in the procurement of literature,
- Skill in processing literature.

Since the independence of the work plays an outstanding role, stricter standards are applied to the evaluation of the scientific work in the case of extraordinarily intensive counselling.

## **9 Conclusion**

Finally, it should be emphasised once again that formalities are of great importance for the success of a scientific paper, both with regard to the considerable amount of time required to produce a formally correct paper and with regard to the assessment of the scientific paper.

Therefore, a corresponding period of time should be planned for the observance of various formal guidelines. Theisen (1993, p. 20 f.) or Kaiser (1978a), for example, show a work plan for a thesis of twelve weeks. This can of course be adapted according to the specifications for theses at the Chair of ABWL and Service Management.

# Appendix

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Appendix 1: Sample design of a title page for a thesis..... VI

Appendix 2: Design recommendations for references in the bibliography using examples  
..... VIII

Appendix 1: Sample design of a title page for a thesis

Source: Based on Thomas 1987, S. 367.

## **Service guarantees as an instrument for managing customer integration**

Chair of ABWL and Service Management

Prof. Dr. Jens Högrevé



Master's thesis for the award of the degree

Master of Science

at the Ingolstadt Faculty of Economics,

Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Submitted by:

Max Mustermann

Matr.-Nr. 1234567

Submission date: 1. October 2025

Appendix 2: Design recommendations for references in the bibliography based on examples

Source: Own illustration.

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