

Guidelines for Bachelor theses

Department of Economics at the University of Mannheim

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These guidelines intend to define basic rules and requirements for submitting a Bachelor thesis as agreed upon by most of the senior and junior faculty members at the Mannheim Department of Economics. **Please make sure to talk to your supervisor about any possible deviation from or extension of these rules concerning your particular thesis project.** For more details on how to write a good thesis, you may want to consult the academic writing consultancy, the homepage of the consultancy or one of the references given at the end.

General information

The Bachelor thesis is a written exam, which is part of your Bachelor grade. You should check the up-to-date examination regulations before you begin your thesis. The bachelor thesis must prove your ability to work with scientific methods independently, to critically evaluate scientific literature, and to communicate in an academic manner.

Two bound copies as well as an electronic version of the thesis have to be delivered to the supervisor or to the person named by the supervisor no later than on the last day of the agreed time limit. The electronic version is requested as pdf-document, raw data from empirical studies in a valid format like SPSS or Excel; all databases and online texts used (i.e. texts that are exclusively available on the internet) must be documented and quoted with the day of reference.

Topic and language

The topic of the Bachelor thesis must be agreed upon with your supervisor. Please discuss with your supervisor and make sure to understand precisely, whether your thesis is supposed to concentrate on the review of relevant literature and/or whether (and to what extent) you are expected to contribute your own thoughts, algorithm, application or research results. The thesis has to be written in German or English language.

Editing

Bachelor theses must be typewritten. Any word processing software may be used. LaTeX may be a good choice in case of frequent use of formulas in your paper.

Style

Format: one-sided DIN A4

Font Size: 12 pt

Line Spread: 1.5 pt

Alignment: justified (“Blocksatz”)

Left and right margin: 3 cm

Structure

The Bachelor thesis is structured as follows (parts in parentheses are not obligatory):

- Cover: includes title of the thesis, supervisor’s name, student name and contact information, student ID (see example below)
- Table of Contents: headings in the table of contents and the text must be numbered identically
- (List of Abbreviations: uncommon abbreviations only)
- (List of Figures: all figures with number and heading)
- (List of Tables: all tables with number and heading)
- (List of Symbols: all mathematical symbols and variables with their definitions)
- Main content: introduction, body (the table of contents derived from the research question and objective should be balanced and systematic), and summary. Provide economic intuition for your key results. In an empirical thesis, the used data set must be described adequately; take care that all steps within data collection and preparation are thoroughly documented. Reduce the number of footnotes to a minimum. Number only important equations that you refer to. Within the text argue in economic terms rather than with variables. Orthography, grammar, and style are taken into account. Refrain from excessive bulleting and numbering.
- References: in alphabetical (first) and chronological (second) order
- (Appendix: e.g. data, computer code, detailed proofs; however, information that forms an integral part of the main text has to be included in the content section)
- Affidavit – Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung (see below)

Pagination

Cover: Roman numeral (however “I” is not displayed on this page)

Table of contents as well as all lists before the main part: Roman numerals

Main content as well as list of references, appendix and affidavit: Arabic numerals

Length

The content part of the Bachelor thesis should typically span 20 to 35 pages, however less or more pages may be agreed with your supervisor depending on the topic of your thesis. Within this range, your thesis should be “as short as possible, but as extensive as necessary”.

Quotations

Unless otherwise agreed upon with your supervisor, use Harvard style, i.e. quote within the text and not in footnotes (e.g. “... as has been shown by Smith (2006) ...”).

References

All references that you have quoted (or cited) in the text have to be included in the reference list. Anything that you have only read, but that is not quoted in the text, must not be included.

You should primarily quote current academic literature. Newspapers and magazines are not considered appropriate literature but can in some cases represent a source of empirical data or public opinion. Periodicals and books addressing practitioners and general encyclopaedia or reference books are not considered appropriate literature either, except for selected definitions (if in doubt, consult your supervisor). Publications from associations and corporations, in particular those published on the web, need to be considered with care. Wikipedia entries and lecture notes are not considered academic references.

Plagiarism

Any parts of your text (of more than two words) or ideas or data that are not strictly your own have to be marked. The same applies for translations. That means that the text has to be phrased in a way that makes unambiguously clear which parts are your own thoughts and which parts repeat

ideas from other persons. Only general knowledge, commonly accepted facts or economic 'general knowledge' is exempted from this requirement (e.g. if you use the concept of a utility curve in general, you do not need a reference; however, if you are using a specific utility curve from another author, you have to quote; in case of doubt, provide a reference). Plagiarism will result in the rejection of your paper and possible further disciplinary measures by the university. All theses are subject to electronic plagiarism check.

Sample Cover Page

Title of the Thesis

Bachelor Thesis

Department of Economics

University of Mannheim

submitted to:

Prof. Dr. First name Last name

submitted by:

First name Last name

Student ID:

Degree Programme: Bachelor of Science in Economics (B.Sc.)

Address:

Phone:

E-Mail:

Mannheim, (Date of submission)

Affidavit – Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung

Please use the following text for your affidavit:

„Ich versichere, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit ohne Hilfe Dritter und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel angefertigt und die den benutzten Quellen wörtlich oder inhaltlich entnommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht habe. Diese Arbeit hat in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch keiner Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass meine Arbeit zum Zwecke eines Plagiatsabgleichs in elektronischer Form anonymisiert versendet und gespeichert werden kann.“

“I affirm that this Bachelor thesis was written by myself without any unauthorised third-party support. All used references and resources are clearly indicated. All quotes and citations are properly referenced. This thesis was never presented in the past in the same or similar form to any examination board. I agree that my thesis may be subject to electronic plagiarism check. For this purpose an anonymous copy may be distributed and uploaded to servers within and outside the University of Mannheim.”

Mannheim, (Date of submission)

(Signature)

References

Alley, M. (1996): *The Craft of Scientific Writing*. 3rd edition. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.

Neugeboren, R. (2005): *The student's guide to writing economics*. Routledge, New York, NY.

Theisen, M. R. (2011): *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Technik, Methodik, Form*. 15. Aufl. Vahlen, München.