Guidelines for Academic Writing

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Chair of Marketing and Consumer Behavior

Prof. Dr. Yasemin Boztuğ • Platz der Göttinger Sieben, 37073 Göttingen • Tel. 0551 / 39-27328 • markeitng@wiwi.uni-goettingen.de

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1 General Information

1.1 Application Process for Academic Papers

Bachelor's and Master's theses are assigned through an [online application system](#). The platform provides essential details regarding application deadlines, submission timelines, required documents, and available thesis topics. It is crucial to review these guidelines carefully before applying. Only complete applications submitted on time will be considered for thesis allocation.

1.2 Supervision

In the course of your supervision, you are responsible for contacting your supervisor and not your supervisor contacting you. If you wish to schedule a consultation, please request an appointment at least two working days in advance. Any drafts or specific questions should be submitted to your supervisor at least one working day before the meeting. Please always indicate the sources you are using. E-mails are usually answered within a maximum of 48 hours on working days.

1.3 Thesis Registration

After viewing the list of available topics, you have two weeks to contact your preferred supervisor and the supervisor has four weeks to officially register your thesis. If this deadline is not met, the right to supervision expires. This regulation ensures equal conditions for all students. Once your thesis is registered, the examination office will inform you of your submission deadline. The standard processing time is 12 weeks for Bachelor's theses and 20 weeks for Master's theses.

1.4 Colloquium (only Master's theses)

The colloquium offers you the opportunity to present the current status of your Master's thesis and to receive valuable feedback. It usually takes place about four weeks before your submission deadline. Please arrange the exact date with your supervisor approximately four weeks before the colloquium. The colloquium consists of a 30-minute presentation followed by a 30-minute discussion. Presentation slides (as a PDF file) must be submitted to the supervisor at least one hour before the start of the colloquium.

1.5 Thesis Submission

Bachelor's and Master's theses must be uploaded as a PDF file to FlexNow via the "Upload papers and theses" section. The maximum file size is 100MB, with the option to upload two additional ZIP files containing supplementary materials. The examination office forwards the electronic thesis to the assigned reviewers. For empirical theses, all relevant data (questionnaire, collected data, data analyses etc.) must also be sent directly to the respective supervisor via E-mail.

Seminar papers must be submitted as a PDF file via email to the responsible supervisor.

2 Formal Requirements

2.1 Length and Structure

The academic papers (excluding cover page, appendix, respective lists and declarations) should have the following length (+/- 10%):

- Bachelor's thesis: 30 pages
- Master's thesis: 40 pages
- Seminar paper: 4,000 words (approximately 12 pages, including the table of contents and references)

In the following, you will find the basic structure of the text section that you should use for your thesis. Any deviations must be discussed with the respective supervisor.

2.1.1 Bachelor's Thesis

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Framework
3. Main Analysis (addressing the research question)
4. Discussion (including implications for research and practice, limitations, and future research)
5. Conclusion

2.1.2 Master's Thesis

1. Introduction
2. Theoretical Framework
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Discussion (including implications for research and practice, limitations, and future research)
6. Conclusion

2.1.3 Seminar Paper

1. Introduction
2. Background (definitions and concepts for understanding the main section)
3. Main Section (addressing the research question)
4. Conclusion

2.2 Formatting Requirements

For **Bachelor's** and **Master's** theses:

Format	DIN A4, single-sided			
	Font size	**Alignment**	**Spacing**	**Paragraph**
Headings	14 Arial (bold) <u>or</u> 14 New Times Roman (bold)	Left-aligned	1,0	Before: 12 pt. After: 6 pt.
Text	11 Arial <u>or</u> 12 New Times Roman	Justified	1,5	Before: 0 pt. After: 6 pt.
Caption	9 Arial <u>or</u> 9 New Times Roman	Left-aligned	1,0	Before: 0 pt. After: 0 pt.
Footnotes	9 Arial <u>or</u> 9 New Times Roman	Justified	1,0	Before: 0 pt. After: 0 pt.
Top margin	2 cm			
Bottom margin	2 cm			
Left margin	2,5 cm			
Right margin	2,5 cm			

The following requirements apply to the layout of **seminar papers**:

Format	DIN A4		
Alignment	Justified		
	Font size	**Spacing**	**Paragraph**
Headings	14 New Times Roman	1,5	Before: 12 pt. After: 6 pt.
Text	12 New Times Roman	1,5	Before: 0 pt. After: 6 pt.
Footnotes	9 New Times Roman	1,0	Before: 0 pt. After: 0 pt.
Top margin	2 cm		
Bottom margin	2 cm		
Left margin	4 cm		
Right margin	2 cm		

2.3 Common Mistakes

Certain mistakes occur frequently in academic papers. For example, the structure is very often not balanced in terms of form and content. In this case, formal balance means that the points of the main section should be divided into roughly the same number of subsections.

The written work should be formulated concisely and objectively so that the message is conveyed to the reader as clearly as possible. Make sure that you avoid the following mistakes:

- Overly complex or convoluted sentences
- Unnecessary filler words (e.g., "really", "in order to")
- Exaggerations (e.g., "extremely," "enormously")
- I-, we-, one- forms
- Personal evaluations (e.g., "unfortunately")
- Contradictory statements
- Inconsistent terminology
- Colloquial language

3 References and Citation Guidelines

3.1 Literature Search and Evaluation

There are numerous options available to you for researching suitable literature for your topic. For example, use databases and tools provided by the university library, as well as platforms such as Web of Science or Google Scholar. Give preference to publications from well-established, high-ranking academic journals. You can view the journal rankings in the VHB Journal Ranking or via Scimago. For your research, focus primarily on papers published in A+/A/B-ranked journals or Q1-ranked journals.

3.2 Citation

3.2.1 General Principles

All direct quotations or paraphrased ideas from external sources must be properly cited. This applies not only to textual references but also to tables, figures, and other visual materials. A citation should always come from the **original source**. A secondary source may only be used if the original source is no longer accessible.

A violation of the citation obligation leads to the work being graded as "insufficient".

All references must follow the latest version of the APA citation style (currently APA 7th edition). Sources are listed in the text directly after the cited content as a short citation. If there are more than two authors, only the surname of the first author is listed and all other authors are abbreviated to "et al.".

For more details on APA 7th edition, refer to the official APA guidelines: APA Style Guide.

Multiple works by the same author in the same year

If several works by the same author are published in the same year, or if different authors with the same last name publish in the same year, lowercase letters are used to distinguish them.

Example:
The influence of WOM information is particularly significant when the information has the same valence as one's own experience, since consumers feel validated and socially integrated by consistent evaluations, which affects both emotional and cognitive levels (Liu et al., 2020**a**).

These purchases are associated with emotional and multisensory shopping experiences (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Liu et al., 2020**b**).

Reference list entry

Example:

Pizzutti, C., Gonçalves, R., & Ferreira, M. (2022). Information search behavior at the post-purchase stage of the customer journey. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 50(5), 981–1010. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-022-00864-9
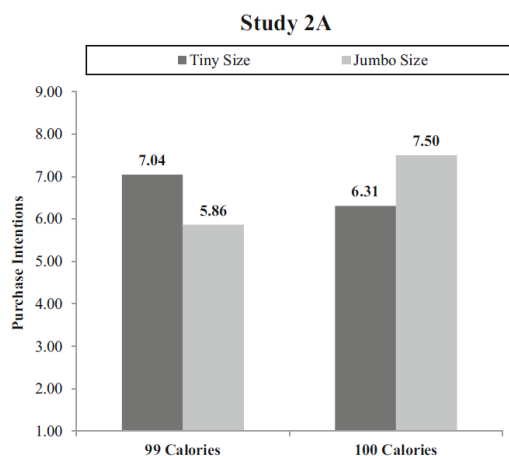
Figures

Example:

Figure 1: The Effect of Numerical and Verbal Cues on Purchase Intention
Source: Minton et al. 2018, p. 232

Direct Quotations

The purpose of a direct quotation is to highlight a particularly significant statement where the exact wording is essential (e.g., definitions). However, direct quotations should be the exception and be kept concise.

Directly quoted passages must be enclosed in quotation marks ("…"). If a single word is omitted, it should be indicated with two dots [..], while omissions of multiple words should be marked with three dots […]. Any modifications made for grammatical consistency should be placed in square brackets (e.g., "... this [study] …").

Paraphrased Quotations

The purpose of a paraphrased quotation is to identify the content of an external source to which the author refers. The source from which the quotation is taken must be indicated in brackets after the quotation. A preceding "cf." is no longer common and should be avoided.

Example:

Moreover, even random and unrelated values can distort the WTP collected from customers (Ariely et al., 2003), as well as the selected measurement method itself (Miller et al., 2011; Schmidt & Bijmolt, 2020; Voelckner, 2006; Wertenbroch & Skiera, 2002).

Page Numbers in Citations

For direct quotations and image citations (e.g., illustrations), the exact page number must always be included in the citation. For content taken from books, the page number must <u>always</u> be provided, even if it is not a direct quotation.

3.2.2 Reference Management Software

Citation programs (e.g., Citavi, Zotero, Endnote, Mendeley, etc.) can make your work easier if you are doing extensive literature review. The University of Göttingen offers you a license to use the full version of Citavi. Further information can be found on the SUB website.

4 Structure of the Thesis

4.1 General Guidelines

The formal structure of the thesis should follow the sequence below:

	Page number	Numbering
Title page without page number (see template in the appendix)	None	None
For Bachelor's and Master's theses: Abstract	Roman numerals	None
Table of contents	Roman numerals (continuation)	Roman numerals
List of figures (if applicable)	Roman numerals (continuation)	Roman numerals (continuation)
List of tables (if applicable)	Roman numerals (continuation)	Roman numerals (continuation)
List of abbreviations (if applicable)	Roman numerals (continuation)	Roman numerals (continuation)
List of symbols (if applicable)	Roman numerals (continuation)	Roman numerals (continuation)
Main Text	Arabic numerals	Arabic numerals
Bibliography	Arabic numerals (continuation)	None
Appendix (if applicable)	Roman numerals (continuation)	None
Statement of independent authorship and declaration of AI usage (see appendix for template)	Roman numerals (continuation)	None

4.2 Abstract

For both Bachelor's and Master's theses, an abstract must be included after the title page. It should be about half a page. The core question of the thesis and the most important results should be summarized and clearly presented.

4.3 Table of Contents

The textual explanations must be preceded by a table of contents, which should provide an overview of the logical structure of the work and be comprehensible to the reader. The bullet points listed in the table of contents must be identical to the headings in the text section. The number of bullet points should be proportionate to the length of the text.

At least two points should be listed at each outline level, i.e., point 1.1 must be followed by at least one point 1.2. The depth of the outline should contain a maximum of two sub-items (i.e., max. 1.2.1). Subordinate bullet points should be indented in the table of contents and not indented in the text section. All other components of the paper (list of figures, tables, appendix, etc.) are also listed in the table of contents in the order of their appearance.

4.4 Figures and Tables

Figures and tables should supplement the text in a clear form and make it more descriptive. Figures and tables should always be referenced in the text, i.e., they always require an explanation.

Each figure and table must have a title and be listed in a list of figures and list of tables. A list of figures and/or tables should only be prepared if at least two figures and/or tables are used in the paper. If only a few figures and tables are included, they may be combined into one single list. Titles of figures and tables must appear exactly as written in the respective list.

Figures and tables should only be included if they are a necessary part of the text. Additional tables required for the paper (not the entire SPSS output!) can be added in the appendix (this applies particularly to empirical papers).

Formal Requirements:

- Formatting according to APA guidelines (see example table)
- Sequential numbering throughout the text (separately for figures and tables)
- Title above each figure or table, clearly describing its content
- No SPSS outputs/outputs should be inserted as images
- Source citation:
    - Not required for self-created figures/tables
    - For modified figures/tables: "Source: adapted from [author], [page number]"
    - For directly copied figures/tables: "Source: [author], [page number]"

<u>Example:</u>

Differences between Derived Price Points (H2b)

Price point	Mean Dif. seq. (SD)	Mean Dif. ex. (SD)	Dif. seq. > Dif. ex. in %[a]	p-value	Dif. seq. > Dif. ex. in %[b]	p-value
Optimal price point	0.71 (2.12)	-3.98 (5.59)	26.6	.734	4.9	.951
Point of marginal cheapness	-3.82 (4.12)	1.37 (4.50)	59.7	.403	2.6	.974
Point of marginal expensiveness	0.28 (2.35)	-2.92 (5.76)	74.2	.258	2.8	.972

Note. Dif = Difference. Seq. = sequential question sequence. Ex. = extremes first question sequence.
[a]Usage of absolute differences. [b]If both differences are positive.
*p < .05. **p < .01 ***p < .001.

4.5 Abbreviations

All abbreviations used in the text and references should be listed alphabetically in a list of abbreviations.

Commonly used abbreviations do **not** need to be listed (e.g., etc., cf.)

The following abbreviations **must** be listed:

- – Common abbreviations of journals
- – Abbreviations for institutions and organizations
- – Abbreviations commonly used in the subject area

Abbreviations that are unusual or introduced for convenience are **not** allowed.

In the rare case that symbols are used, a combined list of abbreviations and symbols can be created.

4.6 Content

4.6.1 Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of the topic and establishes the relevance of your research. It explains the research gap based on the existing literature, formulates the research question, and outlines the significance of answering this question for both theory and practice.

4.6.2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background outlines the central concepts and theories relevant to your thesis. This section not only defines and explains these elements but also demonstrates how they are interconnected.

4.6.3 Main Part

The main part constitutes the core of your thesis. It presents and analyzes the central content, following a clear and coherent line of argument that remains consistently aligned with the research question.

4.6.4 Discussion

The discussion begins with an examination of the results presented in the main part of the thesis. It includes a critical reflection and interpretation of these results in relation to the central research question, which is addressed in this section of the work.

This is followed by a presentation of the implications for both research and practice. The implications for research highlight the contribution of the thesis to the academic discourse. The implications for practice include concrete recommendations for action derived from the findings.

The limitations of the thesis are then addressed. These may include, for example, methodological constraints. The aim is to critically evaluate the work and realistically assess its significance.

Finally, the discussion concludes with an outlook on future research. This section outlines possible directions for further studies, which may be developed on the basis of the previously identified limitations.

4.6.5 Conclusion

The conclusion forms the final part of a scientific thesis. It summarizes the key findings and clearly and precisely answers the research question once more. The focus is not on introducing new content, but on concisely presenting the insights already gained.

4.6.6 Research Question

Your research question represents the guiding idea of your thesis and should be answered within the writing process. Each section of your thesis should clearly relate to the research question. Your research question should always be derived from an identified research gap that was found with the help of existing literature. Furthermore, your research question or the answer to your research question must be relevant to practice and research. When formulating your research question, avoid biased or directional components. For example, avoid questions like: "How does X lead to an increase in Y?" or "How does X result in a better Y?".

4.6.7 Hypotheses (Master's Theses Only)

When deriving hypotheses, consider the following: Firstly, your hypotheses must reflect concrete statements that you can also test. Secondly, the hypotheses should be clearly derived from the literature and fit your research model. Thirdly, make sure your argumentation is logical and source-based.

4.7 Bibliography

All cited publications must be included and **all** authors must be named in the bibliography. If there are several editions, the most recent edition should be used. Follow APA 7th edition guidelines.

Order of Entries:

1. Alphabetical order by author's last name.
2. If an author has multiple publications, order them chronologically, starting with the earliest. If multiple publications exist from the same author in the same year, add lowercase letters (e.g., 2008a, 2008b).

Publications without a listed author should be cited under "N.N." (Nomen Nescio). The same approach applies when page numbers or publication years are unavailable. All sources must be included in a **single** bibliography, i.e., there is no separation according to monographs, collected works, journals, etc.

Blogs, Wikipedia, and similar sources are not permitted. Websites must be critically evaluated for credibility and should originate from reputable sources. They may be used for illustrative purposes but must **not** be used as a basis for argumentation.

When using citation software, attention must be paid to the accuracy and consistency of the information. There are often transcription errors, especially in author names (sometimes abbreviated), capitalization of titles, missing or incorrect page numbers, volume numbers and journal spelling.

4.8 Appendix

If an appendix is included, it should be placed after the bibliography The appendix is referred to by placing a page labeled APPENDIX in front. This page is not given a page number. The appendix pages should be numbered using Roman numerals, continuing from the last numbered section of the document. For example, if the final page of the figure list is numbered VII, the first page of the appendix (or appendix index, if applicable) should be numbered VIII.

If the appendix exceeds the length of the main text or contains more than four items (e.g., questionnaire, SPSS syntax), an appendix index must be included immediately after the APPENDIX title page. This index should list all appendix entries along with their corresponding Roman numerals.

The appendix may include tables, charts, and other supplementary materials that provide additional explanations for the main text. All figures and tables in this section must follow the same formatting guidelines as those in the main text. Consequently, copying and pasting SPSS outputs into the appendix is not permitted. While an appendix is not mandatory, it can be useful for including supplementary explanations. However, it should be kept concise and only contain relevant material. In non-empirical papers, an appendix is generally uncommon.

4.9 ChatGPT

All academic papers submitted to the department must include a statement on the use of ChatGPT or other AI tools, attached after the statement of independent authorship. The use of ChatGPT or other AI tools must be completely transparent. Explicit labeling of passages generated with ChatGPT or other AI tools is required. Students should also explain how ChatGPT or other AI tools was used to create the academic paper. This declaration must be signed by the author, including the date and place of submission, as shown in the example below.

APPENDIX

Template Cover Page for a Bachelor's Thesis

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Faculty of Business and Economics

Chair of Marketing and Consumer Behavior

BACHELOR'S THESIS

Title of the Bachelor's Thesis

Submitted by

(First Name)(Last Name)

Student ID (XXXXX)

Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Yasemin Boztuğ

Max Mustermann, M.Sc.

Location, Date (XX. Month 202X)

Template Cover Page for a Master's Thesis

Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Faculty of Business and Economics

Chair of Marketing and Consumer Behavior

MASTER'S THESIS

Title of the Master's Thesis

Submitted by

(First Name)(Last Name)

Student ID (XXXXX)

Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Yasemin Boztuğ

Max Mustermann, M.Sc.

Location, Date (XX. Month 202X)

Example: Table of Contents for a Bachelor's Thesis

Example: Table of Contents for a Master's Thesis

Template for Statement of Independent Work

Statement of Independent Work

I hereby declare that I have completed this thesis independently and without the use of any sources other than those cited. All passages taken verbatim or paraphrased from published or other sources are clearly marked as such. I consent to the thesis being checked using plagiarism detection software.

Location, Date

Signature

Template for Statement on the Use of ChatGPT

In this thesis, I have utilized ChatGPT or another AI in the following ways:

[ ] Not at all

[ ] For idea generation

[ ] For structuring the outline

[ ] To generate specific passages, accounting for …% of the total text

[ ] For developing software code

[ ] For optimizing or restructuring software code

[ ] For proofreading or text optimization

[ ] Other, namely: …

I confirm that I have fully disclosed all instances of AI usage. Any omissions or incorrect declarations will be considered an attempt at deception.

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Location, Date   Signature