

Guidelines for Academic Paper Writing

at the chair in E-Business

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1. Introduction

The aim of this document is to guide you through the formal requirements of a seminar or final academic paper at the chair in E-Business. Please take your time and read the following pages carefully. How closely you follow these guidelines can reflect on your final grade. That is why we suggest that you leave plenty of time for formatting, revision, printing and binding of your documents.

Seminar papers are to be handed in on time at the chair in E-Business. Academic final papers, such as Bachelor, Master, Diploma thesis, are to be handed in punctual at the examination board (Prüfungsamt). An extension is usually not granted.

To be handed in

Seminar paper:

- one hardcopy (stapled or ring bound), as well as
- one electronic submission including all relevant data.

Academic thesis:

- Two hardbound copies of your work
- In addition, it is required that you submit a softcopy of your work on CD (additional information in chapter 5) which is to be fixed to the inside of one of your hard copies.

The advisor may refuse to accept the paper, if requirements are not met.



2. Concept and formatting of an academic paper

Please keep in mind while you are writing your paper, that it is a formal documentation of your working ability and might later on be read by potential future employers. This is part of the reason it is so important that you provide the best work and to make sure that phrasing, style and formatting is flawless and scientifically correct. Use a spellchecker and ask friends and fellow students to proof read your paper with a focus on comprehension. Avoid unnecessarily complicated wording and sentence structures. Comprehension can be improved further by using short well-structured sentences and proper terminology.

Dimensions of the paper:

Seminar: 6 – 10 DIN –A4 – written pages

Bachelor: 20 – 25 DIN –A4 – written pages

Master and Diploma: 30 – 45 DIN –A4 – written pages

The page limitations embrace the whole body of text, including inserted images, graphs and tables. It does not include the cover sheet, content page, references and attachments.

Exceptions are to be discussed with the advisor before handing in your work.

Formatting

Font: sans-serif fonts in 11pt. (e.g. Arial) or Serif fonts in 12 pt. (e.g. Times New Roman or Garamond)

Line spacing: 1.5 lines

Text: Justified

Page margins: left 2.5 cm, right 2.5 cm

Make sure that your work is structured goal orientated. It should start off with a problem description of one or more central questions which, after reading the paper, have to be answered. Recommended is that you, among other things, give a description of your approach to your work, to make sure that the reader sees a clear progressive structure throughout your work.

Present several solution approaches (from academic literature, practical examples and your own approach) and discuss them. Then explain and justify your chosen approach.

An outlining structure is a prerequisite to start working on your paper. The structure has to be in logical order and has to follow the written work exactly. A sample content structure of a scientific paper is provided below.

Table of content	I
List of images	II
List of tables	III
List of abbreviations	IV
Abstract	V
1. Introduction	1
2. Motivation	4
3. Approaches to the subject	8
3.1 Scientific approaches	12
3.2 Real world application approaches	20
4. Development of own approaches/methods	29



4.1 Research design.....	31
4.2 Analysis	34
5. Conclusion / critical comments	43
References	45
Appendix	50

The sample content page indicates that the pages have to be numbered sequentially. The title page is not numbered. Pages that are not part of actual text (such as Table of content, lists and the abstract) have to be numbered with Roman numerals and all following pages with Arabic numerals. The content page is located on page “I” and the actual text begins on page “1”.

In general the rule is that additional content lists should be include for images, abbreviations, tables, diagrams or symbols, if you, for example, use more than five images in your work.

An abstract should only be included in a Diploma or Master thesis. The abstract should not be longer than 250 words and entail the root problem, your derivation as well as the proposed solution.

Divide the following main-part into a series of sensible chapters. However try not to divide the main part into too many chapters and restrict yourself, especially for seminar and Bachelor papers, to a total of five main chapters. (e.g.: see content page above)



Ensure that all **main-chapters** start on a new page. Also, when using **sub-chapters**, make sure that each heading is followed by at least a few sentences. Every further division of a chapter has to be comprised of at least two parts (4.1, 4.2). The depth of each subdivision should not be more than three levels (4, 4.1, 4.1.1) (less with seminar papers). Headings with equal depth should be of equal importance and should be considered, while keeping in mind the mutually superior problem definition.

Headings should be brief, meaningful and should give the reader an idea of what to expect in the following part. They should be visually emphasized. Repetition of words from title or headings should be avoided.

Continuous text should be divided into paragraphs. Paragraphs are placed at distinct portions of a text that deals with a specific topic. Short paragraphs consisting of one or two sentences should be avoided.

Should you want to refer to extensive material that is not necessarily needed to support your text (e.g. Questionnaires), attach the material to your **appendix**. Each part of the appendix has to start on a new page. The layout of the appendix can vary, according to how the content can be displayed best. This includes using pages horizontally, vertically and/or foldout pages.

Additionally, **visual aids** in the text can help to clarify and summarize issues. It is vital that graphics or tables are labeled precisely and are clearly readable. This also includes the content of visual aids, such as, axes on graphs that have to be labeled.

Graphics should fundamentally not be copied and if possible should be self-made. Should you want to use a scanned graphic, please make sure that the quality is high enough for it to be read clearly on monitor and in printed version.

If you want to integrate **tables and figures** in your text, number them separately and continuously with Arabic numerals. The table's title is placed before the table (e.g.: table 4: Plan calculation of an online shop) whereas the labels for figures are placed directly below the Figure. (e.g.: figure 2: Added value of e-Business). The reference note should follow directly below the figure and with tables directly after the title. (e.g.: Figure 1:...(Reference:...))

Please note that figures and tables are not allowed to be inserted into the text, without at least a short description of their content and its purpose. In general, tables and figures are inserted after they have been referenced in the text.

Using **abbreviations** should be kept to a minimum. However, abbreviations used in the paper, including names of professional journals, have to be explained in the abbreviation list. Abbreviations which can be found in a dictionary (such as: e.g., i.e.) are exempt from this rule and do not have to be listed.

3. Quotation, footnotes, reference list

The basis for writing an academic paper is that you identify the topic specific standard literature and integrate it into your work. For this it is best to use **scientific journals**. During your literature research always use the most recent resources available, especially with books. Remember that unreliable resources, such as none scientific magazines, are not the best references to support your argument and might therefore lower the quality of your work.

Every quote must be verifiable. Directly or indirectly acquired thoughts have to be processed properly and clearly cited with corresponding reference. Factual claims without clear citation are not acceptable in an academic paper. Figures and statements which do not root from literature, such as personally conducted questionnaires, also have to be cited. Please note that lectures and lecture scripts are not allowed to be quoted.

Plagiarism is, without exception, penalized with a mark of 5.0. Examples of plagiarism:

- Handing in a Paper with your own name, when the paper was written by a third party (“ghost writer”)
- Handing in someone else’s work under your name.
- Handing in an old seminar or other final paper.
- Quoting translated text without reference.
- Copying someone else’s text without reference.
- Copying text, changing its wording and not referencing it.
- Copying text, referencing it but not at the right place.



Try to avoid exact quotes. If a quote seems to be extremely insightful and quote worthy, it should not be longer than two or three sentences. Must a quote exceed the limitations, then the text has to be indented and the format changed to single spacing. Quotes have to be identified by surrounding them with quotation marks (“...”) and have to be quoted word for word. Deviation from the original text has to be marked clearly and leaving out a part of the text has to be marked by brackets and dots (...). If special emphasis is made in a quote (e.g. italic or bold) make sure you include this. A quote within a quote is to be marked with single quotation marks (‘...’).

If you want to use a quote that is in a **language other than English**, it has to be translated.

Third party quotes (quotes other people have quoted) are only admissible if you are not able access the original source.

Indirect quotes (same meaning not the same words) have to be identified in full. Placing a reference at the end of a longer paragraph is not enough. Several references along the way should show the root of your idea. Remember that one general reference is not enough, as the corresponding page number has to be provided. (This is true independent of the chosen referencing style.)

Footnotes indices should be placed after the quote, in continuous ascending Arabic numerals in superscript. Footnotes should always be found on the same page as the corresponding quote. They should include details on the quote as well as side notes of

the author.¹ Please note that side notes should not exceed two sentences. If they do, see if the side note could be integrated into the text.

Footnotes for **direct quotes** should be cited like this² and indirect quotes like this³. References are structured like a sentence and should finish with a full stop.

If you cite different publications by the same author that were published in the same year, then append a lower case letter to the year of publication in the footnote. If a publication has more than three authors, only the first author name is used for the footnote followed by “et al.”. The full reference, with all authors’ names has to be shown in the reference list at the end of your paper. If the author is an institution (e.g. Federal Bureau of Statistics), and not an individual person, then the institutions name is used for the footnote. Quoting a source without an author (or institution) or without year of publication, then the corresponding area in the footnote or the reference list has to be labeled with n.A. (no author) or n.Y. (no year).

The reference list contains a list of all references in full. The references should be sorted alphabetically by author’s name. The order of the authors should be the same as the original publication. Numbering the references is not necessary.

The following describes the various source types and how they need to be cited. Included are examples of footnotes and full references as they are to appear in the reference list for each type of source media.

¹ You may also use the APA stile of referencing. Further information and instructions on how to do this are not provided in this document. Please read up on this topic yourself.

² Fershtman, Judd (1987), S. 935-936.

³ See Fershtman, Judd (1987), S. 935-937.

1. Books

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Publication year
- Title
- Chapter (if available)
- Version
- Title of version
- Publishing house
- Edition (additional information if available)
- Place of publication

E.g.:

Anderson / Sweeny / Williams (2004), p. 23.

Anderson, D. / Sweeny, D. / Williams, T. (2004), Statistics for business and economics,
11. edition, Mason.

2. Dissertation or habilitation thesis

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Publication year
- Title
- Chapter (if available)
- Type of work (Dissertation or Habilitation)
- University / Institute

E.g.:

Selten (1961), p. 12.

Selten, R. (1961), Bewertung von n-Personenspielen, Diss., Universität Frankfurt.

3. Journals

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)



- Publication year
- Title
- Chapter (if available)
- In: Name of the journal
- Volume (if available)
- Issue (if available)
- First and last page of journal

E.g.:

Fershtman / Judd (1987), p. 931.

Fershtman, C. / Judd, K. (1987), Equilibrium incentives in oligopoly, in: The American Economic Review, 77(5), pp. 927–940.

4. Part of a collection volume

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Publication year
- Title
- Chapter (if available)
- In: last name and first name of publisher/editor
- Title of collecting volume
- Subtitle of volume
- Volume number
- Publishing house
- Place of publication
- First and last page of article

E.g.:

Camerer (1997), p. 565.

Camerer, C. (1997), Individual decision making, in: Kagel, J. / Roth, A. (eds.), Handbook of experimental economics, Princeton, pp.587–674.

5. Secondary citations (indirect quotes)



- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Citation year
- Title of original source
- Chapter (if available)
- In: name of journal / book / publisher / editor
- Year/ volume (additional comment, if applicable)
- Series/ volume/ place of publication
- Cited by: last name(s) of citing person/people
- First name(s) of citing person/people
- In: title of secondary source
- Subtitle (if available)
- In: name of journal/ book/ magazine
- Year/ volume (if available)
- Publishing house (if available)
- Issue/ place of publication (if available)
- First and last page

E.g.:

Selten (1961) as cited by Tietz (2010), p. 20.

Selten, R. (1961), Bewertung von n-Personenspielen, as cited by: Tietz, R. (2010), Reinhard Selten's Frankfurt years from the perspective of a co-player, in: Ockenfels, A. / Sadrieh, A. (eds.), The Selten school of behavioral economics, Berlin, p. 19–28.

6. Internet quote

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Publication date
- Title
- Chapter (if available)
- URL
- Page number
- Date accessed

E.g.:

Statistisches Bundesamt (2011).

Statistisches Bundesamt (2011), Unternehmen und Arbeitsstätten, Nutzung von Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien in Unternehmen, [https://www-ec.destatis.de/csp/shop/sfg/bpm.html.cms.cBroker.cls?CS_PCHD=00y0000100004k7v1IK5000000G5\\$A21zKDG7U7OwHpmnRCg--&cms_path=struktur,vollanzeige.csp&ID=1026388](https://www-ec.destatis.de/csp/shop/sfg/bpm.html.cms.cBroker.cls?CS_PCHD=00y0000100004k7v1IK5000000G5$A21zKDG7U7OwHpmnRCg--&cms_path=struktur,vollanzeige.csp&ID=1026388), 14.02.2011.

7. Laws

- Abbreviation
- Name of the law
- Date of version

E.g.:

UWG §15.

UWG Gesetz gegen den unlauteren Wettbewerb as amended on 03 June 2004.

8. Newspaper articles

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Publication year
- In: Title
- Chapter title (if available)
- Name of newspaper
- Year
- Date
- First and last page of article

E.g.:

Grimm (2010), p. 15.

Grimm. K. (2010), Projekt iMeck, Ein Internetberater will für 1 Mrd. Euro eine virtuelle Uni im mecklenburgischen Schwerin aufbauen – eine irrwitzige Idee, in: Financial Times Deutschland, 10 December 2010, p. 15.

If a softcopy of a quoted source is available, include it in the electronic submission.

4. Evaluation standards

Although there is a difference between a seminar- or final paper (Diploma, Bachelor or Master thesis) there are basic requirements that have to be fulfilled in any case.

Content requirements

The structure and outline of your work has to fulfill academic standards and requirements. This means that

- all essential aspects of the topic have been included
- all individual aspects have been discussed in a logical manner and
- the weighting of the discussion of individual aspect is in accordance with the original topic

The requirements result in the following **fundamental criteria**:

- all individual aspects in your work are factually correct and have been, topic allowing, discussed in full
- You have developed your own opinion (by critically evaluating existing (academic) opinions or through own thoughts and ideas)
- You were able to outline existing problems, develop a clear problem structure and questions to be answered
- Claims made in your work have to be justified and proven

When grading your work, we will take the following into consideration:

- If there was very little (or a lot) of relevant literature available and the literary research needed to be adjusted accordingly
- If the work included empiric research or programming work (practical work also has to have a theoretic foundation)

5. Submission

The CD, that is to be attached to your written work with the help of an adhesive envelop, has to include:

- A digital copy of your work in the original format it was written in. (e.g. Word-Format, LaTeX-Format ...)
- A digital copy of your work in PDF-Format.
- Analyzed data in Excel-Format (if applicable)
- Maple-Data (if applicable)
- A folder labeled “sources” which should include a digital copy of all literature sources and digital copies of websites, which were used as sources. (PDF-Format)

Please avoid multi-layer folder structures. Digital copies of your work, analyzed data and the “sources” folder should all be saved in the top layer of your storage device.

The **folders should be named** as follows:

Title – Last name, First name

6. Title page example

Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg

Faculty of Economics and Management

Chair in E-Business

Seminar paper / Bachelor- / Master- / Diploma thesis

Title

Seminar: Title (if applicable)

Advisor / lecturer: Prof. Dr. A. Sadrieh

John Smith

Examplelane 13

00000 Examplecity

John.Smith@st.ovgu.de

Matriculation number: 0000000

Degree / course



7. Declaration of authorship example

Declaration of authorship

I certify that the work presented here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and the result of my own investigations, except as acknowledged, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree at this or any other university.

.....

(Signature)

Magdeburg, 30 February 2011