

Guidelines for Academic Paper Writing

at the chair in E-Business

Contents:

1. Basic Information	1
2. Concept and formatting of an academic paper	2
3. Quotation, footnotes, reference list	9
4. Evaluation standards	17
5. Submission	18
6. Title page example	19
7. Declaration of authorship example	20



1. Basic Information

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 these guidelines are followed can influence your final grade immensely. 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 at the chair in E-Business on time. Academic final papers, such as Bachelor, Master, Diploma thesis, are to be handed in promptly 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 essential to provide your 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. In addition to checking spelling, grammar and punctuation, make sure that footnotes, literature and abbreviation lists, as well as page numbering are complete. Avoid unnecessarily complicated wording and sentence structures. Comprehension can be improved further by using short, well-structured sentences and proper terminology. Furthermore, the academic paper should also be aimed at experts, which means that you can assume fundamental knowledge of terminology, however may still give explanations if necessary.

As a self monitoring tool, to insure that you have sufficient knowledge of the subject and can start composing your paper, it is advisable to draw up a disposition. The disposition does not have to be handed in, it only serves to help structure the paper. The disposition should contain the central arguments, as well as the main thesis, the chain of argumentation that aims to verify your thesis and how your investigation contributes to the specified field of research. In addition the scientific methodology as well as the (expected) outcome needs to be regarded. As soon as you have composed your disposition, you can start writing your actual paper. Information and help on how to continue will follow.

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

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 included if your paper contains more than five images, abbreviations, tables, diagrams or symbols. Should you use additional content lists, make sure they are labeled appropriately. For symbol lists, please use the correct mathematic–technical formula symbols. To depict them, divide the list in two columns: left the symbols and right the corresponding meaning. Order the symbols alphabetically, listing the capital symbols first and the uncapsualized symbols afterwards. All additional lists are final, which means if you use a specific abbreviation or a symbol they have to be used consistently throughout the paper.

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.

Your paper should show several different solution procedures (from academic literature, praxis examples and self–deliberation) and discuss them. Justify the solution procedure you will follow in your paper. Divide the then 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.

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 in the introduction, to make sure that the reader sees a clear progressive structure throughout your work and can follow the argumentation. Ask yourself after every paragraph and chapter, what point you are trying to bring across in this part and always keep the main arguments in mind. This is a sure way to avoid gaps in your line of thought.

Note that the **introduction** should include the motivations for your work, as well as structure of your work. At this point, you may also briefly mention main arguments and results. In the **literary part**, you should discuss existing academic contributions and their results and associate them to your own work. Please do not discuss any historical discourse that is not critical for your argumentation. Instead, you should rather include relevant information that supports your work. In the following chapters



on your own deliberations and solution approach, depict your solution structure and results. In the last part of your work, the conclusion or finishing remarks, summarize your main arguments and results and discuss them critically. Latest at this point, you should clarify the academic relevance of your results. If you like, you may include an outlook on unresolved research issues and future scientific work. Should you want to refer to extensive material that is not necessarily needed directly to support your text (e.g. questionnaires), attach the material to you **appendix**. Each attachment to 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 fold out tables and figures using pages horizontally and vertically (pages should be arranged in such a way that they are readable by turning them clockwise). Note that the appendix is not a continuance of the main part of your work and is not a “material dump site”. This means that you should number and label all attachments in the appendix, as you do in the main part of your work, and don’t forget to refer to the existence of the content in the appendix. You can see that the main results can be found several times through an academic paper: in the introduction, the chapters of the analysis, in the summary as well as in the abstract.

As the writing process usually does not follow the content outline, we suggest the following writing sequence: begin with the theoretical part (e.g. model description, census design, formulation of the hypothesis), then move on to the analysis part (e.g. modeling analysis, hypothesis test), then append the literature section and round of your work with the finishing part. The introduction is written last.

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.

Should you need to use mathematical formulas, you need to use uniform symbols and number them progressively. Insert the formula, using 1 - 1.5 line spacing, into the text and indent the formula by 1cm or place it in the center. To illustrate, here is an example:

$$v_i(c\sigma_i, \sigma_i) = a_i c \sigma_i - \frac{b_i}{2} \left(\sigma_i - \frac{1}{2} \right)^2 \quad (2)$$

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 books as well as **scientific journals**. In the best case, it is the rule that you should not make any statement without evidence – this of course excludes natural statements which are part of general knowledge of the subject.

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.

Publication is a fundamental prerequisite for citable source. For bibliographies and journals you can guide yourself with the help of the following characteristics: the publisher or edition of the bibliography will give an indication of the quality of the source. With journals, the peer review process will give an indication of its quality. This is potentially quite extensive with two surveyors, double blinded assessment and several assessment rounds. The quality of journals can also be gathered from various journal-rankings (e.g. Jourqual2)

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 (always use the short citation for the footnotes) and indirect quotes like this³. A citation is structured like a sentence; it starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Should you use several sources to verify a statement, separate them with a semicolon and sort the sources chronologically. 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.” before the year of publication. The references will show a detailed list of all authors’ names. 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

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.



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. The references should be numbers or grouped in any form.

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. Books

- Last name of Author(s)
- First name of Author(s)
- Publication year
- Title
- Chapter (if available)
- Version
- Title of version
- 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
- 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)
- 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



OTTO VON GUERICKE
UNIVERSITÄT
MAGDEBURG



FAKULTÄT FÜR
WIRTSCHAFTSWISSENSCHAFT

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

Date of the final presentation:

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