

University of Hohenheim

Chair for Banking and Financial Services

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Style Guide for Scientific Writing



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Introductory Remarks

The following guide is for students writing a seminar paper, bachelor- or master-thesis at the Chair for Banking and Financial Services. It was written for you to prevent common failures and misunderstandings. It gives you some first tips concerning important topics when writing a scientific paper. However, it is not a full instruction for a perfect paper or a substitute for a wider personal knowledge on scientific writing. Such knowledge has to be gained by each student on its own.

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1. Seminars and Topic allocation

The announcement for an upcoming seminar will be done at the end of the preceding term on the chairs homepage. All information about the registration will also be provided there. The allocation of the topics and supervisors will take place at the end of the registration deadline. Keep yourself informed about the latest information and announcements.

2. Introductory Work and Literature

Until the first individual meeting with your supervisor you have to first prepare your topic by yourself.

To start with, you have to formulate or identify a research question which will be answered during the course of your paper. This is the main goal of the seminar and, therefore, you should spend some time and focus identifying the research questions of your respective topic and on completely understanding the underlying literature to give a sufficient answer for the question(s).

To get a first orientation about your topic you should read a wide range of literature and order its information on a systematic basis. The accumulated information can help for a better understanding of the core literature of your work and help you achieve a better line of argumentation. It's not enough to just read the recommended literature which is given to you by the supervisor. You also should search for additional literature. This can be done by using some kind of "pyramid-scheme", where you start with the references of your initial paper assigned to you. You can have a look at the cited papers there and then continue with their citations and on and on. Further high-quality literature can also be found in peer-reviewed journals, academic textbooks and databases like "Scopus", "Science Direct", "JSTOR", and the websites of the publishing journals themselves. The access to all the journals is provided through the university network with the VPN-client or the university's library (HOHSEARCH: <https://rds-hoh.ibs-bw.de/hohsearch/>). Common databanks for working papers are "SSNR", "Econstor", "RePEc" and "NBER". The simplest way to find and search through all these sources is to use a search tool like "Google Scholar" which limits Google's search engine to results with an academic background.

It is not recommended to use sources like newspapers or websites, because of their generally lower scientific quality and different speed of publishing compared to academics.

3. Research Question and Structure

3.1 Structure

A scientific paper could be structured as follows:

- Research question, introduction and a presentation of the paper's structure.
- The main part includes the presentation of the theoretical framework, the literature, the analysis of the data and a discussion of all the arguments concerning the topic.
- The conclusion is used to show the results, criticism and to suggest possible solutions, a scope for further research, or policy implications.

The structure of the paper should be clean and simple. This means to avoid small subchapters with less than one page of content and to choose chapters which are connected by a logical line of argumentation. It's recommended to take some consideration in the first draft of the paper's structure which will help you to write you with a clear line of thought.

3.2 Research Question

Seminar papers are usually representations and interpretations of the scientific work of others. Simply repeating the results and findings of the given literature does not provide any additional insights and is rather boring for the readers of such a paper. Therefore, the paper should answer a concrete question which should be formulated after a first introduction to the topic. The research question should be clear enough to show exactly the goal of the paper and by that provide an important orientation for the reader. The research question and the introduction should span between $\frac{3}{4}$ to one page. Besides the research question, the introduction should include a brief presentation of the following chapters and contents. In general, one can say the more precise the formulation of the research question and the structure of the paper, the better the paper will be.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The starting point of the main part can be provided by the theoretical knowledge needed to understand the following analysis. This should include a presentation of the used models with explanations of their key concepts and variables. You are not asked for derivations or the mathematics behind the models. Rather give the an intuition and interpretation of the models results. If you are dealing with an empirical work, you also should cover the econometric methods used and provide comprehensible interpretations.

3.4 Discussion, Analyses and Evaluation

The following analysis, the data and explained theoretical tools should be used and should lead to a result which delivers an answer to the research question and other open questions from the discussion of the different arguments found in the literature.

3.5 End

The end should include a repetition of the research question and provide answers as well as recommendations for actors affected by the topic like politicians or consumers. It is also possible to name additional research questions for further research.

3.6 Appendix, Sources and Statement on Oath

After the paper itself, you could add tables and figures with additional information which are not necessarily needed for the understanding of the text and therefore not part of the main part of the paper, but nevertheless give some additional insights. After the appendix you must include a statement of originality as given in the appendix of this guide or on the examination office's website (https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/wiwioec-pa#ifmulticontent_c264542-12). Please check that you have used the latest version.

4. Formality

4.1 General Formality

A paper has to be written in full justification with activated syllabication. At each side you need a margin of 2.5 cm. The font should be either Arial or Times New Roman with the sizes 12 pt for the text body, 10 pt for footnotes and 14 pt bold for headlines in case of Times New Roman and 11pt, 10pt, and 12pt, for Arial. The line spacing for each font is 1.5 and you need the page number starting with one at the introduction after the content in the lower right corner. Table of contents, figures, and tables are numbered with roman letters, while the title page is not numbered at all.

The volume of your paper should be as follows:

Tabel 1: Different Sizes of Papers

Bachelor seminar	Ca. 10 pages
Master seminar	Ca. 15 pages
Bachelor thesis	Ca. 30 pages
Master thesis	Ca. 60 pages

4.2 List of Figures, etc.

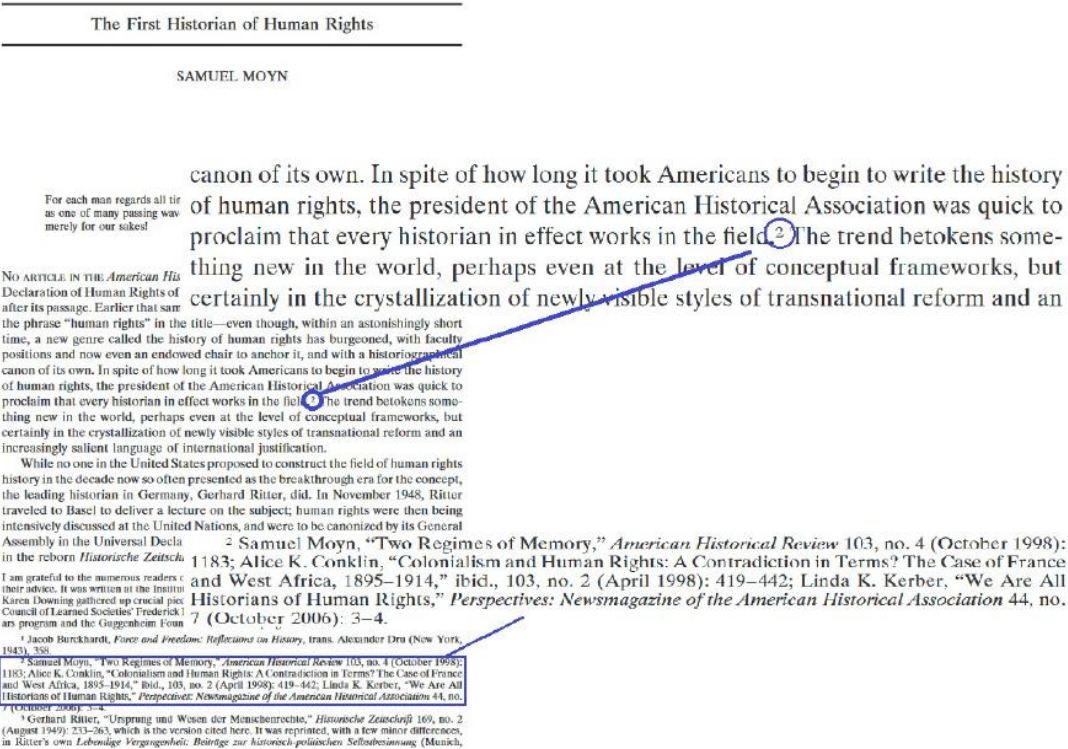
Besides the usual table of contents and list of references, depending on the contents of your paper, a list of figures, tables, abbreviations, and symbols might be needed. This means, if your paper contains graphs, tables, recurring abbreviations, or symbols from mathematical models, these have to be mentioned in the respective list. The different lists must be put after the title page and table of contents.

4.3 Citation

For the citing of sources are the two common styles Chicago- and Harvard Method accepted.

The Chicago method uses a superscript number in the text body with a full citation¹ in a footnote at the bottom of the page with the same number. This style is mostly used in arts and literature, as well as in history papers. An example can be found in Figure 1.

Figure1: Example Chicago Method



Source: Moyn (2011), p. 58-79

The Harvard method puts the citation directly in the text body after the cited content with the format „ author’s name (year, page)“ or „(authors name, year, pages)“ . This style is mostly used in natural and social sciences, as well as in economics. Examples can be found in Figure 2 and 3.

¹ In the case of more than three authors you can use “et al.” but have to name all authors with full names in your references.

Figure 2: Example Harvard Method „Author’s Name (Year)“

provide their forecasts over the whole time span. Some analysis of the micro expectations data is conducted by Marimon and Sunder (1995) and Bernasconi and Kirchkamp (2000) in an overlapping generations framework. These authors estimate several different regressions in order to study inflation expectation formation and find that most subjects behave adaptively, although Bernasconi and Kirchkamp (2000) provide evidence that adaptive

Source: Pfajfar & Zakelj (2014), p. 147-168

Figure 3: Example Harvard Method „ (authors name, year)“

other factors are controlled for. We carry out these tests using the multivariate logit econometric model developed in our previous work on the determinants of banking crises (Demirgüç-Kunt and Detragiache, 1998). The first test that we perform is whether a zero-one

Source: Demirgüç-Kunt & Detragiache (2002), p. 1373-1406

For both styles it is of course necessary to repeat the whole citation with the complete list and names of the authors in the reference list at the end of the paper as done in this style guide.

Tables and figures are also cited as done here.

5. Presentation

For a good presentation it is important to focus on the choice of presented content. It should be avoided to spend a lot of time on trivial or basic knowledge. Keep the focus of your presentation on the most important parts and findings of your paper. The simplest way to keep your presentation as close as possible on your paper is to use the same line of argumentation and the same structure. You can start with a general introduction to your topic and then you can go on through the different chapters of your paper.

Every presentation should also be visualized. It is important that the presentation is easy to follow. Therefore, you should avoid too long sentences and too much text on your slides. Also choose a size and font for your slides which are easy to read. Clean slides are always preferable to overloaded slides with distracting animations, pictures and other stuff.

Besides the content and the visualization of your presentation, you should also focus on the way how you are presenting your presentation. Try to keep eye contact with your audience and speak loud and freely. Try to stay in the time limit to avoid a too long and boring presentation.

6. Language

Writing your first paper in English can feel intimidating. However, do not forget that the most of your audience and readers are no native speakers. Although, you should at least try to avoid language mistakes like grammar, spelling and wrong pronunciation when presenting, you won't get any deductions in your grade. However, your text processing software should help you during your writing process and, therefore, too many mistakes in your text will affect your grade negatively. We are accepting both British and American spelling, just decide on one and follow it consequently.

7. LaTeX

Always try to work efficient. To write a paper you will need support through technical tools like a text editor software. Automatized table of contents or reference lists can help you saving time and are less prone to mistakes. An honorable mention here is the software package/ type setting language LaTeX which is not like Microsoft Word a What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get Software but a script-based software. With little commands in the text you can command the software how it should interpret your text.

LaTeX provides a lot of benefits:

- Formatting is done in the beginning and you don't have to worry about it, once it's done.
- It gives a much cleaner format, while still being highly adjustable to individual tastes and needs.
- Table of contents, reference list, and other lists are generated automatically.
- Using LaTeX is standard for academic journals and publishing these days.

All in all, it is faster to work with LaTeX after you put the work into it. Try it the very first time you are writing a paper for your studies and you will save a lot of time later on in your academic career.

Appendix

Erklärung*

Hiermit erkläre ich,

Name, Vorname

Matrikelnummer

dass ich bei der vorliegenden

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor-Arbeit | <input type="checkbox"/> Master-Thesis/Master-Arbeit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seminararbeit | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomarbeit |

die Regeln guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis eingehalten habe. Ich habe diese Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt und die wörtlich oder inhaltlich übernommenen Stellen als solche kenntlich gemacht.

Betreuende/r
Dozent/in

Thema der Arbeit

Semester

Ich erkläre weiterhin, dass das unverschlüsselte digitale Textdokument der Arbeit übermittelt wurde, das in Inhalt und Wortlaut ausnahmslos der gedruckten Ausfertigung entspricht. Ich bin damit einverstanden, dass diese elektronische Form anhand einer Analyse-Software auf Plagiate überprüft wird.

Ort, Datum, Unterschrift

* Diese Erklärung ist der eigenständig erstellten Arbeit als Anhang beizufügen. Arbeiten ohne diese Erklärung werden nicht angenommen.

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