



UNIVERSITÄT  
HOHENHEIM

## Guidelines for Scientific Work

University of Hohenheim  
Chair of Banking and Financial Services  
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## Some remarks in advance

This guide is intended for students who wish to attend a seminar or write a seminar paper or thesis at the Chair of Banking and Financial Services. The guide aims at pointing out frequently occurring errors in order to avoid them from the outset. This guide only provides initial information on some important topics. It does not replace basic knowledge of scientific work. Such knowledge may have to be acquired independently, e.g. in the course "Fit for Empirical Work in Your Thesis"<sup>1</sup> by this respective Chair.

### 1 Seminar Registration and Topic Assignment

The announcement of the seminar is made at the end of the previous semester on the homepage of the Chair. Information about registration and information events will also be announced this way. At the end of the registration period the topics will be assigned. Keep up to date!

### 2 Familiarization with the Topic and Literature

Until the first individual preliminary discussion between the seminar participant and the seminar supervisor, an outline and a problem definition on the topic must be formulated. This requires an initial orientation in the topic area, in which textbooks prove to be helpful. They provide initial information about central terms of the topic and their meaning, about relevant theories and about basic literature. With a prior understanding acquired in this way, the literature mentioned in the "Literature Recommendations" for the respective seminar can be better classified and processed in a more targeted and meaningful way. No patent remedies can be given for the handling of the given literature. It is certainly not sufficient to limit oneself to the sources mentioned in the references and to go through them only once. Literature must be worked through systematically. A structuring of its decisive information and statements is unreliable. Thus, for example, information can be searched for specifically by reading the literature cited in a paper on the respective point in order to obtain more information about it. From this new source, research can be conducted on its sources, so that a large and detailed amount of literature-based information is quickly available.

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<sup>1</sup>Further information can be found at <https://bank.uni-hohenheim.de/en/fit-for-empirical-work>.

## 2.1 Finding High Quality Academic Literature

Academic literature includes:

- Scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals.
- Articles from edited volumes or handbooks.
- Research monographs.
- (Scientific) articles from periodicals.
- Only if necessary relevant articles from websites or newspapers can be used (e.g. The Economist, ...).

Motivating a paper by means of the recent importance of a topic is not always recommended, since science moves at a different speed of publication. Rather try to highlight the problem or research question you're going to discuss and show its relevance.

Furthermore, high quality academic literature can be found in peer-reviewed journals, or academic single and serial works. Access to such literature is provided via databases such as "Scopus", "Science Direct", "JSTOR", websites of the respective journals themselves, as well as university libraries<sup>2</sup>.

Additionally, working papers can be found on "SSRN", "Econstor", "RePEc" and "NBER". An easy way to search all these databases is the search engine "Google Scholar"<sup>3</sup> which limits the search results to academic literature. Literature from websites and newspapers are used less and only in special cases. Their quality often does not meet scientific standards and science, journalism and politics run at different speeds of publication.

As mentioned above, Use the reference pages of your recommended basic literature to start a "snowball" scheme for your research for additional sources.

## 2.2 Literature from Textbooks

In many cases, basic textbooks are a good starting point to grasp the essence of a topic or theory. Some offer "further reading" sections which can help you find the basic papers and publications on a topic. However, you should not rely too heavily on textbooks themselves as sources. You can browse the stock of available books (and ebooks) and access them through "HOHSEARCH" at the University of Hohenheim.

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<sup>2</sup>At the University of Hohenheim go to HOHSEARCH: <https://rds-hoh.ibs-bw.de/hohsearch/>.

<sup>3</sup><https://scholar.google.de/>

## 2.3 Scientific Databases

- These databases store all articles from the journals they cover and can be accessed through the network of the University (via VPN).
- Almost each of the big scientific publishers has their own website where they offer their journals online (Wiley, Oxford UP, ...).
- Very popular are "Scopus" and "Science Direct".
- The database of "JSTOR" is very good and holds papers by e.g. *The American Economic Review*, or *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*.
- Sites like "SSRN", "Econstor", "RePEc", or "NBER" offer articles in the working paper stage.

Please note, journals from the American Economic Association (American Economic Review, Journal of Economic Perspectives, Journal of Economic Literature, ...) often do not appear in search queries of Google Scholar. Either go directly to the journals' websites and open the current issue section, or, for older issues, visit the JSTOR database. Nevertheless, the biggest side to find these web pages and journal articles is, as mentioned, Google Scholar.

## 3 Structures of Scientific Papers and Problem Definition

### 3.1 Structure of a Seminar Paper or Thesis

A scientific paper can be roughly divided into:

- the problem definition or **introduction** that shows the relevance of the topic and research question, a brief outlook on the findings and a summary of the structure of the work that follows,
- the **main part** which includes the presentation of the theoretical framework, the review of the existing literature and the analysis, results, and critical discussion of the topic,
- and the **end or conclusion** where further result can be presented, criticism is voiced and solutions or answers to the research questions are proposed.

The structure of a paper should be as clear as possible. This means, for example, that large amounts of very short sub-chapters (less than one page long) should be avoided.<sup>4</sup> In addition, the choice of chapters should already draw a red line that connects the chapters meaningfully. It pays off to put effort into the first version of the structure of the topic. This forces you to think through the topic and prepares you for the first meeting with your seminar supervisor. If the structure of the paper corresponds properly to the way in which you will go through your argumentation and answering of your research question, writing the text will be much easier and more successful.

### **General aspects to look out for:**

- Avoid single sub chapters: if there is no chapter 1.2, there is no need for chapter 1.1.
- As mentioned, sub chapters should not be much shorter than one page. Remember, keep the structure of your paper/thesis clear and avoid too many chapters. You're writing a 10 page seminar paper and not "War and Peace".
- Draw a "red line" through your paper and provide suitable connections and transitions between the chapters and sub chapters. This improves the reading flow and shows that you are presenting a coherent argumentation instead of thrown together pieces of text.

## **3.2 Exemplary Structure of a Seminar Paper/Thesis**

**Title page**

**Table of Contents**

**List of Figures/Tables/Abbreviations**

**Chapter 1: Introduction**

- Motivation (e.g. why is the topic relevant?, precise verbalization of the problem).
- Formulate a research question.
- Briefly summarize the structure of the seminar paper.

**Chapter 2-5 (7 at most): Main part**

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<sup>4</sup>Unlike in this style guide which solely serves illustrative purposes.

- Presentation of the theoretical foundations (what is the relevant underlying economic theory?).
- Review of the specific theoretical literature on the topic.
- In-depth analysis, discussion and critical evaluation of one or two practical examples/objects of the investigation.
- Review of the econometric methods and results (if applicable).

## Chapter 5 (6, 7, ...) <sup>5</sup> Conclusion

- What are the results of your paper?
- If applicable: what is new and goes beyond the existing literature?
- What are the limitations of your paper or the used methods and data? How could these be overcome?

## References

- Looking at published papers and how they are structured can help you a lot!

**Also, please arrange a separate meeting with your supervisor to make sure that the structure of your paper goes in the right direction. Be prepared, and send a first draft of the structure to your supervisor beforehand.**

## 3.3 Problem Definition

Seminar papers are usually a presentation and interpretation of scientific statements and results of others. Simply retelling them and putting them together hardly contributes to an increase in the author's understanding and often makes reading the work a bit tedious. It is important that the treatment of the topic (and thus of the literature) is from the outset based on a question or problem.

The problem and introduction should be three quarters to one page long (for final theses this can of course vary). After an introduction to the topic, which leads logically to the problem definition, the task to be solved should be clearly formulated (author and reader must know exactly which research questions are to be dealt with in the paper). Following the problem definition, a description of the procedure can

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<sup>5</sup>Please note: the number of chapters is only a recommendation and can of course vary depending on the paper.



be given. For example..:

*First of all, the essential terms of the work should be defined ...*

*Subsequently, the theoretical approaches are presented ...*

*Finally, a reference to the problem definition and a critical reflection ...*

The formulation of the research question is the basis for the structure of the work. It helps to make a purposeful and interesting selection from the wealth of information on the topic. Above all, however, a well thought-out research question is the best way to derive a stringent structure. This, in turn, is the basic requirement for a work strictly oriented towards the overall topic. It should make it clear which ways and methods are used to work on the problem and why they are used. However, the presentation of the approach should go beyond what can be taken from the table of contents anyway, otherwise it is redundant. The problem or research question determines whether and how the work is read. It should motivate the reader to read. Experience shows that the importance of the problem is underestimated. However, the effort put into it pays off in that it makes it easier for the author to structure and formulate the other parts of the work.

In principle, the more precisely the question to be answered by the paper is formulated and the more narrowly it is defined, the clearer the resulting structure required to answer it will be and the greater the chance that the work will provide new added value for readers and authors.

### **3.4 The Research Question**

Starting point of a seminar paper or thesis should, as mentioned above, be a precise research question. The research question should pick up a specific aspect of the topic or ask a specific question which is to be answered during the course of the paper. Possible starting points are:

- Which aspects of the topic can be of special interest?
- Is there a case study that I would like to analyze?
- Can I easily find suitable literature for a certain aspect of the topic?

In seminars, the research question is taken from the underlying paper you're supposed to analyze and the corresponding econometric analysis. When writing your final thesis at our Chair, your supervisor will give you some literature to start off and to find the corresponding research question to your chosen topic.

### 3.5 Theoretical framework

After you have found your research question and wrote your introduction, the main part of your paper will follow. The beginning of the main part can consist of the theoretical basics which are necessary for analysis and to understand the work. For this purpose, the models should be fully understood and reproduced with the help of the literature, so that these can be explained and critically questioned in the work. Since each paper contains a description of its theoretical foundations, these can be found by the above mentioned literature search. In the paper itself it is not necessary to present the mathematical derivations of a model. It is sufficient if the reader realizes that the author has understood the models.<sup>6</sup> Many empirical papers often contain little theory. In such cases it is recommended to focus on the econometrics used and to have understood it.

You could start with the theoretical foundations in a first part of the main section which should serve as a tool for your analysis. To do this, you have to critically evaluate the literature. Additionally, you should justify the concepts which you will use during the further course of your paper. Possible starting points when looking for a "suitable" theory are:

- Does a model discussed in the lectures or the suggested paper offer a theoretical starting point?
- Does a textbook offer a model to start with?
- Is there a journal article which suggests a suitable model?

### 3.6 Empirical Methods

This section of your main part should present your data (and data source), methodology, and empirical results and interpretations. Furthermore, you should have grasped the underlying methods and be able to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the statistical models used.

Empirical models and research questions are very present in the current economic research and practice and are a big part of recent academic publications. As mentioned above, to prepare for such research questions in seminar papers and bachelor or master theses, the course "Fit for Empirical Work in Your Thesis" provided by our Chair will give students the opportunities to learn about statistical software packages and to refresh and deepen their knowledge about econometrics. With respect to many

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<sup>6</sup>Please contact your supervisor to clarify this.

practical examples on which the students themselves will work, the foundations of Stata and R as well as the underlying statistical concepts in form of a “cookbook” will be presented without much theoretical discussion. Furthermore, the basics of scientific writing will be shown to help the students to cope with formal requirements in their academic writing and to show L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X as an alternative for the writing process.

### 3.7 Discussion, Analysis and Evaluation

After the literature review and empirical and theoretical foundations have been established, the following analysis will now process the existing data in such a way that an answer to the underlying problem or research question can be worked out.

- Try to answer your research question as broad as possible and try to integrate the presented theory into the analysis. For that, try to link your results to interpretations based on theoretical considerations.
- If your paper is of empirical nature present the econometric methods used and the results.
- You do not have to present the derivations for the econometric methods but you should show that you understood the methodology and data, and that you can interpret the economic results. This is also the case for findings stemming from theoretical models and derivations.
- Empirical papers most often do not offer a lot of theory. That’s why you should then focus on the econometrics!
- Present your results in tables and figures and compare them to the recommended literature. Always replicate tables and do not use simple screenshots!
- When working with an empirical paper, please make a sensible selection of the tables you put into your final paper. **Do not put all tables in the appendix!**

### 3.8 Conclusion

In the conclusion, the research question posed at the beginning should be taken up again and answered with the results found in the main part. Furthermore, unanswered research questions can be pointed out for further work and recommendations

can be made for economic agents affected by the topic, e.g. politicians. Do not put too many interpretations here, they should have been discussed in a dedicated results sections before. The conclusion is mainly here to wrap things up.

### **3.9 Appendix, List of References and Affidavit**

Finally, the text of the actual work must be followed by the list of references, the appendix, and the affidavit (see figure 2) in the order mentioned. The appendix contains all tables and figures that are not absolutely necessary for the understanding of the work and, therefore, do not necessarily belong in the text part but can nevertheless provide additional information.

The form of the affidavit has to be in accordance with the criteria of the examination regulations, since it is not the responsible Chair but the responsible examination office that sets the criteria for this. You will find a sample declaration in the appendix or on the website of the examination office at [https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/wiwioec-pa#jfmulticon-tent\\_c264542-12](https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/wiwioec-pa#jfmulticon-tent_c264542-12).

## **4 Formalities**

### **4.1 General Requirements**

Our Chair does not impose too strict formal requirement. Nevertheless, your paper should meet certain standards of format. Most importantly, a consistent layout (not a new font on every page), correct citations and a complete list of references, as well as no orthographically mistakes are key. The basic formal requirements (font size, line spacing, etc.) can be found in Table 4.1.

### **4.2 Directories**

In addition to the table of contents and bibliography, which must be included in every work, a list of figures, tables, abbreviations and symbols may also be necessary, depending on the content of the work. This means that if there are graphics, tables, recurring abbreviations or mathematical symbols from theoretical models in the work, these must be noted in the corresponding directories. These directories are to be inserted after the cover sheet and table of contents.

Number of pages	10-15 (B.Sc.- M.Sc.-seminar), 30 (B.Sc.-thesis), 50 (M.Sc.-thesis)
Text alignment	Full justification and syllabication
Margins	Top 2.5cm, bottom 2.0cm, right 2.5cm, left 2.5cm
Font types	Times New Roman Arial
Font sizes	TNR: 12pt (10pt for footnotes) Arial: 11pt (10pt for footnotes)
Headlines	Bold, TNR: 14pt, Arial: 12pt
Line spacing	1.5
Page numbering	Bottom right; Introduction is page 1; ToC, LoF/ LoT/References Roman, otherwise Arabic numbering
Spelling	German Either British or American English, but be consistent!

Table 1: Formal Requirements

### 4.3 Citation Styles

There are two accepted styles for citing the sources used. In both the Chicago and Harvard methods, an additional complete citation with all the names of the authors<sup>7</sup> must be entered in the bibliography for each cited source. An example of this is the bibliography at the end of this manual. Tables and figures should be cited as in the examples in this manual.

- It is a big formal mistake not to mention cited papers in the reference list or bibliography!
- Longer seminar papers and especially bachelor and master theses can have quite lengthy lists of references.
- To keep track of your citations and to avoid missing entries reference managers are very helpful.
  - Most frequently used are Citavi, Mendeley, Zotero and RefWorks (you can get the premium versions of these programs with your university e-mail

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<sup>7</sup>If there are more than three authors, "et al." can be used in the text. However, all authors must still be named in the bibliography.

address<sup>8</sup>).

- Microsoft Word also offers a own (quite simplistic) reference manager and plugins for the aforementioned software.
- When using LaTeX, citing with BibTex is also very convenient. The reference manager JabRef<sup>9</sup> is specifically designed for that.

General remarks on footnotes:

- Besides citations, footnotes can be used to show short derivations and robustness checks or further information.
- Also contrary opinions to your research question can be put into footnotes to complement the lines of argumentation.
- But use them with caution!
- No further discussion should be in footnotes. Either these points are important enough to go in the main text, or they are of no interest whatsoever.

#### 4.3.1 Chicago Style

- Mostly used in humanities, literature, history and arts.
- The source text is indicated by a superscripted note number that corresponds to a full citation either at the bottom of the page (as a footnote) or at the end of a main body of text (as an endnote).
- In both instances the citation is also placed in a bibliography entry at the end of the material, listed in alphabetical order of the author's last name.
- Use this style if you want to cite with footnotes.

**Exemplary citation:**

text text text<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup><https://kim.uni-hohenheim.de/94970>

<sup>9</sup>For more information see <https://www.jabref.org/>.

<sup>10</sup>See Miller (1234), pp. 1-10

### 4.3.2 Harvard Style

- Mostly used in physics, natural and social science (thus, economics, the Queen of social science).
- In text references with a bibliography instead of footnotes.
- Format: **name of author (year, page)** or **(name of author, year; page)**

#### Exemplary citation:

... the whole time span. Some analysis of the micro expectations data is concluded 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 ...

... 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 ...

## 4.4 Citing Figures and Tables

Citing Figures and Tables follows the same rules as usual citations. Please make sure to center your figures and tables when including them in the text.

#### Example:

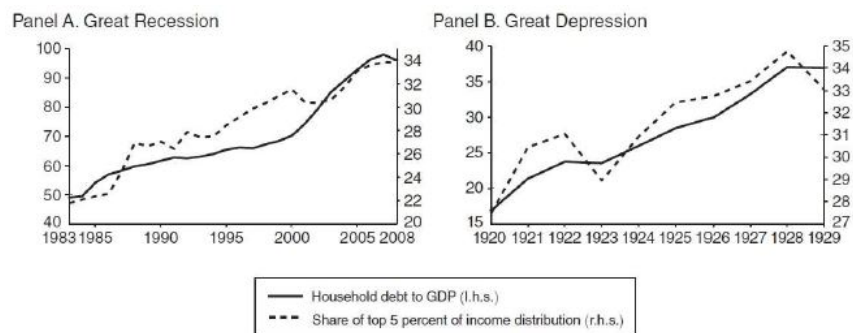


Figure 1: Income Inequality and Household Leverage, Source: Kumhof et al. (2015), p.1221

## 4.5 Mathematical Equations

Even when your paper is focused on an econometric model and statistics, you will have to include equations and formulas, such as a standard OLS regression equation:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot x_1 + \beta_2 \cdot x_2 + \cdots + \beta_n \cdot x_n + u. \quad (1)$$

If you include more than one equation in your paper, make sure to number them correctly. This numbering can also be used as references for the equations within the text.  $\LaTeX$  is especially useful for setting mathematical symbols and equations. If you write a more theoretical paper or thesis with various derivations and equations, we highly recommend to use  $\LaTeX$ . More on this typesetting language in section 7.

## 4.6 List of References

- The list of references should be ordered alphabetically with the complete list of the author's names and all further information.
- Do not forget papers you cited in your text in the references. As mentioned, this is a big formal mistake.
- If you need further help, look at published papers and how the authors do it in there.
- Our Chair is not that strict with formalities, but please try to keep your list of references consistent and choose an appropriate style for your references.
- Also, try to avoid direct citations if possible, and when you use them, use quotation marks!
- Please note, that the final design of your list or references might vary with the style of the bibliography (as an example, look at papers from different journals). We do not specify a unique bibliography style, but ask you to use one of your choosing consistently.

### Example:<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Please note, that in a real paper, the list of references would naturally come at the very end of the text. This bibliography is solely for illustrative purposes.



## References

- Bernasconi, M. and Kirchkamp, O. (2000). Why do monetary policies matter? An experimental study of saving and inflation in an overlapping generations model, *Journal of Monetary Economics* **46**(2): 315–343.
- Demirgüç-Kunt, A. and Detragiache, E. (1998). The determinants of banking crises in developing and developed countries, *Staff Papers* **45**(1): 81–109.
- Kumhof, M., Ranciere, R. and Winant, P. (2015). Inequality, leverage, and crises, *American Economic Review* **105**(3): 1217–45.
- Marimon, R. and Sunder, S. (1995). Does a constant money growth rule help stabilize inflation?: experimental evidence, *Carnegie-Rochester Conference Series on Public Policy*, Vol. 43, Elsevier, pp. 111–156.
- Miller, M. (1234). Exemplary Texts of Examples in the Science of Showing How Things Are Done, *The Journal of Examples* .

## 5 Presentation

For a good presentation, special attention should be paid to the selection of the presented content. It should be avoided to spend too much time on basic knowledge or trivialities. The focus of a presentation should be on the main part of the work and the explanation of the core topics. In order to be able to explain these precisely, it is necessary that the respective aspects are fully understood.

In general, a presentation should always follow a red line. This can start with a general introduction to the topic and develop along the structure of the work (question, analysis, results).

A presentation should also always be supported visually. It is important that the visual representation is easy to follow and does not distract from the actual presentation. This means that the slides must not be overloaded with too much text, the font must be easy to read in size and style and any distracting symbols, animations, images or other superfluous content should be avoided.

In addition to the content and visualization of a presentation, behavior of the presenter is also important. By adhering to the time limit, an unnecessarily long and thus potentially tiring presentation is avoided. By speaking freely at an appropriate volume and making eye contact with the audience, the presentation can be made

even more appealing, making it easier for the audience to follow and stimulating their interest.

## 6 Language

If you do not write your paper or thesis in German, writing completely in English for the first time can be a bit frightening if you do not feel 100% confident about your language skills. But keep in mind: we are also no native speakers. We won't lower your grade if your English is a bit simple or rough. Nevertheless, try to avoid spelling and grammatical errors! Your text processing software should help you to avoid this. Also, since you passed your "Abitur" you should all be able to write a comprehensible and statistically appealing paper. Science has, in a sense, its own language with a common style and set of phrases. Try to use short and precise sentences and formulations. A good starting point for getting used to scientific writing is again reading scientific articles and journals. Another source for phraseological 'nuts and bolts' of organized academic writing is the "Academic Phrasebank" by the University of Manchester<sup>12</sup> which offers a variety of standard phrases and keywords commonly used in scientific writing.

If you need further training for your English writing and speaking skills read English newspapers like the New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian, or The Economist to see how a well presented argumentation and report is written. In general, reading English books massively improves your language skills and helps you to stay in touch with English.

Furthermore, read and use the scientific literature you're working with in the original English version. PLEASE, do not start to translate papers!

We also recommend The Journal of Economic Perspective<sup>13</sup>. There are many articles by the most famous economists on all economic fields and subjects. The articles give a general overview on the topics, without much math and econometrics.

A last recommendation for English speaking is to watch American and British shows and films in the original version (that's what you will do anyway, so use it as a learning opportunity).

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<sup>12</sup>See <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>.

<sup>13</sup><https://www.aeaweb.org/journals/jep>

## 7 LaTeX

Efficient work requires the use of technical aids. Automatically created directories save a lot of meticulous detail work. In this context we also refer to  $\LaTeX$ .  $\LaTeX$  is a scripting language that does not work according to the What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get principle (like Microsoft Word). For Windows systems there are different editors that more or less resemble a WYSIWYG concept (TeXMaker, TeXnicCenter, LyX, TeXWorks, ...). In addition to your text, you type commands that define how TeX should interpret your text. Furthermore, the online-editor Overleaf<sup>14</sup> offers the possibility to jointly work on projects and very easy to handle for beginners.  $\LaTeX$  offers the following advantages:

- Formatting is available from the beginning of your work (at least after you have worked through it for the first time).
- Formatting is cleaner, but can also be customized.
- Content, literature and other directories are created independently and without errors.
- TeX formatting has become standard for scientific publications.

In summary, this means that once you have taken the trouble to familiarize yourself with the TeX environment (preferably during your first term paper), you will have no formatting problems for the rest of your studies. As an example, this style guide was also written using  $\LaTeX$ .

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<sup>14</sup>[overleaf.com](http://overleaf.com)

## 8 Appendix

### Erklärung\*

Hiermit erkläre ich,

Name, Vorname \_\_\_\_\_

Matrikelnummer \_\_\_\_\_

dass ich bei der vorliegenden

- Bachelor-Arbeit       Master-Thesis/Master-Arbeit  
 Seminararbeit       Diplomarbeit

die Regeln guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis eingehalten habe. Ich habe diese Arbeit selbständig 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.

Figure 2: Affidavit