

GUIDE TO SCIENTIFIC WRITING

(SEMINAR PAPERS, BACHELOR'S, AND MASTER'S THESIS)

This document provides you with basic and most relevant information on how to produce a scientific text at the Chair of International Economics. Please visit the course on "Scientific Methods" offered by the Chair for more detailed information!

Structure

- Cover page: paper/thesis title, type of your text (seminar paper, bachelor's thesis, master's thesis), date of submission, degree program/course, your name, matriculation number, your semester, university, department, professor/supervising tutor, contact details
- Table of contents and list of figures/tables/abbreviations (if applicable) with page numbers
- Introduction, description of research task (research question, relevance/research gap, focus), structure and proceeding of your work
- Current state of research (baseline situation, basics, theoretical perspective, prominent approaches in the literature, conventional methods)
- Presentation of own solution approach (if applicable) or own adaption of existing approaches
- Theory (introduction of concepts and models, application in light of research question)
- Empirics (proceeding, methodology, data, results, comparison of similarities and differences)
- Results (assessment, critical appraisal)
- Assessment of own approach/of the results considering current state of research (gap), relevance for application, context
- Summary and conclusion
- List of references
- Appendices

Source: Disterer (2009), p. 147.

Formal criteria

Number of pages, language, and writing time:

(see also examination regulations and module descriptions!)

- Seminar paper: see requirements in introductory session (usually 11-15 pages)
- Bachelor's thesis (M&E): ≤ 25 pages; 9 weeks; German or English
- Bachelor's thesis (Dual-Subject): < 75.000 characters; 6 weeks; German
- Master's thesis: 50-60 pages; 14/18 weeks, if applicable 3-6 weeks in addition (depending on degree program and type of thesis)

Font

Times New Roman

Text body

Font size 12pt; line spacing 1,5; alignment justified;

Tables and figures with direct reference in text body, not appendix!

Headings

Fontsize 16pt, 14pt (subheadings)

Footnotes

Fontsize 10pt; single spacing

Margins

Measures for top, bottom, right, and left margin: 2.5 cm

List of references

Fontsize 12pt; single spacing; left-aligned

Citations

- Short citations up to 2 lines long: quotation marks in text body
- Long citations > 3 lines long: quotation marks, own paragraph, indented, single spacing

Abbreviations

If you use abbreviations for technical terms, you need to include them in a list of abbreviations. Common abbreviations like etc., i.e., and the like do not have to be included!

Used literature

See course on "Scientific Methods"!

Referencing guide

The referencing rules given here are one example of how to reference. There are other formats that you can use as long as you stick to one set of rules **consistently** throughout your text.

Book/Monograph

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). *Title*. *Subtitle* (in italics), edition (if not the original publication), place of publication: publisher.

Article from an edited volume

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). Title of article. Subtitle, in: last name, first name of editors (in parentheses behind: ed./eds.), *title of book* (in italics), edition (if not the original publication), place of publication: publisher, pp. x-y (page numbers).

Journal article

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). Title of article (optional: in single quotation marks). Subtitle, *title of journal or periodical* (in italics), volume number (in parentheses behind: issue number or article number), pp. x-y (page numbers).

Online article/website

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). Title of article (optional: in single quotation marks), URL (accessed: date of last retrieval).

Article from electronic journals

Similar to regular journal articles, plus URL (accessed: date of last retrieval).

Encyclopedia article

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). Title, in: name of encyclopedia, volume, place of publication. Column x-y (column numbers).

Dissertation

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). Title. Subtitle, type of publication, university, place of publication.

Some further details

Citation style

There are many citation styles. Decide for **one** and stick to it!

- *Harvard style (mostly used in scientific literature)*: The author's last name, the year of publication, and page number(s) (in parentheses: name year, pages) are referred to in the text or main body of your writing (called embedded or in-text citation). Always indicate the page number(s), even though in scientific literature they are only used when directly quoting or closely paraphrasing. The list of references includes the complete source information of the work cited. Footnotes at the bottom of the page only display further explanations.
- *German style*: Footnotes at the bottom of the page, to which reference is made after the quotation with continuous superscript numbers.¹ First citation of a source requires complete bibliographical information. In case of directly following same citation, "ibid." is used.² If further citation from the same source is made, an abbreviation is used (e.g., last name (year), p. 40.).

Reference list arrangement

The reference list is arranged in alphabetical order according to the author's last name. Do not use bullet points or numbers to begin each entry. Every entry ends with a full stop.

Multiple authors

Maintain the order of their names as they appear on the title page of the publication. Except for the first author, you name the following authors by their first names first, after which the last name follows. This also holds for editors of volumes ("Last name, first name and first name last name"). More than three authors? Name the first, then write "et al." (but only in the main body).

Multiple places of publication

In principle, all locations should be given separated by commas. If there are more than three locations, "et al." can also be used.ⁿ

Missing information of place or year of publication:

Any missing information must be explicitly pointed out. No place of publication: n.p. (= no place). No year: n.d. (= no date)

Several sources of the same author within one year:

Are listed alphabetically according to the title and add the letter 'a' after the first date, and 'b' after the second date, and so on (e.g., 2003a, 2003b, 2003c).

Page numbers in citation:

With reference to one page (Wells 2003, p. 4), with reference to different pages (Wells 2003, p. 1, 2, & 6), with reference to a sequence of pages (Wells 2003, pp. 25-26).

¹ Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). *Title. Subtitle* (in italics), edition (if not the original publication), place of publication: publisher, p. 40.

² Ibid., p. 40.

Recommended literature

The following notes represent a small selection of literature. Further works on various aspects of scientific work are available in the library.

- Brink, A. (2013). *Anfertigung wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten. Ein prozessorientierter Leitfaden zur Erstellung von Bachelor-, Master- und Diplomarbeiten in 8 Lerneinheiten*, 5th edition, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.
- Disterer, G. (2014). *Studienarbeiten schreiben. Seminar-, Bachelor-, Master- und Diplomarbeiten in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften*, 7th edition, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Gabler.
- Neugeboren, R. (2005). *The Student's Guide to Writing Economics*, New York: Routledge. Online: <https://www.wiwi.hu-berlin.de/de/professuren/vwl/wg/theses/writing-economics/>
- Skern, T. (2011). *Writing Scientific English. A Workbook*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart: UTB.
- Thomson, W. (2011). *A Guide for the Young Economist*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hoffmann, A. (2010). *Scientific Writing and Communication. Papers, Proposals, and Presentations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- <https://www.wissenschaftliches-arbeiten.org/>

Additional courses

This guide should only serve as a short overview for writing academic papers at the Chair of International Economics and as a supplement to the Chair's introductory course “Scientific Writing”. Every semester, the university library and the faculty library also offer helpful courses on literature research or courses on software solutions (Office, Citavi, etc.). Please take them *in time* if necessary!

<https://www.ub.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/Fachbib/wiwi/recherchekurse.html>
<https://www.ub.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/en/courses-and-events/courses>