



UNIVERSITY OF HOHENHEIM

INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS: INFORMATION AND UNCERTAINTY

Prof. Dr. Philipp Weinschenk

Guidelines for Writing a Master Thesis

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Preliminary Remarks

These Guidelines provide students of the University of Hohenheim with general information on writing their Master Thesis at the Department of Economics: Information and Uncertainty. The guidelines should be adhered to in order to prevent a negative assessment.¹ Furthermore, important hints for conceiving and structuring the thesis are given.

If you have any queries after reading the guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact us either your supervisor (for content-related issues) or the staff member who is responsible for Master Theses at the Chair (for organizational issues).² With the current guidelines, we attempt to explain techniques of academic research and working in a short and intelligible manner. However, this depiction is not intended to be exhaustive. Therefore, the guidelines are not able to replace an analysis of a more detailed handbook. Recommended handbooks that are recently published are for example Balzert et al. (2011), Heesen (2014), Oehrich (2015), Theisen (2013) and Voss (2015).³ In the bibliography, you will find complete information on the recommended literature. With the exception of Balzert et al. (2011), all handbooks can also be obtained as eBooks from the University of Hohenheim. We strongly recommend to read at least one of those books.

¹ A short summary of the most important guidelines are provided in the Information Sheet - Formal Aspects for Writing a Master Thesis at the Department of Economics: Information and Uncertainty

² Further information can be found at the chair's homepage <https://mikro.uni-hohenheim.de/>.

³ Please note that the literature referred to is in German.

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List of Abbreviations

KIM	Communciation, Information and Media Center
SIZ	Student Information Center

1 Assignment of the Master Thesis

The assignment of a Master thesis is done directly by the chair. Students who would like to write their Master thesis at our chair should contact the secretary Isolde Dormeyer.

2 Conception of a Master Thesis

Before starting to write your Master thesis, you should have a basic idea of the basic conception of your thesis. This is not only about accumulating ideas, but following a red line. In the context of scientific writing, this means that the structure of your thesis has to be stringent. Therefore, it might be helpful to formulate a research question which will be investigated and answered within your thesis.

This section provides support for creating a concept as well as for searching relevant literature. In the first part, basic requirements will be discussed. The mentioned criteria have to be considered when writing your thesis. It is important to have an overview of the relevant literature before you start to create a concept for your Master thesis. How to proceed with literature research will be described in the second part of this chapter.

The result of your first concept is a rough structuring of your thesis. This structuring serves as a guideline for subsequent explanations. The structure ensures that you follow a red line while writing your thesis. What aspects have to be considered with regard to your rough structuring will be described in the third part of the section. Moreover, the discussion of the outline with your supervisor will be based on the rough structuring of your thesis. The discussion of the outline is mandatory for all students writing a Master thesis at the Department of Economics: Information and Uncertainty. In order to give you a rough idea of what to expect in these meetings, the last section of this chapter briefly describes the content of such an discussion of the outline.

2.1 Basic Requirements

Master theses are one of the most important forms of scientific work in studies. By writing this thesis, you should show that you have mastered the methods and techniques of scientific work and can apply them to the question posed by the examiner. Therefore, it is advisable to deal with the requirements that are placed on a scientific work before writing the Master thesis. In the following, criteria are formulated that you must consider when writing your Master thesis.

- Scientific work is always *systematic* and *free of contradictions*. The explanations in your Master thesis must be logically consistent.
- Scientific papers must always be designed to be *review-friendly*. The arguments put forward in your Master thesis must be comprehensible to a knowledgeable reader.
- Scientific papers are always *structured*. The structure of your Master thesis is coherent and follows a common thread.
- In scientific work, *clarity of terms* must prevail. The technical terms used in your Master thesis must be defined and delineated in an unambiguous manner.

- Scientific papers must be written in a *comprehensible* way. Your Master thesis must be written in such a comprehensible way that a knowledgeable reader can follow your explanations without much effort.
- Scientific work is characterized by a *differentiated* view. In your Master thesis, all opinions and perspectives on your topic that are common in the literature must be taken into account.
- Scientific work always includes *topicality*. Try to take into account the current state of research in your Master thesis as far as possible.
- Scientific work must follow the *principle of honesty*. If you use the intellectual property of another person, you must indicate this.
- Scientific work is characterized by transparency. The sources of the information you use must be provided in a consistent form.
- Scientific papers must be clearly arranged. Your Master thesis must fulfill the formal guidelines given by the chair.⁴

This list of criteria is intended to show you the basic requirements that are placed on scientific work. Adhering to these basic rules of scientific work is not difficult, but only requires a certain amount of practice.

2.2 Literature Research

The starting point of your literature search is usually the literature references of the chair on your topic and the bibliographies contained in these specialist publications. In addition, you should of course search independently for further literature. So-called review articles are particularly helpful for the beginning. For each scientific topic, certain standard articles have crystallized, which are cited in almost every technical article on this topic. You should definitely take a look at these standard works. In most cases, there is no way around the fact that you will have to refer to English-language research literature for your work. As a result of the internationalization of science and research, most economics essays are now published in English.

Another conceivable approach to finding an entry point to the topic is to search for a current textbook that contains a section on the topic of your Master thesis. The same applies to articles in the didactically oriented economic journals **WIST** or **WISU**. From the respective tables of contents you can find out whether your topic is treated in these publications.

In your thesis, you are to use primarily **specialized literature**, to which neither daily newspapers, newspapers, weeklies, and popular magazines, nor freely accessible online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia belong. The latter sources of information are generally not citable, even if they can be helpful to get started with a topic and can possibly be used in the introduction of the paper introduction to the topic or to illustrate its topicality by means of a current example.

Please keep in mind that topicality is a criterion of scientific work. The bibliographies of the professional publications you have already read often cannot provide an overview of the current

⁴ See chapter 4 or the Information Sheet - Formal Aspects for Writing a Master Thesis.

state of research, since they only list articles that were published before the respective professional article. For the search of further, especially current literature, literature banks are often the best source.

It is advisable to search for current specialist publications using **online literature databases** such as **EconLit** or **WISO**. In such databases, almost all publications are listed in an extensive list of economic (and mostly English-language) journals, collective papers and journals. The databases EconLit or WISO, as well as many other important databases as well as many other important databases, can be found in the database offer of the **Communciation, Information and Media Center (KIM)**. In the meantime, you are supported by the university's own literature search engine **HohSearch**. With HohSearch you can search for book and journal titles in the holdings of the Hohenheim libraries as well as for articles in selected subject databases and free internet sources.

<https://rds-hoh.ibs-bw.de/hohsearch/>

Access to licensed e-media is available on the university network. Outside the university network, students of the university have full access to licensed articles after login (for example via *Shibboleth*). Another option is the use of the **VPN-Clients**⁵.

If you would like to use even more current literature than that published in journals, then you should consult so-called **preprint servers**. There, current discussion papers are put online, which you can often easily get by download. Note that a highly topical discussion paper can also be a good key to the relevant literature. A portal where you can access numerous discussion papers on various economics topics is offered by the **WWW Virtual Library: Economics** at the address:

<http://www.helsinki.fi/WebEc/EconVLib.html>

Another good address is the **Social Science Research Network (SSRN)**. There are also numerous current discussion papers published in English.

<http://www.ssrn.com/en/>

The Research Papers in Economics (RePEc) project aims at providing the best possible overview of and access to the economic literature. Under the address

<http://www.repec.org/>

⁵ All information about worldwide access to the Hohenheim network via VPN is available here: <https://kim.uni-hohenheim.de/en/100304>

you can find information about economic research papers, most of which, especially the more recent ones, are available for download. Helpful for your literature search are also the search engines **Scopus** and **Google Scholar**, which can be found under the adress:

<https://www.scopus.com/>

respectively

<http://www.scholar.google.com>

2.3 Outline

After the literature research, you should start thinking about the conception of your paper. The result of this conception is a outline of your work.

The result of this conception is a outline of your work. Thereby it could be helpful if you formulate a **research question** to your topic, which you would like to answer within the scope of your Master thesis. On the basis of this research question, you should then delimit the topic and think about which information, definitions and economic models are important for answering it. These considerations usually result in a relatively good outline.

It should be noted that this initial outline is by no means set in stone. Rather, it can be assumed that it will have to be adapted during the writing process. Such a outline should primarily help to proceed in a structured manner and not to lose sight of the actual topic. The outline should show the common thread, i.e. the stringent structure of your paper.

In addition, it might be advantageous for you if you already consider how many pages you would like to plan for the individual outline points when creating the outline. Even if an exact division is certainly not possible at this point, it helps to prevent digressions and irrelevancies when writing the paper or to recognize them at an early stage. It should be noted that the introduction and conclusion together should make up 10-20 % of the paper (i.e. a maximum of 6 pages).

The success of your work sometimes depends on how much time you want to devote to the individual aspects of your work. The outline will tell you what your focus will be and which issues you will spend little or no time on. It has proven useful to create a timetable that is planned backwards from the deadline of the Master thesis. Since unforeseeable problems can always arise in a scientific thesis and phases of recovery are necessary, you should allow for sufficient buffer times and start working on time.

Basically, you should start creating a bibliography or at least a literature overview after determining the topic of your Master thesis. This will not only save you from stress shortly before handing in the thesis, but will also help you to keep an overview. In addition, you will need a first version of your bibliography for the discussion of the outline.

2.4 Discussion of the Outline

The discussion of the outline is the first milestone in writing your Master thesis. Before you start actually writing your thesis, you need to sit down with your supervisor and discuss your outline. It is advised to contact your supervisor as early as possible. The discussion will be based on the outline you prepared and your preliminary bibliography. There are two aspects to consider in the outline. First, the outline should have a maximum of three levels (example: 2.3.2), and second, each outline level should contain at least two points (example: If there is an outline item 2.1, it is mandatory that there is also an outline item 2.2).

Why could this discussion of the outline be so important for the success of your Master thesis? On the one hand, this meeting gives you the assurance that you are not writing completely off-topic, and on the other hand, you get feedback for your previous engagement with the topic. Among other things, the following questions will be discussed in the meeting:

- Have you already found and understood the most important literature on your topic? Does the literature you use meet scientific standards?
- Is there potential for improvement within your outline? Is the structure of your work logically coherent?
- Are you well on schedule? On which issues should you mainly focus your attention?

You will receive answers to such questions and further information about your thesis in the outline meeting. The task of your supervisor is to support you in your Master thesis. Under no circumstances will you be accused of a lack of competence if you ask him or her questions. Use the interview to your advantage.

3 Fundamental Structure of the Master Thesis

After the discussion of the outline with your supervisor, you can start writing your thesis. Some students have difficulties getting their initial thoughts on their topic down on paper. Often, they are not sure about how to begin. However, the outline written in the discussion of the outline should provide a starting point. After all, this outline already broadly provides the contents of the respective chapters and subchapters. Experience has shown that it is easiest to start with a basic chapter to get into the flow of writing.

The text part of a Master thesis usually consists of three parts: introduction, main part and conclusion. In most cases, it is advisable to write the main part first and then write the introduction and conclusion. The special features of each of these text sections and what you need to bear in mind when writing them will now be explained in the following three subsections.

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to arouse the reader's interest and at the same time lead the reader to the topic of the paper. It should make the reader curious about your discussion in the main part and highlight the relevance of your topic. Your introduction could be structured as follows:

- *Motivation and Problem Definition*

The motivation of your thesis is an important part of the introduction. You should explain why the reader should read your Master thesis. It is important to clearly state the problem, i.e. the subject of your thesis. If you have thought of a research question for your thesis, as suggested in chapter 2.3, then you can use this as a hook for your topic. The effort required to develop the research question will pay off in that it will help you structure and formulate the subsequent parts of your paper.

It would be advantageous for the motivation of your work if you could establish a reference of your topic to current events or developments in business life in the introduction, in order to make the reader aware of the importance of your topic. However, you should refrain from using empty phrases such as “more and more” or “more and more frequently” at least if they cannot be backed up with concrete facts and figures. When motivating your topic, you can certainly refer to current data from statistical surveys or make reference to current articles in the daily and business press. In the latter case, however, make sure that you do not adopt the journalistic style of the press.

- *Objective and Delimitation*

The introduction must outline the objective of your work. Here, the central scientific hypothesis of your work must be addressed. This central question should be formulated briefly and concisely, ideally in a single sentence. It can then be explained in more detail and narrowed down.

With the delimitation, you make it clear to the reader which aspects you do not address in your work and thus steer his/her expectations in the right direction. The reader should know exactly what issues are addressed in your paper after this passage.

- *State of Research*

This section aims to provide a brief summary of the current research literature. The main point here is to place your research question in the current state of research. To do this, you must first clarify in which subject area your topic is located. Based on this, you can then go into the standard works on your topic and name scientific works that investigate a similar question. However, this section should be as concise as possible. An extensive literature review is out of place at this point. If anything, such a review should be provided within a (sub)chapter in the main of your paper.

- *Procedure and Argumentation Structure*

In the last section of your introduction, you describe the outline of your paper. You explain how you will structure your arguments, in which order you will work on which questions and with which sources of information you want to answer them. In doing so, you must disclose your considerations that led exactly to this structuring of your work. It is important to make sure that you do not simply retell your outline, but explain the key points of the individual chapters briefly and concisely.

3.2 Main Part

In this section, you should cover the topic of your Master thesis in depth as well as in breadth. Since the main part will be by far the largest page count of your Master thesis, it is necessary to subdivide it into several chapters. However, there is no generally accepted guideline for subdividing the main part. However, it is of fundamental importance that your subdivision must ensure a coherent and meaningful flow of ideas and arguments. Depending on the topic of your paper, this can be done by following one of the following approaches:

- *Deductive* oriented approach (starting from the general to the special case)
- *Inductive* oriented approach (starting from the special case to the general)
- *Dialectical* oriented approach (thesis, antithesis, synthesis)
- *Chronological* oriented approach (sequence according to time of occurrence)

In most cases, it is advisable to follow the introduction with a general chapter on the basics, on which the further explanations build. This can be done, for example, by defining central terms, presenting theoretical foundations and models, or naming central assumptions. It should be noted, however, that the chapter is not simply called 2 Fundamentals or 2 Theoretical Foundation. Rather, a chapter heading should be informative to the reader and accurately state the content of the chapter.

Do not make the mistake of turning the basic chapter into a gap filler for your thesis due to lack of creativity. The Master thesis topics are intentionally chosen to require an individual solution. These topics cannot simply be worked off of knowledge already learned through your studies. Rather, the content of the basic chapter must be aligned with your explanations in the following chapters.

Furthermore, it is advisable to write short transitions between the individual chapters in order to avoid abrupt changes of topic and to make reading your work more pleasant. For example, after a chapter heading, it is a good idea to provide an extremely brief and concise summary of the following section and to establish a link to the previous chapter. In this way, you accompany the reader through your work and explicitly show him the structure (i.e. the famous red thread) of your work.

3.3 Conclusion

Every scientific work needs a concluding part that rounds off the work in a worthy manner. Do not underestimate this part of your Master thesis, because this is the text element that will dismiss the reader of your work from the topic.

You can use the concluding part of a scientific paper either as a summary or as a conclusion. Both a summary and a conclusion briefly summarize the insights the main part of the paper and address the main question raised in the introduction. In addition, in both variants you have the possibility to give an outlook on questions that may have arisen or issues that still need to be clarified. In both variants, you can name any open questions that have arisen from your examination of the topic, but which could not be dealt with in your thesis could be addressed.

In contrast to the summary, a conclusion has an evaluative character and contains conclusions. In the conclusion, you have to emphasize the quintessence of your explanations in the main part. Within a conclusion, you can also give a personal statement on the extent to which you were able to answer the research question of your Master thesis. Here you can also point out those open questions which you think could be particularly fruitful for future research efforts. Due to the different nature of the summary and conclusion, be careful how you name the concluding part of your Master thesis.

4 Formal Aspects for Writing a Master Thesis

A good scientific paper is characterized by a perfect interplay of content and form. For this reason, the observance of formal standards and conventions is indispensable. In the following, the formal standards obligatory for Master theses at the Department of Economics: Information and Uncertainty, are presented. Do not regard these standards as a vice, but rather as a guide so that you do not have to worry too much about the formal aspects of your work. However, the formal requirements also give you leeway for individual design at various points. A compact list of the most important formal requirements can be found in the **Information Sheet - Formal Aspects for Writing a Master Thesis**. Ignoring to comply with the formal requirements may result in a corresponding deduction from the grade up to a grade of 5.0.

4.1 Page Layout

It is recommended to use the possibilities of modern word processors and good printers to optimize the external appearance of the work. Working with **L^AT_EX** is recommended, but other word processing programs such as **Microsoft Word**, **Pages** or the various **Open Office-Packages** are also suitable alternatives. The program-independent page layout requirements are listed below.

- *Number of pages*

Your Master thesis should have a length of 25–35 pages, with sheets to be written on one side only. Please note that this requirement only applies to the text part. This means that the table of contents, bibliography, etc. do not count towards the prescribed number of pages. The pages of the appendix, however, are counted towards it, provided it contains mostly your own explanations. For extensive empirical work, an individual exemption may be granted in consultation with your supervisor.

- *Margins*

Please make sure you have a reasonable page margin. Keep in mind that we also need the page margins for annotations for correction. Page margins of 2.5 cm each on the right, left, and top, and 3 cm on the bottom must be maintained.

- *Font*

The main of the text should be in a 12-point (12pt) font using Times New Roman (11pt for Arial), justified, with one-and-a-half-line spacing. Footnotes should be formatted with single-line spacing, 10pt font size, and hanging indentation in justified type. These specifications will allow for good readability of your paper. The page count information above is based on this formatting.

- *Page numbering*

The title page is not numbered. The table of contents, list of figures, list of tables and list of abbreviations are numbered consecutively in Roman numerals, starting with a Roman one ("I") for the table of contents. The text section and the appendix are numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals, beginning with an Arabic one ("1"). The numbering of the bibliography, on the other hand, continues the Roman page numbering of the other indexes.

- *Captions*

Captions are to be formatted left-justified. They must be particularly emphasized by a font size and font type that differ from the main text (e.g. bold print). To improve readability, blank lines should be inserted before and after the caption. Usually, there is a blank line between the caption and the beginning of the paragraph. How many blank lines are inserted before the caption depends on whether the caption introduces a main chapter or only a subchapter. Two blank lines are usually inserted before main chapter headings. For subchapter headings, on the other hand, one blank line is sufficient.

After you have written your Master thesis, it is recommended that you check the thesis to see if there is a caption at the bottom of the page. If it is, insert one or more blank lines before the caption so that the caption slides to its main.

- *Paragraphs*

Be sure to set up enough paragraphs in your remarks. A paragraph should usually be no longer than half a page. A paper in which a paragraph is inserted after a completed thought is easier to read and follow. Usually, a small space (e.g. equal to half a blank line) is inserted after each paragraph.

- *Figures and Tables*

Please keep in mind that a figure or a table should only be included in your Master thesis if it offers insight value and has a recognizable relation to the argumentation in the text. It is usually best to create the figures yourself (this can certainly be done by hand with paper, scissors, pencil, and glue). If you adopt a figure or a table, please make sure that its labeling matches the notation of your paper or, where this is not possible, that you explain the deviations in a way that is comprehensible to the reader. In principle, figures and tables should be integrated into the text at the point where they support your explanations or

form the basis of your argumentation. If they are merely supplementary, they belong in the appendix.

Each figure and table is given a sensibly chosen designation (in 12pt font) and an exact reference (in 10pt font). In addition, all figures and tables are to be numbered consecutively with arabic numerals (e.g. Figure 1, Figure 2, ... and Table 1, Table 2, ...). The name, numbering and source reference are to be placed centered below the respective figure or table. If the figure or table was created by the author, it is sufficient to add "Own presentation". Tables and figures which are based on external sources must be marked with the addition "Own presentation based on ...(source reference)". For figures and tables, a list of figures or tables must be created. How such lists are structured is explained in the sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

In the following there are some examples of tables and figures.

EXAMPLE: TABLE

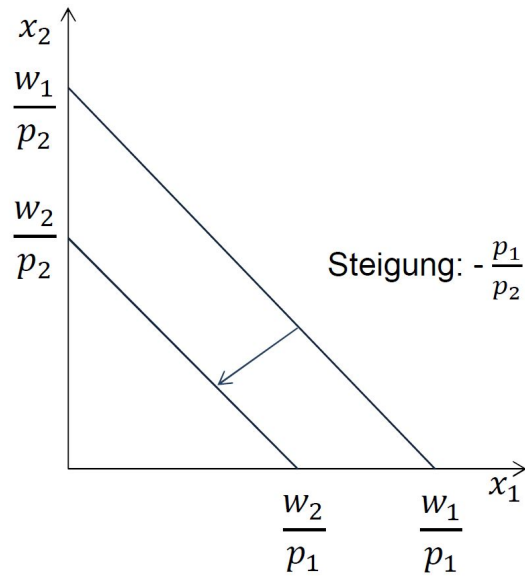
Country	Currency	Country	Currency
Belgium	Euro	Bulgaria	Lew
Denmark	Danish Krone	Germany	Euro
Estland	Euro	Finnland	Euro
France	Euro	Greece	Euro
Ireland	Euro	Italy	Euro
Croatia	Kuna	Lativa	Euro
Lithuania	Euro	Luxembourg	Euro
Malta	Euro	Netherlands	Euro
Austria	Euro	Poland	Zloty
Portugal	Euro	Romania	Leu
Sweden	Swedish Krone	Slovakia	Euro
Slovakia	Euro	Spain	Euro
Czech Republic	Czech koruna	Hungary	Forint
United Kingdom	Pound Sterling	Cyprus	Euro

Table 1: Member States of the EU and their respective currencies (of 1.1.2016)

Source: Own Illustration.

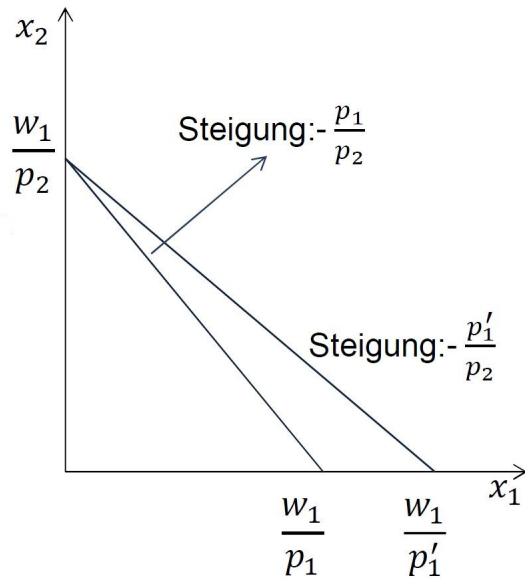
EXAMPLE: FIGURES

Figure 1 shows the change in the budget line when income changes, where $w_1 > w_2$.



Source: Own Illustration based on Varian (2010, p. 24).

In Figure 2, the slope of the budget line changes from p_1 to p'_1 as a result of a price reduction on good 1.



Source: Own Illustration based on Varian (2010, p. 25).

Figure 2: Rotation of the budget line in the event of a price change

4.2 Elements of a Master Thesis

Master theses have a certain uniform basic construction. Every Master thesis includes a cover sheet, a table of contents, a structured main text section with introduction and conclusion, and a bibliography. The following order of the individual components of a Master thesis has proven itself.

Structure of a Master Thesis

- Title Page
- List of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- List of Abbreviations
- Text Part
- Appendix
- List of References
- Declaration of Independence

Of course, you do not have to create a list of abbreviations if you do not use a single abbreviation in your thesis. The same applies to the list of tables and figures as well as the appendix. What you need to consider in terms of formal guidelines and common scientific conventions within the individual components is explained below.

4.2.1 Title Page

Each scientific work must be provided with a title page. The title page must contain the most important information about the Master thesis. In addition to the topic of your Master thesis, your name, your matriculation number and your contact details - address, telephone number, e-mail - as well as the date of submission must appear on the title page. In addition, you may also include information about your semester of study and your supervisor. An example of a clear title page can be found in Appendix 1 of this guide.

4.2.2 List of Contents

The purpose of the list of contents is to give the inclined reader a first overview of the content and structure of your thesis. A Master thesis that merely consists of the chapters 1 **Introduction**, 2 **Main Part** and 3 **Conclusion** certainly does not meet these requirements. The outline made in the table of contents should consist of concise but appealing and informative headings. Note here that the chapter headings in the table of contents must match the headings in the main.

Additional outline levels can help to structure the work and make it easier to follow the logic of your approach. However, you should not overdo such a subdivision and stop at the third subdivision at the latest for reasons of clarity. Introduction and conclusion are usually not

subdivided. When you start a new outline level, you must include at least two bullet points at that level. Consequently, bullet point 4.1 must also be followed by bullet point 4.2. In addition, you should pay attention to balance within your work. If one chapter is heavily subdivided and the following chapter is without any outline, the work may appear inconsistent.

The individual outline levels are to be numbered with arabic numerals. The numbering is done according to the rank of the outline level. It must be ensured that the last digit of the numbering ends without a period character. Each bullet point of the table of contents is also assigned a page number, which indicates on which page the corresponding section in the text part begins. In the table of contents, the numbering and the heading are to be left-justified, whereas the page number is to be right-justified.

Since the outline of the paper sets the thematic framework of your paper, the discussion of the outline with your supervisor (see the explanations in chapter 2.4) takes on a central importance. It ensures that you do not go down the wrong thematic path.

4.2.3 List of Figures

In the list of figures all figures of your Master thesis are listed. Only the numbering, title and page number of the individual figures should be included in the list of figures. As with the table of contents, the numbering and title should be left-justified and the page number right-justified. The source information does not belong in the list of figures. It is placed below the title of the figure in the text part (see the explanations in chapter 4.1). As an example, the list of figures on page IV of this guide can be used.

4.2.4 List of Tables

The last mentioned applies to the same extent to the list of tables of your Master thesis. In this list, all tables that are included in your Master thesis are listed. However, only the numbering, title and page number of the individual tables are included, whereby the numbering and title are to be left-justified and the page number right-justified. As an example, the table list on page IV of this guide can be used.

4.2.5 List of Abbreviations

If you use abbreviations in your thesis, they have to be listed in full in the list of abbreviations in alphabetical order. Common abbreviations, such as approx., etc., e.g. and or should not be included in the list. Despite a list of abbreviations, abbreviations should be explained the first time they are used in the text section. For this purpose, the term on which the abbreviation is based should first be written out in full, and then the abbreviation should be placed in brackets behind it. Abbreviations that are invented for the sake of convenience have no place in Master theses.

Not only with abbreviations, but also with all other terms, you should make sure that they are used consistently throughout the text. This often does not happen, especially when it comes to compound terms that are written once with and once without a hyphen.

Both the introduction of an abbreviation in the main text and a corresponding list of abbreviations are shown below as examples.

EXAMPLE: ABBREVIATIONS IN MAIN TEXT AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

[...] The antitrust law is governed by the German Act against Restraints of Competition (GWB). Alongside the Act against Unfair Competition (UWG), it is the second central main of competition law. [...]

List of Abbreviations

....

GWB Act against Restraints of Competition(german: Gesetz gegen Wettbewerbsbeschränkungen)

UWG Act against Unfair Competition (german: Gesetz gegen den unlauteren Wettbewerb)

....

As mentioned above, you only need a list of abbreviations if you also use abbreviations in your Master thesis.

4.2.6 Text Part

This guide cannot replace a manual for academic writing. Nevertheless, this section will discuss some conventions commonly used in practice as well as typical sources of error.

The overriding principle when writing a Master thesis is that you present your topic clearly and understandably in correct **English written language**. Correct written language includes, among other things, correct spelling, correct punctuation, correct sentence structure, and the avoidance of colloquial or dialectical expressions as far as possible. Even if you think your thesis is perfectly written and error-free, it never hurts to have fellow students, relatives, or friends proofread your thesis before submitting it.

In scientific papers, a rational and factual style should prevail. Often, it is a matter of finding the golden mean. On the one hand, you should avoid an exaggerated journalistic style. On the other hand, however, you should also refrain from overly complicated formulations, accumulations of foreign words or substantivized verbs. Do not follow the bad tradition that is often associated with German academic texts, which equates academicity with incomprehensibility. What unites you with journalists is the goal of presenting your topic concisely and succinctly. The difference is that, when in doubt, you choose precision over linguistic showmanship or the entertainment value of your text. The following are some points you should keep in mind when writing.

The first person singular ('I') is frowned upon in scientific papers.

EXAMPLE: AVOIDING THE FIRST PERSON SINGULAR

Not:

"I describe in this paper the theory of general equilibrium."

Instead:

"In this paper, the theory of general equilibrium is presented."

Whether one should make the thesis itself the subject of the sentence can be seen differently. On the other hand, it is also common to use the first person plural. The latter approach comes from English usage and is intended to involve the reader. The following example illustrates the two approaches.

EXAMPLE: SUBJECT VARIANTS

1st variant: Master Thesis as subject

"This thesis deals with the theory of general equilibrium."

2nd variant: first person plural as subject

"We present in this paper the theory of general equilibrium."

Technical Terms must be clearly defined and then consistently used in the same way throughout your thesis. In this context, please forget your teachers' advice that you can avoid word repetition by using synonyms.

Some possibilities of modern word processing systems should be used rather cautiously in your work. In addition to bulleted lists and indents (which can, however, serve well on slides for your presentation), these also include various gimmicks for text highlighting, such as using colors, bold, italicized or underlined text passages, or the use of many changes of typeface.

EXAMPLE:

We refrain from demonstrating *all possibilities* **as hopefully it will also become clear in this way** that excessive use **does not make the text more readable.**

When you use these stylistic devices, you should always have a clear function that is consistently followed throughout the text.

In order to clarify which symbolism is suitable for the mathematical concepts used in the Master thesis, it is often necessary to deal with these mathematical concepts in terms of content. However, this shall be avoided here as far as possible. Nevertheless, some significant hints for dealing with formulas shall be given at this point.

If you use **formulas**, they should always be embedded in the explanatory text. A formula should not stand alone, but should be explained in more detail in the main text. Detailed derivations of mathematical formulas or proofs should be given in the appendix and referred to at the appropriate place.

Formulas and equations are usually separated from the rest of the text with double line spacing. If you want to refer to a formula or equation in the following, you should number it. Formulas or equations that are no longer cited below do not require numbering.

EXAMPLES:

The consumer's preferences are represented by the Cobb-Douglas utility function

$$U(x_1, x_2) = x_1^\alpha x_2^\beta \tag{1}$$

is shown, where for parameters $\alpha, \beta > 0$ applies.

Your mathematical notation must be used consistently throughout your formulas. Of course, it is to be explained clearly in each case where you use it for the first time. Consequently, the procedure is analogous to the introduction of abbreviations. However, the mathematical notation is not part of the list of abbreviations.

Furthermore, it is necessary that you make clear the relation of the notation you have chosen to that used in the literature, both where you adopt the notation and where, in order to achieve consistency, you vary the notation used in the literature. While you can essentially specify the notation as you prefer, you should nevertheless accommodate the readers of your thesis as much as possible by following traditions that have evolved in the mathematical and economic literature. For example, prices are usually denoted by p .

4.2.7 Appendix

In the appendix, you should place the components of a scientific paper which, because of their large size, would exceed the text part of the paper and are dispensable but helpful for the understanding of your explanations. Please note that text passages, models, calculations, etc., which are necessary for understanding, have no place in the appendix, but belong in the main part of your thesis. For example, calculations whose results are used in the main part can be presented in detail in the appendix.

If an appendix contains several documents, they are numbered consecutively (Appendix 1, Appendix 2, ...). Longer appendices of different types (e.g. a questionnaire appendix, a statistics appendix, etc.) are numbered separately (e.g. Appendix 2.1 (Questionnaire 1), Appendix 2.2 (Questionnaire 2), ..., Appendix 3.1 (Proof of Theorem 1), Appendix 3.2 (Proof of Theorem 2), ...).

The following list gives a selection of papers to be included in an appendix.

- larger image files
- longer transcripts
- complete questionnaires
- extensive evaluations (statistics, econometrics, etc.)
- complex schematic overviews
- test records
- simulation protocols
- program printouts
- detailed presentations of technical realizations
- mathematical proofs and derivations

If your thesis contains an appendix, it must be referred to at a relevant place in the main part. For example, in the text part, where only excerpts of detailed elaborations can be seen, reference to the appendix can be made as follows: “[...] (see Appendix 5 for details).“

4.2.8 List of References

In the list of references, all literature mentioned in the thesis is listed in alphabetical order. Literature that is not referred to in your thesis has no place there. Please make sure that the literature is listed consistently.

The list of references should always be arranged alphabetically according to the author’s surname or according to the published institution (e.g. Federal Cartel Office). Publications by the same author are listed according to the year of publication. If several sources of an author from one year are included in the list of references, they are sorted in ascending order by the title of the publication and a lowercase letter beginning with the letter “a” is added to the year. This makes it possible to clearly identify the sources at any time. For this very purpose, the year is also used for the source references in the text. Usually, no titles or academic degrees are added to the author’s name. Each source citation is terminated with a period.

Please note that a classification of the bibliography by publication type (e.g. monography, journal article, internet source) is not made. However, the way the source reference is presented varies with the publication type. Below you will find a template for each common publication type as well as an example of this formatting. The following templates are to be used:

(a) *Monography*

surname, first name (year of publication): title, edition, publisher, place of publication [if there are more than three places, it is sufficient to indicate only the first one with the addition i.a.(inter alia)].

EXAMPLE:

Tirole, Jean (1988): The Theory of Industrial Organization, 1. Edition, MIT Press, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(b) *Compilations and Commemorative Publications*

surname, first name (year of publication): title of the contribution, in: surname, first name (ed.) [if there are more than three, it is sufficient to indicate only the first with an i.a.]: title of the collective paper, volume, edition, publisher, places of publication, first and last page numbers.

EXAMPLE:

Schwalbe, Ulrich (2014): Leniency Programmes and the Structure of Cartels - Remarks from an Economic Perspective, in: Schweitzer, Heike, Hüschelrath, Kai: Public and

Private Enforcement of Competition Law in Europe: Legal and Economic Perspectives, ZEW Economic Studies. Mannheim, pp. 39-51

(c) *Journal Articles/ Newspaper Articles*

surname, first name (year of publication): title of the article, in: title of the journal, year or volume number, issue number, first and last number of pages.

EXAMPLE:

O'Hara, Maureen and Oldfield, George S. (1986): The Microeconomics of Market Making, in: Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis, Volume 21, Issue 4, pp. 361 - 376

(d) *Discussion Papers / Working Papers*

surname, first name (year of publication): title, name and number of the series.

EXAMPLE 1:

Bettendorf, Timo and Miguel A. León-Ledesma (2015): German wage moderation and European imbalances: feeding the global VAR with theory, Deutsche Bundesbank Discussion Paper No. 15.

EXAMPLE 2:

Filistrucchi, Lapo, Tobias J. Klein and Thomas Michielsen (2011), "Merger Simulation in a Two-Sided Market: The Case of the Dutch Daily Newspapers", NET Institute Working Paper No. 10-15.

(e) *Online Sources*

surname or name of the organization (retrieval date), URL of the domain

EXAMPLE:

Department of Economics: Information and Uncertainty (16.03.2016), <https://mikro.uni-hohenheim.de/>.

Assistance in creating a bibliography can be provided by digital literature management programs such as Citavi, JabRef Mendelev or RefWorks.⁶ However, learning these programs takes some time. KIM offers introductory courses for certain literature management programs at regular intervals.

⁶ Citavi is free for students of the University of Hohenheim, see <https://kim.uni-hohenheim.de/en/citavi>. Mendeley (<https://www.mendeley.com/>) and JabRef (<http://www.jabref.org/>) are freeware

4.2.9 Declaration of Independence

Since you are writing your Master thesis on your own responsibility and not in an examination situation, you must submit a declaration of independence. In this declaration, you affirm that you have adhered to the rules of good scientific practice, that you have written the Master thesis independently, that you have not used any sources or aids other than those indicated, and that you have marked the passages taken over verbatim or in terms of content as such. In addition, you affirm that the submitted electronic version of the Master thesis corresponds to the printed version in content and wording without exception and that you agree to this electronic version being checked for plagiarism using plagiarism software. This declaration of independence belongs on the last page of your Master thesis and must be signed by hand. Master theses without this declaration will not be accepted. In the appendix of this guide you will find the declaration of independence of the examination office of the University of Hohenheim.⁷

4.2.10 Declaration on the use of generative AI

The University Senate has recommended that generative AI systems be permitted as aids in unsupervised written examinations, e.g., in term papers, seminar papers, and theses. If you use generative AI in your thesis, you must indicate in a separate declaration which system you used for which step of the work and how. You will find a template (.docx) for this declaration on the chair's homepage. Help with filling out the form and further information can be found on the Examination Office website at <https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/en/use-of-generative-ai-in-exams>.

4.3 Quoting and References

One of the essential formal aspects of a Master thesis is correct citation of literature sources in the main text. You can include your literature sources in your Master thesis in different ways. In the first section of this subchapter, you will be introduced to the possible citation methods.

The requirement of scientific honesty requires that you disclose all sources you use in your Master thesis, no matter if journal articles, working papers, textbooks, websites, etc. in the main text as well as in the bibliography. While sources must be fully cited in the bibliography (see the explanations in chapter 4.2.8), they are only mentioned in short form in the main text. You will find out which scheme this short citation method follows in the second section of this subchapter.

Citation of sources can be done in different ways. Both citation according to the Harvard method and citation in footnotes are permitted. These two citation methods are discussed in the last two sections of this subchapter. Here, it is important to note that you must consistently adhere to the citation method you choose. This means that you must not switch between these two citation styles under any circumstances. Regardless of the chosen method of citing the sources, you must always create a bibliography as explained in chapter 4.2.8.

⁷ The declaration of independence of the examination office of the University of Hohenheim can also be found here: <https://www.uni-hohenheim.de/en/intranet-students/organizing-your-studies/examination/exam-forms>.

4.3.1 Citation of Literature Sources

A major challenge in writing your Master thesis is that you need to summarize findings from different literature sources in a structured way and relate them to each other.

Often there is a lack of clarity among students in estimating how independent the formulations should or may be. Sometimes the view that the original source must still be recognizable in the wording leads to texts that are too reminiscent of the respective source in terms of content and, what is even worse, to sentence constructs that are neither fluently readable nor resemble the German language. When writing scientific texts, it is important to detach oneself linguistically somewhat from the original source. Unless it is explicitly a direct quote, the original source should not simply be copied or translated verbatim. On the other hand, it should also not be rephrased in a complicated and awkward way. Since scientific work requires transparency and honesty from the author, it is also necessary to inform the reader which findings come from whom, even in the case of independent formulations. Citing these findings in your paper can be done in a variety of ways:

- *Direct Quote*

In a direct quote, a section or sentence is copied verbatim. You must adopt the grammar, spelling, and punctuation used in it. Direct quotations are indicated at the beginning and at the end by quotation marks. Omissions are indicated by three dots in square brackets [...]. Additions made by the author within the quotation are placed in round brackets (...). The source is cited after the direct quotation. A foreign language source is cited in the original language. If the source is not English, then you should provide a translation of the direct quote. Literal quotations are often used when a question is to be motivated or an argument is to be supported. However, they should appear only a few times in your paper.

- *Secondary Quote*

As a general rule, you should always try to locate the primary source. Secondary citations may only be used if access to the primary source is not possible. Secondary citations must be identified by the reference “cite to”.

- *Indirect Quote*

Indirect quotations are understood to be reproductions of the meaning or the use of other people's thoughts. Indirect quotations must be clearly marked. The source can be indicated in footnotes or according to the Harvard citation method. These two methods are explained in later sections. Please note that you must choose one of these methods.

4.3.2 References in Short Citation

An important principle of scientific writing is that when you present facts and findings that you did not discover through your own research, you must cite the sources immediately. It must be made clear to the reader which findings you have taken from the technical literature and which new findings have been obtained as a result of your research efforts. General knowledge that you find in dictionaries or relevant technical terms, however, do not need to be supported by a

reference. Under no circumstances, however, may you pass off the findings of others as your own. Plagiarism is spiritual theft. If there is such a presumption of other people's spiritual property, the Master thesis will be consistently graded with a 5.0. Please note that every Master thesis is checked for plagiarism with the help of plagiarism software!

In the continuous text, the sources are given only in abbreviated form, in the so-called short citation method. This citation method consists of the simple scheme: surname (year of publication). If the comments refer to a specific page (or pages) of the source, the corresponding page number must be added.

In the case of more than one author, the order established by the authors should be followed. In the case of three or more authors, the explicit mention of the names of all but the first author in alphabetical order may be omitted from the references in the main text and replaced by "et al." (et alii, Latin for "and others").

If an author or editor has published several papers in one year, this must be indicated uniformly. It is recommended to mark the year of publication in parentheses in the footnotes and in the bibliography with the Latin letters a,b,c,... for example Schwalbe (2015a) and Schwalbe (2015b). If there is no author or editor, one either names the organization that published the work (e.g., Bundeskartellamt) or uses the designation "n.p." in place of the surname (no publisher).

The next two sections discuss two methods for citing sources in the main of the text. The source references can be placed either in footnotes or in the continuous text (so-called Havard method).

4.3.3 References in Footnotes

With this citation method, the sources are indicated in the footnotes. The footnotes are to be numbered in order throughout the Master thesis. In order to keep the footnote short, the sources are only mentioned in short citation. As described above, this consists of the scheme: name (year of publication, page number). The full citation of sources is only given in the bibliography. Source references in footnotes are to be ended with a period, just like the source references in the bibliography.

In the continuous text, a superscript number refers to the corresponding footnote. If the footnote refers to only one word or a group of words, this superscript number is placed directly after the last reference word and thus before any following punctuation mark (see EXAMPLE 1). If the footnote refers to a part of a sentence or a whole sentence enclosed by punctuation marks, the superscript always comes after the last punctuation mark (see EXAMPLE 2).

EXAMPLE 1: REFERENCE IN FOOTNOTE

More generally, the rate of five star reviews is 31% on TripAdvisor and 44% on Expedia⁴ compared to 75% on Airbnb.

Footnote:

⁴ Mayzlin, D., et al. (2014, p. 2421-2455)

EXAMPLE 2: REFERENCE IN FOOTNOTE

Firms that offer differentiated products gain some degree of market power because their products are not viewed as perfect substitutes by consumers.¹²

Footnote:

¹² Bester (2000, p.108).

EXAMPLE 3: REFERENCES IN FOOTNOTE FOR SEVERAL WORKS WITHIN ONE YEAR

³ Maurer (2008a, p. 101).

⁴ Maurer (2008b, p. 7).

4.3.4 References using the Harvard method

In the Harvard citation style, the source is indicated either in parentheses at the end of a quotation (see EXAMPLE 1) or with the citation of the source in the sentence (see EXAMPLE 2). As in the case of citation in footnotes, the short citation method should be used here: name (year of publication), page number. The complete citation of the source is only done in the bibliography.

EXAMPLE 1: REFERENCE AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE

Firms that offer differentiated products gain some degree of market power because their products are not viewed as perfect substitutes by consumers (Bester 2000, p.108).

EXAMPLE 2: REFERENCE WITHIN THE SENTENCE

For example, Bester (2000, p. 108) points out that companies offering differentiated products gain a certain degree of market power because their products are not seen as perfect substitutes by consumers.

5 Submission of the Master Thesis

You must submit your thesis to the Examination Office by the deadline. The electronic version of the thesis (PDF) must be sent to pruefungsamt@uni-hohenheim.de by 2:00 p.m. on the submission date at the latest. If you are unable to submit your thesis on time due to technical problems or late delivery, you will usually be held responsible for missing the deadline. This means that the thesis will then be graded with a 5.0.

If your supervisor has requested a printed version (glue binding, no spiral binding), this must be submitted or sent by 11:59 p.m. on the same day that the digital version was sent by email. This also applies if the digital thesis was submitted before the official end of processing.

After the grading of your Master thesis, your supervisor will offer you a feedback meeting. In this personal meeting, you will learn the background for the grading of your Master thesis. Your

supervisor will discuss the strengths as well as the weaknesses of your thesis.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Title Page of the Master Thesis

UNIVERSITY OF HOHENHEIM

FACULTY OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS

CHAIR OF MICROECONOMICS AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

PROF. DR. ULRICH SCHWALBE



– Master Thesis Title –

Name:	First name and surname
Matriculation Number:	XXXXXX
Address:	Address line 1 Address line 2
Phone number:	XXXXXX
E-mail address:	Author's e-mail address
Semester:	X th semester
Supervisor:	Name of supervisor
Date of submission:	dd.mm.yyyy

Appendix 2: Declaration of Independence

Declaration

I,

Surname, First name

Matriculation number

declare that I have followed the Principles of Good Scientific Practice while writing the present

- ☐ Bachelor's Thesis, ☐ Master's Thesis,
☐ Seminar Paper.

I have written the paper/thesis independently and have used no other sources or aids than those given and have marked the passages taken from other works word-for-word or paraphrased.

Assessor

Topic of the paper/thesis

Semester

I furthermore declare that I submitted the thesis as an unencrypted electronic text document. I give my consent to this electronic version being checked for plagiarism with analytical software.

Furthermore, I declare that I understood that the thesis submitted first to the examination office is the final version. I acknowledge that I will not be able to submit corrections later.

Place, Date, Signature

List of References

- Balzert, H., Schröder, M. & Schaefer, C. (2011), *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Ethik, Inhalt & Form wiss. Arbeiten, Handwerkszeug, Quellen, Projektmanagement, Präsentation*, 2. Auflage, W3L-Verlag, Herdecke, Witten.
- Heesen, B. (2014), *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Methodenwissen für das Bachelor-, Master- und Promotionsstudium*, 3. Auflage, Springer Gabler, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Oehrich, M. (2015), *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten und Schreiben: Schritt für Schritt zur Bachelor- und Master-Thesis in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften*, Springer Gabler, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Theisen, M. R. (2013), *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: erfolgreich bei Bachelor- und Masterarbeit*, 16. Auflage, Vahlen, München.
- Voss, R. (2015), *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten*, 4. Auflage, UTB GmbH, Stuttgart.

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