

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
- **Tables and lists with page numbers**
 - Table of contents (outline)
 - List of figures/tables/abbreviations (if applicable)
- **Introduction**
 - Explanation of the topic (central question, relevance/significance of the topic, delimitation, i.e. what will be covered and what will not)
 - Descriptive section (if not a separate chapter, see next section)
 - Structure of the paper/thesis
- **Descriptives** (if applicable)
Development of relevant indicators/variables based on data, tables, graphs
- **Theory**
 - Introduction of economic models and/or concepts (transmission channels)
 - Application to research question
- **Empirical evidence**
 - Results of other studies (including their topics/research questions and methodology), comparison of similarities and differences
 - Own empirical study: approach, methodology, data set, results, evaluation, critical assessment, comparison of similarities and differences with previous literature
- **Discussion of results/findings:**
Putting results/findings into perspective (of the previous literature), relevance for practical application, context (either in a separate section or integrated into conclusions)
- **Conclusions**
- **List of references**
- **List of prompts used in AI tools** (ChatGPT, etc.)
- **Appendices** (if applicable)

Formalities

Number of pages, language, and writing time

(see also examination regulations and module descriptions!)

- Seminar paper: usually 11-13 pages (bachelor), 13-15 pages (master) (see requirements in each seminar's introductory session)
- Bachelor's thesis (M&E): ≤ 25 pages, 9 weeks, German or English
- Bachelor's thesis (two subjects): < 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), German or English

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

Font size 12pt, bold

Footnotes

Font size 10pt, single spacing

Margins

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

List of references

Font size 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* (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, 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), *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* (in italics), URL (accessed: date of last retrieval).

Article from electronic journals

Similar to regular journal articles and additionally the URL (accessed: date of last retrieval).

Encyclopedia article

Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). Title of article (optional: in single quotation marks), in: last name, first name of editors (in parentheses behind: ed./eds.), *title of encyclopedia* (in italics), volume, place of publication. Column x-y (column numbers).

Dissertation

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

Further information

Citation style

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

- *Harvard citation style* (most common in academia): The surname and year (in parentheses) are cited in the main text (embedded or in-text citation). Example: “Smith (2025) argues ...”. For direct quotations or close paraphrases, please also indicate the page number. Example: Smith (2025, p. 12). The complete reference can then be found in the bibliography. Footnotes at the bottom of the page are only used for 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”). If there are more than three authors, state the first name and then write “*et al.*” (but only in the main text).

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.

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., Meyer 2003a, Meyer 2003b).

¹ Last name, first name of author(s) (year of publication). *Title* (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, Alfred (2013). *Anfertigung wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten. Ein prozessorientierter Leitfaden zur Erstellung von Bachelor-, Master- und Diplomarbeiten in 8 Lerneinheiten*, 5th edition, Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.
- Disterer, Georg (2019). *Studienarbeiten schreiben. Seminar-, Bachelor-, Master- und Diplomarbeiten in den Wirtschaftswissenschaften*, 8th edition, Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Gabler.
- Neugeboren, Robert (2005). *The Student's Guide to Writing Economics*, New York: Routledge Online. <https://namanjain.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/robert-h.-neugeboren-the-students-guide-to-writing-economics-routledge-2005.pdf>.
- Thomson, William (2011). *A Guide for the Young Economist*, 2nd edition, Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hoffmann, Angelika (2010). *Scientific Writing and Communication. Papers, Proposals, and Presentations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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>