



WIRTSCHAFT  
**HOCHSCHULE MAINZ**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
APPLIED SCIENCES

# GUIDE

TO WRITING TERM PAPERS, PRAC-  
TICAL SEMESTER PAPERS, BACHE-  
LOR'S AND MASTER'S THESES

SEPTEMBER 2023

# PREFACE

*Every researcher at Mainz University of Applied Sciences must adhere to the principles of good scientific practice throughout their work. This includes working in accordance with current professional standards, maintaining strict honesty with respect to one's own contributions and the contributions of others, consistently challenging all results, and allowing and encouraging critical discourse in the scientific community.*

*§ Section 1 of the Principles for Ensuring Good Scientific Practices dated 10/07/2021*

This guide intends to provide you as students with assistance in writing academic papers and theses in business studies (including term papers, papers on practical semester projects, bachelor's and master's theses)<sup>1</sup>. It provides an overview of the most important principles to be observed when writing an academic paper, as well as specific information on the formal design of your paper.

A standard format has been established for the form of such papers. However, the specifications of individual instructors may differ in detail depending on their subject. This also applies to the use of gender-appropriate language. It is essential that you check the format requirements in advance with the person who will be evaluating your paper, and that you follow the guidelines of the Exam Management Office applicable to you. If they do not provide any other specifications, the guidelines here shall be deemed binding.

You can find more detailed literature on working scientifically in the bibliography of this guide. Your advisor can also provide additional specific literature recommendations for scientific work in their discipline. In addition, you can use dissertations or textbooks as templates for the format of your academic paper.

A large selection of literature on working scientifically is available in the Mainz University of Applied Sciences library. The library team offers events, courses, and learning materials for literature and information research as part of its "Teaching Library" and is available to advise you on individual questions.

Although formal design cannot replace content, it is still an important aspect in the evaluation of an academic paper. With this in mind, we hope this guide will provide you with helpful guidance.

We wish you great success in writing your paper!

The Dean's Office,  
the Examination Board of the Consecutive Bachelor's and Master's Degree Programs, and  
the Research and Doctoral Committee of the School of Business <sup>2</sup>

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1 Separate guidelines apply to papers in the field of law (see download section of the School of Business).

2 Please feel free to send suggestions for updating and improving this guide to:  
forschung.wirtschaft@hs-mainz.de

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMJ	Academy of Management Journal
APA	American Psychological Association
APO	General Examination Regulations
BMW	Bayerische Motoren Werke AG
BWL	Business Administration
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

# 1 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

## 1.1 WORKING SCIENTIFICALLY

*“Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten ist planvoll geordnetes Vorgehen mit dem Ziel, neue Erkenntnisse und neues Wissen zu generieren und Praxisprobleme zu lösen”*  
*[Scientific work is a planned, orderly process with the goal of generating new findings and new knowledge and solving practical problems]*  
*(Balzert et al., 2017, p. 7)*

According to the General Examination Regulations (APO) of the School of Business at Mainz University of Applied Sciences, students should be able to independently apply scientific methods to solve problems in their discipline by the end of their studies. This skill is practiced during the course of their studies (in term papers, practical semester papers, and project reports, for example) and proven at the end of their studies with a final paper (bachelor's or master's thesis) (APO, 2021, p. 17, p. 21).

Academic papers build on existing knowledge and must make an independent and new contribution to this knowledge. Therefore, all **sources** included in the paper must be **critically examined in terms of quality** and rendered verifiable by the use of **correct citation**. In addition, the **student's own distinct intellectual contribution** must be evident, for example by incorporating existing knowledge into new settings, applying it to new contexts, or augmenting it with new information through empirical data collection (cf. Goldenstein et al., 2018, pp. 4-6).

The language and argumentation style of academic papers are **factual, objective, and precise**. The topic and the sources used must be presented from a critical and reflective distance. Unfounded judgments, subjective opinions, and colloquial language are to be avoided. A systematic structure and careful adherence to the rules of spelling, punctuation, and citation are also part of academic writing (cf. Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2022a).

## 1.2 GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES

The **principles for ensuring good scientific practice at Mainz University of Applied Sciences** are binding for all researchers at Mainz University of Applied Sciences. They aim to ensure the trustworthiness of scientific work and to avoid any scientific misconduct. The principles of good scientific practices include a meticulous working method in accordance with scientific consensus, strict honesty and transparency in the research process, and the consistent verifiability of all sources used. According to the definition of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 2019a, b), **scientific misconduct** is committed by anyone who, for example,

- makes misrepresentations (for example, by fabricating or falsifying data and/or research findings),
- claims others' research achievements as their own without justification (such as plagiarism, idea theft), or
- interferes with others' research (for example, deleting data without authorization).

The principles of good scientific work must also be observed in student research papers and theses at Mainz University of Applied Sciences. **Scientific misconduct (such as plagiarism)** related to papers and theses will result in a **grade of “unsatisfactory.”**

## 2 FORMAL DESIGN AND SUBMISSION

### 2.1 BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3 provide an overview of the basic requirements of various papers (cf. Koeder, 2013).

**Table 1**

*Requirements for the Bachelor’s and Master’s Thesis based on the General Examination Regulations (APO)*

	<b>Bachelor’s thesis</b>	<b>Master’s thesis</b>
<i>Intention</i>	<p>“The bachelor’s thesis is an assessment. It is intended to show that students are able to work independently on a subject-related problem within a given period of time by applying scientific methods.” (§ 22 Section 1 APO)</p> <p>Bachelor graduates should be able to derive and define research questions, explain and justify operationalization of research, apply research methods, and present and explain research results (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2017, p. 6).</p>	<p>“The master’s thesis is an assessment. It is intended to show that students are able to work independently on a subject-related problem within a given period of time by applying scientific methods.” (§ 26 Section 1 APO).</p> <p>Master’s graduates should be able to design research questions, select and justify operationalizations and research methods, and explain and critically reflect on research results (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2017, p. 8).</p>
<i>Length</i>	10,000 words as a point of reference	12,000 words as a point of reference
<i>Registration</i>	To register for their bachelor’s thesis, the student must submit a research proposal (length: approx. 2-3 pages).	The submission of a research proposal is not obligatory in registering for a master’s thesis, but it is strongly recommended—in coordination with your advisor (length: approx. 6-8 pages). The topic must be agreed on with your advisor well in advance. You should contact your advisor at least four weeks before registering for your master’s thesis to agree on a topic.



	<b>Bachelor's thesis</b>	<b>Master's thesis</b>
<i>Timeframe for writing the thesis</i>	8 weeks	5 months
	Your advisor is to define the topic of your bachelor's or master's thesis in consultation with you in such a way that it can be completed within the specified time. The effective workload, including the written paper, generally corresponds to the given time frame. Any necessary preparation work (such as reading up on the task and getting to know internal company processes) is usually done before you register for your thesis.	

**Table 2**

*Requirements for the Practical Semester Paper*

	<b>Practical semester paper</b>
<i>Length</i>	Usually 20 pages, including a maximum of 5 pages of an activity report and approximately 15 pages of scientific elaboration of a topic from the practical module, taking the relevant literature into account.
<i>Coordination of the topic</i>	The topic is to be discussed and arranged with your advisor at an early stage.

**Table 3**

*Term Paper Requirements*

	<b>Term paper</b>
<i>Length</i>	The length of a term paper is to be agreed on with your advisor/instructor (usually approximately 15 – 20 pages).

## 2.2 ABSTRACT/RESEARCH PLAN

The abstract or research plan outlines the content and conceptual planning of your bachelor's or master's thesis. It should outline (in prose) the objective of the investigation, and the approach to be taken. Additional components of the abstract are a preliminary yet informative outline, a time and work schedule, and a bibliography of the sources evaluated. The abstract should already have the cover sheet required for an academic paper at Mainz University of Applied Sciences (see Appendix) with "Abstract" added. The declaration on academic work required at Mainz University of Applied Sciences (see section 3.3) must also be included in the abstract. To make your subsequent work easier, it is advisable to use a document template for the abstract that fulfills all of the requirements of this guide and to adapt the list of references to the formatting requirements for the bibliography. The length of the abstract as well as any deviating specifications regarding the content must be agreed on with your advisor.

## 2.3 STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER/THESIS

Your bachelor's or master's thesis, term paper or practical semester paper is comprised of the following components (the order is binding):

**Table 4**

*Structural Organization of Papers and Theses*

Component	Required	Page numbers	Remarks
<i>Restriction Notice</i>	No	No	See guidelines for sample text
<i>Title Page</i>	Yes	No	See guidelines for sample text
<i>Declaration</i>	Yes	No	See guidelines for sample text
<i>Preface/Foreword/Dedication and Acknowledgments</i>	No	No	Not customary for theses
<i>Management Summary</i>	Yes (at least one of the two, only required for theses)	No	Maximum one page (500 words)
<i>Abstract</i>		No	Maximum half a page (250 words)
<i>Table of Contents</i>	Yes	Roman	
<i>List of Figures</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Required if figures are used
<i>List of Tables</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Required if tables are used

Component	Required	Page numbers	Remarks
<i>List of Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Required if abbreviations and/or acronyms are used
<i>List of Symbols</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Required if symbols are used
<i>List of Formulas</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Required if formulas are used
<i>Body</i>	Yes	Arabic	Starting with page number 1
<i>Word Count</i>	Yes		Add under body section  Texts in figures, tables, and citations are not included in the word count
<i>Bibliography</i>	Yes	Roman, consecutive	
<i>List of Sources and Case Law</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Legal sources may also be integrated into the bibliography
<i>List of Appendices</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	Only if there is an appendix
<i>Appendix</i>	No	Roman, consecutive	

All indexes and the appendix are numbered (consecutively) in Roman numerals; the body is numbered (consecutively) in Arabic numerals (starting with 1 on the first page of the body). You can check with your advisor to see whether it is possible to omit alternating between Roman and Arabic numbering.

## 2.4 FORMAT TEMPLATE, FONT STYLE, AND MARGINS

The layout of your paper must be discussed in advance with your advisor. You can find a suggested format template for a thesis (in Word) on the Mainz University of Applied Sciences intranet under Corporate Design. A slide master for PowerPoint presentations and files with the university's logo are also available there. Use a word processing program to write your term paper, practical semester paper, bachelor's thesis, or master's thesis. Whenever possible, use word processing features to automatically format indexes, references, and citations. However, always check that the settings are correct and that the results match the format specifications.

- **Font:** easy to read and not too small (e.g., Arial 10 pt or Calibri 11 pt), consistent throughout

the document, only use italics or boldface sparingly for emphasis

- **Page margins:** top and bottom 2 cm each, right and left 1.5 cm each (or if submitted in printed form: left 4.5 cm).
- **Line spacing:** 1.5 lines, between two paragraphs: 2 lines, other spacing at the author's discretion (important: consistent use throughout the document)
- **Paragraph formatting:** Justified text (with hyphenation enabled to avoid gaps in the text), no indentation at the beginning of a paragraph
- **Page numbers:** in the header or footer, in the center or on the right side
- **Footnotes:** at the end of the page, justified with hanging indent

## 2.5 FORM AND SUBMISSION

It is essential that you inform yourself in good time at the Exam Management Office about the currently applicable regulations for handing in your paper. Answers to frequent questions about submission can be found in the Exam Management FAQs under:

<https://www.hs-mainz.de/en/academics/services/school-of-business/exam-management/exams/faqs-from-the-exam-management/>

The following applies to submissions in general:

- **Theses (bachelor's and master's theses)** are to be submitted by email to the Exam Management Office (pruefungen.wirtschaft@hs-mainz.de) as a PDF file, with your advisor in CC.
- **Practical semester papers** are to be submitted by email to your advisor/instructor as a PDF file, with the Exam Management Office in CC (pruefungen.wirtschaft@hs-mainz.de).
- **Term papers** are to be submitted directly to your instructor (e.g., as a PDF file by email or by uploading it on OpenOlat)–check with your instructor for specific requirements!

For large file sizes or extensive additional materials (e.g., data sets, attachments), you can request an **upload link for the university cloud, Seafile**, from the Exam Management Office for digital submission. Please contact the Exam Management Office, with sufficient advance notice. You will then receive a confirmation of submission by email after the Exam Management Office has checked that the deadline has been met.

It may also be possible to **submit a printed** version–please consult the Exam Management Office and your advisor/instructor to see if this is possible. In this case, the paper is to be submitted in duplicate, printed in DIN A4 format, bound and furnished with a hard cover (for bachelor's and master's theses), or in a thin folder/binder (for term papers and practical semester papers). The submission in printed form must also be made by the deadline and be verifiable–at the Office of Exam Management (during business hours) or, alternatively, at the reception desk. Submission to a postal delivery service by the deadline is sufficient to meet the deadline. Direct submission to your advisor is not permitted.

## 3 COMPONENTS OF THE PAPER/THESIS IN DETAIL

### 3.1 RESTRICTION NOTICE

If your paper contains data that should not be made accessible to the public (e.g., due to confidential company data), you must include a restriction notice. This notice is placed on the first page (even before the title page) and has no page number. Use the template in Figure 1 for the restriction notice. Any deadline must be coordinated with the collaborating company/institution.

#### Figure 1

##### *Restriction Notice Sample Text*

This thesis bearing the title \_\_\_\_\_ (title) contains internal and confidential data of the company/institution \_\_\_\_\_ (name of company/institution). This thesis may only be made accessible to the reviewers (in particular the first and second reviewers), the members of the examination bodies (including assessors & plagiarism checkers), and those entrusted with any legal redress proceedings.

Furthermore, publication and duplication of the thesis, including excerpts thereof, is not permitted. With the exception of the regulations governing the examination procedure and the examination, any inspection of the paper by third parties requires the express permission of the author and the above-mentioned company/the above-mentioned institution.

This confidentiality obligation shall apply until the expiry of the deadline \_\_\_\_\_ (date of expiry of deadline).

### 3.2 TITLE PAGE

The title page of the paper must contain the following information:

- The title of the paper
- The term bachelor's thesis, master's thesis, practical semester paper, or term paper
- The degree program, e.g., Business Administration with degree, e.g., B.Sc.
- Mainz University of Applied Sciences
- The school (School of Business)
- Presented by: First and last name, Address, Student ID No.
- Presented to: (Academic degree) first and last name of your advisor
- Submitted on: Date of submission

The title page does not have a page number. For an example of title page layout, see the Appendix.

### 3.3 DECLARATION

This declaration (Figure 2) must be attached to every paper, should have the following wording, and must be signed by the student (original signature/scanned original signature in the PDF and on all copies submitted–no computer-generated or typed signatures). This page has no page number.

## Figure 2

### Declaration Sample Text

I hereby declare that I have written this bachelor's thesis on

“topic of the paper”

on my own and without any help from others. I have used only the sources and resources specified in the thesis.

I also confirm that I have not submitted nor will I submit this or any related work as an assessment for any other subject.

## 3.4 FOREWORD OR PREFACE

The body of a paper may be preceded by a preface or foreword in special cases. However, this is unusual for student research papers and term papers, as well as bachelor's and master's theses.

## 3.5 MANAGEMENT SUMMARY AND ABSTRACT

The paper is to be preceded by a brief summary. There are two possible formats for this, each aimed at different target groups. For papers with a practical orientation, a management summary is rather recommended; for research-oriented papers, an abstract or—if the paper is both scientific and practical—both. Coordinate this with your advisor.

A **management summary** summarizes the research question, the approach, and the central findings of your thesis in a practice-oriented manner and in generally understandable language. The focus is on the findings and recommended actions that result from your work for use in the practice. The length of the management summary is a maximum of one page (max. 500 words).

An **abstract** is aimed more at a specialized scientific audience. It presents the research question, methodology, concrete hypotheses where applicable, and the central findings concisely and in scientific terminology. Implications for use in the practice may also be briefly stated at the end of the abstract, but they are not the primary focus. The length of the abstract is a maximum of half a page (max. 250 words).

The management summary and abstract are always on a separate page and do not have a page number. Their word count does not count towards the total count of the paper.

## 3.6 TABLE OF CONTENTS

The table of contents reflects the outline and with it the logical structure of the work, and indicates the page numbers of the individual chapters. All chapters that have a page number (see Table 1 in Chapter 2.2 of this guide) are listed in the table of contents. The wording in the chapter heading and table of contents must match exactly; abbreviations are not permitted in headings. The heading here is “Table of Contents” and its page number is a Roman numeral.

Be sure that the outline has a logical structure—sections that are on the same outline level should be on the same level in terms of content. Sub-sections cannot stand alone (i.e., a sub-section 1.1 must be follo-

wed by a sub-section 1.2). If a section has additional subsections, these subsections are usually preceded at most by a short text paragraph as an introduction, but no content-bearing text.

Two outline levels are sufficient in most cases.

### 3.7 LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

All figures and/or tables used in the body are numbered consecutively and listed in a list of figures and/or tables.

### 3.8 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

The list of abbreviations includes all abbreviations used in the paper in alphabetical order (Goldenstein et al. 2018, p. 140). Abbreviations of institutions (e.g., UN, WTO), companies (e.g., BMW) or names of periodicals (e.g., AMJ) that are common in the subject area (e.g., BA for Business Administration) and frequently used must also be listed in the list of abbreviations. Common abbreviations which can be found in the dictionary (such as “e.g.”, “etc.”) are not listed in the list of abbreviations. As a general rule, abbreviations should be used sparingly and must be defined in the text at the point where they first appear. This also applies to abbreviations in tables and figures, as well as to abbreviations taken from cited works.

#### **Figure 3**

*Example of a List of Abbreviations*

AMJ	Academy of Management Journal (periodical)
BFH	Federal Fiscal Court
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards

### 3.9 BODY

The body contains all elaborations on your topic and is generally divided into introduction, main body, and conclusion. The main body is structured according to the content of the paper. The chapter headings of the body should be precise and informative, so that an impression of the overall logical structure is given when reading the table of contents (Goldenstein et al. 2018, p. 139). The author must ensure that the sections do not overlap in terms of content and that the sub-sections in total each fully reflect the superordinate point—overall, the main chapters of the paper should fully cover the topic (Goldenstein et al. 2018, p. 144). For empirical papers, it is advisable to structure the body in accordance with the customary structure of scientific journal articles: Introduction–Theory–Methodology–Findings–Discussion–Conclusion (Goldenstein et al., 2018, pp. 143-144).

**Table 5***Typical Elements of the Body of Theses*

<b>Introduction</b>	Currentness and relevance of the topic, naming of the problem based on the present state of knowledge (or, in case studies: the situation in the current practice), objective of the paper and, where applicable, general guiding questions, a brief overview of the approach and argumentation logic of the paper, the stating of the essential propositions of the paper, where applicable.
<b>Theory</b> (main body for theoretical-conceptual papers)	Presentation of central definitions (if not already named in the introduction), theories, and concepts. Further subdivision depending on the content. In theoretical-conceptual papers, this part constitutes the focal point of the analysis and the work on the problem. In empirical papers, the derivation and formulation of the concrete hypotheses, the research questions, takes place here.
<b>Methodology</b> (for empirical papers)	Detailed description of the methodological approach (e.g., description of study design, sample, and study context, methods of data collection and analysis).
<b>Findings</b> (for empirical work)	Report of research findings, usually structured according to the order of the hypotheses/research questions.
<b>Discussion and conclusion</b>	Summarizing interpretation of the findings, conclusions with regard to the problem defined in the beginning, recommendations for action in the practice (possibly in a separate chapter), specification of the limitations of the paper, critical reflection of the approach, outlook for future research and development needs. Final concise conclusion answering the research questions (possibly as a separate chapter).

*Note.* Adapted from Goldenstein et al. (2018, pp. 143-144, pp. 151-159).

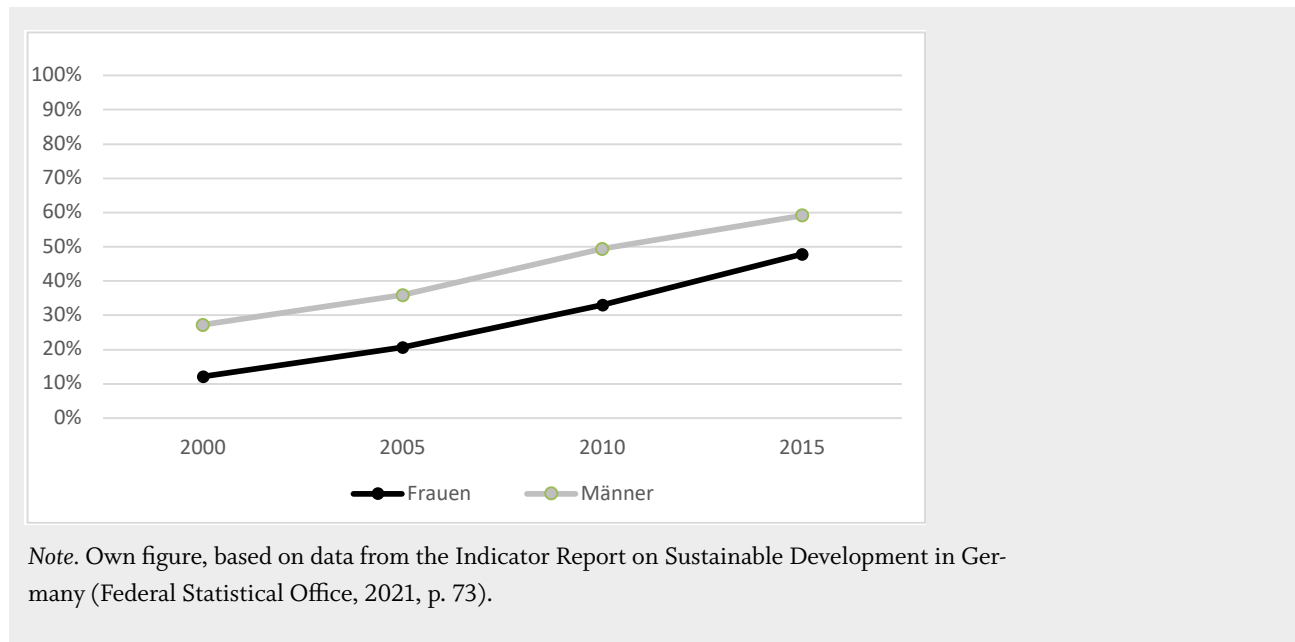
### 3.10 TABLES AND FIGURES

Whether figures or tables are presented within the body copy or in the appendix with the use of appropriate references in the copy is to be discussed with your advisor. The key statements of the tables or figures must be presented in the text. Tables and figures are numbered consecutively (Table 1, Table 2,...; Figure 1, Figure 2,...), with a note underneath indicating the source of the table or figure. For tables and figures created by the author, “own table” or “own figure” may be used as an addendum instead of a source citation. All tables and figures are to be listed in the list of tables and list of figures (Theisen, 2021, pp. 172-178).



**Figure 4**

*Development of the Employment Rate Among 60-64 year-olds in Germany from 2000 to 2015*



**Table 6**

*Employment Rate by Age Group and Year*

Age group	Employment rate in %	
	2000	2019
20–24 years – total	64.8	67.3
Women	63.0	65.4
Men	66.7	69.0
60–64 years – total	19.6	61.8
Women	12.1	57.1
Men	27.2	66.6

Note. Own figure, based on data from the Indicator Report on Sustainable Development in Germany (Federal Statistical Office, 2021, p. 73).

### 3.11 BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

The **bibliography** or **references** section contains the literature used in the paper—and only this literature (Goldenstein et al., 2018, p. 142). Please note:

- The heading “Bibliography” is written in the same way as the heading “Table of Contents”.
- Each work cited in the text is listed in the bibliography with a full reference.

- There must be at least one citation in the text for each source listed in the bibliography.
- The bibliography is arranged alphabetically by author; multiple sources by the same author are arranged chronologically in ascending order.
- If the author and year are the same, lowercase letters are added alphabetically after the year (example: Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2022a; Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2022b).

**Legal sources** should be listed in a separate list of sources after the bibliography, with further subdivisions by source type if necessary:

- **List of sources** for laws and similar legal regulations and official statements used (with subdivision by law, official statement, etc., where applicable)
- **List of case law** for cited judgments, arranged by court of law.

### 3.12 APPENDIX

The appendix contains materials that are not necessary for understanding the argumentation, but are important for verification (Goldenstein et al., 2018, p. 142). For documentation purposes, the appendix must include all materials that were used in the paper but are not verifiable by permanent publication. These include for, example

- **Study materials** (e.g., interview guides; interview transcripts; questionnaires; experimental design; consent forms of study participants; documentation of data collection, processing, and analysis; statistical materials),
- **Unpublished documents, data, and materials** (e.g., internal company documents, process descriptions, organizational charts, interview notes, court records, certificates, storyboards for TV commercials, AI-generated content),
- **Limited published materials** that are not permanently available to the public or verifiable (e.g., websites, brochures, fact sheets, ad examples).

Each appendix is given sequential numbering and a heading (e.g., Appendix A: Questionnaire, Appendix B: Interview transcript). These are listed in a list of appendices, which immediately precedes the appendix. Consult your advisor to see whether documents in the appendix can be submitted as a separate digital appendix.

## 4 CITATION AND QUOTATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 4.1 CITATION REQUIREMENT, CITABILITY AND WORTHINESS OF CITATION

In academic papers, **citation** is **mandatory**, i.e., all content that has been taken verbatim or in spirit from others must be identified as external ideas by a correct and verifiable citation—unless it is common general knowledge (Goldenstein et al., 2018, pp. 146-151; Theisen & Theisen, 2021, pp. 144-145; 252). The citation obligation applies not only to the literal reproduction or paraphrasing of texts, thoughts, and ideas, it also applies to tables and figures (even those that are license-free!), data sets, software, questionnaires, test materials, and other documents (APA, 2020).

**Adopting external content without proper citation is plagiarism**, is considered scientific misconduct (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 2019; Mainz University of Applied Sciences, 2021), and will lead to the paper being graded as “**unsatisfactory**.” This also applies to AI-generated content without proper citation or otherwise appropriate and traceable documentation of its creation. Papers and theses submitted to the School of Business at Mainz University of Applied Sciences are regularly checked for plagiarism.

As a basic principle, sources that have been published and are therefore traceable and verifiable **can be cited**. Sources that are not accessible to the public (e.g., oral information, seminar papers, lecture notes; Theisen, 2021, pp. 144-145) cannot be cited. If, in exceptional cases, unpublished materials are referred to in the paper (e.g., internal company information, interview transcripts), these must be included in the appendix to the paper. The permission of the author must be obtained before using such sources.

Academic and scientific texts and works whose quality is assured according to scientific criteria (e.g., research articles, scientific monographs, dissertations) are **worthy of citation**. Non-scientific materials (e.g., practice-oriented specialized literature, studies by consulting companies) may also be worthy of citation, but must be carefully checked for seriousness and objectivity in individual cases and critically assessed, as they are not subject to scientific quality controls. As a basic principle, the latest edition of a publication should always be used—unless an older edition is used deliberately, to show the historical development of a definition, for example. In general, texts whose scientific quality has not been sufficiently tested (e.g., seminar papers, lecture notes) or which have no claim to scientific merit from the outset (e.g., tabloid newspapers, blogs, forums, corporate websites, AI-generated texts) are **not worthy of citation**. If such texts are the target of investigation of your paper (e.g., in an analysis of company blogs), they are to be documented accordingly as data material.

### 4.2 CRITERIA FOR CORRECT CITATION

A correct citation must be complete, original, accurate, and verifiable (see Goldenstein et al., 2018, p. 149): **Complete** means that a source reference must be available for each item of content (including graphics, tables, etc.) taken over from others verbatim or as paraphrasing. **Original** means that citation must be from the original source, i.e., the work in which the idea first appears (primary citation). Only when the original source cannot be consulted can a secondary source that is as reliable as possible be cited (secondary citation). **Accurate** means that quotations must retain the original meaning and not be taken out of context or distorted. Foreign language quotations should be included in the original lan-

guage and translated as needed (e.g., in parentheses or a footnote). **Verifiable** means that the citation must enable the reader to find and verify the source. Statements about general patterns in the scientific discussion (e.g., “current research on this is predominantly qualitative-empirical in nature”) also need to be supported with concrete evidence (Goldenstein et al., 2018, p. 149).

### 4.3 PARAPHRASING AND VERBATIM QUOTATIONS

The standard case in academic papers is paraphrasing, or **indirect citation**. Here, the cited ideas are reproduced in the author of the paper’s own words—with reference to the source—and incorporated into the argumentation of the paper (Goldenstein et al., 2018, pp. 146-147). Putting it in one’s own words, connecting different ideas, and drawing one’s own conclusions must show the author’s own clear efforts. Slight rewording by substituting individual words is not sufficient and may be considered plagiarism if it is too close to the original.

**Verbatim (direct) quotation** reproduces the quoted content verbatim. Verbatim quotations are indicated by quotation marks (German: „”; English: “ ”), immediately followed by citation of the source with author, year, and page number. It should be used very sparingly and only when the exact wording of the source is actually important. This may be the case (following Koeder, 2013), for example:

- with precise definitions,
- with particularly original wordings,
- if the wording of the statement is to be analyzed critically,
- when the choice of words of the quoted person is the main focus (e.g., quotations from famous individuals),
- when an indirect quotation from a foreign language text is supplemented by the verbatim quotation in the original language.

Verbatim quotations must be copied exactly to the letter, including punctuation. Errors and obsolete spellings are also included exactly as is, and, where applicable, marked with [!]. Omissions must be marked with [...]. Any necessary additions can be added with “Author’s note” in square brackets (Goldenstein et al., 2018, pp. 146-147). Added emphasis (e.g., italics) are to be indicated with a note (“emphasis added”). Quotations within quotations use single quotation marks (German: ‘ ’; English: ‘ ’).

Laws are reproduced verbatim but without quotation marks and may be introduced in the text by “in accordance with” or “under” (example: Under § 1 (1) HGB, a merchant is a person who carries on a commercial business).

### 4.4 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CITATION

As a basic principle, the original source should always be cited (primary citation)—quotations must therefore always be traced back to their source. Only if the original source cannot be obtained with reasonable effort (e.g., for works for which only a few copies are available in libraries worldwide and interlibrary loan is not possible) are secondary citations permissible. In this case, the citation, with the note “as cited in”, is taken from the work that is actually available for inspection and therefore verifiable. The author name and year of publication of the original source are cited in the text, but not listed in the bibliography.

## Figure 5

### Example of a Secondary Citation

#### In-text citation

“there is nothing so practical as a good theory” (Lewin, 1951, p. 169, as cited in Ployhart & Bartunek, 2019, p. 493)

#### Bibliography

Ployhart, R. E., & Bartunek, J. M. (2019). Editors' comments: There is nothing so theoretical as good practice—A call for phenomenal theory. *Academy of Management Review*, 44(3), 493-497.

## 4.5 CITATION STYLES

There are various citation methods and citation styles for implementing and formatting citations. In many sub-disciplines of business administration, the **American Psychological Association** (APA; known as APA style, American Psychological Association, 2020) **citation style** has become the standard. This citation style is used and explained in this guide. However, depending on the discipline, a different citation style may be applicable (e.g., MLA, Chicago A, Vancouver). Be sure to coordinate the citation style with your advisor in advance. The citation style is to be used consistently throughout the paper and in the latest version.

In APA style, a complete citation consists of (a) an in-text **citation** in the text and (b) a detailed reference (**full citation**) in the bibliography. The in-text citation indicates the work from which the respective quoted content originates by indicating the author, year and, where applicable, page number. The full reference in the bibliography at the end makes it possible to find the work in databases and libraries by providing extended information on the cited work (e.g., title, year, issue number, edition, publisher, etc.).

You can find information about and examples of APA style here:

- English version of APA style: Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th edition (American Psychological Association, 2020)
- Examples of formatting different types of sources on the APA style homepage: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references/examples>
- Short manuals in the download section of the School of Business: <https://www.hs-mainz.de/en/academics/services/school-of-business/exam-management/downloads/>
- German version of APA style: Richtlinien zur Manuskriptgestaltung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Psychologie (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Psychologie, 2019)

## 4.6 IN-TEXT CITATION

The APA style in-text citation (APA, 2020) is placed in the text in parentheses immediately following the citation; at the end of the sentence, it precedes the punctuation mark. It includes author name, year, and page number, where applicable, each separated by a comma. If the author is not a natural person, but a legal entity, its name (e.g., company name) is given as the author name. You can use the in-text citations in this guide as examples. In APA style, page numbers are mandatory in in-text citations for direct (i.e., verbatim) quotations and optional for indirect (i.e., paraphrasing) citations (APA, 2020). Especially when citing from longer works (e.g., books), however, page numbers should be added to indirect citations to make the cited text passage clearly locatable and traceable. Check with your advisor on how to handle page numbers.

More information on in-text citations (Goldenstein et al., 2018, p. 148):

- If the author’s name is used in a sentence, only the year and, where applicable, the page number are given in the parentheses (example: Theisen (2021) points out that ...).
- For works with two authors, the names in the parentheses are separated by “&” (example: Hug & Poscheschnik, 2020), as part of a sentence outside the parenthesis they are separated by “and”.
- If there are more than two authors, only the name of the first author is given and followed by “et al.” (example: Goldenstein et al., 2018).
- Multiple sources are separated in parentheses by “;” and arranged alphabetically by the first author (example: Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2021; Hug & Poscheschnik, 2020; Theisen, 2021)
- Identical author names are arranged chronologically in ascending order by year of publication.
- Sources with identical authors and year of publication are identified in the in-text citation and bibliography by consecutive lowercase letters (example: Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2022a; Esselborn-Krumbiegel, 2022b).
- If the same source is cited several times in direct succession, “ibid.” may be used instead of the name and year in the in-text citation starting with the second citation.
- The addition of “cf.” (“compare”) is used in APA style only when reference is made to further relevant, similar, or expanding literature.

## 4.7 SHORT-FORM CITATION IN FOOTNOTES

The approach described below does not comply with APA style or any other generally applicable citation style. It is therefore essential to check with your advisor whether this approach is feasible and permissible in your specific case. The short-form citation with author, year and, where applicable, page number is not inserted in the text in parentheses in this version, and instead appears in a footnote at the end of the page. As a result, the reading flow is not “disrupted” by the parenthetical short-form citations, which readers outside of academia (e.g., corporate partners) usually find more pleasant. The footnotes are to be numbered consecutively. Here as well, a full citation is provided in the bibliography for each source cited.

## Figure 6

*Example of a Short-Form Citation in a Footnote*

Auch das Lösen praktischer Problemstellungen kann ein Ziel wissenschaftlicher Arbeit sein [Solving practical problems can also be an aim of scientific work]<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Balzert et al., 2017, p. 7.

## 4.8 MISSING INFORMATION ON THE SOURCE

If the source lacks information on the author, use the title/name of the item you are citing as the first part of the citation. If information on the year of publication is missing, a substitute date (e.g., year of printing, date of retrieval, dating of the preface) is used whenever possible or—if no plausible substitute date is available—“n.d.” (“no date”) is used (Theisen, 2021, pp. 116-117).

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## LEGAL SOURCES


Allgemeine Prüfungsordnung für Studiengänge mit den Abschlüssen Bachelor und Master an der Hochschule Mainz, Fachbereich Wirtschaft (APO Bachelor & Master) vom 6.7.2017, Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 12/2017 i.d.F.v. 5.5.2021, Mitteilungsblatt Nr. 8/2021. Reading version in German available at:

[https://www.hs-mainz.de/fileadmin/Wirtschaft/Services/Pruefungsmanagement/pdf/Pruefungsordnung/Lesefassung\\_APO\\_bachelor\\_master\\_FB\\_wirtschaft\\_210809.pdf](https://www.hs-mainz.de/fileadmin/Wirtschaft/Services/Pruefungsmanagement/pdf/Pruefungsordnung/Lesefassung_APO_bachelor_master_FB_wirtschaft_210809.pdf)

Prinzipien zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis vom 07.10.2021, Mitteilungsblatt der Hochschule Mainz Nr. 18/2021. [https://www.hs-mainz.de/fileadmin/Hochschule/Forschung/Mitteilungsblatt\\_HSM-2021-Nr\\_18\\_Prinzipien\\_zur\\_Sicherung\\_guter\\_wissenschaftlicher\\_Praxis.pdf](https://www.hs-mainz.de/fileadmin/Hochschule/Forschung/Mitteilungsblatt_HSM-2021-Nr_18_Prinzipien_zur_Sicherung_guter_wissenschaftlicher_Praxis.pdf)

# APPENDIX

Example of the title page layout of a bachelor's thesis/master's thesis:

			WIRTSCHAFT <b>HOCHSCHULE MAINZ</b> UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
<p>Bachelor's Thesis/Master's Thesis Degree Program of Business Administration B.Sc. /Management M.Sc.</p>			
<p><b>Thesis Title</b></p>			
<p>Mainz University of Applied Sciences School of Business</p>			
Presented by:		Maximilian Mustermann Musterallee 123 55128 Mainz Student ID No. 1234567	
Presented to:		Prof. Dr. Norma Neugier	
Submitted on:		12/01/2023	