

# Scientific Writing

## Guidelines for Theses at the IMU-U

Procedure, Content and Formalities

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# **1. Introduction**

This guideline defines standards which relate to formal aspects of academic writing. This should support the students writing a thesis at the institute of Marketing and Management. Additionally, this document also serves as a guideline for other papers at the institute.

A scientific paper is the result of independent work, whereby the author demonstrates the ability to independently address a problem from the field of business management in a scientific, competent, clear, relevant and timely manner.

The quality of a scientific paper is judged primarily on the basis of content-related criteria. The main focus is on the intellectual penetration of the problem, its classification in an overall context, the theoretical foundation as well as the argumentatively conclusive presentation of what has been worked out. However, the overall assessment is also based on formal and linguistic aspects. The standards mentioned in this guideline with regard to the formal design of the paper are binding.

In the preparation of a scientific paper, we assume independence. Questions should be answered by the students themselves by means of the guidelines and further literature.

## **1.1 Goals of the Bachelor thesis**

At Bachelor's level, at the end of the studies a Bachelor's thesis must be written.

The expected result of a Bachelor's thesis is the provision of new knowledge. However, the goal of this thesis is primarily the methodical development and creation of a scientific paper. In this context, scientific integrity is of importance. A scientific paper is characterized by the fact that the systematics, structure, logic and transparency are guaranteed.

## **1.2 Goals of the Master thesis**

At Master's level, at the end of the studies a Master's thesis must be written.

In addition to the methodical development of a scientific paper, the Master's thesis also requires critical reflection on the chosen topic. The same requirements apply regarding the systematics, structure, logic and transparency. In addition, the aim is to identify deficits in current research and to critically evaluate previous findings.

The focus of a bachelor or master thesis can be exclusively on literature or partly on empiricism as well. If empiricism is used, different research approaches can be used. In the case of a literature thesis, a much more profound examination of the existing literature is expected. The student's own work consists mainly of creative approaches and/or an independent and critical examination of the subject matter.

## **2. Assignment and Supervision**

### **2.1 Assignment of Bachelor thesis**

The application procedure, application deadlines, as well as any preconditions are communicated directly on the website of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship (<http://www.management.imu.unibe.ch>) in the section "Bachelor Thesis".

Twice a year, topics for bachelor theses are posted on the website. Students select their preferred topic and apply according to the procedure announced on the website of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship.

### **2.2 Assignment of Master thesis**

The application procedure, application deadlines, as well as any preconditions are communicated directly on the website of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship (<http://www.management.imu.unibe.ch>) in the section "Master Thesis".

Current topics for master theses can be viewed on our website. Topics for master theses are posted on an ongoing basis. Students choose their preferred topic and apply according to the procedure announced on the website of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship.

### **2.3 Entitlement for supervision and the role of the supervisor**

The nature and extent of supervision will be determined based on the various conditions.

For Bachelor's and Master's theses, at least two meetings with the supervisor are scheduled. At the first meeting, open questions of the topic are clarified in order to properly prepare the proposal. The students have already read the literature for this meeting and are informed. In the second meeting (which is voluntary for bachelor theses), feedback on the proposal and open questions are discussed. For the Master's thesis, the work needs to be presented additionally in the department's research colloquium.

The supervising assistants take the role of a process guide and have the task to prevent the students from making larger mistakes. It is important to emphasize that requests for revision should not be considered harassing, but rather a worthwhile investment that will pay off in later stages of editing by saving much effort and expense. In this sense, the supervisor is a strategic help. However, they are not a source of information for questions that could also be answered by in-depth research.

### **2.4 Official Completion Time**

For bachelor theses, the approval of the proposal is considered the official start of the processing period of 12 weeks.

The official processing time of 22 weeks for master's theses also starts with the approval date of the proposal.

Possibilities for extension exist in each case only if the needs are signaled and justified at an early stage. Therefore, military or other services for example, should be communicated in advance.

**CAREFUL:**

If the concept of a Bachelor's or Master's thesis has to be modified, the official processing time starts after the positive feedback on the second proposal. If fundamental changes are made to the content or structure of the proposal, this must be discussed with the supervisor and approved by e-mail. The revised concept must be resubmitted within 14 days.

### 3. The Proposal

The proposal is the elaboration of an exposé on a specific topic. The purpose of the proposal is on the one hand to develop the research question of the thesis, on the other hand it serves to agree on the framework of the thesis between the supervisor and the supervised person. The focus in writing a proposal prepares a clear and doable path. Therefore, proposals reveal conceptual (logical) and methodological shortcomings of a work, which is why possible errors in later phases of a project can be identified already at the beginning of a work. Errors in later phases of a work are often irreversible.

**CAREFUL:**

The preparation and timely submission of a proposal is a precondition for bachelor's and master's theses. The two or three weeks for the preparation of a proposal mean a lot of work for the students: intensive reading into the topic and the preparation of a well-founded proposal are the tasks.

#### 3.1 Scope and Components of the Proposal

The scope of the proposal differs depending on the type of theses. The proposal for your Proseminar, Bachelor's and Seminar thesis should not exceed five pages and must be written according to the formal requirements (see chapter 5).

**Table 1: Scope Components Proposal Bachelor thesis**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Scope (A4 pages)</b>
Introduction	Limitation and distinction	All in all 1 page
	Problem definition	
	Goal setting	
Main part	Theoretical foundation	0.5 page
	Methodical approach	0.5 page

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	Intended structure of the finished work	1-2 pages
	Figures, tables, outlines, model conceptions	If necessary
Appendix	Time schedule or project plan	0.5 pages
	Preliminary literature sources	1-2 pages
<b>Total</b>		<b>Max. 5 pages</b>

The proposal for your Master's thesis should not exceed ten text pages and must be written according to the formal requirements (see chapter 5).

**Table 2: Scope Components Proposal Master thesis**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Elements</b>	<b>Scope (A4 pages)</b>
Introduction	Limitation and distinction Problem definition Goal setting	All in all 2 pages
Main part	Theoretical foundation Methodical approach Intended structure of the finished work Figures, tables, outlines, model conceptions	1 page 0.5 page 2-3 pages If necessary
Appendix	Time schedule or project plan Preliminary literature sources	0.5 page 2-3 pages
<b>Total</b>		<b>Max. 10 pages</b>

### **TIP:**

Parts of a well-written proposal can be used as a direct or indirect template for certain sections of the actual paper (introduction, methodological approach) and thus do not represent a loss of time.

The research question must be defined thematically. First of all, it has to be discussed how the title is understood and which definitions and distinctions are made. The problem definition is to be derived from the topic specification. The objective(s) of the work is (are) then derived from the problem definition.

## **3.2 Limitation and distinction of the topic**

Usually, a topic has several constitutive elements (dimensions) which, taken on their own, would not represent a meaningful topic definition, since they usually have too great a degree of generality. Considered together, however, they result in a workable, delimited area, a thematic intersection, so to speak.



**Example:** The thematic elements 'corporate culture' and 'leadership styles' viewed in isolation, are very broad areas of research that can hardly be meaningfully dealt with in this form. Combined into a working topic such as "Leadership style as an element of corporate culture", on the other hand, a workable topic area can be determined. The different dimensions of the topic must be explicitly described in the proposal.

Different dimensions of a topic:

- business function (e.g., management, procurement, sales, etc.)
- specific type of organization, type of company (e.g., industrial, consumer or service companies; medium-sized companies; entrepreneurs; non-profit organizations)
- special geographic orientation (e.g., internationality)
- one or more theoretical models or concepts (e.g., transaction cost theory, Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions, resource-based view)

### **3.3 Problem Definition**

Basically, a problem can always be said to exist when there is no agreed opinion among experts in the outlined subject area and/or no clear solution to the problem exists. Problems can be identified, for example through contradictions in scientific essays, suggestions from lectures and conferences or suggestions from economic practice.

It is essential to specify an identified problem clearly and unambiguously - preferably in question form, as questions can address a problem directly.

### **3.4 Goal Setting**

A distinction can be made between main and secondary objectives / goals. While main objectives indicate what is to be achieved with the work, secondary objectives serve to achieve the main objective.

A theoretical-conceptual literature review could develop new concepts, models, and/or theories, further develop new concepts, models and/or theories, combine new concepts, models, and/or theories or apply concepts, models, and/or theories to specific facts or situations.

It is a very important task, but not a particularly easy one, to formulate the goal not too broadly, but also not too narrowly. After all, the extent to which the goal is achieved is ultimately the measure of the work.

### **3.5 Theoretical foundation**

Each topic must be analyzed with reference to theories. A scientific analytical framework for the issue must be developed from scientifically defined terms and scientific theoretical approaches, which must

be consistent and robust. The selection of theories must be justified, and the theories must be critically reflected. Therefore, answers to the questions below or similar questions are to be formulated in this section of the proposal:

- What are the involved scientific disciplines and sub-disciplines?
- What are the most important theories, models, concepts, lines of thought, scientific controversies, empirical studies in relation to the chosen topic (e.g. new institutional economics: transaction cost theory, principal-agent theory, model of competitive strategies, cultural dimensions of Hofstede, the organizational control approach)?
- In which fundamental scientific publications can these theories, models, concepts and empirical results be found, and which authors have made significant contributions?
- How does the planned work relate to the current state of research? Is it an innovative research question, a novel combination of previously unrelated models and theories, an application of a theory to a practical phenomenon, a replication of a previous study, etc.?

In the proposal, the sources of the underlying theories are to be listed in the references. In addition, a summary of the most important theory elements of the thesis should be provided. It should already be indicated how the different elements are connected in terms of content.

### **3.6 Methodical Approach**

The methodological procedure is derived from the objective, the concretely formulated main and secondary objectives. It may be that only an in-depth literature analysis is necessary to answer the questions. However, it is also conceivable that the questions are best answered with a literature analysis and an empirical part. The proposal should state and describe what activities will be undertaken to realize the stated objectives. If a specific method is to be used, possible preliminary designs of individual data collection and analysis instruments should be included in the proposal.

The proposal must answer questions such as:

- Which data is needed to answer the research question(s)?
- Which data must be newly generated (primary data), which can be taken from already existing data sources (secondary data)?
- Should the methodological research approach be more quantitative (large sample size, standardized approach) or more qualitative?
- What types of data collection (e.g., questionnaire-based survey, group interviews, individual interviews, case study, document analysis) should be used to collect the needed data?
- How should the raw data obtained be analyzed (quantitative vs. qualitative methods)?

### **3.7 General overall structure**

Only when the previous points have been answered in a logically convincing manner and in sufficient detail an outline of the work to be submitted should be prepared. It is important to ensure that the contents build upon each other and are linked. The theoretical building blocks as well as the objective of the thesis are reflected in the structure, or the structure of the thesis is derived from the objective. The planned chapters and bullet points should already make it clear how the individual parts of the thesis are weighted. The answer to the actual question should be given the most space (e.g., a ratio of 10 % to 10 % to 80 %) in comparison to introductory and preparatory explanations (often definitions and explanations of the models and theories used).

**TIP:**

In the proposal, the planned titles and subtitles should be shown in their structure. Ideally, the individual parts are outlined in key words.

## **4. Components of the scientific work**

The components of Bachelor's and Master's theses are based on the proposal and the described structure.

### **4.1 Cover**

The cover page should contain the title of the paper, the name of the supervisor, the semester and year, and the student's contact information. The sample in the appendix contains all mandatory information.

### **4.2 Preface**

The Bachelor's or Master's thesis can be introduced with a preface to express the author's personal thoughts (e.g. about the reason and inspiration for writing the thesis, help or difficulties in collecting material, thanks for support from individual persons, etc.). It is not obligatory to write a preface. It is recommended to write the preface last.

### **4.3 Management Summary**

For bachelor's and master's theses, before the table of contents there is a management summary on light blue paper. It should report in a short, concise form on a maximum of two pages for bachelor's theses or four pages for master's theses on the main results of the work.

**CAREFUL: Differences between a Management Summary and the Summary**

The management summary serves as a concise summary of the problem definition and the proposed solutions. Important thoughts and considerations may also be included. The management summary must include the following points: introduction, knowledge gap, problem definition, research question, method, and results of the work. A summary (as a review), in contrast to a management summary, contains only the data on the achieved goals from the introduction, as well as the results placed in a larger context.

## **4.4 Table of Content**

The paper must be preceded by a table of contents containing the outline with page numbers. This outline must also appear in the text in identical wording for the sake of better comprehensibility and orientation in the paper.

The outline must be in numerical order (arabic numerals) according to the principle of graduation. The table of contents, list of figures, list of tables and list of abbreviations must be numbered consecutively in roman numerals (starting with I). The actual text, any appendix, the references, and the statement of independence should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals (see Figures 7 and 8 in Appendix 8.4).

## **4.5 List of tables and figures**

Individual indexes must be created for tables and figures. Therefore, figures and tables must be numbered and have a title. The numbering can either be continuous or refer to the respective chapter.

Furthermore, it should be noted that figures and tables should have uniform font sizes and types as well as legibility. A copy & paste approach from scientific pdf articles usually leads to unsatisfying results.

If figures and/or tables are taken unchanged from sources, then the source must be cited. However, the sources are not listed in the references. The addition "own presentation" for figures and/or tables developed by the author is not to be applied. Figures and/or tables are to be integrated into the text (e.g., the used dimensions of coordinates are to be explained in the text). Extensive presentations such as extensive literature reviews, questionnaires, elementary statistical evaluations, contracts, legal texts, etc. are to be included as appendices.

When using tables, please note the following:

- Large tables should be placed in the appendix.
- Tables and figures must be incorporated and interpreted in the text.
- Units (e.g., \$, CHF, %) must be indicated in the table heading.

- Decimal numbers must be indicated uniformly (within a table) and never more than two decimal places.

## **4.6 List of abbreviations**

As a general rule, it is advisable to avoid using abbreviations that are uncommon, because they disturb the flow of reading. If, however, not only common abbreviations are used in the text, they must be listed in an alphabetical list of abbreviations at the beginning of the text. If used for the first time, the term must be spelled out and the abbreviation added in brackets.

## **4.7 Introduction**

The introduction first leads to the topic, specifies the topic, and defines and delimits it. This leads to the problem, from which the main and secondary objectives can be deduced. The introduction, which goes from the general to the specific, also gives an overview of the structure of the work and justifies the chosen approach. At this point of the work, the relevance of the topic should be made clear. In addition, the reasons for focusing on specific aspects of the topic should be stated. The introduction should not exceed 25% of the page count of the entire paper and should enable the reader to place the paper in an overall context.

## **4.8 Main part**

The main part is divided into individual subtitles according to the topic. The main part contains the systematic analysis of the topic. The argumentation should follow a comprehensible thought process (common thread) and be consistent in itself. The structure and content of the individual sections should correspond to the intended argumentation sequence. The chapters should be connected by suitable transitions, so that the logical connection is recognizable. Great importance is attached to this kind of reader guidance in all parts of the thesis. In sections devoted to the theoretical treatment of the topic, the relevant theoretical approaches and controversies should be discussed. The currently relevant literature on the subject is to be considered and critically evaluated. It should be ensured that the structure and scope of the individual sections (chapters) correspond to their importance in the overall conception of the paper (focal points!). The main part should take up about 65 - 80 % of the total volume of the paper.

## **4.9 End**

The conclusion answers the questions raised at the beginning and presents a thesis-like classification of the results of the study in a larger context. The end should not take up more than 10% of the total number of pages.

## 4.10 References

The references are in accordance with the latest guidelines of the Academy of Management Journals (AMJ Style Guideline). Sources are cited directly in the text and footnotes are kept free for comments. Information on the AMJ citation style can be found directly on the AMJ page as well as in the most recent publications of the journal.

## 4.11 Statement of authorship

A signed statement of authorship with the appropriate content must be included in the scientific paper. Depending on the language in which the work is written, the declaration of independence will be included in either English or German.

If the thesis was written in connection with an external institution that provided confidential data, a declaration of confidentiality must be included and signed as well. Please check this with the supervisor.

**Figure 1: Statement of authorship (English)**

Statement of authorship	
„I hereby declare that I have written this thesis without any help from others and without the use of documents and aids other than those stated above. I have mentioned all used sources and cited them correctly according to established academic citation rules. I am aware that otherwise the Senate is entitled to revoke the degree awarded on the basis of this thesis, according to article 36 paragraph 1 letter r of the University Act from 5 September 1996.“	
Place, Date	Signature (Name, Surname)

If the scientific paper was written in a team, the following declaration of independence must be applied:

**Figure 2: Statement of authorship Groups (English)**

Statement of authorship for a group work	
„We hereby declare that each of us has contributed their part to this thesis without any help from others. Furthermore, we declare that we have written it without the use of aids other than those stated above. We have mentioned all used sources and cited them correctly according to the established academic citation rules. We are aware that otherwise the Senat is entitled to revoke the degree awarded on the basis of this thesis, according to article 36 paragraph 1 letter r of the University Act from 5 September 1996.“	
Place, Date	Signature I (Name, Surname)
Place, Date	Signature II (Name, Surname)

## 5. Presentation

In order to successfully complete the master's thesis, it is also necessary to present it at the monthly research colloquium. The presentation in the colloquium, which is held every first Monday of the month, takes place in consultation with the supervisor. In order to participate in this event, the master thesis does not have to be finalized yet; however, first results and insights should already be available.

The presentation corresponds to 10% of the total grade of the master thesis.

### 5.1 Formalia

The layout of the University of Bern is to be used as a template for the presentation (will be provided by the supervisor if needed).

The presentation should not exceed 20 minutes. And is followed by a free discussion of the participants and the presenter for a maximum of 20 minutes. The discussion does not have to be prepared by the student.

The presentation should be given in the written language of the paper.

### 5.2 General Structure and Content

The presentation should include at least the following topics:

- Research question
- Outline content and structure of the paper
- Method used and information about the sample
- Data collected
- Current status and preliminary findings
- Outlook

## **6. Formalities**

### **6.1 Structure: Margin width, font and line spacing, print**

All papers written at the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship must be formatted as follows:

- Margins (page format: A4): top: 2,5 cm, bottom: 2 cm, left: 2,5 cm, right: 2,5 cm.
- Fonts: Arial or Times New Roman
- Font sizes / font formatting:
  - 12 points in text, table of contents, etc.
  - Headings are to be formatted in bold
  - 10 points in footnotes
  - At least 10 points for figures and tables
- Spacing and paragraphs:
  - Text: 1.5-spaced
  - Footnotes: 1-spaced within the footnote, 1.5-spaced between two different footnotes
  - 1.5-spaced in the references as well as a hanging indent (1.5 cm)
  - Preliminary to new paragraphs: 6-point space or a blank line
- Alignment: Justification

The work is to be printed one-sided on DIN A4 paper (pure white or bleached) using a quality printer (inkjet or laser).

### **6.2 Scope, Number of ECTS**

For students according to the study plan 2006<sup>1</sup>, 10 ECTS points can be achieved with the **Bachelor thesis**. The thesis should have a length of 35-50 text pages (i.e. without lists of contents, figures, tables, abbreviations, references and appendices).

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<sup>1</sup> For students according to the study plan 2004, 8 ECTS points can be achieved with the bachelor thesis and the thesis should have a length of 30-50 text pages (i.e. without lists of contents, figures, tables, abbreviations, references and appendices).



With **the Master's thesis**, 20 ECTS points can be achieved for students according to the 2006<sup>2</sup> study plan. The thesis should have a length of 65-100 text pages (i.e. without lists of contents, figures, tables, abbreviations, references and appendices).

In the performance assessment of all theses, the limitation of the content presentation to the specified scope is taken into account.

### **6.3 Number of copies and submission form**

Bachelor's and Master's theses must be submitted in a simple bound version (e.g. spiralized) as well as electronically (MS Word document **and** PDF by e-mail / USB stick). All parts of the thesis (cover sheet, indexes, text, tables, figures and appendix) as well as any presentation slides must be included in the electronic version resp. handed in with the electronic version.

The submission of a paper only in electronic form is not permitted.

### **6.4 Language and language style**

Bachelor theses can be written in German or English. Master's theses are usually written in English. A clear and precise style of language and expression is to be used. In principle, even people without subject-specific knowledge should be able to understand the content. Colloquialisms and phrasal superficialities should be avoided. The writing style should be interesting and fluent. The use of technical or very specific terms should be limited. If such expressions are indispensable, they should be defined the first time they are used.

The "I" and "we" forms should be avoided and replaced by neutral expressions. Orthography should be error-free and correspond to the current spelling reform. Self-invented abbreviations are to be avoided unless they significantly facilitate reading.

Careful "reader guidance" with introductory, transitional and summary sections should be ensured so that the overview is always maintained.

### **6.5 Citation Method**

Scientific work is characterized, among other things, by the principle of intersubjectivity, which is why every citation must be verifiable. In general, scientific work does not "completely reinvent the wheel". Foreign ideas are acknowledged to the appropriate extent and must therefore be identified. Sources used in the text are not cited in the footnotes, but reference to the source is provided in the text.

Basically, with regard to citation style, German or American style can be distinguished. At the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship (University of Bern) the American citation style is

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<sup>2</sup> For students according to the study plan 2004, 18 ECTS points can be achieved with the Master's thesis and the thesis should be 60-100 text pages in length (i.e. without lists of contents, figures, tables, abbreviations, references and appendices).

used. Hereby the page numbers are only indicated in case of direct (i.e., literal) quotations. For the German citation style page numbers are basically always indicated.

In general, direct quotations should be used sparingly, as they often do not fit one's own style and sentence structure. Rather, students should formulate the thoughts of other researchers in their own words.

### **Author names**

For up to three authors, all names are cited, for example Villiger, Schweiger & Baldauf, 2021. For more than three authors, only the first author is cited with the addition of "et al.", for example Schweiger et al., 2019.. Literal/direct quotations should be placed in quotation marks. In English, a comma is placed before the "&" when there are three authors (e.g., Baldauf, Cravens, & Piercy, 2001).

### **Paraphrases (single reference):**

... the focus lays on the language (Kulkarni, 2015).

### **Paraphrases (several references):**

... for example, in the perception of the team members (Jehn & Bezrukova, 2010; Thatcher & Patel, 2012).

### **Direct quotation (single reference):**

Based on the upper echelon theory «large body of research suggests that characteristics of the TMT, through its influence on group decision making processes and preferences, can predict firm behavior and outcomes” (Joeng & Harrison, 2017, p. 1221).

- Is a direct citation over more than one page, it must be indicated, e.g., Joeng & Harrison, 2017, S. 1223 ff.
- If statements in the beginning or the end of the citation are omitted, this must be shown through (...)
- If a statement is omitted within the citation it must be shown through [...]

### **Example for a source a subject to a sentence**

Alternatively, a source can be used as a subject to a sentence. In this case only the year of publication and the respective page number(s) need to be put in brackets. Examples:

- Kulkarni (2015) believes that ...
- Villiger, Schweiger und Baldauf (2021) believe that ...
- Schweiger et al. (2019) believe that ...

## **7. Evaluation**

The following criteria summarise the most important points of this guide. The questions listed are intended to provide assistance in editing and revising one's own academic work.

### **7.1 Evaluation Content**

1. Has the topic been specified, defined and delimited?
2. Have important terms been scientifically defined?
3. Have appropriate theories been addressed and have they been critically deliberated?
4. Are terms and theoretical constructs/approaches inherently consistent?
5. Have specific research questions been formulated?
6. Have answers to these specific research questions been found?
7. Does the paper provide an added value? Is the reasoning logically and consistently?
8. Is there a common thread throughout the paper? Is the reader being guided through the paper?
9. Do the contents of the work build on each other and are they linked in a meaningful way?
10. Is there one's own line of argument?
11. Has the paper been organized and structured appropriately?
12. Have the propositions been supported sufficiently by other research?
13. Does the literature used meet academic/scientific requirements?
14. Is the linguistic style applied precise and objective?
15. Does the presentation of the Master thesis show the content of the work in a comprehensible way without losing relevant information?

### **7.2 Evaluation Formalities**

1. Is there a correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation?
2. Is the paper formatted correctly?
3. Do the external form and scope correspond to the guidelines?
4. Have all relevant components of an academic paper been considered?
5. Is the linguistic style of the work precise, fluent, factual but understandable? (Scientific writing style - no colloquial language).
6. Is there an objective line of reasoning?
7. Are the titles listed in the table of contents identical with the titles throughout the regular text?
8. Have complex coherences been visualized by figures or tables?
9. Have tables and/or figures been mentioned in the text?
10. Are all components of the appendix referenced in the paper?
11. Is the presentation qualitatively and stylistically correct?

12. Are the formal criteria of the presentation followed (e.g., time)?

## **8. Readings**

Becker, F. (1994). *Anleitung zum wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten*. 2nd edition, Köln: Bergisch-Gladbach.

Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., Tight, M. (1996). *How to research*. Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Churchill, G. A., Iacobucci, D. (2002). *Marketing research: methodological foundations*. 8th edition, Mason, Ohio: South-Western/Thomson Learning.

Cooper, H. M. (1988). The structure of knowledge synthesis. *Knowledge in Society*, Vol. 1, 104-126.

Kruse, O. (1997). *Keine Angst vor dem leeren Blatt*. 5th edition, Frankfurt/Main, New York: Campus.

Theisen, M. R. (2000). *Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten: Technik, Methodik, Form*. 10th edition, München: Verlag Franz Vahlen GmbH.

Zikmund, W. G. (2003). *Business Research Methods*. 7th edition, Mason, Ohio: South-Western/Thomson Learning.

### **The following readings are recommended in case of a Systematic Literature Review:**

Short, J.C. The art of writing a review article. (2009). *Journal of Management*, Vol. 35 (Issue 6), 1312-1317.

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., Smart, P. (2003). Toward a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 14 (Issue 3), 207–222. (available online: <http://www.cebma.org/wp-content/uploads/Tranfield-et-al-Towards-a-Methodology-for-Developing-Evidence-Informed-Management.pdf>).

Denyer, D., Tranfield, D. (2009). Producing a systematic review. In Buchanan, D., Bryman, A. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*: 671–689. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. (available online: <http://www.cebma.org/wp-content/uploads/Denyer-Tranfield-Producing-a-Systematic-Review.pdf>).

Hitt, M. A., Ireland, R. D., Hoskisson, R. E. (2006). *Strategic Management: Competitiveness and Globalization: Concepts and Cases*. 7th edition, Mason, Ohio: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.

## **9. Appendix**

### **9.1 Sample Cover**

Proseminar / Seminar / Bachelor / Master thesis

*Title of the thesis*

submitted to the

Institute of Marketing and Management  
Department of Management and Entrepreneurship

Prof. Dr. Artur Baldauf

Supervisor:

*Name of the supervisor*

University of Bern  
Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Sciences  
Department of Business and Economics

*Fall/Spring Semester 20XX*

by

*Student's name*

*Address*

*Student ID number*

*Telephone*

*E-Mail*

Bern, *month year*

## 9.2 Presentation of a table of contents

Figure 3: Example Table of Contents

<b>Management Summary</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>Table of Abbreviations</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Problem definition and actuality of the research question	1
1.2 Goal setting and structure of the thesis	3
1.3 Methodological approach	5
<b>2 Theoretical framework of entrepreneurship</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Definition and dimensions of corporate venturing	6
2.2 Definition and dimensions of corporate entrepreneurship	8
2.3 Critical comparison of corporate venturing and corporate entrepreneurship	10
<b>3 Performance implications of corporate venturing and corporate entrepreneurship</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Impact of corporate venturing on performance	14
3.2 Impact of corporate entrepreneurship on performance	16
3.3 Possible mediators and moderators of these relationships	18
3.3.1 Mediators and moderators in corporate venturing-performance relationship	18
3.3.2 Mediators and moderators in corporate entrepreneurship-performance relationship	19
<b>4 Analysis</b>	<b>...</b>
<b>5 Discussion and Conclusion</b>	<b>...</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Annex</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Statement of authorship</b>	<b>28</b>

## 9.3 Typical Mistakes and Tips for Success

Table 3: Typical Mistakes and Tips for Success (German)

Mistakes	Tips
Central question is not dealt with consistently and enough in depth	Ask yourself: "What am I trying to say with this paper/chapter/paragraph?" and "What's the problem?".

Clean, clear definition is missing	After describing different definitions, limit yourself to one which is derived from the scientific literature
Too narrow a scope	Use different aspects and perspectives to describe the topic
Unstructured	Structure your work: starting with a description of the initial situation, continuing with an analysis and ending with a conclusion.
Inadequate citations	Distinguish between scientific and non-scientific sources (website of a practice-oriented organization is not a scientific source) and be consistent in your citation
"Complicated" writing	Write "simply" and use clear and logical sentences.

## 9.1 Common Abbreviations

**Table 4: Common Abbreviations**

Deutsch	Englisch	Meaning
S.	p.	page
f.	pp.	following (one)
ff.	ff. / et seq.	following (several)
Vgl.	cf.	compare
z.B.	e.g.	for example
d.h.	i.e.	this means
et al.	et al.	et alii (and others)

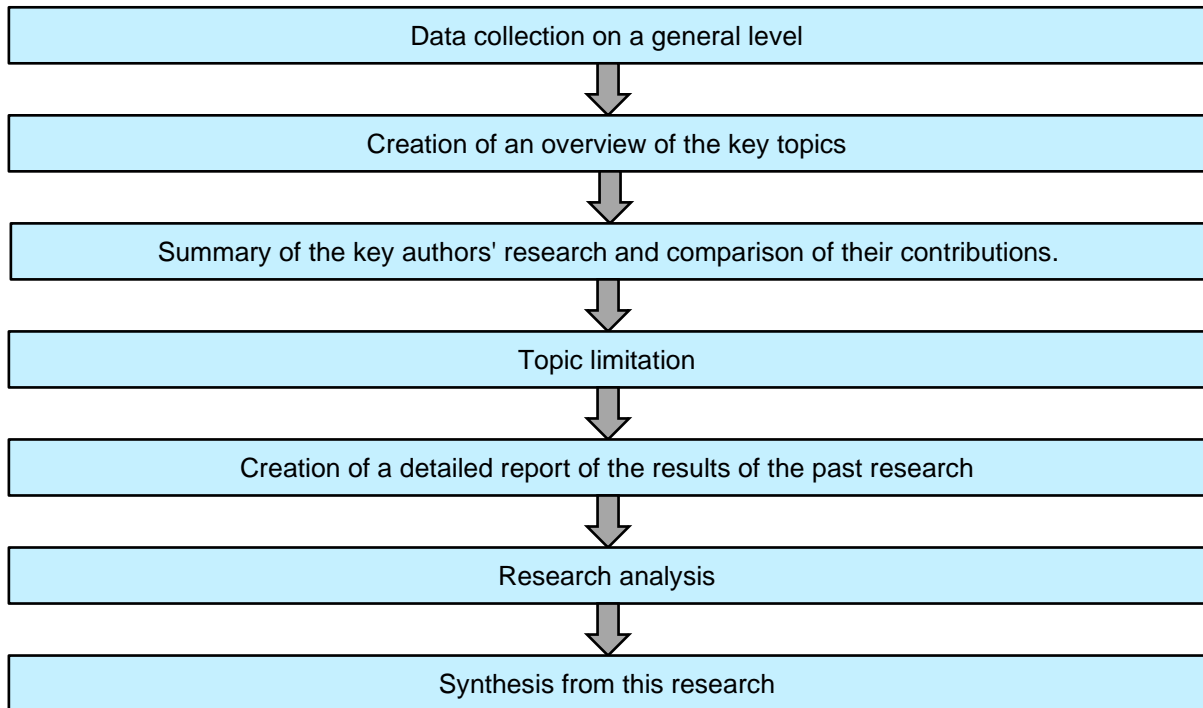
## 9.2 Information on Literature Reviews

The literature work or literature analysis includes both reading and assessing the relevant literature in the chosen field of knowledge. The descriptive part and the analytical part can be separated into a theory part "overview of previous research achievements" and a theory part "critical appraisal of previous research achievements".

The aim of the literature review is to communicate what knowledge or ideas have been developed in a particular subject area and what their strengths and weaknesses are. It is not just a descriptive list of available materials or a series of summaries.

*According to Cooper (1988, S. 107) "... a literature review uses as its database reports of primary or original scholarship, and does not report new primary scholarship itself. The primary reports used in the literature may be verbal, but in the vast majority of cases reports are written documents. The types of scholarship may be empirical, theoretical, critical/analytic, or methodological in nature. Second a literature review seeks to describe, summarise, evaluate, clarify and/or integrate the content of primary reports".*

**Figure 4: Process of the Literature Analysis**



**NOTION STATEMENT: Synthesis**

The process of the analysis ends with the realization of the essence of a phenomenon and its inner relationships. The synthesis reverses this process and tries to put together a new whole from the elements found through the analysis.

The literature used must correspond to the topic and the basic scientific requirements in terms of scope, selection and topicality, whereby international literature (especially English-language literature) must be taken into account. Scientific, peer-reviewed journals are to be given preference over books. All sources cited in the text (and only these) are to be included in the references.

A ranking of peer-reviewed journals can be found here: <https://vhbonline.org/vhb4you/vhb-jourqual/vhb-jourqual-3/gesamtliste>

**Conceptual / theoretical questions to be answered:**

1. What do we already know in the immediate area of the topic?
2. What are the existing theories that help explain the phenomenon?
3. What are the characteristics of the key concepts, the main factors and the variables?
4. What are the relationships between these key concepts, factors or variables?
5. How do we know what we know?
6. What research approaches are used to study the phenomenon?



**Scientific Writing**

Guidelines for scientific writing at the IMU-U

7. What are the methodological strengths and weaknesses (limitations) of previous research?
8. Where are inconsistencies or other gaps in our knowledge and understanding?
9. What aspects need to be tested further?
10. What evidence is missing, inconclusive, contradictory, or too limited?
11. Why are we studying this research problem?
12. What contribution can this study make to the existing knowledge base?