

**Guidelines for writing theses at the  
Schöller Endowed Chair for Information Systems (Digitalization  
in Business and Society)**

## Foreword

Dear students,

thank you for your interest in the theses offered by the Schöller Endowed Chair for Information Systems (Digitization in Business and Society). Irrespective of whether your thesis is a seminar paper, project paper, bachelor's or master's thesis, this guide is intended to answer the most urgent questions regarding the design of your thesis and to provide you with an initial point of reference.

This guideline is flanked by templates provided by the Institute for writing your thesis using Word or LaTeX. These have been carefully created for you so you can rely on the formatting guidelines it contains without having to make any additional adjustments.

We would also like to expressly point out that it is not intended to avoid any personal contact with your supervisor. However, it serves to keep non-content-related questions in these conversations as low as possible to be able to place the content of the work in the foreground. Nevertheless, the final word in both areas lies on your supervisor, so this guideline is intended to be a generalized recommendation only.

We are looking forward to working with you and wish you much success in your work.

The faculty of the Chair for Information Systems (Digitization in Business and Society).

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*Remark:*

*The table of contents is preformatted in the template of the institute and should be retained. To update it, right-click in the table of contents and then click on "Update fields".*

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*Remark*

*The list of illustrations is preformatted in the template of the institute and should be retained.  
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### *Remark*

*The list of tables is preformatted in the template of the institute and should be retained. To update it, right-click in the table of contents and then click on "Update fields".*

*If no tables are used in your scientific paper, the list of tables must be removed.*

## List of Abbreviations

API	Application Programming Interface
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
IaaS	Infrastructure as a Service
JSON	Javascript Object Notation

### *Remark*

*The list of abbreviations includes all abbreviations that are not commonly used or are not listed in the dictionary. Abbreviations such as "etc.", "e.g." and "i.e." do not require a definition and therefore do not belong in the list of abbreviations. All abbreviations separated in this way must be marked throughout the document with a protected space ([Ctrl]+[Shift]+[Space]). The protected space becomes recognizable as "°" after pressing the "¶" button in the toolbar.*

## List of Symbols

$a_0$	Acquisition payment in $t = 0$
$C$	Net present value
$q$	Interest factor $1 + i$

### *Remark*

*The (selected) entries can be sorted using the sort function in Word. You can find it in the "Start" tab under "Paragraph". A list of symbols is not necessarily required in every scientific paper.*

# **1 Formal Requirements**

## **1.1 Application**

First, please check that you meet the necessary requirements for writing an academic paper at our chair. The examination regulations of your study programme are decisive. The student is solely responsible for ensuring that the thesis can be credited for his/her studies. Please check the formal criteria in the examination regulations of your specific study programme.

Subsequently, you select one or more of the advertised topics. Please contact the indicated supervisor directly for your application with the required documents. Alternatively, you can also apply to write on a topic of your choice as long as it fits the research area of our chair. Please refer to the chair's website for our research areas and to identify prospective supervisors. If you are sure that your project fits to the research area of our chair, you may directly approach the indicated supervisor

## **1.2 Registration and Supervision**

Each subject must be agreed upon with your supervisor before you start. Once you have settled on a topic with your supervisor, he will take over the registration of the thesis for you. Supervisors reserve the right to request an exposé (concept) or a similar assignment prior to registration. In general, students can start working on their scientific paper throughout the entire semester. The registration and the submission dates are not tied to the semester dates (subject to deviating provisions of the examination regulations for specific application deadlines and modalities). Please coordinate the editing time with your supervisor, especially about the desired submission date.

Please provide your supervisor with the necessary documents in time before each meeting. Bringing the materials only to the meeting makes careful preparation impossible and moreover inefficient.

## **1.3 Seminar Performance**

In the case of Bachelor theses, participation at the Chair's own "Seminar for Bachelor Thesis" represents the seminar performance. The seminar is held every semester and usually consists of seven individual dates, which are spread over the respective semester. The exact dates can be



found in the corresponding StudOn course. Registration is obligatory. Students must register for the seminar before they start working on the scientific paper.

In the case of Master theses, please inform your supervisor in time if your examination regulations require an additional seminar performance. Your supervisor will then notify you about the modalities

#### **1.4 Submission**

The submission of your thesis is subject to the requirements of your examination regulations. Please note, print copies must be printed single-sided and be firmly bound for example thermal or hot glue binding; comb or spiral binding is not permitted, nor is the insertion into a ring binder or slide binder. Together with the printed copies, you must submit your thesis in electronic form as a Word or LaTeX document and in PDF format. Please also include all related files, such as mp3 files of interviews or source code. If you should print the corresponding files (if technically possible) will be decided by your supervisor. The examination office will inform you of the last possible submission date. If you submit your paper by post, the postmark will count as the submission date. Before submitting your paper, you should allow sufficient time for proofreading, printing, and binding.

#### **1.5 Review & Grading**

It usually takes up to six weeks to evaluate your work after submission. However, the date on the certificate is the date of submission and not the date on which the grade was announced. If, for an urgent reason, you require confirmation of submission or successful completion before the correction is completed, please discuss this with your supervisor.

## 2 Format

### 2.1 Page Layout

You must observe the following formal specifications for the page layout:

Table 2-1: Format specifications for the page layout

Line spacing	Page margins	Alignment	Page numbers
1,5 lines	Left 3,5 cm Right 1,5 cm Top & bottom 2,5 cm	Justification	Directories: Roman numerals Text pages: Arabic numerals

Source: Own Illustration

These values are already preset in the templates provided by the institute.

### 2.2 Font

You must observe the following formal requirements for the font design:

Table 2-2: Format specifications for the font design

Font Type	Font Size Text	Font Size Illustrations	Font Size Tables	Font Size Footnotes
Times New Roman	12pt	10pt	10pt	8pt

Source: Own Table

Please use the provided format styles in templates. In Word you will find them in the tab "Start" under "Styles". There are templates for every imaginable use case (headings in three levels, footnotes, tables, continuous text, etc.), so that you can build your work completely with their help.

### 2.3 Scope

Please consult with your supervisor regarding the length of your thesis.

### 2.4 Citations & References (Use of Literature)

Every time you reproduce someone else's ideas, you must identify them in the form of a quotation. Quotations may not contain any other content and/or meaning than that given by the author of the original work. The correct citation is a formal main criterion in the preparation of a scientific paper.

A distinction is made between direct and indirect quotations, with the former being the exception. If they are necessary, they are indicated by quotation marks. Direct citations must be identical to the original text, but can be interrupted by three dots (...) to fit grammatically into the context. It is also possible in this way to omit the intermediate parts of the quotation that are irrelevant for your purpose. You can also expand the content of the quotations in individual cases, which should be indicated by square brackets [...].

At the chair, the citation style "MISQ" is usually used. The source is always in brackets at the end of each citation, not in footnotes. The Institute provides online files for use in Citavi, Endnote, Mendeley and Zotero. The use of a literature management program is mandatory, but you are free to choose the program you wish to use.

When using MISQ, the following format must be followed:

Table 2-3: Citation in text after MISQ

Number of authors	Documentation in the text	Example(s)
One author	(Last name author year, page numbers)	(Smith 2003, p. 17)
Two authors	(Last name author A and last name author B year, page numbers)	(Chenhall and Romano 1989, p. 17-20)
Three or more authors	(Last name author A et al. year, page numbers)	(Morck et al. 1990, p. 39-41)
More than five authors	(Last name author A et al. year, page numbers)	(Smith et al. 2005, p. 43)
Multiple papers from the same year	(Last name author(s) year letter, page numbers)	(Chenhall and Romano 1989a, p. 17-20) (Chenhall and Romano 1989b, p. 43f.)

Source: Own Table

Here the following format must be followed:

- If the quote refers to a specific page only or is a literal quote, the page must be included. Example: (Smith 2003, p. 17).
- If the citation refers to two consecutive pages, this must be marked with "f.". Example: (Jones et al. 1995, p. 17f.).
- If the citation refers to several consecutive pages, these must be explicitly indicated. The use of "ff. is not permitted. Example: (Chenhall and Romano 1989, p. 17-20).

The listing in the bibliography must be complete. All references listed in the text must appear in the list and vice versa. When formatting the bibliography, you can use the following examples as a guide:

- Ackoff, R. L. 1961. "Management Misinformation Systems," *Management Science* (14:4), December, p. 147-156.
- Bonini, C. P. 1963. *Simulation of Information and Decision Systems in the Firm*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Chenhall, R. H., and Romano, C. A. 1989. "Formal Planning and Control Presence and Impact on the Growth of Small Manufacturing Firms," in *Job Generation by the Small Business Sector in Australia*, W. C. Dunlop and A. J. Williams (Hrsg.), Newcastle: Institute of Industrial Economics, p. 71-89.

## 2.5 Tables and Illustrations

Illustrations and tables serve to illustrate and/or clarify matters dealt with in the text. The most important results of your work should therefore always be presented in greater detail or clearly summarised in an illustration or table. It is indispensable that you explain all parts of an illustration in the text or that you explicitly refer to the illustration in the text. If you only need parts of a graphic for your argumentation, it is recommended that you adapt the illustration accordingly.

Illustrations should always be created or traced by yourself (e.g. with PowerPoint) and not scanned, since the process of scanning is usually at the expense of quality. There is nothing against the (partial) transfer of illustrations from e-books or electronically published journal articles.

Figures and tables are to be numbered consecutively with arabic numerals in relation to the first level of outline. This means that the first table in Chapter 3 is entitled "Table 3-1: (...)", the second table is entitled "Table 3-2: (...)" and so on. Word does this automatically for you with the function "Insert Label" in the "References" tab, you only need to have the numbers adjusted by right-clicking on them and using the function "Update Fields".

In addition, make sure that your figures and tables are labelled in a meaningful and self-explanatory way. Two illustrations created in the same or comparable notation should also use the same font size.

Illustration 2-1: FAU Logo



Source: [...]

When quoting the sources of your figures or tables, please refer to Table 2-4.

Table 2-4: Labeling of illustrations and tables

<b>Type of adoption</b>	<b>References according to MISQ</b>
Unchanged adoption	Source: Smith 2003, p. 17
When changing a graphic representation	Source: Based on Smith 2003, p. 17
Own representation, which is based on source contents, which are not represented in the source as illustrations/tables.	Source: Own presentation based on Smith 2003, p. 17
Own Table/Illustration	Source: Own Illustration

Source: Own Illustration

## 2.6 Directories

The integration of a table of contents, a list of illustrations and a bibliography is mandatory; the creation of a table of tables, abbreviations and/or symbols is only necessary if tables, abbreviations and/or symbols are actually used. The necessary instructions for creating and formatting these tables can be found in the sample tables at the beginning of this guide.

Your bibliography deserves special attention. There you list all the sources you have used in your work in alphabetical order by author name. If you cite several works of one author, then you should arrange their sources in the bibliography chronologically according to year of publication. If you again cite several sources of the same author with the same year of publication, then list them with letters in ascending order (see chapter 2.5). It is not necessary to categorize the entries according to the type of works cited.

## 2.7 Appendix

An appendix is not mandatory. However, if you have created more extensive graphics, tables, questionnaires or similar material that is relevant to your work but would disturb the flow of reading in the text part, you can present this material in the appendix.

## **2.8 Statutory Declaration**

You will conclude your work with a declaration on freedom from plagiarism, which you must sign by hand. This declaration is already integrated in the Institute's templates and only requires your signature including place and date.

### 3 Content

True to the fundamental right of freedom of teaching and research, the guidelines for you and your supervisor regarding the content of the work are very limited. Only the structure of the introduction and the final part are clearly defined in the template and should be kept as they are in order to facilitate the introduction for the reader and to meet the requirements of the different examination regulations.

In the past, the following structure has often proved to be effective for a wide range of topics:

1. Introduction
  - 1.1 Problem definition
  - 1.2 Objective and structure of the work
2. Theoretical foundations
- ...
3. Methodology
- ...
4. Evaluation of the results
- ...
5. Discussion of the results
- ...
6. Conclusion
  - 6.1 Summary
  - 6.2 Limitations and need for further research

In any case, please make sure that your argumentation is linguistically and logically comprehensible and that the language used is scientifically correct. Try to avoid long and difficult to understand box sentences of more than 30 words wherever possible.

Components of any scientific work are the definition and explanation of the central theoretical terms and constructs of the work, the current state of research, an explanation of the methodology used and the evaluation and subsequent discussion of your results. Please discuss with your supervisor how to integrate these points structurally into your work.

As far as the scientific methodology in particular is concerned, please consult the Chair's own StudOn-Tutorial "Information Systems Research Methodology". This tutorial has been created for the purpose of introducing the most common methods of scientific work in Information Systems to students writing their thesis at the chair.

### **3.1 Introduction**

In the first sub-section of the introduction, the relevance of the topic or the problem addressed is worked out and it is placed in a larger context.

In the second sub-section the objective is formulated and differentiated from other topics. Then you describe the further procedure in your work. The definition of the most important terms is no longer part of the introduction.

### **3.2 Conclusion**

In the first subsection of your conclusion, you summarise the main results of your work. Avoid describing the complete course of your work in detail again, but limit yourself to a brief paragraph here. Instead, emphasize the value you have created with your work in a comprehensive and easily understandable way. In doing so, you should mention the original problem once again and show how you encounter it in your work.

In the second sub-section, point out the limitations of your work and derive the need for further research.



## **Closing Remark**

Dear Students,

in the end, there is not much more to say than to wish you all the best for your thesis.

This closing word is rather intended to point out to you once again that the list of references, the appendices and the statutory declaration must be numbered with roman numerals in analogy to the lists at the beginning of your work. For this, the page number usually has to be manually adjusted to the required value. To do this, go to the header bar of the page and select the function "Format page numbers" under "Page number". In the appearing menu, you must set the correct value under "start at".

Otherwise, please consider that the purpose of scientific work is to prove that you are able to work independently on a specific problem with scientific methods within a given period and to present the results properly. Your supervisor has only a limited amount of time available due to his or her numerous obligations in research and teaching so that a high degree of initiative and autonomy on your part is required for the successful completion of your scientific work. This guideline is intended to make a decisive contribution to this.

We are looking forward to a pleasant and value-creating cooperation.

The faculty of the Chair of Information Systems (Digitization in Business and Society).