

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Faculty of Life Sciences
Thaer-Institute

Berlin, August 2014

Guidance on the submission of final theses at the Faculty of Life Sciences, Thaer-Institute

0. The purpose of this guide

The following guide is intended to inform graduates about the form in which they are advised to write their final thesis. These guidelines are not exhaustive, and cannot be a replacement for discussing your work with your supervisor.

The regulations of the corresponding study programmes are valid without restriction. Separate guidelines exist for the composition of state exam theses for the teaching profession.

1. The aim and length of Bachelor and Master theses

The **Bachelor thesis** is an application-orientated final assignment. The student should use the Bachelor thesis to show that he/she is in the position to apply his/her knowledge and skills to a practical problem.

As a rule, whilst working on the Bachelor thesis, the student will solve problem-orientated tasks, in which he/she will collect, evaluate and combine available information in order to answer the questions raised.

The Bachelor thesis should develop the students' abilities and skills, encourage them to co-operate, and further develop their ability to produce clear documents and presentations.

The **Master thesis** is a research-orientated, scientific final paper, which requires a high degree of independence to be completed. The student should use the Master thesis to show that he/she is in the position to apply their knowledge and methodical skills to a scientific problem. The Master thesis shall reflect the student's ability to combine the data gained with the development of own scientific thoughts and applications, and to verify and validate it, using literature.

Length of thesis

In correspondence with instructions on the internet by other institutions, the following recommendations are given:

Bachelor theses should be between 30 and a maximum of 50 pages long.

Master theses should be between 50 and a maximum of 100 pages long.

The length of work within these limits is dependent on the chosen topic. Experimental work should be orientated towards the lower limit, and literary work towards the upper.

2. The external form of the thesis

2.1. Cover sheet

The name of your supervisor shall be given on the front cover. A model cover sheet is enclosed.

The cover sheet example for Phd theses/post doctoral teaching qualification theses is appended to the respective regulations.

2.2 Text structure

The thesis shall be word-processed or typed on A4 paper. It is recommended to write with a 1,5 spacing in font size 12 and in block format (dividing longer words). Times New Roman should be used as a font style. The left margin should be 4 cm wide, and the right 2 cm; above margin 2.5 cm, and 2 cm below. New paragraphs should usually be aligned left; the space between the paragraphs should be somewhat wider than between the lines in a paragraph. The page numbers should be placed at the top of the page, either centred, or in the right corner.

2.3 Tables and illustrations

Tables and illustrations shall be separately numbered all the way through the work. Each table or illustration shall have a clearly defined heading or caption, from which the contents should be readable independently from the rest of the text. If a large number of tables has to be included, it is recommended to include all the tables together as an appendix to ensure that the ongoing text is still easy to read. In the latter case, only a few summarising tables or diagrams should be included in the text.

2.4 Copies / Submission

Diploma, Bachelor and Master students must hand in two copies of their thesis to the Exam Office. PhD doctorate and post-doctorate candidates must hand in five copies of their thesis to the Phd office along with the required documents. The number of further copies that must be handed in is stated in the PhD doctorate/post doctorate regulations.

The submission date shall be put on record.

Theses shall usually be submitted in A4 format with writing on one or both sides of the page. They can, however, also be submitted on A5 paper, in which case you shall write on both sides. Make sure the font size you use is sufficiently large enough (see 2.2).

Final theses must be bound together when handed in. You may use a transparent cover. Publication of theses on the internet is permissible in accordance with special regulations of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

3. Subdivision

3.1 Table of Contents

At the beginning of your thesis, you shall include a table of contents with page numbers to show how it is subdivided. The pages that you use for this shall not be included in the page numbering of your thesis. You could, for example, use roman numerals (I...X) to number it. Indexes for tables, illustrations, and abbreviations shall be included in the page numbering. To start with, the main sections of the thesis should be numbered all the way through. Further sub-divisions shall be made by adding a new number, each separated by a point. In the table of contents, an indentation to the right shall be used for each further sub-division, so that it reads clearly. The advantage of this system is that the different main sections can be subdivided to varying degrees.

The table of contents shall include all the headings used in the text (all sections and sub-sections). The bibliography and the appendix with tables shall be included as main sections. The individual pages of the appendix shall be numbered through with the regular page numbers.

After the table of contents, a list of abbreviations shall be included, which contains the definitions of all the technical and subject-specific abbreviations used in the text.

3.2 The purpose of the individual parts of the thesis

1. The Introduction should present the current standpoint of scientific research as concisely and clearly as possible, and outline the problems addressed in the thesis.
2. In the Literature section, the thesis shall expound the latest information that has been published in relevant scientific magazines and dissertations (but not information from a textbook.) In addition, articles covering the immediate thesis subject area (methodical aspects and results) and also topics that border the subject or deal with it further, should be taken into consideration.
3. The Material and Methods section shall clearly describe the approaches which have been chosen to solve the problems posed in the introduction. Experiments and analyses etc. must be fully comprehensible with the information given.
4. In the Results section, all significant data shall be reported objectively and without interpretation, in the form of text, diagrams and tables.
5. In the Discussion section, the results gained shall be interpreted and be compared with those found in the literature, and conclusions shall be drawn.
6. At the end of your thesis, a short Summary of the results shall be included. The summary should outline the aim, the subject, methods, results and the most important conclusions drawn, on a maximum of 1.5 pages. Each summary shall exist independently. Readers, who want to quickly inform themselves about the essence of the thesis, should be able to do so by reading the introduction and the summary.

The thesis has to conclude with the following signed declaration:

I hereby declare that the present thesis has not been submitted as a part of any other examination procedure and has been independently written. All passages, including those from the internet, which were used directly or in modified form, especially those sources using text, graphs, charts or pictures, are indicated as such. I realize that an infringement of these principles which would amount to either an attempt of deception or deceit will lead to the institution of proceedings against myself.

4. Literature

4.1 Quotes within the text

As a rule, only original results should be quoted. It can be assumed that information from text books is common knowledge. For the text to be clearly to read, it is recommended that you write the source references in small capitals. The quote used in the text shall have the surname of the person you are quoting, and the corresponding year, in brackets after it (HERZOG 1936). You can also include the name in the course of the text. The other references shall then be included in brackets after it, e.g. "HERZOG (1936, p. 37 ff) established that...". If the source was written by more than two authors, list the first name, and write 'et al.' (et alii= and others) for the further names. If the original publication cannot be accessed, then you must state whom it was quoted by, e.g. (HERZOG 1936, quoted by RÖMER and SCHAFER 1944).

The use of quotes depends on their importance; quotation marks shall be used. The text should still flow well. With quotes, it is absolutely necessary to include the exact page numbers. Following the author's name and the year of publication, and separated by a comma, the page number of the quoted part (if a book) shall be given, followed - if appropriate - by the suffix 'f' or 'ff' for 'following', e.g. (HERZOG 1936, p. 37 ff).

4.2 Bibliography

At the end of the thesis, an exact list of all the literature that has been used and quoted shall be included. The individual sources shall be given in alphabetical order of the authors' surnames or, in the case of a group of authors, the name of the first author; the Christian name(s) of each also being mentioned. If more than one piece of work from the same author, or group of authors is quoted, then they shall be enlisted in chronological order according to the dates of publication. If more than one was published in the same year, then a low-case letter in the order of the alphabet shall be added to the year of publication within the text, as well as in the table of contents, e.g. (HERZOG 1936a); (HERZOG 1936b).

References that must be included in the bibliography:

Next to the surnames and shortened first names of the authors, separated by a blank, the publication year is mentioned and, if appropriate, a supplementary low-case letter is added. After that, the full title of the quoted work is given in the original language, if possible.

If the work is written in a rarer language, it is recommended that you include a translation of the title in brackets.

With magazines, the name of the magazine shall be given, followed by the year/volume number (and the magazine number if the pages are not consecutively paginated) and also the first and last page numbers. For example:

ROHRMOSER;G. (1994): Ethische Verantwortung im Umgang mit der Natur. *Agrarwirtschaft* **43**, 169- 172.

In the case of books, the references of authors' names, year of publication and book titles shall be given in the same order as with the magazines and, if appropriate, with details about the volume and the edition of the book. The name of the publisher and the place of publication shall follow. If articles from handbooks or anthologies have been used, then the individual article as well as the book shall be clearly indicated. After the title of the individual article, the name of the publisher and the title of the anthology shall be given. The page numbers of the article shall be given in the same way as with magazines.

For example:

HEIDHUES, F. and WEINSCHENK, K. (1989): Rural Finance Profiles in African Countries - Cameroon.

- In: MASINI, M. (Publ.): The Credit Markets of Africa. Series, Vol. 2., Finafrica, Cariplo, Mailand, 13- 25.

Attachment: Cover sheet example for Bachelor, Master, and Diploma theses

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN
Faculty of Life Sciences

„“
(Topic of thesis)

..... thesis in the study program:

submitted by:
(Family name, first name)

1st Supervisor:
(Academic degree, family name, first name)

2nd Supervisor:
(Academic degree, family name, first name)

Institute:
Division of

Berlin,