GUIDELINES FOR WRITING SEMINAR PAPERS AND THESES
IN THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS STUDIES

VAASA 201X
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1. WRITING THE THESIS

The University of Vaasa publication guidelines also apply to seminar papers and theses where applicable.

Such guidelines apply to seminar papers, bachelor’s and master’s theses in the Faculty of Business Studies. These can be augmented by the Faculty Administration Amanuensis as well as by departments, study units and professors responsible for the paper. If there are problems with understanding these guidelines, the afore-mentioned bodies should be turned to.

Master’s Thesis, which is included in the Master level studies, consists of 30 credit units. Students should be able to conduct academic research on a subject related to the research area. Typical Master’s Thesis is in the form of a monograph. Master’s Thesis can also conduct of a scientific article (which has been sent to be published in a scientific journal) and Introduction, which introduce the research theory, the research methodologies and the results of the research wider than the article itself. The scientific article based thesis should follow the guidelines of the scientific journal and the Introduction should be written according to the writing instructions of the faculty.

1.1. Format

The fonts recommended are Palatino, Times New Roman or similar. Normally the font size is 12 or the one corresponding to that, in main headings or similar places a larger size font (e.g. 14), or in some special cases a smaller font (10), may be used.

The width of the text is 15 cm, with a 3 cm margin on both sides and at the top and bottom of the page. The interlinear space corresponds to 1.5 of the traditional typewriter scale. Since theses in practice are written using word-processing programmes, the interlinear space equals point 18 on the continuous computer scale. The interlinear space in the abstract is 1.
Boldface, italics, petite (font size 10), small interlinear space (e.g. in direct quotations) among other things can be used to enliven the text. Underlining, however, is not recommended. Effects should be used logically and their overuse avoided to safeguard legibility.

The text should be divided into paragraphs which are separated by one empty line. The first line of a new paragraph is not indented. The text should be flush with both left and right margin as well as titles longer than one line. When the text is flush with the right margin, care has to be taken that there are not too many irregularly spaced lines.

Each main heading is started on a fresh page (e.g. Chapter 2 starts on a new page even if Chapter 1 has not continued to the bottom of the previous page). Subheadings are placed on the same page as the preceding text. Two-split subheadings (e.g. 2.4.) are placed on the third line from the preceding text. A subheading with more splits (e.g. 2.4.1.) is placed on the second line from the preceding text. Subheadings with more than three splits are not recommended.

Figures and Tables must have double interlinear space both above and below.

Page numbers are centered in mid-page, c. 1.5-2.5cm from the top.

The layout of the table of contents has to be like the table of contents of these guidelines. (The hyperlinks in the table of contents of these guidelines may be underlined due to the fact that they are in the www-form. Do not, however, interpret them as underlined headings. The same applies to other possible hyperlinks of these instructions as applicable. Also remember that the indentation of the table of contents for www-technical reasons may not be impeccable. The indentation of subheading numbers must be flush with the left margin of the text under the preceding heading.)
1.2. Writing instructions

The title has to be brief and unambiguous, and it has to be in accordance with the contents (study topic and locality). If necessary, subheadings can be used to specify the topic.

The table of contents has to be identical with the headings used.

Page numbering starts from the page following the cover page and continues till the last page of the paper including appendices when they are printed on normal pages. The odd page numbers are always on the right hand side of the opening, even numbers on the left. The instructions on the table of contents and the abstract, to be given later, have to be taken into consideration when ordering the pages.

**The abstract of the Master’s thesis.** An abstract of maximum one page is placed between the table of contents and the introduction (see Appendix 2). More information on the abstract, see Chapter 2.1.

**Figures.** All figures and photographs should be consecutively numbered. Legends are placed below the figure or to its side. The word figure and its number are in boldface (e.g. *Figure 1*), but the legends are not. Legends are flush with the left margin and end in a full stop.

**Tables** are provided with their respective consecutive numbering and sufficient captions. Table captions are placed above the table. Vertical lines are generally not used. The word Table and its numbering (e.g. *Table 1*) are in boldface but the table captions are not. The table captions are flush with the left margin and there is a full stop at the end. Statistical information has to be presented clearly and in accordance with the conventions followed in statistics.

**Mathematical formulae.** Mathematical formulae that may be used in the thesis have to be numbered systematically and they have to be an integral part of the text. Normal orthographic rules, including punctuation, have to be followed. Each formula is written
on its own line and is separated from the text double-spacing both above and below. The consecutive numbering will be put in the parenthesis and placed on its left side. The formula has to be indented so that all formulae start from the same point.

**Dashes.** Between extreme values or classes, whether expressed with words or numbers, a dash is used (not a hyphen) For example: in years 1941 – 1944, items 3 – 7, pages 12 – 15.

**References.** (See Chapter 1.2.1.). References are usually given in the parentheses within the text. Electronic sources are inserted in the text in the parentheses, just like conventional sources.

**List of references** (See Chapter 1.2.2.) should include all works cited as sources in the text, but nothing else. An unpublished work is placed in the list under Unpublished, and the institute or library where it is found is mentioned.

**An appendix** follows the list of references. Appendices are consecutively numbered. Figures, tables and catalogues which complement or illustrate the contents of the paper but are of large size or of less importance and therefore cannot be included in the text will be appended at the end. Questionnaires or interview forms are also placed in the appendix.

**1.2.1. Parenthetical citations**

Every reference in the text must clearly point to a specific source in the list of references. Each source mentioned in the list of references must be referred to in the text.

Within the text, references are made by giving in the parentheses the last name of the author, the year of publication, colon and the page or pages referred to. If the reference is to the whole work, page numbers are left out.
An electronic source is mentioned within the text in the parentheses in the same way as a conventional source, but without page numbers. The Internet address of the electronic source is not included in the reference; the full details are given in the list of references.

For example a printed publication: (Suutari 1996: 120 – 121) and an electronic publication: (Salmi & Virtanen 1996).

If the name of the author is mentioned in the text, there is no need to repeat it in the parentheses. In such cases only the year and a possible reference to pages are put in the parentheses.

For example: Virtanen (1966: 25 – 27) has reported …

If a source has several authors, they are all cited in the first reference. In subsequent references it is sufficient only to give the last name of the first author followed by ym. (if the source is in Finnish) or et al. (with sources in other languages), the year of publication and the pages.

For example: first mention (Vauhkonen, Viillos & Härmälä 1968: 34), later references (Vauhkonen ym. 1968: 56 – 58).

If there is a generalisation in the text based on several sources, they are mentioned within the same parentheses, e.g. in the order they were published. References are separated with semicolons.

For example: (Morrill 1965; Winter 1969: 36).

Works by the same author are distinguished by means of the year of publication, and they are mentioned in the order of publication. Publications by the same author from the same year are identified by means of low case letters.

For example: (Smith 1970a, 1970b).
If the source does not have a specific author, it is referred to in the text by the first words of the title appearing in the list of references. For example: (Komiteanmietintö 1986: 12).

For example: (Kirjanpitolaki (1336/1997), later KPL).
For example: according to Asunto-osakeyhtiölain 69 § … or according to Asunto-osakeyhtiölaki (809/1991) 69 §:n (296/1998) …(if specification is necessary for the information given).

What has been derived from each source has to be exactly indicated in the parenthetical citation. If the whole information content of a paragraph is borrowed from somebody else, the citation is placed at the end of the paragraph after the full stop. The reference within the parentheses ends in a full stop which is followed by the closing parenthesis.

For example: …end of the text. (Suutari 1996: 120 – 121.)

If the reference applies to a shorter passage or one sentence, the citation is placed within the sentence.

The nature of the reference can be clarified by using abbreviations, such as: see, cf. (compare), viz. (namely).


A direct quotation consisting of several sentences is set away from the text by indenting it, putting it in quotation marks and using smaller interlinear spacing.

1.2.2. List of references

Publications are alphabetised by the last name of the author. The alphabetical listing follows the convention of the language in which the thesis has been written. Publications by the same author are listed in order of the publication date. Works by the
same author published in the same year are identified by adding a low case letter after the year of publication (e.g. 1960a, 1960b etc.).

If the same source has several authors, first comes the last name of the first author, followed by their first name(s) or initials. The other authors’ names are not inverted: first name comes before last name with no comma between. There is a comma after each author’s name, with the exception of the last two that are separated with an ampersand (&).

If titles of books are in English, initial capitals are used for all major words. In the title of an article from a publication series, only the first word is capitalized; in the title of the publication series, all major words are capitalised.

**Books**

*Printed books:*

| Last name of the author, first name(s) or initials (the year of publication). Title of the book. Edition. Place of publication: Publisher. *Page number. *Annotations. *ISBN. |


Electronic publication:

Last name of the author, first name(s) or initials (the year of publication). Title of the book [type of medium]. Edition. Place of publication: Publisher, time of updating [date of citation]. *Annotations. Availability and address. *ISBN.


Publications (a book or an article) from a periodical (or from a publication series or a magazine or a journal)

Printed article (or a book from a series):

Last name of the author, first name(s) or initials (the year of publication). Title of the article. Title of the periodical. Volume number: issue number, the inclusive page numbers of the article cited..

Article published in electronic form:

Last name of the author, first name(s) or initials (the year of publication). Title of the article. *Title of the periodical [type of medium] Volume number: issue number [date of citation], location. *Annotations. Availability and address. *ISSN


Article from a compilation

Printed article:

Last name of the author, first name(s) or initials (the year of publication). Title of the article. In: *Title of the compilation*, pages. Editor(s) of the compilation. Place of publication: Publisher.

**Article in an electronic compilation:**

Last name of the author, first name(s) or initials (the year of publication). Title of the article. In: *Title of the compilation* [type of medium]. Editor(s) of the compilation. Place of publication: Publisher [date of citation]. Location in the compilation.


**Unpublished written work**

Differentiation between "unpublished" work and "electronically published" work is not always unambiguous. More detailed instructions concerning reference made to e-mail lists or personal e-mail messages are given later

**Conventional sources:**


**Electronic source:**


Anonymous author (or corporate author)

In the Standard SFS 5342, there are instructions for referring to patents, maps, statistics, standards, Governmental documents, laws and other such sources. In legal science, the general practice in connection with laws is, instead of including them in the list of references, to draw a separate list (of abbreviations) where the abbreviations used of laws are explained (e.g. KPL = Kirjanpitolaki 30.12.1997/1336). If there are several Committee Reports, they are mentioned in the order of appearance. The same applies to e.g. Statistics Finland.

Printed source:


Electronic source:

Periodicals

When reference is made to all or several volumes of e.g. a year book or magazine, the title and the publication information of the periodical in question are mentioned in the list of references, instead of mentioning each issue separately. The volume and issue numbers as well as page numbers are in the parenthetical citation in the text.

Printed Journal:

Virittäjä. Helsinki: Kotikielen seura, 1897-. ISSN 0042-6806.

Electronic Journal:


Instructions concerning electronic journals are temporary and are based on the international standard ISO/DIS 690-2, which is presently being drafted.

Source with DOI name:

Including the DOI name (Digital Object Identifier) in the reference: More information about the DOI system: http://www.doi.org/

Dividing of a URL-reference at the end of a line:

When dividing a URL-reference at the end of a line, do not use hyphens. Neither should the line break be made at a hyphen already belonging to the reference. Instead the URL-reference should be divided at a slash, so that the slash of the division point is moved to the beginning of the next line.
2. EDITING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE THESIS

The structure and process of the degree and thesis writing are explained in the study guide for Business Studies. This chapter deals with the final stages of the thesis writing process.

2.1. Abstract

The abstract is included in the thesis as a single-sided page placed after the table of contents, and it is numbered. When the thesis is left for assessment, at least one separate copy of the abstract page without a page number has to be submitted.

The abstract page must have information about the topic, material, research methods used and major research results. The title of the thesis in the abstract has to be identical with the name on the cover page of the thesis. Model for the abstract page is in the Appendix 2.

Take care to fill ALL the requirements for the abstract and note the margins. There should be 1 – 5 keywords, and the first word should indicate the topic in as great a detail as possible while the others (if any) further specify it. If necessary, you can discuss the keywords with the Assistant or the Supervisor.

In addition, the abstract page has to be sent to the library, to the "Thesis form"-page http://www.tritonia.fi/?d=247&l=3. The receipt of the WWW-form is a prerequisite for considering the thesis at the Dean’s acceptance.
2.2. Editing the thesis

The layout of the final version of the thesis should be verified with the Amanuensis before the thesis is duplicated.

2.2.1. Master’s thesis

1) Attention must be paid to the quality of the print of the Master’s thesis. A laser printer or a printer of equal standard should be used when printing the text from a word processor. When Figures, Tables and Appendices are pasted and copied, care has to be taken that there are no signs of untidiness in the thesis.

2) The text on the cover page must be in accordance with the model (Appendix 1).

3) The colour of the cover is for the whole faculty Pale blue.

4) The paper has to be copied on both sides apart from the title page and the abstract page, which must be one-sided. Pages that remain empty because of this rule are, however, considered paged, even though their page numbers are not marked. The page numbering of the thesis is therefore consecutive.

5) The pages and the coloured front page are stapled together, after which they are glued to the cover so that on the front there is a transparent plastic cover and a white cardboard cover at the back. On the back cover, a tape is added where the last name of the author and the year of the thesis can be seen. The copying of the thesis may be left with any printing house.

6) All the theses written at the University of Vaasa undergo a plagiarism check based on an electronic plagiarism detection software before the theses are accepted. Deliver a pdf version of your thesis into Moodle.

7) A thesis handed in for evaluation must have three or four copies. Submit four copies of your thesis, or if you have given a permission for publishing online, three copies to Amanuensis. In addition, a paper version of the separate abstract page (without page number) is left to the Amanuensis. In addition, the thesis (all pages + abstract) has to be saved in the electronic form (see item 2.1. afore) before the thesis is submitted.

8) The reader requires 30 days (excluding the holiday periods) for assessment.
9) The theses are not returned.

2.2.2. Bachelor’s thesis

According to the stipulations concerning the Bachelor’s degree in Business Studies (a University degree of 120 credits), a student has to write a thesis and pass a written maturity test. The thesis for the Bachelor’s degree equals 5 credits. The Bachelor’s thesis is either contributing to the Master’s thesis or is an independent piece of work. The writing of the Bachelor’s thesis usually starts during the third year of study in joint groups with those working on the Master’s thesis, or according to the instructions of the department, in separate thesis groups aiming at the Bachelor’s degree.

The Bachelor’s thesis has to fulfill the requirements set for an independent academic paper, to show familiarity with academic problem-setting, different approaches and methods.

The Bachelor’s thesis is submitted to the Supervisor in two copies unless the Supervisor otherwise instructs. The Bachelor’s thesis is similar to the Master’s thesis in appearance. The Bachelor’s thesis is evaluated as an examination. Unlike the Master’s thesis, it is not considered by the Dean’s acceptance.
2.3. Assessment and approval of the thesis

2.3.1. Master’s thesis

The time required for the assessment of the Master’s thesis is 30 days. This means that the thesis has to be submitted for evaluation c. 5 weeks ahead of the Deans acceptance where the grading and approval of the thesis are considered. It is advisable to check the timing when the thesis is submitted. In case the thesis is the last study attainment of the student, it should be on the Dean’s acceptance agenda before the deadline for the request for the graduation certificate (14 days before the graduation ceremony).

The grades used in the assessment of the Master’s thesis are sufficient, satisfactory, good, very good, and excellent. As a rule the thesis has two readers.

After the Dean’s acceptance, the student will be informed of the grade of the thesis and a copy of the reader’s statement will be sent to them.

If the student considers that the evaluation process of the Master’s thesis has been faulty, they can make a complaint to the Faculty Council. The request for rectification has to be submitted within 14 days of the date when the student has received information of the grade and grading criteria. In case of dissatisfaction with the rectification decision, amendment of it can be requested in writing from the Examination Board within 14 days of the service of the decision. (The Study Attainment Regulations of the University of Vaasa; Section 29, 1998.)

There is no right of appeal in the rectification resolution made [by the Examination Board], concerning study attainment (Section 3.2).
2.3.2. Bachelor’s thesis

The grading scale for the Bachelor’s thesis is sufficient, satisfactory, good, very good, and excellent. The thesis is read by the supervisor of the thesis group, or if necessary, an academic assigned by the Head of the Department.

The Bachelor’s degree is comparable to an examination; it is assessed and stored like an examination. Rectification procedure for it is the same as for an examination. A student dissatisfied with the grading of the Bachelor’s thesis can orally or in writing ask the academic who has assessed it for rectification, within 14 days of the date when informed of the grade and its criteria. In case of dissatisfaction with the rectification decision, amendment of it can be requested in writing from the Examination Board within 14 days of the service of the decision. (The Study Attainment Regulations of the University of Vaasa, Section 29, 1998.)
3. MATURITY TEST

The student has to pass a maturity test, i.e. to write a paper on a topic related to the thesis, as a part of the Master’s or Bachelor’s degree in Business Studies. The maturity test is an invigilated examination where students prove that they master their discipline and mother tongue.

If the student takes the maturity test in the language of their school education, it certifies that they have perfect competence of that language. A person who has 1) got school education in Finnish or Swedish, 2) passed the matriculation examination which contains a grade in Finnish or Swedish, or 3) passed a maturity test at a University in Finnish or Swedish is considered having good competence of that language. (Decree on Demonstrating Good Competence of Finnish and Swedish (442/87) Sections 11 – 12.)

The student is usually given two topics related to their thesis from which they have to choose one. An essay on that topic has to be written. The reader is assumed to be a person who is aware of the general thinking within the discipline in question but is not particularly well-informed about the problem discussed. Thus, the writer must not assume that the reader is acquainted with their thesis, but text has to be comprehensible as such.

The maturity test can be taken on any examination day, and registration for it is done by using an examination envelope available from the study office. Registration for the maturity test is not allowed before the Master’s thesis has in its final form been submitted for inspection. This can at its earliest be seven days after the thesis has been submitted. It is advisable to check the timing of the maturity test with the supervisor.

If the student has already taken the maturity test for the Bachelor’s degree, the knowledge of the language used need not be retested; only the subject knowledge is tested. (Cf. Decree on Degrees of Economics and Business Administration, Section 11,
Clause 2.) If the student has previously taken a maturity test as part of another academic degree, the procedure is the same. The maturity test on content only is required.

Apart from having good academic content, the writing is expected to be stylistically good. The text has to be well-structured. It has to be built by linguistic methods, not e.g. by means of tables, whose authenticity cannot be verified at the test. It has to have a title (without a title, the language reviser cannot judge whether the writer is capable of abiding by the subject). The paper has to have an introduction and a conclusion. The recommended length is one folded paper written on each line. The text must be divided into paragraphs between which one empty line has to be left.

It is recommended that the essay be recopied. Handwriting has to be clear, and capital and low case letters must be clearly distinguishable, words must also be clearly separated. The basic rules on orthography and punctuation have to be followed. Plentiful use of abbreviations is not allowed. The paragraph and sentences have to be logically linked, sentences have to be complete and varied. Severe mistakes in references are unacceptable. The word order has to be unambiguous and in accordance with the information structure presented, the style used has to be rigorous, informal style is unacceptable.

The same time limit of 30 days (holiday periods excluded) applies to the inspection of maturity tests as to other examinations. The maturity test is not graded; it is either passed or failed. If the maturity test is failed due to the content, the student has to see the supervisor before registering for a retake. If failure is due to linguistic faults, the student has to contact the person who has revised the language.
4. THESES IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN FINNISH OR SWEDISH

Students can write their theses in English. Use of English has to be agreed with the supervisor of the thesis.

Foreign students can take their maturity test in languages other than Finnish and Swedish. There will be a note in their Graduation Certificate of the language in which the maturity test has been taken. Foreign students should discuss matters related to thesis writing and the maturity test with the study secretary or the thesis supervisor before they start writing it.

The expenses possibly accruing from the language revision or other such matters related to writing in a language other than Finnish or Swedish are chargeable to the student.
APPENDIX 2. The Abstract

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA
School of xxx
Author: Name
Topic of the Thesis:
Name of the Supervisor: Name
Degree: Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration

Bachelor’s/Master’s Programme:
Year of Entering the University:
Year of Completing the Thesis: 201x Pages: XX

ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS: