Information regarding

BACHELOR THESIS SUPERVISION

at the Institute for Strategic Management (ISM)

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This document gives students, who are interested in writing a bachelor thesis at the Institute for Strategic Management (ISM), an overview of requirements, guidelines and the supervision process. Students are advised to read this guideline before applying for thesis supervision at ISM.

as of January 2023

1 Requirements for writing a bachelor thesis at ISM

Students from WU have the possibility to write a bachelor thesis at ISM. Please note that the successful completion of the course "Grundlagen wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens"/"Academic Research Techniques" constitutes a prerequisite for applying for a bachelor thesis supervision at our Institute. Furthermore, students preferrably attended one of the specialization courses offered by one of the Institutes of the Department of Strategy and Innovation (e.g. "International Strategic Management 1" and "International Strategic Management 2" of the "Cross Functional Management" specialization).

Information on important administrative aspects related to the process of writing a bachelor thesis at WU are available on https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-degree-program/student-guide-bachelors-programs/bachelors-thesis/.

In case you are studying in an individual track (no standard curriculum), please also submit your current GPA via the following item in the application form:

Current grade *   [Browse… |]

2 Writing a bachelor thesis at ISM

2.1 Assigning a topic

Students can either propose a topic that fits the main research field of strategic alliances or select from a number of suggestions from the supervisor. If current bachelor thesis topics are advertised, they will be announced on the ISM homepage.

Students can apply for thesis supervision via a form available on the ISM website on a continuous basis. If the application is successful, the topic of the bachelor thesis (in the area of strategic alliances) will be discussed in a first meeting with the potential supervisor. Please note, that this is not a confirmation of supervision. The final confirmation of supervision takes place with acceptance of the proposal.

2.2 Proposal

A proposal is a preliminary work plan. It is meant as a guideline for the students writing the thesis as well as for the supervisor. It is about 3 to 5 pages long and includes the following:
- **Cover page**
  - **Title of the thesis:** This is usually a provisional working title, which can be adapted accordingly during the writing of the bachelor thesis.
  - **Name of the student and Student ID**
- **Introduction to the topic:** This section describes which topic the bachelor thesis is dealing with

- **Problem definition:** It will be briefly explained which research question(s) should be answered by writing the thesis.
- **Objective of the thesis:** It should be clearly stated, what the student wants to achieve and why the student writes this bachelor thesis.
- **Procedure/Methodology:** This section describes how the student wants to work on the problem. This can be done either in the form of a pure literature analysis or by supplementing it with an empirical part (e.g. a survey, interviews, a case study). During the first meeting with the potential supervisor the methodology will be agreed upon.
- **Possible thesis structure:** This section provides an overview of the planned structure and the chapter structure of the thesis.
  - Abstract
  - Table of contents
  - Introduction (Introduction, problem definition, relevance for both theory and practice, objective of the thesis)
  - Methodology
  - Literature review
  - Results (if applicable)
  - Discussion
  - Implications and limitations
  - Conclusion
  - Reference list
  - Appendix (if applicable)
- **Time table:** A preliminary timetable (no precise dates necessary) for writing the bachelor thesis and mentoring meetings will provide a guideline for individual time scheduling and planning for the student and the supervisor.
- **Preliminary list of references:** The preliminary bibliography contains the sources that the student would like to use or has already used to create the proposal.

The proposal should give an overview of the work and should clarify the goal of the thesis and the steps necessary to achieve it. It provides the first foundation for the bachelor thesis and is important initial groundwork. It should be written in good academic English, well structured and include in-text references.

Incomplete proposals are not considered for review and will be rejected. For reasons of fairness, the thesis proposal will not be discussed in person or via mail before students submit their proposal. The proposal is assessed based on its quality and thoroughness (i.e. research-oriented proposals – sufficient review of relevant academic literature). The final confirmation of supervision takes place with acceptance of the proposal.

The deadline for the proposal is 4 weeks after the student has met with the supervisor to discuss the bachelor thesis topic. It should be handed in electronically via email to the respective supervisor.

2.3 Time frame

The student should work on the Bachelor thesis quickly and continuously. The thesis should be completed within 4 months after the acceptance of the proposal. Students are encouraged to meet this time frame and plan their workload accordingly. Assuming that students allocate at least 50% of their working time to complete the thesis, the duration of writing a Bachelor thesis should be 3 months at the maximum. If the student unreasonably exceeds this time frame, the supervisor can decide to terminate the supervision. The evaluation process can take up to 1 month after the thesis has been uploaded on Learn@WU. It is therefore the student's responsibility to plan ahead and manage time so that additional deadlines (e.g. completion of studies) can be met.

Other aspects of the supervision process (e.g., feedback on jointly defined project phases) are agreed upon with the supervisor. The student is advised to contact the supervisor in order to discuss the progress of the work and to clarify any questions/problems. However, the supervisor will not correct the thesis prior to the final submission.

2.4 Submitting the bachelor thesis

The thesis needs to be handed in electronically with the official cover page by uploading it to Learn@WU. All information regarding the upload can be found on **https://learn.wu.ac.at/guide/**. The thesis will undergo a plagiarism check. A printed version of the uploaded bachelor thesis needs to be handed in as well.

3 Searching for literature

The student should use as much high-quality and up-to-date literature as possible. Students should use articles from relevant leading international journals. ISM considers those journals high-quality that are not ranked lower than "B" (with "A+" being the best ranking) in the Journal Ranking of the Department of Strategy & Innovation available on https://bach.wu.ac.at/d/research/ratings/.

Other literature such as scientific books, textbooks can also be used but in moderation and with the focus on high-quality. In some cases, Internet sources may be used, e.g. for corporate and industry information (such as company websites) or working papers (scientific papers) by researchers. However, inappropriately published sources (Wikipedia, lecture scripts, other bachelor or master theses) should not be used.

The library of the WU is excellently equipped and offers access to the most important databases.

4 Formal guidelines

The Institut for Strategic Management recommends writing the bachelor thesis in English. It should be noted that the work needs to be linguistically and grammatically impeccable. Bachelor theses containing obvious defects regarding these guidelines will not be accepted for assessment.

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4.1 Formatting guidelines

ISM does not define specific formatting requirements. However, students are advised to choose a common font such as Arial or Times New Roman in a 12-point readable font with 1.5 spacing. Commonly applied style guides such as APA6 or AOM can be used as a reference regarding formatting requirements. It is important to note that the chosen style shall be applied throughout the thesis.

All figures and tables must be numbered consecutively (Figure 1 to Figure 99, Table 1 to Table 99). Less important and/or extensive illustrations and tables, which are not necessary for understanding explanations in the text should be in the list of figures/tables. Each figure/table should be designed in such a way that it can be understood without the corresponding text. Consequently, it should include a headline, units of measures/rating scales etc. (if applicable).

4.2 Structure of the bachelor thesis

All relevant directories such as table of contents, list of tables and list of figures must be included in the bachelor thesis. The main body should include an introduction, which describes the motivation, the problem and the objective of the work. Followed by a literature review, a description of the methods used and a chapter summarizing results and an outlook on future research. The thesis concludes with the bibliography.

Example of the structure of the bachelor thesis:
- Cover pages (including official cover page)
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- List of figures, list of tables, abbreviation list, symbol list (if applicable)
- Introduction (Introduction, problem definition, relevance for both theory and practice, objective of the thesis)
- Methodology
- Literature review
- Results (if applicable)
- Discussion
- Implications and limitations
- Conclusion
- Reference list
- Appendix (if applicable)

For the Bachelor program held in German ("WISO") the bachelor thesis is weighted with 8 ECTS points. Therefore, it should have 30 pages excluding bibliography and appendix. For the English-held Bachelor program ("Business and economics") the bachelor thesis is weighted with 10 ECTS points. Therefore, it should have 40 pages excluding bibliography and appendix.

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4.3 Citation rules

In general, scientific work is characterized by the fact that all thoughts, which cannot be assigned to the author of the bachelor thesis, must be identified. If this is not done consistently, it is plagiarism. ISM and WU understand plagiarism as a serious infringement in academic work. Plagiarism includes missing citations (meaningful or literal), part of another author's work, the use of "Ghost Writers", "copy-and-paste" and so on. The submitted bachelor thesis is subject to a plagiarism check. Plagiarism will result in a negative evaluation of the bachelor thesis. Students are advised to check the information regarding plagiarism by WU available on https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-degree-program/student-guide-bachelors-programs/courses-and-exams/plagiarism/.

By citing the student ensures that a third party can recognize beyond doubt, which thoughts were adopted by other authors and what are the student's own thoughts. Since the student should have passed the course "Grundlagen wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens"/"Academic research techniques" in order to write the thesis, basic principles of citation should be familiar.

As a general rule, a chosen citation style must be maintained throughout the bachelor thesis. ISM recommends using APA as citation style. Other citation styles may be used after consultation with the supervisor. All used figures and tables must also be quoted.

In the list of references the sources should be arranged chronologically according to (first) authors (e.g. all publications of Porter as sole author followed by those of Porter with C and D as co-authors etc.).

ISM recommends using literature management software such as Citavi, EndNote or Mendeley.