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Last Update: 30. June 2026 (V4)

Guidelines for Written Seminar, Bachelor's, or Master's Thesis

Written seminar, bachelor's, master's, and diploma theses are scholarly works and therefore an important part of your studies at the University of Regensburg. Their production can be learned, practiced, and refined—and will, hopefully, soon enable you to participate in the scientific discourse in logistics and controlling.

The following briefly lists helpful guidelines for writing a successful academic paper. After establishing a few formal rules, which we kindly ask you to observe, the emphasis is on helping you along the sometimes tedious process of improving your writing skills.

These suggestions have emerged from our seminar teaching and from grading both successful and less successful papers. They focus on the typical pitfalls that arise when writing the academic works mentioned above and therefore do not claim to be exhaustive. Various issues (for example, finding and processing sources) are not addressed here; other sources are referred to in this regard.

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1 Formal Guidelines

The importance of the external form of a scientific paper is generally overestimated. Scholarliness is equated with formalism. By the same token, adherence to formalities is often regarded as sufficient to pass the work. This is a fallacy and is also not the basis on which your scientific paper will be evaluated in our chair. Nevertheless, external form is important, because it affects the usability and comprehensibility of the written work.

1.1 Formatting and Labeling

The specifications for formatting the written assignment are based on practical considerations and have been kept to a minimum:

- Font size 11 for the main text, 12 for headings, 10 for footnotes
- Font: Arial
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Margins: left and right 3 cm, top and bottom 2 cm
- Single-sided printing, with page numbering
- Use special formatting (bold, italics, etc.) only very sparingly, if at all.
- Integrate tables and figures directly into the text. Label them clearly and consistently and refer to them in the text.
- Use standard English spelling
- For seminar papers: maximum 30 pages, bachelor's theses: 30 pages, master's theses: 60 pages. This refers to the text body only.

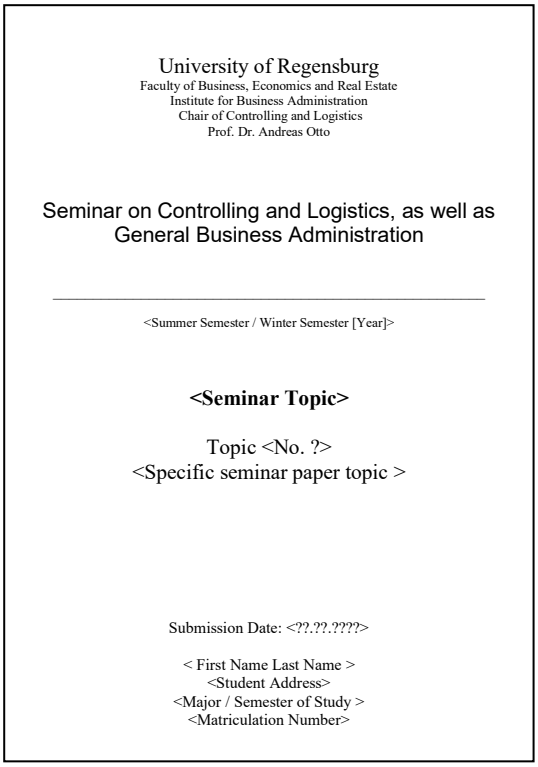
1.2 Structure

The academic papers must include the following elements in the order specified below:

1. Title Page (see 1.2.1)
2. Table of Contents (see 1.2.2)
3. List of Figures, if applicable (see 1.2.3)
4. List of Appendices, if applicable (see 1.2.5)
5. List of Abbreviations, if applicable (see 1.2.4)
6. List of Symbols, if applicable (see 1.2.4)
7. Text Body
8. Appendix, if applicable (see 1.2.5)
9. Bibliography (see 1.2.6)
10. Plagiarism Statement, including date and signature (see 1.2.7)

1.2.1 Title Page

The title page for a seminar paper must be formatted as follows:



University of Regensburg
Faculty of Business, Economics and Real Estate
Institute for Business Administration
Chair of Controlling and Logistics
Prof. Dr. Andreas Otto

Seminar on Controlling and Logistics, as well as General Business Administration

<Summer Semester / Winter Semester [Year]>

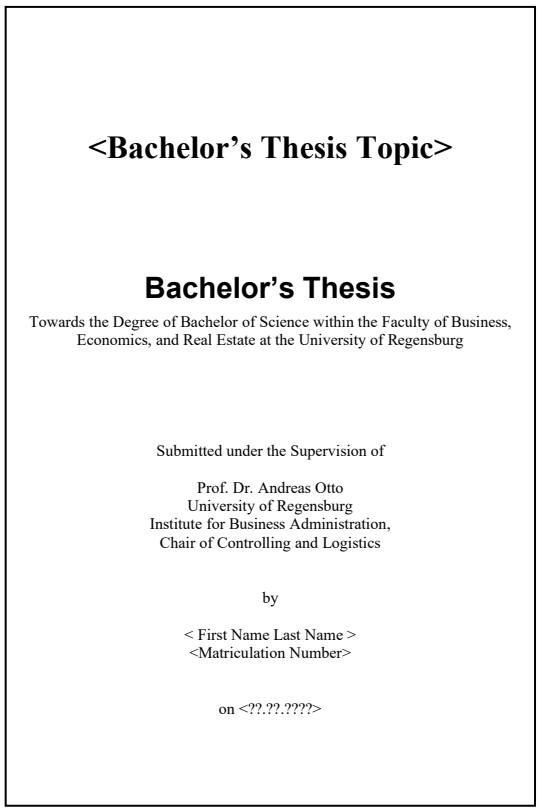
<Seminar Topic>

Topic <No. ?>
<Specific seminar paper topic >

Submission Date: <??.??.????>

< First Name Last Name >
<Student Address>
<Major / Semester of Study >
<Matriculation Number>

The title page for a bachelor's or master's thesis must be formatted as follows:



<Bachelor's Thesis Topic>

Bachelor's Thesis

Towards the Degree of Bachelor of Science within the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Real Estate at the University of Regensburg

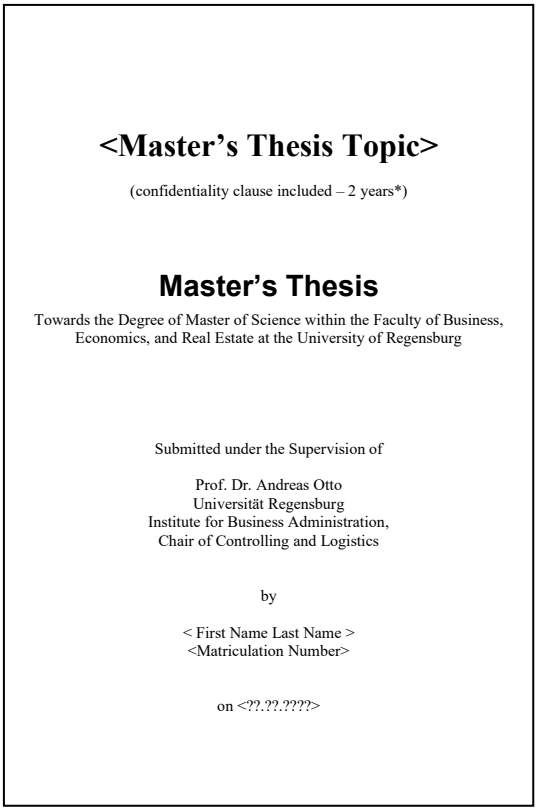
Submitted under the Supervision of

Prof. Dr. Andreas Otto
University of Regensburg
Institute for Business Administration,
Chair of Controlling and Logistics

by

< First Name Last Name >
<Matriculation Number>

on <??.??.????>



<Master's Thesis Topic>

(confidentiality clause included – 2 years*)

Master's Thesis

Towards the Degree of Master of Science within the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Real Estate at the University of Regensburg

Submitted under the Supervision of

Prof. Dr. Andreas Otto
Universität Regensburg
Institute for Business Administration,
Chair of Controlling and Logistics

by

< First Name Last Name >
<Matriculation Number>

on <??.??.????>

(If a confidentiality clause is required, the duration must be obtained from the company)

1.2.2 Table of Contents

The table of contents should provide the reader with an initial overview of the structure and, thereby, of the main contents of the paper, and should make its logical structure ("thread of argument") clear. Through this outline you show the structure of your work and thus also your systematic intellectual effort in organizing it around a specific research question. The following points should be observed when structuring the paper:

Aspect	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
The outline must follow the decimal system.	*1 SCM as Success Factor* *2 Key Drivers of SCM* *2.1 Key Driver 1* *2.2 Key Driver 2* *2.3 Key Driver 3* *3. …*	*A. SCM as Success Factor* *B. Key Drivers of SCM* *a. Key Driver 1* *b. Key Driver 2* *c. Key Driver 3* *C. …*
Each individual section heading must be included in the table of contents with the corresponding page numbers.		
Each section heading should reflect the content of the corresponding section. To this end, formulate informative ("speaking") headings to		1. Introduction 2. Main Part 3. Conclusion

make orientation easier for the reader. Ideally, the research question and the result should be recognizable simply by reading the headings.		
The section headings listed in the table of contents must be reproduced unchanged in the text.		
Consistent depth of the outline, i.e., content-wise equally important main sections should have the same formal rank within the outline's hierarchical structure.	*1 SCM as Success Factor* *2 Key Drivers of SCM* *2.1 Key Driver 1* *2.2 Key Driver 2* *2.3 Key Driver 3* *3 …*	*1 SCM as Success Factor* *2 Key Drivers of SCM* *2.1 Key Driver 1* *2.2 Key Driver 2* *3 Coordination as Key Driver*
Pay attention to sufficient depth of structure. Avoid breaking your work down too much, as this can make the "thread of argument" no longer recognizable. However, do subdivide individual chapters into meaningful sub-sections; in a 15-page paper, a 10-page chapter without any further subdivisions is generally inappropriate.	*1 SCM as Success Factor* *2 Key Drivers of SCM* *2.1 Key Driver 1* *2.2 Key Driver 2* *2.3 Key Driver 3* *3 …*	*1 SCM as Success Factor* *2 Key Drivers of SCM* *2.1 Key Driver 1* *2.1.1 Detail* *2.1.1.1 Detail* *2.1.1.1.1 Detail* *2.1.1.1.2 Detail* *2.1.1.1.3 Detail* *2.2 Key Driver 2* *2.3 Key Driver 3* *3 …*
Any further subdivided section must include at least two sub-sections.		*1 Introduction* *2 Detail* *2.1 Detail* *3 Conclusion*

1.2.3 Figures and List of Figures

Figures should complement the text in a concise and clear way. Therefore, only figures that are embedded into the text via references or explanations should be used. Figures in the main text must be numbered separately and provided with an informative caption. The source of each figure should be given in a footnote or immediately after the caption. All figures in the main text must be listed in a list of figures, under their number and with the corresponding page number. For papers that present extensive data material in tabular form, a separate list of tables may be required. Figures and tables should be created by the author themselves. Wherever possible, low-quality scanning should be avoided.

1.2.4 Abbreviations, List of Abbreviations and List of Symbols

Abbreviations in the text should be avoided as far as possible. The use of **common abbreviations**, such as e.g., i.e., and etc., is permitted. These do not need to be

included in the list of abbreviations. However, abbreviations used purely for convenience, such as BWL, Info, or BSP, are **not allowed**.

Field-specific abbreviations of a substantive nature may be used but must be listed in the list of abbreviations.

Topic-specific abbreviations must be spelled out the first time they appear, for example, *Computer Aided Planning (CAP)* or *Supply Chain Management (SCM)*. These must likewise be included in the list of abbreviations.
All mathematical and technical **symbols** and **formula symbols** used in formally oriented papers can be regarded as special variants of abbreviations; if they go beyond generally understood symbols and their combinations (for example, Σ, m^2, etc.), they must be explained in a separate **list of symbols**.

1.2.5 Appendix and List of Appendices

Materials that would disrupt the flow of argument in the main text but are nevertheless indispensable for understanding it, for example large tables, questionnaires and figures, lengthy formula derivations, unpublished sources, and similar items should be placed in the **appendix**. All appendices must, analogous to the figures, be given an informative title, numbered, and listed in a separate **list of appendices**.

1.2.6 Bibliography Layout

In the **bibliography** all sources must be listed in alphabetical order by author. Multiple publications by the same author are to be arranged chronologically underneath one another, beginning with the oldest title. The bibliography must not be subdivided (for example into books, journal articles, and dissertations)!

Sources without given author are entered in the alphabet under "N.U." ("name unkown"), or, if applicable, under the name of the issuing institution (for example, annual reports, brochures, market research studies) and cited accordingly. Unpublished material must be clearly marked, for example as "unpubl. Master's thesis, Munich 1987".

As a general rule, all source references must enable the interested reader to locate the original source (see also section 1.4).

1.2.7 Plagiarism Statement

1.2.7.1 Wording for Bachelor's and Master's Theses according to PO 2015

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich habe die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt. Die Arbeit wurde bisher an keiner anderen Hochschule zur Erlangung eines akademischen Grades eingereicht. Die

vorgelegten Druckexemplare und die dem Prüfer/der Prüferin zur Verfügung gestellte elektronische Version (PDF-Datei) der Arbeit sind identisch. Von den in §13 Abs. 3 PO 2015 vorgesehenen Rechtsfolgen habe ich Kenntnis.

Regensburg, den (Datum) (Unterschrift)

English translation:*
I have written this paper independently and used no other sources or aids than those specified. The paper has not previously been submitted at any other university for obtaining an academic degree. The submitted printed copies and the electronic version (PDF file) provided to the examiner are identical. I am aware of the legal consequences stipulated in §13 Paragraph 3 of the Examination Regulations 2015.
* for reference only - German version is legally binding.

1.2.7.2 Wording for Bachelor's Theses aacording to PO 2021

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich habe die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt. Die Arbeit wurde bisher an keiner anderen Hochschule zur Erlangung eines akademischen Grades eingereicht. Die vorgelegten Druckexemplare und die dem Prüfer/der Prüferin zur Verfügung gestellte elektronische Version (PDF-Datei) der Arbeit sind identisch. Von den in §27 Abs. 6 BPO 2021 vorgesehenen Rechtsfolgen habe ich Kenntnis.

Regensburg, den (Datum) (Unterschrift)

English translation:*
I have written this paper independently and used no other sources or aids than those specified. The paper has not previously been submitted at any other university for obtaining an academic degree. The submitted printed copies and the electronic version (PDF file) provided to the examiner are identical. I am aware of the legal consequences stipulated in §13 Paragraph 3 of the Examination Regulations 2015.
* for reference only - German version is legally binding.

1.2.7.3 Wording for Master's Theses according to PO 2021

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Ich habe die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt. Die Arbeit wurde bisher an keiner

anderen Hochschule zur Erlangung eines akademischen Grades eingereicht. Die vorgelegten Druckexemplare und die dem Prüfer/der Prüferin zur Verfügung gestellte elektronische Version (PDF-Datei) der Arbeit sind identisch. Von den in §26 Abs. 6 MPO 2021 vorgesehenen Rechtsfolgen habe ich Kenntnis.

Regensburg, den (Datum) (Unterschrift)

English translation:*
I have written this paper independently and used no other sources or aids than those specified. The paper has not previously been submitted at any other university for obtaining an academic degree. The submitted printed copies and the electronic version (PDF file) provided to the examiner are identical. I am aware of the legal consequences stipulated in §26 Paragraph 6 of the MPO 2021.
*for reference only -German version is legally binding.

1.3 Citations, Sources, and Bibliography

Citations are statements that are either reproduced verbatim or paraphrased from other authors. All citations must be clearly identifiable as such. Citations show which sources you have used in preparing your work. Whenever you adopt another author's ideas verbatim or in paraphrase, you are **obliged** to make this clear by citing them. A violation of this **citation requirement** is regarded as a serious breach of the principles of academic work and will result in the work being marked as "insufficient," even if the topic has otherwise been executed satisfactorily. In some cases, you may also be infringing copyright.

Before citing or including unpublished sources (unpublished academic papers, white papers, statistics, or other internal company documents, etc.) in your work, you must obtain the author's written consent. Please pay careful attention to this requirement!

Handling citations and sources in the text and in the bibliography may at first seem bureaucratic and requires careful attention. However, this is essential to unequivocally document the use of the intellectual work of others. The formal requirements are therefore not an end in themselves, but a reflection of practical considerations.

There are different systems for citing literature: First, the so-called footnote referencing style, in which the text refers to a footnote (at the bottom of the page) that contains the corresponding source reference in short-form. Second, there is the in-text citation, in which the short-form reference appears directly in parentheses immediately after the quoted passage within the main text.

In any case, the use of in-text citations (author-date style) is recommended. Here, the author's surname (and, if applicable, an abbreviated given name), the year of publication, and the page number are given. The year is placed in parentheses. If multiple works by the same author were published in the same year, the letters a, b, c, etc. are added after the year. The same labels must be used correspondingly in the bibliography. For reasons of practicality, the short reference style is to be preferred over the full citation.

Footnotes generally serve two main functions: First, they can provide source references for all citations used on the page (see above). Second, independent of source citation, footnotes can contain additional content-related comments by the author that complement the main text but would otherwise interrupt the flow of the argument if included directly. Therefore, place comments, clarifications, and suggestions for further engagement with the text in the footnotes. In this way, you continue the discourse on a different level. However, if the information is essential for understanding the text, it must appear in the main body. The text must remain comprehensible even without the footnotes. Please do not use endnotes, as they make reading your work more difficult. Footnote numbering should run consecutively throughout the text.

Aspect	Example
In the footnote referencing system, the text refers to a footnote (at the bottom of the page) that provides the corresponding source reference in abbreviated form.	In the text: *„…"*[1] At the bottom of the page: [1] *Pfeffer and Salancik 1978, p. 3.*
The in-text citation method, in which the author's surname(s) are accompanied by the year of publication and page number(s) directly in the running text (see right), is considered superior from a practical standpoint.	In the Text: *„…" (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978, p. 3)*
List all sources used in the bibliography.	
For books:	*Pfeffer and Salancik 1978: Pfeffer, Jeffery, Salancik, Gerald R.: The external control of organizations. New York: Harper & Row: 1978.*
For essays and journals:	*Sharma und Lambert 1994: Sharma, Arun, Lambert, Douglas M.: Segmentation of Markets Based on Customer Service. In: International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, (Vol. 24) 1994, Nr. 4, S. 50 - 58.*
For contributions in edited volumes:	*Bohr, Kurt (1985): Betriebswirtschaftlicher Wertbegriff und seine Anwendung, in: Stöppler, S. (Hrsg.): Information und Produktion, Festschrift für Waldemar Wittmann, Stuttgart 1985, S. 59-81.*

For internet sources:	*United Nations / General Assembly: Proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002- 2005, Programme 9: Trade and development / United Nations, General Assembly, 55th session, 2000. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/55/a556p9.pdf> Rev. 2000-06-13*
When quoting directly (verbatim), you must enclose the quotation in quotation marks. You should also preserve all formatting from the original. At the end of a quotation, a clear reference to the source must be provided. Failure to indicate direct quotations constitutes a particularly serious formal error.	*„Supply Chain Management ist eine junge, aber schnell wachsende Disziplin, die sich mit dem Management langer industrieller Versorgungsketten befasst."* *(Otto und Kotzab 2000, S. 1)* *"Supply Chain Management is a young but rapidly growing discipline that deals with the management of long industrial supply chains." (Otto und Kotzab 2000, p.1, translation by the author)*
Omissions (…) and modifications […] in quotations must be clearly indicated.	*„Supply Chain Management ist eine (…) Disziplin, die sich mit dem [integrierten] Management langer industrieller Versorgungsketten befasst."* *(Otto und Kotzab 2000, S. 1)* *"Supply Chain Management is a (…) discipline that deals with the [integrated] management of long industrial supply chains." (Otto und Kotzab 2000, p. 1, translation by the author)*
Emphasis (bold, italics) in the quoted text should generally be preserved. If you add your own emphasis, the relevant passage must be indicated with the note (emphasis added).	
A paraphrased quotation reproduces the meaning of the original text rather than its wording. Since you are still using someone else's ideas and arguments in this case, you must identify them with an appropriate citation. The corresponding footnote should begin with "cf".	In the Text: *...*[1] At the bottom of the page: [1] Cf. *Pfeffer und Salancik 1978, S. 3.*
If the quoted passage spans several pages, the first and last page of the cited section are to be given, connected by a hyphen.	e.g.: p. 450-451 (or pp. 450) or p. 450-455 (not pp. 450)
If a source has more than three authors, it is sufficient to list only the first author, followed by "et al." This	

rule does not apply to the bibliography.	
Use the same care and logic when citing internet sources. If a document is also available in printed form, prefer the printed version. For internet sources, add the date on which you accessed the source (Reviewed …).	*United Nations / General Assembly: Proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002- 2005, Programme 9: Trade and development / United Nations, General Assembly, 55th session, 2000. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/55/a556p9.pdf> Rev. 2000-06-13*
Cite only sources that are generally accessible to others. Therefore, avoid citing lecture notes or handouts. If a source is not generally accessible but is nevertheless indispensable, it must be appended to the work (after consultation with your supervisor).	Avoid: *Lecture slides "Logistics and SCM", SS 2004, Slide 11*
Cite "professional" sources. Keep in mind that the selection (relevance) of the sources you use reflects your subject-matter expertise. Lexical or general-knowledge information that constitutes common knowledge does not require a citation.	Avoid: Britannica, general business dictionaries
Avoid secondary citations (you cite B, but have only read about B in A). Every citation—whether direct or indirect—that you have not researched directly must be checked against the original source.	

Both verbatim and paraphrased quotations must accurately reflect the cited author's position and appear in the correct context. It constitutes a serious violation of the principles of careful academic work if a statement is torn out of context and used as evidence for an opinion that the author does not actually hold.

Language

Beyond the obvious requirements—such as careful editing and grammatical correctness—you should strive to write in a professional manner, using a style that is typical of your academic discipline (economics, business administration, logistics, and controlling) and appropriate to the context of scholarly work. This requirement is flexible and cannot be spelled out in detail in this brief introduction. In case of doubt, compare your work with articles published in established academic journals.

Nevertheless, several key points of appropriate formulation can be outlined:

- Avoid the first-person singular ("I"). It will usually be clear from the context which insights are your own and which are derived from sources.
- Use abbreviations only if they are widely accepted in the discipline (for example, "SCM" for "Supply Chain Management", "APS" for "Advanced Planning Systems"). Do not invent new abbreviations (such as "L" for "Logistik"). Spell out an abbreviation the first time it is used (see section 1.2.4).

2 Content-Related Guidelines

2.1 Principles of Academic Work

Below, particularly important aspects of academic work from the chair's perspective will be outlined. These principles will be revisited in detailed aspects in the subsequent sections of this introduction.

Please note that these principles represent only a selection from a broader set of principles of academic work. Limiting the focus to these is appropriate, as certain principles are not relevant to the preparation of seminar papers.[1]

Knowledge Accumulation – reading widely and deeply:
Academic work fundamentally generates new knowledge. Outstanding work generates a substantial amount of new knowledge. For understandable reasons, a typical academic paper usually contributes only a limited degree of new insight. In any case, however, new knowledge is built upon existing knowledge.
When writing an academic paper, it is therefore your responsibility to present the current state of knowledge with regard to the research question to be addressed. Your own "creative" contribution in the paper is then built upon this foundation of existing knowledge.

Originality – making an independent contribution: A scholarly paper must not consist solely of the results of others but must contain an original contribution of its own. You should therefore ensure that readers can clearly see the dividing line between existing and new knowledge, that is, between reproduction and the generation of new insights.

Integrity – clearly marking others' contributions: The principle of knowledge accumulation requires engaging with literature—that is, the intellectual output of others. Integrity in this context means that you cite the relevant results of others' intellectual work, whenever they are citable. Results that constitute common knowledge in the field are exempt from this rule.

Priority of Publication– observing the chronological order of contributions:
Academic research generates new knowledge. What qualifies as "new" is determined by the date of publication. In this sense, scientific inquiry constitutes a competition over time, in which recognition is accorded to those who publish their findings first.
In acknowledgment of this principle, students are expected to consult and cite the original contributions (primary sources) wherever possible. Engagement with foundational works is indispensable. Just as it would be methodologically inadequate to study Johann Wolfgang von Goethe without reference to his original texts, it is not appropriate to study logistics without engaging with seminal contributions by Donald J. Bowersox, Martin Christopher, or Hans-Christian Pfohl Ihde.

[1] For example, the principles of "timeliness" or "relevance" of results, since the author of a seminar paper cannot determine the timeliness and relevance of results due to the topics prescribed for them. For an overview of the characteristics of relevant business research, see: Thomas, Kenneth W., Tymon Jr., Walter G.: Necessary properties of relevant research: Lessons from recent criticisms of the organizational sciences. In: *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 7, 1982, no. 3: 345–352.

Logical Coherence – ensuring causality:
A scholarly paper is a coherent document that must be comprehensible without further explanation. This means it (1) explicitly states, explains, and justifies the relevance of the research question, (2) explains the method used to answer it, and (3) ultimately answers the question. All of this must be logically comprehensible and without breaks in the argumentation. In this sense (and only in this sense) a scholarly paper offers a "good story." Unlike a management consultant, who is primarily judged by results (however obtained), a scholarly paper is also evaluated based on its method and the traceability of its argumentation. Intuition and creativity alone are therefore not sufficient for a good scholarly paper—although they are indispensable for an outstanding one.

2.2 Use of Sources

Assume that your reader is an averagely trained business economist. You therefore do not need to define basic concepts (such as costs, revenue, etc.).
Prefer high-quality sources, such as articles from peer-reviewed journals. If in doubt, contact your supervisor.

Establish distance between the sources you use and your own argumentation by interpreting the sources, highlighting their significance for your argument, summarizing more complex statements from them, comparing sources with one another, etc. Simply copying from sources does little to advance your argumentation beyond confirming that a particular idea has already been expressed by another author. The goal is for you to work with the sources in a plausible way—to engage with them critically by agreeing, disagreeing, summarizing, deconstructing them, drawing your own conclusions, etc. Ultimately, this means exploiting the existing body of documented intellectual work to answer your research question effectively.

Aspect	Example
Always read and cite the primary source whenever technically and linguistically possible!	In response to the question: "What is logistics?" Good Example: *Ihde (1984, S. …)* *Bowersox und Closs (1996, S. …)* Bad Example: *Smith (2004, S. …)*
Cite the origins of the theses, terms, and concepts you use; clearly distinguish which ideas come from others and what constitutes your own contribution.	"… *This effect of the shift from seller's to buyer's markets for daily consumer goods was observed in the USA in the late 1940s and 1950s*. …" Criticism: No source provided here.
Use canonical and relevant authors.	*„Drumm (1997) defines human resourse management as …*"

	„Otto (2003) defines human resource management as …" Criticism: Otto (2003) is not canonical for the topic of human resource management.

2.3 Definitions

Definitions are often misunderstood and dismissed as superficial terminology in academic work. Without claiming completeness, this section outlines key guidelines from the chair's perspective on handling definitions. Note that the following focuses exclusively on real definitions.[2]

*Utility***:** Definitions are not scientific achievements in themselves. They merely facilitate scholarly discourse by replacing a *definiendum* with a *definiens* (subject to adequacy criteria). In this sense, however, they are an essential component of academic work.

*Comprehensiveness***:** A complete definition links the *definiendum* and *definiens* in one or more declarative sentences. The *definiendum* must be described by naming the "*Genus Proximum*" and the "*Differentia Specifica*". The former refers the phenomenon to be defined back to a known concept; the latter names the distinguishing feature that forms the species.
*Example***:** "Logistics" can be defined as "a subfield of business administration" (*Genus Proximum*), "... concerned with the rationalization of transport, handling, and storage processes in the physical goods sector" (*Differentia Specifica*).

*Professionalism***:** As a member of the "scientific community" in business administration—or more broadly, economics—you are expected to handle the relevant terms and concepts (which are ultimately the result of guided definitional work, among other things) and thus use them in your academic work.

*Cumulativity***:** You are also obliged to first survey the landscape of existing definitions. Only in the rare case where no suitable definition exists should you create new ones. As a reader of scholarly literature, you will notice the lack of clarity in concepts and terms across many fields. Note that you contribute to this problem when you generate your own definitions without compelling reason.

*Situativity***:** Definitional work rarely introduces new terms but more often specifies their meaning as a starting point for research. No definition is inherently "true" or "false"—the key is adequacy. Define purposefully—for the needs of your academic work.
Since real definitions capture essence, differing views on what constitutes a thing's core (e.g., what is essential to a firm?) make selection meaningful. What should "logistics" or "controlling" mean in *your* paper? If literature offers variants (as it

[2] While a real definition is an essential definition that specifies the essential characteristics of a thing, a nominal definition merely stipulates a new term as a conventional abbreviation for a longer linguistic expression.

almost always does), justify your choice, note alternatives, and explain their unsuitability.
Remember: "Your" definition is typically not a novel creation but an existing one you now endorse. Defining isn't a scientific contribution in itself—yet it demands intellectual effort in engaging your topic.

Consistency: Take the definition you chose seriously and argue accordingly. Avoid overturning a previously selected definition during your work and using a term differently from then on.

2.4 Language

Aspect	Unsatisfactory
Argue precisely	"*The closer a company is to the customer, the better it can satisfy their needs*." Criticism**:** How can a company "be close to the customer"?
Avoid general statements	*"Companies are confronted with competitors from all over the world, and the time factor increasingly determines business success."* Criticism: What is the "time factor"? Are all companies actually confronted with competitors from around the world? → These statements are not tenable, not precise, and will not advance the argumentation. *"To give companies access to the world market, logistics firms must be able to operate in the new global rhythm."* Criticism: What is the "new global rhythm"?

2.5 Consistent, Compelling Argumentation

Establish a coherent structure for your work, adhere to it consistently, and make it explicit at the outset. An academic paper is not a detective novel in which the solution is revealed only on the last page. Explain the research question and your answer clearly to the reader. Achieving this is challenging, but the following strategies can help: Consider the entire paper from beginning to end before you begin writing. For each (sub)chapter, explicitly formulate the key theses: What is the purpose of this chapter? How does it relate to the research question? Is the sequence logical? Can the claims be substantiated?
State your research question explicitly in the first chapter. While you are generally free in its precise formulation, your work will also be evaluated based on whether you answer this exact question.
Avoid reproducing textbook content or digressions. Argue as concisely as possible to (1) clarify your answer to the research question and (2) make your reasoning fully traceable. For each paragraph, ask yourself: "Is this necessary?" Remove any content that is not directly required to answer the research question.

3 Challenges and Minimum Requirements

3.1 Content Relevance to the Research Question

The most common cause of weak academic papers is the lack of relevance of their content to the research question. If the problem statement has not been clearly and comprehensibly described and answered, the paper has missed its target.
To avoid this, it is advisable to continuously keep the "story" of the paper (question, individual argumentative steps, result) in mind, test and reflect on it in discussions with supervisors and peers—and revise it if necessary. Beyond a certain point, reading additional literature no longer helps. Once you have compiled a basic body of literature, you must evaluate this information, relate it to your research question, and critically engage with it.
Typically, you will gain knowledge about your topic as your work progresses, gradually enabling you to answer the question more effectively. Therefore, it is also advisable to leave the "perfect" written elaboration until the end of the processing period. The willingness to question even perfectly crafted text is usually low.

3.2 Scope of Literature Review Paper

Seminar, bachelor's, master's, or diploma theses are scholarly works evaluated by accepted academic standards. No general judgment can be made about the scope of literature research and documentation required.
However, since thorough engagement with the topic typically demands comprehensive literature study, papers discussing an issue over 14 pages with only 4–6 sources rank at the lower end of the "diligence scale." This doesn't necessarily imply a failing grade —but the risk increases.
Recommended page range: Seminar papers: max. 30 pages. Bachelor's theses: 30 pages. Diploma/master's theses: 60 pages.

3.3 Proportion of Reproduction

If you conclude that your research question can be fully and comprehensively answered solely by reproducing existing literature, please contact your supervisor. In this case, the topic must be revised. Typically, topics are selected so that reproduction and original intellectual contribution stand in an appropriate ratio given the available processing time. Therefore, it is usually insufficient to merely reproduce content and leave it unconnected to the research question. A scholarly paper is judged even more critically if the reproduction relies solely on a single source or the works of just one author. For didactic reasons, topics with such scant literature are generally avoided.