



Guidelines for the preparation of term papers and graduation theses



MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT
HALLE-WITTENBERG

1. FORMAL PROCEDURE

- 1.1 Inquiry
- 1.2 Admission and admission requirements
- 1.3 Enrollment, duration, prolongation and submission of thesis/paper
- 1.4 Assessment, rating
- 1.5 Thesis defense
 - 1.5.1 Procedure of defense
 - 1.5.2 Content of defense presentation

2. FORM REQUIREMENTS (Formal designs)

- 2.1 Language and scope
- 2.2 Structure
- 2.3 Layout
- 2.4 Citation guidelines and list of references

3. CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Content arrangement
- 3.2 Data protection and restriction note

With this document, the working group "Sustainable Landscape Development" would like to give guidance to students for the preparation of term papers and degree theses.

I. FORMAL PROCEDURE

The final thesis in the Bachelor's degree or in the Master's degree program is a module achievement in which the student is to demonstrate that he or she is able to **independently work on a topic using scientific methods within the scope of a specified workload under guidance**. The scope and task of the Bachelor's or Master's thesis shall be organized in such a way that the requirements for knowledge and understanding, ability and formal aspects correspond to the respective level defined in the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education Qualifications in the current version. The topic of the thesis shall be issued by the Board of Studies and Examinations. The topic and the date of issue shall be recorded on file. When issuing the topic, it must be ensured that the standard period of study can be adhered to¹.

1.1 Request

If you are interested in writing a term paper or thesis under the auspices of our professorship, i.e., working group of Sustainable Landscape development, there are two options:

- You apply for a topic provided by us (see the working group website under [Suggested topics for Bachelor's and Master's theses](#)).
- You submit your own concrete topic proposals or discuss ideas with us. In order for us to provide you with the best possible support, your proposals should be oriented towards our research topics or the topic areas mentioned on the website.

If you have decided on one of the two options, please contact us. In order for us to check whether your ideas fit our working group and thus enable us to optimally plan our supervision options, please fill out the [inquiry form](#) and send it by email.

General information and the inquiry form for the supervision of theses under the auspices of the department "Sustainable Landscape Development" can be found on our website under [Bachelor and master theses](#).

Without initial submission of a written form, as a rule no commitment to supervision of the thesis can be made. In principle, we can only accept a quantity of interested parties that allows us to provide good supervision.

1.2 Admission

Students who have successfully completed the module achievements required by the respective subject-specific study and examination regulations (a certain minimum number of credit points or other requirements) are admitted to the thesis. Please check the [current examination regulations for your degree program](#) to see whether you have already fulfilled these requirements and consult the [examination office](#) if necessary.

1.3 Enrollment, duration, prolongation and submission of thesis/paper

After the thesis topic has been accepted, your thesis can be released for registration with the examination office. The forms within the scope of the BSc/MSc theses are handed out via the examination office after the admission requirements have been verified. After registration, the deadline for submission begins immediately, and the length of the processing period depends on the degree program and type of thesis. Please refer to the examination regulations applicable to your degree program.

Usually applies:

Bachelor program: **10-12 weeks** editing time

Master program: **6 months** editing time

Based on verifiable reasons for which the student is not responsible, the deadline for submitting the thesis can be extended upon request. If the Board of Studies and Examinations accepts the reasons, the student will be informed of this in writing. The prolongation time in case of illness corresponds to the duration of the illness. The same applies in the case of illness of a minor child who lives in the student's household and for whom the student has predominant personal care, or in the case of care of a close relative within the meaning of § 7 Paragraph 3 of the Nursing Time Act (Pflegetzeitgesetz). For maternity protection and parental leave, please refer to the provisions of § 19. Instead of the extension, the Study and Examination Committee may issue a new subject. Further details are regulated by the subject-specific study and examination regulations¹.

The topic of the thesis can be substituted only once. The topic can only be substituted within a specific time-period (see the German study and examination regulations – „Studien- und Prüfungsordnung“) after issuance of the initial topic and must be reported in writing to the Board of Studies and Examinations within the stated time limit. For a topic issued as a substitute, the complete processing time is offered once again¹.

1.4 Assessment, rating

- The thesis is evaluated by two reviewers confirmed by the Board of Studies and Examinations¹.
- As a rule, the reviews must be submitted to the Examination Office no later than **eight weeks** after the thesis has been delivered to the reviewers¹.
- The following grades will be assigned for the thesis evaluation:
1.0, 1.3 – very good; 1.7, 2.0, 2.3 – good; 2.7, 3.0, 3.3 - satisfactory; 3.7, 4.0 - sufficient; 5.0 – insufficient.

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- The grade of the thesis is formed from the arithmetic mean of the two grades. If there is a difference in the numerical value of the first and second evaluation that is greater than two or, in the case of an evaluation system that deviates from § 21 (5) and (6), an equivalent difference, or if the thesis is evaluated as "insufficient" (4.1-5.0) by only one of the two evaluators, the Board of Studies and Examinations shall appoint another expert evaluator. The third evaluation should take place within eight weeks. In this case, the grade of the thesis is calculated from the arithmetic average of the individual grades of all three evaluations, unless two evaluators rate the thesis as "insufficient" (4.1-5.0), in which case the thesis is also rated as "insufficient" overall. If, whereas, there are two passed evaluations (4.0 or better), the thesis will be evaluated as at least "sufficient" (4.0) after the arithmetic average of all three evaluations has been calculated¹.
 - After failure, a thesis can be reattempted once. In this case, a new topic must be set. A second reattempt is excluded¹.

II. FORM REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Language and scope

Each term paper or thesis under the auspices of the Chair "Sustainable Landscape Development" can be written in German or English, but please follow the guidelines in your study and examination regulations. The language style should be clear, concise and factual. You should always pay attention to a neutral and gender-appropriate tone and avoid informal language and empty phrases. Please pay attention to correct spelling, punctuation and grammar!

The main part of the Bachelor's thesis is expected to have a length of 25 to 40 pages. The main part of the Master's thesis should not exceed 70 pages. Extensive descriptions, transcripts, photos, tables, figures and calculations that are not necessary for basic understanding of the thesis may be included in the appendix.

2.2 Structure

Ensure that the text is structured internally and has a common thread, i.e., topics should be presented coherently, and jumps in the argumentation should be avoided as much as possible. In addition, a "leitmotif" should always be recognizable throughout the entire thesis!

Your thesis should be structured as follows:

- ❖ Cover page with the following information:
 - Name of the university, faculty and chair
 - Name of the first and second supervisor
 - Title
 - Type of work (bachelor/master thesis or term paper)
 - For term papers: name of the associated course
 - Name with matriculation number, degree program (including CP)
 - Submission deadline
- ❖ Statutory declaration
- ❖ Table of contents and, if applicable, list of abbreviations, list of figures and list of tables
- ❖ Text part
 - Summary
 - Introduction
 - Methods and Data, if applicable: research region
 - Results
 - Discussion

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- Conclusions and outlook
 - ❖ References
 - ❖ Annex if applicable

2.3 Layout

Format and font:

- DIN A4 vertical format, single-sided print
- Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri
- Font size: 11 or 12 pts.
- Line spacing: 1.2-1.5
- Headings may be formatted differently as desired (larger font / bold); Structure numbers: 1., 1.1, 1.1.1
- When formatting the text, always use full justification

Page count and margin

- Abstract and directories remain unnumbered (or roman numerals) and page counting only starts thereafter. Page count can be aligned either to the left, centered or to the right.
- 2-3 cm margin to all sides

Figures

Figures should be labeled and provided with a legend (if necessary, scale); the content of the figure should be understandable from the label/legend (font size 10 pts.) and independent of the continuous text. For online publication at the university library, images and graphics shall be included with a resolution of at least 150 dpi.

2.4 Citation guidelines and reference list

- The complete source is cited in the reference list. The source reference in the text must be clearly assigned to a literature reference in the reference list. For web sources, indicate access date and web link. Important: Literature must always be accessible, if grey sources are used, it must be stated in detail where they can be obtained.
- All sources used must be recorded in a reference list.
- The reference list must be sorted alphabetically (in alphabetical order or, in the case of several publications by the same author, in chronological order regarding the years of publication).

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- The different types (books, articles, internet sources) are not to be listed separately, but in one list. If a relatively large number of Internet sources or books is used, they can be categorized.
 - In principle, the respective edition is mentioned, from which the quote was taken; exception here is the 1st edition of a work. Here this information is NOT mentioned.
 - It is also important to choose the absolutely correct style.
A reference list depending on the formatting style looks different, i.e.:

ELSEVIER-HARVARD

Global Desertification Today, 2012. *Desertification, Land Degradation and Sustainability* 237–265. doi:10.1002/9781119977759.ch7

CHICAGO

“Global Desertification Today.” *Desertification, Land Degradation and Sustainability*, 2012, 237–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119977759.ch7>.

APA7

Global Desertification Today. (2012). *Desertification, Land Degradation and Sustainability*, 237–265. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119977759.ch7>

For US English, The Chicago Manual of Style is preferred. Using citation software such as zotero.org, Citavi, or Mendely will facilitate consistent formatting of references. If you do not want to use dedicated software, web-based services such as ZoteroBib (<https://zbib.org/>) will assist you with uniform formatting.

III. CONTENT DESIGN OF THE WORK

3.1 Content design

Summary or Abstract: provides a 0.5 - 1-page overview of the work with brief description of relevance, research question(s), methodology, main results and brief discussion / outlook. Please avoid literature references.

1. *Introduction:* provides an overview of the state of knowledge and technology, problem/relevance, elaborates on open questions and infers the objectives, hypotheses, if any, and research questions of the paper. State of the art should include a good and thorough literature review of the framework.

2. *Methodology:* gives an overview of the study region, describes with which methods and where data or literature sources or other knowledge bases (survey, interview) have been collected and selected, gives information on statistical or other evaluation procedures and, if applicable, names all technical aids (e.g., statistical programs, GIS evaluation routines).

3. *Results:* here exclusively and objectively all findings from data collection, analysis and processing are presented. This can be done textually and supported by diagrams / tables, possibly pictorial material or graphics.

4. *Discussion:* The discussion must include the choice of methodology (including its strengths/weaknesses) as well as a comparative assessment of the results with other studies or literature references, for example: What other methodological approach would also have been purposeful or even better? How else could the data have been analyzed? How reliable are the results? How robust are the results? Are they transferable to other regions and/or to other contexts? Why are there similarities or differences in comparison with other studies? How can findings (observed phenomena) be interpreted?

5. *Conclusion and outlook:* Here, the most important findings / lessons learned are to be elaborated once again and, if necessary, an outlook on future research needs or necessary supplementary work is to be given.

Use figures and tables in appropriate proportion to the text section and take into account their information content. All figures and tables should be labeled in the caption (citing the source, if applicable) and included in the list of tables or figures.

3.2 Data protection and blocking notices

If your work is based on surveys, interviews or other person-based data sources, your partners must consent to the use of their personal data. This can be accomplished, for example, by a short text in an online survey, possibly referring to a more detailed statement. A sample data consent statement is available from the [University Data Protection Officer](#).

If you write a paper in cooperation with a company and use confidential material in that paper, the paper MAY be marked with a blocking notice to prevent its publication.

Based on

[1] Bekanntmachung der Neufassung der Rahmenstudien- und Prüfungsordnung für das Bachelor- und Master-Studium an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg vom 22.05.2017. Uni-Amtsblatt 27. Jahrgang, Nr. 4 vom 27. Juni 2017, S. 2
http://www.verwaltung.uni-halle.de/KANZLER/ZGST/ABL/2017/17_04_01.pdf