

## Guidelines for the preparation and assessment of a Master thesis

The length of the thesis is primarily dependent on issues of content and is not an end in itself. The lower limit is 80 pages (before formatting and not including tables and appendices), A4 size, 12 pt type, 1.5 line spacing.

### 2 Layout

Only bound copies in hardcover of the Master thesis are to be submitted. Double-sided print is only required if the number of pages is rather high. Layout is up to the writer, the main criteria being readability and ease of orientation. Standard fonts ( Arial, 12 points) are recommended.

### 3 Organisation of the paper

The Master thesis is to be organised as follows:

- Title page
- Affidavit with the author's signature
- Table of contents, including page numbers
- List of exhibits, including page numbers
- List of tables/charts, including page numbers
- List of abbreviations
- Text
- Bibliography / References List
- Appendix (if necessary)

## 4 Title page

The title page of the Master thesis has to be organised like this:

Johannes Kepler Universität Linz
<b>Title of thesis</b>
Master Thesis
to attain the degree of Master of Business Administration in Global Marketing Management
submitted on xx.xx.xxxx Department of Marketing Supervisor: xxx xxx
First, Second Name Street, Number Post Code, Place
Linz, date

## 5 Table of contents

Roman numerals are to be used for all preliminary pages, **e.g., tables** preceding the main text. The body of the text and all subsequent parts are to be numbered with Arabic numbers.

Exhibit 1: Specimen of a table of contents

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<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
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In the main body of the text, a decimal hierarchy of headings is to be used, with decimal sublevels restricted to a sensible number. Alternatively, the main parts can be numbered with Roman numerals, while decimal classification is used for subdivisions.

## 6 List of exhibits and tables/charts

Exhibits and charts are to be listed separately. These lists contain the numbers, headings and page numbers of the exhibits or charts.

Exhibit 2: Specimen of a table of figures/exhibits:

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## 7 List of abbreviations

Only technical abbreviations and their explanations - including any abbreviations/acronyms used in the appendix or the bibliography - are to be included in list of abbreviations. Abbreviations in general use, such as 'e.g.' meaning 'for example', are not to be included. So as not to impair readability of the text, the number of abbreviations used is to be kept to a minimum.

Exhibit 3: Specimen of a list of abbreviations

List of Abbreviations	IV
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	
DBW	Die Betriebswirtschaft
DU	Die Unternehmung
JAMS	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
JMR	Journal of Marketing Research
LRP	Long Range Planning
RoQ	Return on Quality
SMJ	Strategic Management Journal
ZfB	Zeitschrift für Betriebswirtschaft
zfo	Zeitschrift Führung + Organisation

## 8 Bibliography / References List:

Entries in the bibliography must be in alphabetical order (authors). With **books**, these details are required:

- Last name
- Initial/s
- Year of publication
- *Title of the book*
- Number of volume cited (if it is a multi-volume work)
- Edition (if the book is out in various editions)
- Place/s of publication
- Publisher

If there are more than three authors, the name of the first author is to be given, followed by 'et al.'. If there are more than three places of publication, only the first one, with the addition 'et al.' is to be given.

### Examples:

Kotler, P. et al.: (1996): *Principles of Marketing: The European Edition*; London et al.: Prentice Hall

Miller, D. C. (1991): *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Newbury Park et al.: Sage

Thibaut, J. W., Kelley, H. H. (1959): *The Social Psychology of Groups*, New York/London/Sydney: Wiley

Wührer, G. A. (1995): *Internationale Allianz- und Kooperationsfähigkeit österreichischer Unternehmen: Beiträge zum Gestaltansatz als Beschreibungs- und Erklärungskonzept*, Linz: Trauner

If several works by the same author/s are cited, they are to be arranged in chronological order. If books by the same author were published in the same year, they are to be distinguished by lower case letters (a, b, c) after the year of publication.

### Examples:

Jöreskog, K. G., Sörbom, D. (1993): *LISREL 8: Structural Equation Modeling with the SIMPLS Command Language*; Chicago: Scientific Software International

Jöreskog, K. G., Sörbom, D. (1996a): *LISREL 8: User's Reference Guide*; Chicago: Scientific Software International

Jöreskog, K. G., Sörbom, D. (1996b): *PRELIS 2: User's Reference Guide*; Chicago: Scientific Software International

For articles taken from **collections of articles** and **dictionaries/encyclopedias** these rules apply:

- Last name
- Initial/s
- Year of publication
- Heading of the article
- 'in'
- Author's name and initials
- (ed.) / (eds.)
- *Title of the collection of articles or dictionary*
- Number of the volume of the publication cited (if it is a multi-volume publication)
- Edition (if there are more editions than one)
- Place/s of publication
- Publisher
- Page number/s

### Examples:

Marr, R. (1989): Betrieb und Umwelt; in Bitz, M. et al. (ed.): *Vahlens Kompendium der Betriebswirtschaftslehre*, 1; 2nd Edition., München: Vahlen, 47-114

Möller, K., Wilson, D. T. (1995): Introduction: Interaction and Networks in Perspective; in: Möller, K., Wilson, D. T. (eds.): *Business Marketing: An Interaction and Network Perspective*; Boston/Dordrecht/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1-18

For **journals** and **newspapers** these rules apply:

- Last name
- Initial/s
- Year of publication
- Heading of article
- *Name of journal / newspaper*
- Volume and number of the issue of the journal, or number and date of the newspaper
- Page numbers

If a source does not give the author's name, 'Unsigned' is to be used, and listed under the heading 'Unsigned' in the Bibliography.

### Examples:

Kaufmann, P. J., Dant, R. P. (1992): The Dimensions of Commercial Exchange; *Marketing Letters*, 3 (2), 171-185

Mühleder, K. (1996): Wertgestaltung: Ein Beitrag zur Gestaltung von Produktinnovationen; *Journal für Betriebswirtschaft*, 46 (1), 23-35

Unsigned (1984): Making Service a Potent Marketing Tool; *Business Week*, 11. June 1984, 165-167

If **Internet sources** are used in addition to printed literature, an additional **list of references** is to be drawn up which, in addition to the bibliography, comprises all Internet sources.

Internet sources require at least the following details:

- *Internet address* (= URL), which gives the *full link to the document*.
- Date of access

If at all possible, these details should also be mentioned:

- Second name and initial/s or the name of the owner of the site (owner of site)
- Year of publication
- Heading of the article

If in doubt, all available information is to be given.

### Examples:

Müller-Stewens, G. (1998): Post Merger Management: Organisational Integration in Company Takeovers; Talk at Berne University, 7 January 1998, <http://www.iop.unibe.ch/tondokumente/mueller.ram/>, 25 October 1999

PMSI (owner of site) (1998): Homepage, <http://www.pmsinc.com/>, 25 October 1999

If, in the course of preparing the paper, **interviews** were conducted, the references list must also contain a list of interviews. It lists the names of the interview partners in alphabetical order and it comprises:

- Second name and initial/s of the interviewee
- Company / organisation
- Capacity
- Place
- Date of the interview

Whenever interview results are mentioned in the text, the person interviewed is to be cited as follows: name of interviewee, place and date of the interview.

**Example** of a footnote with details of an interview:

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Interview with M. Meier, Linz, 12 August 2001

## 9 Appendix

The appendix may only contain **additional** information relevant to the topic of the paper, which includes items such as:

- Questionnaires
- Interview guidelines
- Covering letter/s
- Company documents

If necessary, any sources on which the appendix is based are to be cited and listed in the bibliography or the references list. In the text, reference is to be made to any relevant item in the appendix.

## 10 Text

### 10.1 Language

Correct spelling and punctuation, grammatical correctness, academic style as well as fluent and coherent syntax are preconditions.

### 10.2 Citing

Any source used in a passage (or sentence) is clearly to be acknowledged in the appropriate place.

There are two ways of quoting sources in a text:

- direct quotation and
- indirect quotation.

A **direct quotation** copies an author's words **directly from the text** and uses the exact wording; an **indirect quote** presents an **author's ideas** in different wording.

**Footnote citations** – as required for papers prepared for the Department of Marketing - can be of two kinds

- concise references and
- comprehensive references.

The Department of Marketing stipulates **concise references**, which means that, **uniformly**, each individual footnote must contain the following items:

- Author/s,
- Year
- Page/s - and, if applicable,
- 'f' / 'ff' (and the following page/s); or 'n.p.' (no page, if the page cannot be ascertained)

### Example:

#### *Original text:*

Sustainable supply and resource advantages are essential, however, in order to guarantee success in the battle against direct competitors. It is this very point which is criticised by the supporters of the 'resource-based view', whose suggestions are dealt with in the subsequent chapter.

#### *Indirect quotation:*

Advantages at resource and supply levels are a *sine qua non*<sup>1</sup>.

#### *Footnote:*

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<sup>1</sup> cf. Kühn/Grünig (1998), p. 139

#### *Direct quotation:*

"Sustainable supply and resource advantages are essential, however, in order to guarantee success in the battle against direct competitors"<sup>2</sup>.

#### *Footnote:*

---

<sup>2</sup> Kühn/Grünig (1998), p. 139

Direct quotations should be the **exception**, i.e., their number should be kept to a minimum. If texts are quoted literally, the quotation has to be identical to the original in spelling and punctuation. Any alterations have to be marked as such.

### Example:

#### *Direct quotation:*

"Sustainable *supply and resource advantages* are essential, however, in order to guarantee success in the battle against direct competitors"<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Footnote:*

---

<sup>3</sup> Kühn/Grünig (1998), p. 139 (writer's italics)

Any omission of single words or of sentences – either in order to shorten the quotation or for stylistic reasons - has to be shown in the text. [...] is used when one word has been omitted, [...] signals that several words have been omitted. No omission points are used for words omitted either at the beginning or end of a direct quotation.

If anything has been added to a quotation, the words added are to be put in square brackets.

**Example:**

*Direct quotation:*

His study had proved that “supply and resource advantages [were] essential [...] in order to guarantee success in the battle against [...] direct competitors.”<sup>4</sup>

*Footnote:*

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<sup>4</sup> Kühn/Grünig (1998), p. 139

If there is a quotation within a quotation, inverted commas are used.

**Example:**

*Direct quotation:*

“It is this very point which is criticised by the supporters of the ‘resource-based view’ whose suggestions are dealt with [...] in the subsequent chapter”<sup>5</sup>.

*Footnote:*

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<sup>5</sup> Kühn/Grünig (1998), p. 139

In principle, every quotation needs to be based on the original. If, despite intensive search, the original source cannot be accessed, **secondary quotation** is admissible. Such quotations should be the exception and they need to be recognisable as such.

### Example:

*Direct quotation:*

“People stay in relationships for two major reasons: because they *want to*; and because they *have to*”<sup>6</sup>.

Footnote:

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<sup>6</sup> Johnson (1982), p. 52f., quoted in Söllner (1993), p. 101 (writer’s italics)

Both primary source (in this case: Johnson) and secondary source (in this case: Söllner) have to be included in the bibliography.

### 10.3 Exhibits and charts

Exhibits and charts have to be clear and explicit by themselves, even without the text they are embedded in. If necessary, a legend can be used for elucidation. With exhibits and charts copied or scanned directly from the original text, legibility is paramount.

Next to each exhibit or chart, its source has to be acknowledged. If no source is mentioned, it means that it is the writer’s **own exhibit**.

#### Examples:

Source: Wilson/Jantrania (1994), p. 62 (*if the original has not been altered in any way*)

Source: after Tröndle (1987), p. 19 (*if the original has been modified*)

Sources can be acknowledged in a footnote or directly below the exhibit. The procedure first chosen has to be followed throughout the paper. All exhibits and charts have to be numbered and they have to be given a meaningful heading. In addition, they have to be integrated into the text and, if necessary, explained.

#### Example:

In redistributive cooperation, two partners, referred to as A and B in *Exhibit 3*, pool resources in order to distribute joint gains among themselves at a later point in time.

#### 10.4 Abbreviations:

Abbreviations and acronyms not in general use have to be explained when first used in the text. They also have to be included in the list of abbreviations.

##### **Example:**

The concept of Return on Quality (RoQ) plays an important role in current marketing literature.

Usage should be consistent; it should not alternate between abbreviations/acronyms and their verbal equivalents. To enhance legibility of the thesis, the number of abbreviations used is to be kept to a minimum.

### 11 Assessment of a Master Thesis

Both formal and content criteria are taken into account when assessing a Master thesis.

The formal criteria concerning presentation have been listed in the passages above. Serious shortcomings will lead to rejection of the thesis.

Essential criteria concerning content are whether and how the stated research problem has been solved or the objective of the thesis has been achieved. With empirical research, special emphasis is on systematic operational survey procedures and on data analysis as well as interpretation of the findings.

Table 1(below) gives you an overview of the criteria on which the final assessment of a Master thesis is based.

	Excellent and distinctive work	Competent work	Significantly deficient work
<b>Aims, objectives and justification</b>	Clear aims able to be operationalized. Explanation of the topic with succinct justification using the literature. Shows full awareness of the need to focus on what is able to be done.	Clear aims and objectives. Acceptable justification with identification of the topic.	Aims and objectives unclear due to no logical connections between them. Insufficient attempt to justify the topic. Actual topic not clear due to lack of focus.
<b>Methodology and data collection</b>	Choice of methodology explained in comparable terms showing considerable evidence of reading and understanding. Overall research design abundantly clear and logical for the student to apply. Strengths and weaknesses in previously used methodologies/data-collection techniques are recognized and dealt with.	Methodology described but not in explanation terms; so no explanation given for choices; nevertheless, an appropriate methodology employed. Research techniques clear and suitable for the topic. May have replicated weaknesses or bias inherent in previous work on the topic.	No explanation of the methodology, its choice or appropriateness for the research. No indication of reading on methodology or data-collection techniques, so no demonstration of ability to collect data in a systematic way. No overall research design.
<b>Literature review and evaluation</b>	Thorough review of the relevant literature; systematically analysed and all main variables and arguments identified. Critical evaluation firmly linked to justification and methodology.	Review of the main literature with main variables and arguments identified. Some links made to methodology and justification.	No review of the literature; annotations of some items but no attempt at a critical evaluation, therefore no arguments or key variables identified relevant to the topic. No bibliography or too large a bibliography to have been used.
			<i>continued</i>
	Excellent and distinctive work	Competent work	Significantly deficient work
<b>Style and presentation, including the use of graphic materials</b>	Clear and cohesive structure. Very well presented with accurate citations and bibliography. Impressive use of visual and graphic devices, and effective arrangement of materials. Accurate and proper use of English, employing scholarly conventions.	Clear structure and arrangement of materials with accurate citations, appropriate use of visual and graphic devices.	Structured presentation but very thin on substantive content. Citations mostly correct but not consistent. Little evidence of thought about the use of visual or graphic devices. Sloppy use of language.
<b>Overall coherence and academic rigour</b>	Systematic and considered approach; critically reflexive; clarity and logic in the structuring of argument; proper use of language; assumptions stated; clarity of interpretation; identification of gaps and possibility for further research. Of a publishable standard.	Considered approach; clarity in the structure of presentation; satisfactory use of language; assumptions mostly stated, though some implicit; conclusions and ideas for further research identified.	Not a considered approach therefore no planning evident. Poor use of technical terms and overuse of cliché. No argumentative structure evident. Some attempt at interpretation, but not based on the data.