

# Formal Guidelines at the institute of Banking and Finance

Last Update: 23. August 2023

---

*“Easy reading is damned hard writing.”*

Nathaniel Hawthorne

---

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Elements of a scientific thesis .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Structure.....	1
1.2	Cover sheet .....	1
1.3	Table of contents .....	2
1.4	List of figures and tables .....	2
1.5	List of abbreviations and symbols.....	2
1.6	Appendix .....	3
1.7	Statutory Declaration .....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Guideline for number of pages .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Design of the thesis .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	Basic formatting .....	4
3.2	Formatting of the main body .....	4
3.3	Formatting and structure of the headlines.....	5
3.4	Paging.....	5
3.5	Footnotes .....	5
<b>4</b>	<b>Citation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	Direct and indirect citations.....	6
4.2	Short references.....	7
4.3	Bibliography .....	7
4.3.1	Content and design of the Bibliography .....	7
4.3.2	Journal articles.....	8
4.3.3	Books .....	8
4.3.4	Internet sources.....	9
4.3.5	Essays in collected editions .....	9
4.3.6	Working Paper .....	10



# 1 Elements of a scientific thesis

## 1.1 Structure

All scientific theses at the Institute of Banking and Finance (IBF)<sup>1</sup> consist of:

- Cover sheet
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- List of tables
- List of abbreviations
- List of symbols
- Main text
- Appendix (optionally)
- Bibliography
- Statutory declaration

The statutory declaration must be added at the end of the thesis and does not show up in the table of contents.

## 1.2 Cover sheet

You may design the cover page of your seminar thesis individually. Nonetheless, the following information is mandatory:

- Title of the thesis
- Submission date
- Information on the author
  - Last name and first name
  - Address
  - Student ID
  - Major
  - Semester
  - optionally e-mail address

For **seminar papers** the following particulars are necessary:

- Lecture format (Seminar, Essay etc.)
- Name and number of the course according to the course catalogue
- Semester: Summer semester 20xy or Winter semester 20xy / 20xz
- Name of the examiner and optionally the supervisor

However, for **bachelor and master theses** the following information is required:

---

<sup>1</sup> This is how you introduce abbreviations which are not common knowledge, see Section 1.5.



- Type of pursued degree (Bachelor, Master) and major
- Title and name of the examiner

In addition, existing formal requirements of the responsible examination office should be taken into account.

### 1.3 Table of contents

The table of content is a structured “summary” of the thesis.

- The table of contents includes all (sub-)chapters with page references.
- The headlines in the table of contents must correspond to headlines in the text (word by word).
- Headlines are structured numbered with Arabic digits (1, 1.1, 1.1.1 etc.). There is no dot behind the last digit.
- The table of contents and the formal declaration are not listed in the table of contents.
- The table of contents must be designed clearly, e.g. through gaps, boldness, indentations etc.

### 1.4 List of figures and tables

In these lists, all figures, respectively tables, need to be listed with their corresponding numerator, title and page reference. The numbering is unstructured with continuously ascending Arabic digits (Figure 1, Figure 2 etc.).

### 1.5 List of abbreviations and symbols

The list of abbreviations comprises all abbreviations not explained in the dictionary. These abbreviations need to be defined in parentheses when used for the first time (within the text).

“The Cumulative Prospect Theory (CPT) is an important theory...”.

The list of abbreviations is ordered alphabetically. For example:

CPT	Cumulative Prospect Theory
CVaR	Conditional Value at Risk
S&P	Standard & Poor’s
LPM	Lower Partial Moment

The list of symbols contains and defines all mathematical symbols used in the text. They need to be explained when being used for the first time. For example:



$er_{it}$  Excess return of stock  $i$  in month  $t$  in excess of the risk free rate

$er_{mt}$  Excess return of the market portfolio in month  $t$  in excess of the risk free rate

$z_{\alpha}$   $\alpha$  -Quantile of a standard normally distributed random variable

The list of symbols is ordered by the first occurrence of the symbols. Common characters or mathematical symbols such as €, &, %, etc. are not required in the list of symbols.

## 1.6 Appendix

The appendix consists of complementary information that is not crucial to the main text:

- Additional analysis, e.g. tables or figures
- Questionnaires or other material the reader does not have access to
- Statistical data discussed in the text
- Irrelevant information should be covered neither in the text part nor in the appendix!
- The appendix must not be “abused” due to a lack of space.
- Especially the body must not be shifted to the appendix.
- The appendix follows directly after the text.
- The appendix contains headlines and is ordered alphabetically (Appendix A, Appendix B etc.).
- These headlines are listed in the table of contents.
- Figures and tables of the appendix are *not* listed in the corresponding lists.

## 1.7 Statutory Declaration

The text of the statutory declaration needs to be the following (last update: April 2016):

— — — Beginning of the declaration text — — —

Herewith I assure that I wrote the present study independently and that I did not use other sources and resources than the one named, that I marked all those parts of the study which have been copied word by word or by content and that the study has not been submitted in the same or similar form to any previous examination.

City, Date, handwritten signature

— — — End of the declaration text — — —



CAUTION: The declaration text presented above is compliant with the examination requirements at the named date according to our interpretation. Nevertheless, it is part of your responsibility to assure that your scientific thesis is compliant with the examination rules. Please inform yourself by reading the examination regulations and by contacting the Dean's office whether there are new or different requirements available regarding the statutory declaration.

## 2 Guideline for number of pages

For scientific theses at the IBF, the following rules regarding the length need to be followed.

- Essays 18+/-2 pages
- Seminar thesis
  - One author 16+/-2 pages
  - Two authors 20+/-2 pages
  - Three authors 24+/-2 pages
- Bachelor thesis 24+/-3 pages
- Master thesis 50+/-5 pages

These figures refer to the text part of the thesis, i.e., from the first chapter headline to the end of the last chapter. Deviations from that must be approved individually by the supervisor in advance.

It is not permitted to list tables and figures in general in the appendix to adhere to the space limitations.

## 3 Design of the thesis

### 3.1 Basic formatting

The document is to be formatted as followed:

- Paper size DIN A4, margins: Top/bottom 3 cm each, 5 cm on the right and 2 cm on the left.
- Font: Times New Roman or similar serif, font color black.
- One-page print.

Symmetric margins deviating from the rules stated above may only be used on the cover sheet, e.g. 2 cm on the top, bottom, left and right, respectively.

### 3.2 Formatting of the main body

For the body of the thesis, the following formatting needs to be followed:

- Font size 12pt for normal text, 10pt for footnotes and captions.
- The line spacing is 1.5 lines for normal text and 1.0 lines for footnotes.



- The space between two normal text paragraphs is 12pt.
- Additional paragraph indents are not necessary.
- Justification with hyphenation needs to be applied.

### 3.3 Formatting and structure of the headlines

The following formatting and structure need to be followed for the headlines of the thesis:

- Headlines on the first outline level are in font size 14pt and in bold letters.
- All the other headlines are in font size 12pt and in bold letters.
- In front of a headline there needs to be a paragraph spacing of 12pt, after a headline a space of 6pt.
- Headlines need to be numbered with a structure (1, 1.1, 1.1.1). In the general case more than three outline levels may not be used.
- A substructure must include at least two subsections, that means, that at least 1.2 needs to follow after 1.1, and not 2.

Text is only on the last outline level, that means, between 1 and 1.1 there is no text, only under 1.1, 1.2 etc.

### 3.4 Paging

The paging must be designed as follows:

- All pages, including the cover sheet, are counted.
- No page numbers on the cover sheet.
- On all pages with lists of references it needs to be counted with Roman digits (I, II, III, IV, ...).
- From the first page with text to the last page of the thesis (including appendix and bibliography), Arabic digits need to be used.
- The first page which includes text is to be marked as page 1.
- The cover sheet and the statutory declaration do not include page numbers.
- The page numbers are on the bottom right without exceptions.

### 3.5 Footnotes

Footnotes should be only used infrequently, unless they state the reference of a source. The footnotes need to be designed as follows:

- Footnotes are on the same pages as they are in the flowing text (no endnotes).
- Footnotes need to be numbered continuously and ascending with Arabic digits. No structure is used.
- Footnotes always begin with a capital letter and always end with a dot.



## 4 Citation

### 4.1 Direct and indirect citations

An important part of the scientific work is the critical review of the literature on the subject at hand. **Any** foreign ideas taken from the literature must be acknowledged to separate existing thoughts from your own results and conclusions. There are two main tools in citation.

#### 1) Direct citation

- A direct citation should be in quotation marks and exactly equal the original sentence in the source:  
*“Though the bubble will ultimately burst, in the intermediate term, there can be a large and long-lasting departure from fundamental values”.<sup>2</sup>*
- The short reference in the footnote provides details where to find this statement in the source.
- Unless the direct citation is within a sentence, the footnote should be at the end of a sentence.
- Direct quotes should be used in rare cases only.

#### 2) Indirect citation

- Indirect quotations are the reproduction of foreign thoughts in one's own words.
- Some examples:

*In efficient financial markets, neither technical analysis, not fundamental analysis enable investors to achieve higher returns than the overall markets.<sup>3</sup>*

*Malkiel (2003) argues that investors are unable to beat the overall markets by using technical analysis or fundamental analysis if markets are efficient.<sup>4</sup>*

- Indirect quotes start with a “cf.” or “see” in the footnote to indicate that you paraphrase foreign ideas. However, be consistent with the two alternatives.
- Always provide a footnote to the reference in the text, even if you state the source in the text.
- The only exception are very general statements which affect the whole source, e.g.:

Malkiel (2003) summarizes the literature on the Efficient Market Hypothesis.

---

<sup>2</sup> Abreu and Brunnermeier (2003), p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Malkiel (2003), p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> See Malkiel (2003), p. 59.



## 4.2 Short references

- Short references in the text must always allow unambiguous references to entries in the bibliography. Short references always follow the scheme "Last name (year of publication), page number", for example: Barberis et al. (2016), p. 732.
- All short references contain only author names.
  - If there is one author, his surname should be mentioned, e.g.: Barberis (2016), p. 100.
  - If there are two authors, both of them are named. In between, an "and" is inserted, not a slash, e.g.: Barberis and Thaler (2016), p. 100.
  - If there are at least three authors, only the first is mentioned and the others are abbreviated to "et al.", e.g: Barberis et al. (2016), p. 732.
- The year of publication is enclosed in parentheses, unless the short reference itself is in parenthesis, which should be avoided if possible.
- If a combination of last name and year refers to several different entries in the bibliography, the year must be followed by a letter. This letter must also be listed in the bibliography.
- The page name is preceded by the abbreviation "p.".
- Page references are always as precise as possible. The specification of several pages (pages 1-5) should be avoided. The reference to more than one following page (ff.) is always inadmissible. If you cite a given range of pages, refer to them as pp. 1-5.
- All further details about the source are only listed in the bibliography, *not* in the short reference. Short references should be used for both direct and indirect quotes.
- In both cases, cite in a footnote and only in exceptional cases directly in the body text.
- Short references to indirect citations always have the abbreviation "Cf." prefixed, for example: <sup>32</sup> Cf. Barberis et al. (2016), p. 732. Alternatively, you can use „See“ instead.

## 4.3 Bibliography

### 4.3.1 Content and design of the Bibliography

The bibliography at the end of the thesis includes all sources that have been used in the text. The use of short references in the text and references in the bibliography must be unambiguous:

- Each short reference must be assigned a correct entry in the bibliography.
- Each entry in the bibliography must be used at least once as a short reference in the text.
- The entries in the bibliography are arranged alphabetically according to the last name of the first author of each entry. When they are several authors with the same last name, publications are sorted by co-authors and year of publication.
- The entries are to be made as legible as possible by spacing, indentation and typesetting.

Entries in the bibliography must allow a quick and unambiguous identification of the source. For this purpose, the entries should be made as follows.



### 4.3.2 Journal articles

Entries for articles in peer reviewed journals must include the following information in the order given:

- Last names and first names of all authors
- Year of publication in brackets, followed by a colon
- Title of the article, concluding with a dot.
- Name of the publishing journal in italics, followed by a comma
- Indication of issue/year (Issue) and edition (No.), followed by a comma
- Page entry, introduced with the abbreviation "pp." and concluding with a dot.

For further design aspects, keep in mind the following examples:

Barber, Brad M. and Odean, Terrance (2000): Trading Is Hazardous to Your Wealth: The Common Stock Investment Performance of Individual Investors. *Journal of Finance*, Issue 55 No. 2, pp. 773–806.

Fama, Eugene F. and French, Kenneth R. (1993): Common Risk Factors in the Returns on Stocks and Bonds. *Journal of Financial Economics*, Issue 33 No. 1, pp. 3–56.

Longstaff, Francis A., Mithal, Sanjay and Neis, Eric (2005): Corporate Yield Spreads: Default Risk or Liquidity? New Evidence from the Credit Default Swap Market. *Journal of Finance*, Issue 60 No. 5, pp. 2213–2253.

Citation management software often provides a default citation for journal articles in the following style, which is also allowed:

Barber, Brad M. and Odean, Terrance (2000): Trading Is Hazardous to Your Wealth: The Common Stock Investment Performance of Individual Investors. *Journal of Finance* 55(2), pp. 773–806.

However, make sure that your citations are consistent in formatting.

### 4.3.3 Books

Entries for books must contain the following information in the given order:

- Last names and first names of all authors
- Year of publication in brackets, followed by a colon
- Title of the book in italics, eventually separated by a comma indicating the edition as on the cover page of the book, concluding with a dot.
- Specification of location and publisher, separated by a colon and ending with a dot.

For further design aspects, keep in mind the following examples:

Gallati, Reto R. (2011): *Verzinsliche Wertpapiere: Bewertung und Strategien*, 3rd edition. Wiesbaden: Gabler.

Greene, William H. (2012): *Econometric Analysis*, 7th edition. Boston: Prentice Hall.



Stock, James H. and Watson, Mark W. (2011): *Introduction to Econometrics*, 3rd edition. Boston: Addison-Wesley.

#### 4.3.4 Internet sources

All internet sources are to be attached to the thesis in electronic form. Entries for internet sources must contain the following information in the given order:

- Last names and first names of all authors or the publishing institution
- Year of publication in brackets, followed by a colon
- Title of the source, concluding with a dot.
- Name or description of the website in italics, followed by a comma
- Internet address of the source
- Date of last updating in brackets, followed by a dot

For further design aspects, keep in mind the following examples:

Bank for International Settlements (2016): Standardised Measurement Approach for operational risk – consultative document. *Publications of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision*, <http://www.bis.org/bcbs/publ/d355.htm> (22.03.2016)

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (2016): CBOE Volatility Index: VIX® (VIXCLS). *FRED Economic Data*, <https://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/VIXCLS/downloaddata> (22.03.2016).

French, Kenneth R. (2016): Fama/French 3 Factors. Data Library, [http://mba.tuck.dartmouth.edu/pages/faculty/ken.french/data\\_library.html](http://mba.tuck.dartmouth.edu/pages/faculty/ken.french/data_library.html) (10.03.2016)

#### 4.3.5 Essays in collected editions

Entries for contributions in collected editions must contain the following information in the given order:

- Last names and first names of all authors of the essay
- Year of publication in brackets, followed by a colon
- Title of the article, concluding with a dot.
- Subsequently, introduction of the information on the anthology by "In:"
- Last names and first names of all editors of the anthology, completed with "(Editor):"
- Title of the anthology in italics, eventually separated by a comma the indication of the edition as on the title page of the anthology, concluding with a comma.
- Page reference, introduced by the abbreviation "P.", followed by a comma.
- Specification of location and publisher, separated by a colon and ending with a dot.

For further design aspects, keep in mind the following example:



Jensen, Michael C. (1972): Optimal Utilization of Market Forecasts and the Evaluation of Investment Performance. In: Giorgio P. Szegö and Karl Shell (Editor): *Mathematical Methods in Investment and Finance*, pp. 310–335. Amsterdam: North Holland.

#### 4.3.6 Working Paper

Entries for Working Paper must contain the following information in the given order:

- Last names and first names of all authors
- Year of publication in brackets, followed by a colon
- Title of the article, concluding with a dot.
- The reference “Working Paper“, followed by the institution which is publishing the document, concluding with a dot.

For further design aspects, keep in mind the following examples:

Aragon, George (2005): Timing Multiple Markets: Theory and Evidence from Balanced Mutual Funds. Working Paper, Arizona State University.

Hunter, David L.; Kandel, Eugene; Kandel, Shmuel und Wermers, Russ (2011): Endogenous Benchmarks. Working Paper, University of Maryland.