

Bachelor Theses

Chair of Corporate Social Responsibility

Dear student,

we are delighted that you will complete your bachelor thesis at the Chair of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)! To make matters clearer, this guideline sums up some basic information on the process and regulations for a bachelor thesis at our Chair.

If any aspects remain unclear or if you would like to discuss further details, feel free to contact Inken Blatt (inken.blatt@bwl.uni-mannheim.de), Michael Verbücheln (verbuecheln@bwl.uni-mannheim.de), or Jenni Sipilä (jsipilae@mail.uni-mannheim.de) who will be happy to advise you regarding general matters and to refer you to other Chair members for specific topics or theses.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

The team of the Chair of CSR

1. Before You Start

1.1. Finding a Topic

As required by the central regulations regarding the bachelor program in Business Administration, we will publish a final list of topics shortly before the time slot for your thesis will begin. All topics stem from the field of CSR, are theoretical in nature (i.e., you will work with existing literature and are not required to collect data), and tie in with current research interests at our chair (see our website for information on these).

1.2. Prerequisites

You can apply for and be assigned to our Chair by the central procedure of the bachelor program in Business Administration. We have no other prerequisites, though, of course, an interest in CSR is welcome.

1.3. Registering Your Thesis

Your topic will be assigned to you by our Chair at the date that the central regulations have declared for the respective semester. No other dates for registering and beginning a thesis are available!

2. Writing, Citing, and Formatting

2.1. Language.

You are welcome to write your thesis in either English or German; this is your choice.

2.2. Length.

Theses at our Chair must adhere to paper-style (i.e., be written in a manner similar to papers that are published in academic journals). This includes a concise writing style. In accordance with the faculty's regulations, the number of pages is limited to 20 *including* tables and illustrations, but *excluding* the title page, bibliography, and all appendices.

2.3. Structure.

The following sections should be part of your bachelor thesis.

2.3.1. Title page.

The first page of your thesis is a title page, including the title of your thesis, your name and matriculation number, the date of submission, and the Chair and supervisor assigned to you.

We provide a sample title page on the Chair's website which you can download and use.

2.3.2. Tables

Please always include a table of contents in your thesis. If you use abbreviations within your thesis, please explain them in the main text when you use them the first time and also include a table that lists and explains all abbreviations. In case you have any tables and/or illustrations, please also include two separate tables listing all of these.

2.3.3. Abstract.

The abstract provides a short summary of your thesis. It gives the reader an idea of the problem you dealt with, its relevance and what the most important findings were. It should not exceed 250 words.

2.3.4. Introduction.

In the introduction, the reader gains an idea of what you are going to do in your thesis and why that is so. By giving a brief overview of existing literature, the introduction highlights the relevance of the problem or research question as well as previous research and relevant theory in the area.

2.3.5. Main Part

The main part of your bachelor thesis typically includes an overview over the literature and theory on your topic. Here, you can present all the material that you have viewed regarding

your topic and the conclusions that you draw from the joint reflection of this material. Please make sure that you are following a clear idea and relating different sources and information to each other and to your topic/research question. Do not simply describe one finding/source/theory after the other, but make sure to connect them and to align them to a general argumentative structure. You are welcome to divide this part in several sections and to name them with subtitles, if this makes sense for the structure and argumentation that you are following. Also, you may consider using a table or illustration to concisely present the current status of the literature, and to indicate the gap in the existing research.

2.3.6. Discussion.

The discussion offers the opportunity to evaluate and interpret your thesis. Typically, the discussion begins with a summary of results that clearly summarizes what your main conclusions and findings are. The discussion then also addresses limitations of your thesis by discussing aspects that may be problematic or remain unclear, for example when the literature on some aspects is contradictory or not sufficient. Lastly, the discussion typically turns to the relevance of the study by pointing out its contribution to theory and research, its implications for further studies and for practitioners.

2.3.7. Bibliography.

Your thesis must contain a bibliography, in which every source that you referred to throughout the thesis must be listed. Please take care in creating your bibliography! For further information, see 2.4.

2.3.8. Appendices.

Material that may be helpful for the reader but that is too lengthy or distracting for inclusion in the main body (i.e., a long table) may be included in an appendix. Typically, this will not

be necessary for a bachelor thesis, but if so, you may add an appendix. If you prefer or if the appendix is very lengthy, it may be handed in digitally instead of in print.

Please note that according to the faculty's regulations, you are only permitted to include information in the appendix that is not strictly necessary to follow the reasoning of your thesis (i.e., you should not try to use the appendix as a way to circumvent the maximum number of pages).

2.3.9. Declaration.

Your thesis must include a signed declaration assuring that the thesis is entirely your own work and does not contain plagiarism. See the Appendix of this guideline for the required wording of the declaration.

2.4. Using References and Citing

In the process of arguing your standpoint and approach, you will depend on the ideas and knowledge of others. Whenever you use background information, definitions, arguments, data, or any other information created by others, you must then cite this source appropriately. By citing, you confirm that you have actually read the original source, and that you are repeating its contents to the best of your knowledge. This must be true whenever you include a reference!

For your bachelor thesis, there is no minimum (or maximum) number of references to be included. There are also no rules regarding the type of reference that may be used. Typically (but not necessarily!), the most useful sources are recently published research papers in highly ranked journals. Depending on the topic, useful sources may stem from areas other than business such as psychology, sociology, etc. Most scientific papers, and hence also paper-style theses, rely on journal articles (rather than, for example, books, media reports,

dissertations etc.) as main sources. To identify highly recognized journals, you can view journal rankings such as FT45, UTD24, or VHB Jourqual.

All references must be made according to the guidelines of the APA. Also, please note that “recycling” written material that you yourself have created some time earlier (e.g., as a bachelor thesis) is also plagiarism unless you officially cite yourself! For details, see the Publication Manual of the APA. Please take care when using references and citing! Not giving credit to sources is a serious mistake and may lead to suspicions of plagiarism, which the university does not tolerate. Note that we use the internet-based plagiarism detection service Turnitin.

In order to simplify citing, you have the option to use the software Citavi (licenses for which are provided for free by the university, see <http://www.bib.uni-mannheim.de/1171.html>) or any other reference management program. Most of these programs are capable of accurately and efficiently implementing APA reference style. However, it remains your responsibility to check the references’ correctness.

2.5. Formatting

Formatting must fulfill the requirements of the APA. For details, see the Publication Manual of the APA; several copies are available in the university library.

Important aspects include:

- 1.5-spaced manuscripts
- Calibri font, 12 pt.
- margins top and right: 2.5cm
- margin left: 2.5cm + 1cm for binding
- margin bottom: 2cm
- running head with title and page number

- use active tense whenever possible

3. Handing in your thesis and grading

Your thesis must be handed in by the general deadline! However, you are of course permitted to hand in your thesis earlier. Please contact your supervisor in advance to discuss whether he/she will be present or whom to give your thesis to on the respective date.

Your thesis must be handed in duplicate as a hard copy and as a digital file. No specific regulations regarding the printing and binding of the hard copies exist; any neat and functional binding/folder/etc. will be accepted. Grading will be completed within the official time frame that is applicable to all Chairs.

In accordance with the faculty's general regulations, your supervisor will assess the following aspects when grading your thesis:

- The structure and quality of your reasoning, for example in regard to the following criteria:
 - Does your thesis address a relevant research question?
 - Does it adequately present the existing research?
 - Does it clearly outline the research gap that you are addressing?
 - Is the methodological approach to investigating that gap adequate?
 - Are the results presented clearly?
 - Are the implications and limitations of the thesis discussed appropriately?
- The degree to which you searched, presented, integrated, and effectively evaluated/discussed existing literature and findings on your topic.
- The quality of your scientific work concerning correct procedures for citing and displaying the work of others.

Appendix

Your thesis must include the following declaration (including the date and your signature) in either German or English:

Hiermit versichere ich, dass diese Arbeit von mir persönlich verfasst wurde und dass ich keinerlei fremde Hilfe in Anspruch genommen habe. Ebenso versichere ich, dass diese Arbeit oder Teile daraus weder von mir selbst noch von anderen als Leistungsnachweise andernorts eingereicht wurden. Wörtliche oder sinngemäße Übernahmen aus anderen Schriften und Veröffentlichungen in gedruckter oder elektronischer Form sind gekennzeichnet. Sämtliche Sekundärliteratur und sonstige Quellen sind nachgewiesen und in der Bibliographie aufgeführt. Das Gleiche gilt für graphische Darstellungen und Bilder sowie für alle Internet-Quellen. Ich bin ferner damit einverstanden, dass meine Arbeit zum Zwecke eines Plagiatsabgleichs in elektronischer Form anonymisiert versendet und gespeichert werden kann.

Ort, Datum: _____ Unterschrift: _____