

Bezeichnung:	Guideline Bachelor Thesis	erstellt:	Breinbauer	freigegeben:	Kollegium
Gültig ab:	01.09.2019	geprüft:	Breinbauer/ Schiessl/ E: Ebersberger	freigegeben am:	06.05.2019
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Guideline for Bachelor Theses at the UAS BFI Vienna

1. In a UAS bachelor programme **one or more bachelor theses** have to be drafted related to specific courses the students attend (pursuant to 3 para 2 Z 6 FHStG/Universities of Applied Sciences Act). In contrast to master theses, bachelor theses are no final degree-completing papers. At the UAS BFI Vienna, bachelor programmes can stipulate one or two bachelor theses. The present guideline appoints, unless stated otherwise, the framework for drafting two bachelor theses within a bachelor programme. If the related specifications diverge from the present guideline (e.g. deadlines, formal requirements such as text length, grading criteria, grading form, adaptation of bachelor examinations etc.), they are to be communicated in writing to the students, the lecturers concerned, the head of the UAS academic council and the head of quality management. This also applies to the case of two differently weighted bachelor theses (e.g. “minor” and “major” bachelor theses in different semesters).
2. This guideline for drafting bachelor theses summarises the **(minimum) standards valid for all degree programmes at UAS BFI Vienna**. *In addition to those*, there may be more specific guidelines which are relevant to one degree programme only. These meet the needs of a specific degree programme and are in accordance with the present general guideline.
3. It is the **aim of bachelor theses** for students to **independently draft and submit** a written paper of professional and academic relevance within the available subjects of a degree programme, **by relying on the knowledge the students have accumulated during their studies**. The bachelor thesis needs to answer one or several research questions. The academic requirements (research question, hypothesis building, depth and width of material etc.) and the requirements regarding the length of the paper are high but definitely less complex than those of a master thesis. A textbook-like treatment of a topic, i.e. a wide range of topics with concomitant lack of depth, is to be avoided.
4. Bachelor theses need to be written **in German** (in bachelor programmes with German as their main medium of instruction), and **in English** in English-medium bachelor programmes. It is possible, however, after consultation with the supervisor of the bachelor thesis and the programme director, to write **one** of the two theses in another language (German/English).

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5. Bachelor theses are drafted in seminars or project seminars.

6. As a rule, bachelor theses are **scheduled to be completed** in 12 weeks (VZ= full-time) or 17 weeks (BB= part-time, work-and-study) respectively. The compatibility of mandatory internships, drafting bachelor theses, and any other student workload is taken care of by the coordinators of the bachelor programmes. If only one bachelor thesis is drafted, the duration may be extended to two semesters with an according extension of the scope or depth of the thesis. The corresponding guidelines will be communicated to the students, the lecturers concerned, and the UAS academic council (head of the UAS academic council) and the head of quality management as representative of the course providing body.
7. Seminar supervisors and students agree on the **research questions to be dealt with in the thesis**, in accordance with the programme directors at the beginning of the seminar at the latest. If students offer their own topics, these can be taken into consideration if they **fall within the scope of the overall seminar topic** (in accordance with the research clusters of the UAS BFI Vienna and the particular bachelor programme) and if the seminar supervisor accepts the topic suggested. Research questions in the course type *seminar* are meant to be related to either programme-specific or cross-programme research clusters of the UAS BFI Vienna. In *project seminars* students can, upon approval by the programme director, either deal with real-business-life or close-to-real-business-life projects in cooperation with enterprises, or carry out research projects. Research topics are distributed at the beginning of the specific semester at the latest.
8. If students can choose from a variety of seminar groups, they can only choose seminars within their degree programme. An even distribution of students across all seminar groups of a seminar is desirable.
9. Regarding grading of student performance in a bachelor seminar, please refer to the 'Assessment Form Bachelor Seminar'.
10. With **UAS-specific research projects**, digressions from these criteria may be tolerated. The bachelor thesis as the final product will be decisive for grading.
11. **A number of students** (up to three) **may jointly address one topic** if the individual performance of each student can be graded separately. (§ 19 para 1 FHStG).
12. The **attendance** of bachelor seminars **is mandatory**: only students abroad (see no. 27) and those carrying out empirical fieldwork are exempt. Further exemptions require consultation of the seminar supervisor and approval by the programme director or the head of the UAS academic council.
13. The **body of each of the two bachelor theses** (consisting of introduction, main part, and conclusion) needs to comprise 6,000 to 8,000 words. For deviating rules regarding the

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amount of work, please consult no. 1 and 2. Formal requirements: 1 ½ -spacing, font: Roboto, font size: 12.

14. The formal and quotation requirements of the UAS BFI Vienna are to be strictly observed (*Haslehner/Springler/Wala, „Bachelor- und Diplomarbeiten an Fachhochschulen“, current edition*), quotations and abbreviations in legal bachelor theses are to be made in adherence to *Peter Dax; Gerhard Hopf, AZR - Abkürzungs- und Zitierregeln der österreichischen Rechtssprache und europarechtlicher Rechtsquellen, MANZ Verlag Vienna, current edition*. Please also note the current **Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice** of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (cf. website OeAWI) which must be adhered to. Further, the **guidelines on gender-sensitive language and images** are to be adhered to (cf. UAS BFI Vienna website, “Guidelines on Gender-sensitive Language and Images”).

Students who want to use a questionnaire survey to generate data for their theses are referred to the survey software which needs to be ordered from research coordination.

If students or graduates of the entire UAS BFI Vienna should be the respondents to the questionnaires, the UAS Academic Council and the quality manager of the UAS have to approve this questionnaire. Degree programme directors will decide about surveys within their degree programmes.

15. For information on the research proposal, students are referred to the UAS e-learning platform and the relevant template.
16. For information on the structure of the **bachelor thesis** students are referred to the UAS e-learning platform and the relevant template.
17. The contents of the thesis have to be presented by the student in the bachelor seminar. The **presentation** is to last 15 to 20 minutes, and is followed by a question-and-answer session, in which the students answer questions of the supervisor and other seminar participants (**defensio or discussion of the bachelor thesis**). If students have not submitted a positively graded bachelor thesis, programme-specific regulations can allow for a waiving of the presentation and defensio of the thesis. In such cases, the programme director will decide on the weighting of seminar components.
18. The **time schedule** of the seminar and uniform deadlines within a degree programme need to be included in the course description.
19. Students need to be made aware that their **literature search** and literature review should have reached a fairly advanced stage by the date of the presentation and discussion. In the research proposal, there should be at least 10 recent academic sources for a topic of average complexity, in particular articles from scientific journals. In the final version of the

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thesis, there should be at least 20 recent academic sources. They are supposed to be high-quality and recent sources which need to have been reviewed critically and comprehensively. This is particular relevant with internet sources – incidentally, it should be noted that Wikipedia is not considered a reliable and quotable academic source.

20. The bachelor theses are to be submitted to the UAS BFI Vienna online platform as a word document and (open) pdf-file. By **submission** of a bachelor thesis we understand the submission of the final draft fit for assessment and approval (no preliminary versions!).
21. The submitted bachelor thesis needs to be subjected to a routine **electronic plagiarism check**, which is carried out by the seminar supervisor. In addition to **this electronic check, the supervisor also needs to do a content plagiarism check. In case of plagiarism, the bachelor thesis will be declared invalid**, and the rules for negatively assessed bachelor theses apply. This incident is communicated to the head of the UAS academic council who will admonish the student; should the same student be caught plagiarising again, he/she will be automatically expelled from the degree programme.

In justified suspected cases of plagiarism or ghost-writing, the UAS BFI Vienna reserves the right to invite the student to the Good Scientific Practice Ombudsman of the UAS BFI Vienna.

22. The **bachelor thesis (on the basis of its final draft) will be graded** by the supervisor within 3 weeks at the latest after its submission. Observance of the formal criteria (cf. part 1 of the form, assessment of the formal criteria) is a minimum requirement. This means that if not all listed formal criteria are observed (completeness, declaration of honour, required number of characters, formatting, academic style, spelling, grammar and punctuation, quoting academic sources, literature references etc.), the thesis cannot be assessed and approved (“nicht approbationsfähig”), and has to be rejected. In this case, contents of the thesis are not assessed, and the lecturer only needs to complete the first part of the assessment form, and label it as “cannot be approved/nicht approbierfähig”. Formal shortcomings, e.g. insufficiently adequate spelling will result in points deducted in the respective category. If all formal criteria are met, and met fully, no points will be deducted. Subsequently, the lecturer can assess the contents of the thesis (part two of the assessment form). In the writing space provided for comments, the supervisor’s reasons need to be documented in order to make the reasons why points have been deducted clear to the student, and allow him/her to improve the thesis in this respect.
23. If a student is unable to meet the deadline (first attempt) without citing any vital reason (e.g. protracted serious illness, a serious accident, or birth of a child), the first attempt is forfeited. The thesis is then to be submitted within four weeks (= 2nd attempt, 1st resit). Should the thesis be of insufficient quality, the paper will be **negatively assessed**. The supervisor will then communicate the changes that need to be made in order to secure a pass grade to the student. These changes need to be integrated within four weeks after the first attempt (1st submission) and the paper is resubmitted (2nd attempt). Should the

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student again miss the deadline without citing any vital reasons or if the draft still contains considerable flaws, the thesis will again be assessed negatively.

There will be a final written communication of the improvements that are necessary for a pass. These changes need to be made within a deadline set by the programme director, and this final version is then assessed by a board of examiners (i.e. treated as a **board exam**). This board is nominated by the programme director, and usually consists of the supervisor of the thesis, the subject coordinator in charge (or any of the full-time or part-time lecturers of this field), and the programme director. The supervisor and the subject coordinator have to draft one independent statement each (for the form see below). If the panel does not reach a unanimous decision, the programme director will take the final decision. All content and formal criteria of the thesis need to be met for a pass grade. If a decision by the board or the programme director is negative, the student cannot pursue his/her studies any further. He/she may, however, petition for a repeat year with the programme director.

24. The course (or the bachelor thesis) is graded on the basis of an **analysis grid** (assessment sheet for a bachelor thesis, see appendix). Overall, **100 points** can be reached (see appendix). For a final submission (treated as board exam), only the bachelor thesis will be graded based on formal and content criteria, any other points collected (presentation, research proposal, participation) are not relevant. Grading depends on the general grading key for the points the student has reached, with minimum content and formal criteria to be met. Grading of content criteria can only take place once all formal criteria are met so that the thesis can be assessed and approved ("approbierfähig") (cf. no. 23) Additionally, the electronic and content plagiarism check must have been negative; finally, ghost-writing must also have been ruled out.
25. The **grading criteria** and their weighting (analysis grid) are communicated to the students at the beginning of the seminar through the UAS e-learning platform.
26. The **bound copies** of the bachelor theses together with the assessment forms completed by the supervisor have to be submitted to the subject coordination two weeks after the last seminar meeting and/or, if explicitly defined by the degree programme, to be submitted electronically as a pdf-file to the UAS e-learning platform.
27. Students, who **are abroad in the semester in which bachelor theses have to be produced** can submit their theses in either of two ways as follows:
- **The paper needs to be written in an equivalent seminar abroad.** This has to be approved by the programme director. The thesis and its grading by the supervisor abroad are to be forwarded to the programme director, who will check them. As a

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rule, this grading serves as a benchmark for the grade of the domestic bachelor seminar. If there is a considerable difference in requirements and levels between the two universities, the degree programme director can adapt the grade to domestic standards.

- If it is not possible to draft a bachelor thesis with a supervisor abroad, the programme director and the outgoing student will agree on a seminar paper topic, and there will be "**distance supervision**".
- In both cases **the grade of the written paper will be extrapolated to arrive at a final grade** since continuous assessment, presentation, and defensio/discussion will not be possible in this case.