

Guidelines for BBE Students

Bachelor's Thesis

The aim of this guide is to give you an overview on your bachelor's thesis process. The process does not only include writing your thesis. It begins much earlier by gathering information on the various topics and selection procedures of the Institutes, and taking the course "Introduction to Academic Writing". Hence, we strongly recommend gathering all information in time.

We would like to emphasize that this document may only serve as a general guide, as every bachelor's thesis topic, focus, and process is different from one another. Working on your bachelor's thesis depends on the requirements of the Institute and your supervisor.

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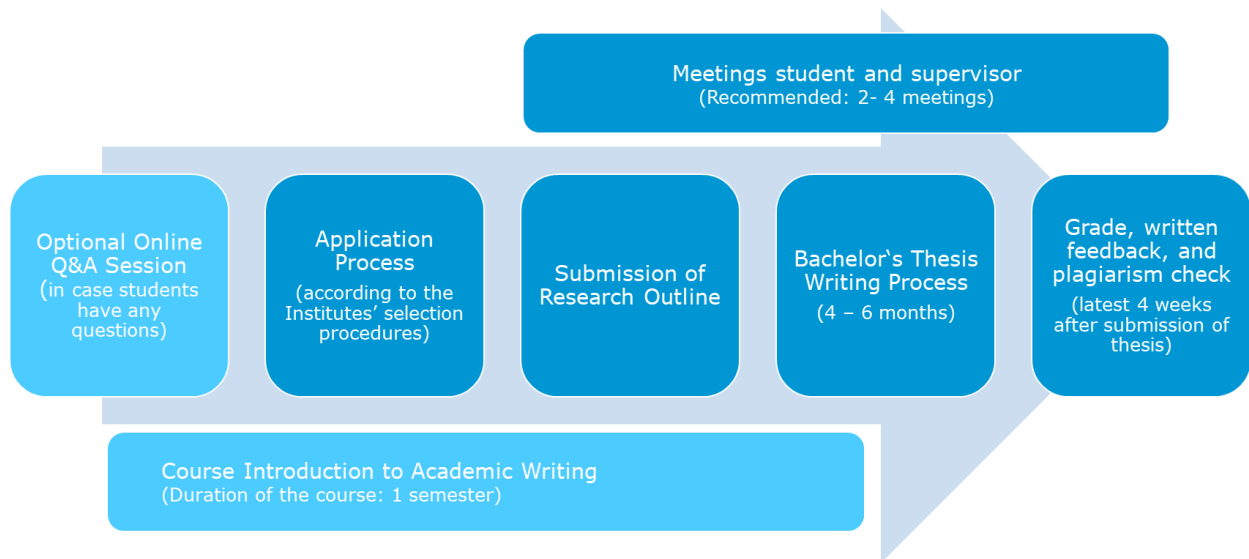
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1. Timeline BBE Bachelor's Thesis Process



1.1. Optional (online) Q&A Session on your BBE Bachelor's Thesis Process

In this session, we invite you to ask your questions on the BBE bachelor's thesis process. Please note that we can only give general information, for specific information please visit the Institutes' websites and contact your supervisor.

Registration is not necessary, just show up. Attendance is optional.

The Q&A session will take place every semester. We will publish the dates of the sessions on the BBE website (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>)

Would you like to write your bachelor's thesis in semester 6? Attend the information session in semester 5 to gather all information in time.

1.2. Course "Introduction to Academic Writing" (2 ECTS credits)

The course "Introduction to Academic Writing" is one of the two core courses in the area of Academic Skills (*Logic and Methodology of Social Sciences* and *Introduction to Academic Writing*).

In the course "Introduction to Academic Writing", you will be introduced to:

- Literature search and reference management
- Academic writing in different disciplines
- Good academic practice, citation, and plagiarism

Please find the syllabus, dates, and information on course registration in the online course catalog (VVZ). Register for the course via LPIS.

We recommend taking the course next to your bachelor's thesis writing process or earliest in the semester before starting your thesis. Please note that some Institutes and supervisors only accept applications of students who have already successfully completed the course.

1.3. Application Process

You will have to apply for supervision of a bachelor's thesis topic. All Institutes apply different selection procedures for accepting students as bachelor's thesis candidates at various points of the semester. You will have to check the Institutes' websites on gathering information on their selection procedures and bachelor's theses they supervise per semester.

Are you interested in specific topics, writing your thesis at a specific Institute, or with a specific supervisor? Please gather all information necessary in time. Some Institutes have specific application dates or special requirements, such as the completion of a specific specialization.

Are you facing difficulties in finding a supervisor? The BBE program management supports you in finding a supervisor if you meet the following requirements:

- You have already successfully completed the two course in the field of Academic skills (*Logic and Methodology of Social Sciences* and *Introduction to Academic Writing*).
- You submitted three convincing applications but been rejected on all of them?

In this case, you may fill in the form "Request support in finding a supervisor". Send the completed form including your applications and rejections to bbe@wu.ac.at before the end of the semester (by January 31 or by June 30). We will try to allocate you to an available supervisor but only in the next semester. We may not guarantee to allocate you to your favorite topic, Institute, or supervisor. Please find the form on the BBE website (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>).

1.4. Bachelor's Thesis Agreement

Did a supervisor agree on supervising your bachelor's thesis? Congratulations, you are ready to start writing your thesis!

Before diving into your thesis, you will need to fill in, agree on with your supervisor, and sign the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement. You will need to complete the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement in addition to the requirements of the Institute.

The Bachelor's Thesis Agreement is your first milestone in your thesis process. Its aim is to give you a first deeper insight into your thesis topic. Moreover, you will create a thesis plan of action in the agreement that gives you structure and overview on the entire process.

You are responsible for filling in the bachelor's thesis agreement, getting it signed and uploading it on Canvas WU as soon as you have been accepted for a bachelor's thesis topic. Please find the agreement and how to upload it on Canvas WU on the BBE website (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>).

At the same time, your supervisor will create and register the Thesis Supervision Agreement. You will be notified by email as soon as a Thesis Supervision Agreement has been entered into WU's IT system. Please note that additional supervision conditions may apply as specified by your supervisor. If you fail to comply with the conditions specified by your supervisor, the supervision agreement may be cancelled.

Your thesis can only be graded, if your supervisor has created and registered a valid Thesis Supervision Agreement.

1.5. Meetings with your supervisor

We strongly recommend actively staying in touch with your supervisor during your thesis process.

It is important to agree on the mode of meetings and feedback, requirements and objectives to be met by the thesis at the very beginning of the thesis process. Ideally, you and your supervisor record the dates and number of the meetings planned in the agreement. With that, you and your supervisor will set important deadlines.

We recommend approximately 2 – 4 personal meetings with your supervisor during your thesis process – requirements and needs are however different for each person. Show up to all meetings well prepared. Moreover, it is important to keep deadlines and agreements. If you cannot keep a deadline, contact your supervisor.

1.6. Grading and plagiarism check of your submitted thesis

You will have to submit your bachelor's thesis online using LEARN. All theses submitted for evaluation are subjected to plagiarism detection. The cover page must be filled out online and included at the very beginning of the thesis document. Once the submission process has been completed, the thesis and the results of the plagiarism check are made available to your supervisor for evaluation. Your supervisor then has four weeks after submission of the thesis to complete his or her evaluation. Together with your grade, you will receive comprehensive feedback on your thesis including the reasons for the grade assigned.

• Plagiarism

A work is considered to be plagiarized if texts, contents, or ideas produced by someone else are being passed off as the author's own work. This is the case especially when parts of texts, theories, hypotheses, findings, or data are incorporated into a work verbatim or in paraphrased or translated form without identifying these elements as quotations and referencing the original sources and authors (§ 51 [2] item 31 of the Universities Act 2002 [Universitätsgesetz, UG]).

- **Academic fraud/academic dishonesty**

Students are considered to have committed academic fraud if they use unauthorized aids, if they pass off texts written by a third party as their own in a written paper or in an exam (ghost-writing), or if they present fabricated or falsified data or findings (cf. § 51 [2] item 32 of the Universities Act 2002 [Universitätsgesetz, UG]).

The Directive on plagiarism, academic fraud, and the resulting legal consequences issued by the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs contains all the relevant information on plagiarism and its consequences:

https://www.wu.ac.at/fileadmin/wu/h/students/Pruefungsorganisation/Formulare/Formulare_Bachelor/DIR_Plagiarism_M%C3%A4rz_2019.pdf

Writing a bachelor's thesis can be challenging. One of these challenges can be determining exactly where another author's ideas end and your own work begins. Keep the following in mind while writing:

- When writing an academic text, the point is to demonstrate your grasp of the material, not so much to write perfectly formulated sentences. By independently and critically addressing the concepts, you show that you have understood and mastered them.
- Research carefully, but remember that just searching for information is not the main core of your work. It is more important to show how you have processed the information.

Only upload the final version of your bachelor's thesis. Before uploading the thesis, agree with your supervisor on the final version. Upload your bachelor's thesis on LEARN – Theses – Bachelor's Thesis.

Make sure to include the standardized cover page at the very beginning of your thesis.

You may find the cover page on the BBE website (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>).

2. Bachelor's Thesis Standards and Criteria

2.1. What's a bachelor's thesis?

You will need to write and submit a bachelor's thesis to successfully complete your bachelor's degree program. A bachelor's thesis is a scientific paper written by students at the end of a bachelor's program. It contains the most important elements of a scientific paper, but is clearly limited in its scope in contrast to a master's thesis.

"Bachelor's papers" mean independently prepared papers forming part of bachelor's degree program which must be written in connection with courses. (§ 51 [2] item 7 of the Universities Act 2002 [Universitätsgesetz, UG]).

2.2. How many ECTS credits do I get for my bachelor's thesis?

Your BBE bachelor's thesis is worth 10 ECTS credits, which is roughly equivalent to 250 hours of work. This is 30 days of full-time work, if your work on your thesis around 8 hours per day. A semester at WU got 16 weeks, if you want to finish your bachelor's thesis within one semester, you will have to dedicate approximately 2 days per week to your thesis.

Create a weekly schedule. We recommend dedicating around two days full-time in a row per week to work on your thesis. Sometimes it takes a while to get into to the writing and researching process. Therefore, we recommend not only working 1-2 hours per day on your thesis but rather an entire day or a few consecutive days.

Note that the 250 hours not only include writing the thesis, but also all preparatory work and any subsequent tasks.

2.3. What requirements do I need to meet?

Your bachelor's thesis may only be evaluated, if you meet the following requirements:

- Successful completion of the two Introductory Courses (Business and Society, Contemporary Challenges in Business and Economics)
- Successful completion of the of the two courses in the area of Academic Skills (Logic and Methodology of Social Sciences, Introduction to Academic Writing)

Please note that Institutes may apply additional requirements. Institutes may only accept you for a bachelor's thesis topic if you have already successfully completed the above-mentioned and further requirements.

2.4. What's important to know about choosing a topic?

The topic of the bachelor's thesis is to be taken from the core courses or the specializations listed in the BBE curriculum. You may find the BBE curriculum on the BBE website (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/curriculum-timetable>). You are entitled to propose a topic yourself or choose a topic from suggestions provided by available supervisors. You will have to write your bachelor's thesis in English. Bachelor's theses in another language than English will not be accepted.

It is not eligible to write your thesis from a topic of your free electives.

Please note that it depends on the Institute whether or not they accept proposed topics. Some only supervise their provided topics. Check the requirements of the Institute or supervisor of your interest in time.

Did you already write a seminar or project paper on your thesis topic? If your supervisor agrees, you may elaborate your seminar paper to your thesis. It is important to note,

however, that the workload required is higher for a bachelor's thesis than for a seminar paper. Moreover, you will have to be aware of not plagiarizing yourself.

2.5. Who is entitled to supervise and evaluate my bachelor's thesis?

Academic staff members with a PhD or doctoral degree are qualified to grade your bachelor's thesis, regardless of whether they are teaching any courses in the respective semester.

Would you like to work with an external supervisor? E.g. a faculty member from another educational institution or a manager in a company? For these supervisors the above-mentioned requirements apply as well. External supervisors have to be academic staff members with a certain degree. You need a special permission from the Vice-Rectorate for Academic Programs and Student Affairs. You can apply for this permission by sending an email with the completed application form to studentsupport@wu.ac.at. Please find the application form on the BBE website (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>).

Without exception, WU cannot recognize any bachelor's theses completed at other universities.

2.6. May I write my bachelor's thesis in collaboration with some of my peers?

If your supervisor agrees on supervising a thesis collaboration of students, you may work with some of your peers. However, it may only be accepted, if the individual performance of each of you is clear and separate evaluation is feasible. The workload for the final thesis will rise according to the number of students working together.

2.7. What's the deadline for my bachelor's thesis?

The usual time for a bachelor's thesis process is four to six months, depending on the topic of your thesis and the agreement with your supervisor. At the very beginning of your bachelor's process in the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement, you will agree on a deadline with your supervisor. Your supervisor may withdraw supervising you, if you do not meet the deadline without prior note or reason.

Immediately contact your supervisor, if you are facing any troubles in your bachelor's thesis process that might lead to missing deadlines.

2.8. What's the structure of a bachelor's thesis?

On average bachelor's theses submitted at WU are between 25 and 40 pages excluding references and appendices. The actual number of pages depends on your topic, the requirements of the Institute, and the agreement with your supervisor. Some of you will meet the objectives of their theses with fewer than 25 pages and some of you will need more than 40 pages.

Ask your supervisor if the Institute provides any format guidelines for bachelor's theses, such as font type, font size, line spacing, etc. Some Institutes provide templates, make sure to use templates, if available.

Academic theses are structured as follows:

1. Cover Page
Use the form provided on the BBE website.
2. Table of Contents
3. Abstract
The abstract shortly summarizes your research and results. It highlights the importance of your findings.
4. Introduction
Create awareness for your topic. Present the structure of your thesis and provide relevant background information on your topic. Make clear what the aim of your thesis is.
5. Body of thesis
The body of thesis depends on your topic and the method you will be using.
6. Discussion
Shortly discuss and critically reflect on the topic and your findings. You may give indications for future research.
7. Reference List
Please apply to the citation style as agreed on with your supervisor.
8. Appendices

The actual structure of your bachelor's thesis will depend on your topic and the research method you will be using. Check if the Institute or your supervisor provide guidelines on the bachelor's thesis process, including the structure of a thesis.

2.9. What are the evaluation criteria?

Your supervisor will evaluate your bachelor's thesis on two types of criteria: content-related evaluation criteria and formal-related evaluation criteria.

Content-related evaluation criteria

Independent work: A bachelor's thesis is more than just an overview of different sources. Clearly separate content taken from other sources and your arguments.

Formal-related evaluation criteria

Completeness of the submitted thesis: Only submit a complete thesis, including cover page, table of contents, references section, if applicable, list of abbreviations, tables and figures, annex.

Fulfilling objectives: Clearly and coherently answer your research question(s) and objective(s).	Clear thesis structure: Make the overall structure and chapter structure clear.
Clear arguments: Give the thesis a coherent, logical structure and develop your position based on sound arguments.	Correct language use and orthography
Use of technical terms and literature: Use technical terms correctly and only where useful and appropriate. Use language that is as clear and plain as possible, without overusing technical and unusual terms. Familiarize with relevant literature.	Correct use of sources: It must be possible to find and check the referenced sources.
If your bachelor's thesis is based on an empirical study, the following criteria apply: Is the choice of the method(s) used justified and suitable for the questions at hand? Did you use the selected method(s) properly? Demonstrate your ability to do empirical work and to properly analyze, interpret, and contextualize the results.	Correct citations

Discuss the evaluation criteria and objectives of your thesis at the very beginning of the process with your supervisor. Make sure to understand the evaluation criteria.

2.10. What's the role of my supervisor in the thesis process?

As stated above in the evaluation criteria, working independently is a crucial part of your bachelor's thesis process. It is your bachelor's thesis and you are responsible for the outcome. Of course, your supervisor will give his/her best to guide you through the process. Please be aware that your supervisor may not only supervise your thesis, he/she may be supervising other students, be teaching or researching. Your supervisor's time will be limited. Therefore, it is important to set milestones, meeting appointments, and feedback rules at the very beginning of the process.

Be proactive. Ask your supervisor for feedback but do not expect immediate answers. Your supervisor will give you feedback but not on every step or part of your thesis. Set up a precise plan of action in your bachelor's thesis agreement to structure the entire process as best as possible for you both.

3. Where do I get support?

First and most important, tell your supervisor, if you face any severe challenges regarding your thesis process.

Additionally, WU's library offers several services, such as trainings, research consultations and Fit4Research an elearning program (<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/library/service>).

On LEARN you will find useful step by step information and tips for your thesis process (<https://learn.wu.ac.at/open/student-support/wissarbeiten>). Check out the further readings on LEARN (https://learn.wu.ac.at/open/student-support/further_reading). The readings are available at WU library.

Additionally, talk with your peers. They may have already experienced the challenges you are currently facing. Always remember, you are not alone during your bachelor's thesis process.

4. List of documents

- Application form for external supervision [Ansuchen um Genehmigung einer externen Betreuung]
<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-student-guide/student-guide-english-taught-bachelors-programs/bachelors-thesis>
- Bachelor's Thesis Agreement
Make sure that supervisor signs the agreement. Upload it on Canvas WU:
<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>
- Cover page [Deckblatt]
You will have to include the cover page as the first page of your bachelor's thesis:
<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-student-guide/student-guide-english-taught-bachelors-programs/bachelors-thesis>
- Request for support in finding a supervisor
<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/students/my-program/bachelors-programs/business-and-economics/bachelors-thesis>
- WU Code of Conduct
<https://www.wu.ac.at/en/the-university/about-wu/documents-and-reports>