

BBE Bachelor's Thesis Supervision Standards

This document is aimed at WU faculty and supervisors of bachelor's theses written as part of the Bachelor's Program in Business and Economics.

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1. What is a bachelor's thesis?

While diploma or master's theses are classified as proper academic theses in the Universities Act 2002 (*Universitätsgesetz, UG*), this is not the case for bachelor's theses. In §51 (2) of the Universities Act, bachelor's theses (= bachelor's papers) are defined as follows: "Bachelor's papers' mean independently prepared papers forming part of bachelor's programmes which must be written or fulfilled artistically in connection with courses." This definition must always be taken into account with regard to the requirements for bachelor's theses.¹

2. Which prerequisites apply for writing a bachelor's thesis?

Bachelor's theses can only be graded if the BBE student in question has successfully completed the courses of the Introductory and Orientation Phase and the courses in the area of Academic Skills.

3. Which conditions apply when 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. This excludes topics that are only dealt with in free electives and that are not reflected in the curriculum.² Students are entitled to propose a topic or choose a topic from suggestions provided by the available supervisors.

4. In what language can bachelor's theses be written?

BBE bachelor's theses must be written in English.³

5. What should be the scope of a bachelor's thesis?

BBE students are required to write a bachelor's thesis worth 10 ECTS credits, which corresponds to a workload of roughly 250 working hours or approximately 30 working days. It is important to make sure that students choose a topic that corresponds to a workload of 10 ECTS credits and that they can handle appropriately within the period planned for working on the bachelor's thesis. The workload includes not only writing the thesis, but also all preparatory work and any subsequent tasks.⁴

6. How should a bachelor's thesis be structured?

A BBE bachelor's thesis should include the following elements:

¹ [Note: Universities Act 2002, §51 (2) items 7 and 8:

7. "Bachelor's papers" mean independently prepared papers forming part of bachelor's programmes which must be written or fulfilled artistically in connection with courses.
8. "Diploma and master's theses" mean academic theses forming part of diploma and master's programmes which serve to demonstrate students' ability to achieve adequate standards of content and methodology when independently addressing scientific topics.]

² [Note regarding double degree students: If a student completes a major at QUT that does not exist at WU, he or she may choose a bachelor's thesis topic from the corresponding subject area.]

³ [Note: It is not possible to write a BBE bachelor's thesis in another foreign language because in the BBE program, business communication in languages other than English is only available as a free elective.]

⁴ In this context, it is important to distinguish between BBE bachelor's theses and bachelor's theses in the Business, Economics and Social Sciences or Business Law programs, which are only worth 8 ECTS credits.

1. Cover page
2. Table of contents
3. Abstract
4. Introduction
5. Body of thesis (depends on the area of research chosen)
6. Discussion
7. Reference list
8. Appendices (optional)

The specific structure of each individual thesis depends on the research method and the area of research chosen. It is recommended that the departments provide students with comprehensive guidelines on writing bachelor's theses. In addition to the formal and content-related requirements, these guidelines should also include details on department-specific criteria and conventions (e.g. citation rules). Each department should also provide a style template for students writing their bachelor's theses.

7. How long does the writing process typically take?

The workload involved in writing a bachelor's thesis corresponds to 10 ECTS credits, so it is recommended to give the student a period of 4 to 6 months for completing the thesis after issuing the supervision agreement. If required due to special, unforeseen factors, the supervisor and the student may agree on an extension. The thesis writing period is to be indicated in the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement.

8. Who can supervise a bachelor's thesis?

WU academic staff members with a PhD or doctoral degree are qualified to grade bachelor's theses, regardless of whether they are teaching any courses in the respective semester. Students can obtain information on the potential supervisors currently available directly from the individual academic units. Persons external to WU (e.g. faculty members of other universities in Austria or abroad) may only grade WU theses upon approval by the Vice-Rector for Academic Programs and Student Affairs (requests for external supervision can be submitted by email to studentsupport@wu.ac.at). Without exception, WU cannot recognize any bachelor's theses completed at other universities in Austria or abroad.

9. Is it possible for two or more students to co-author a bachelor's thesis?

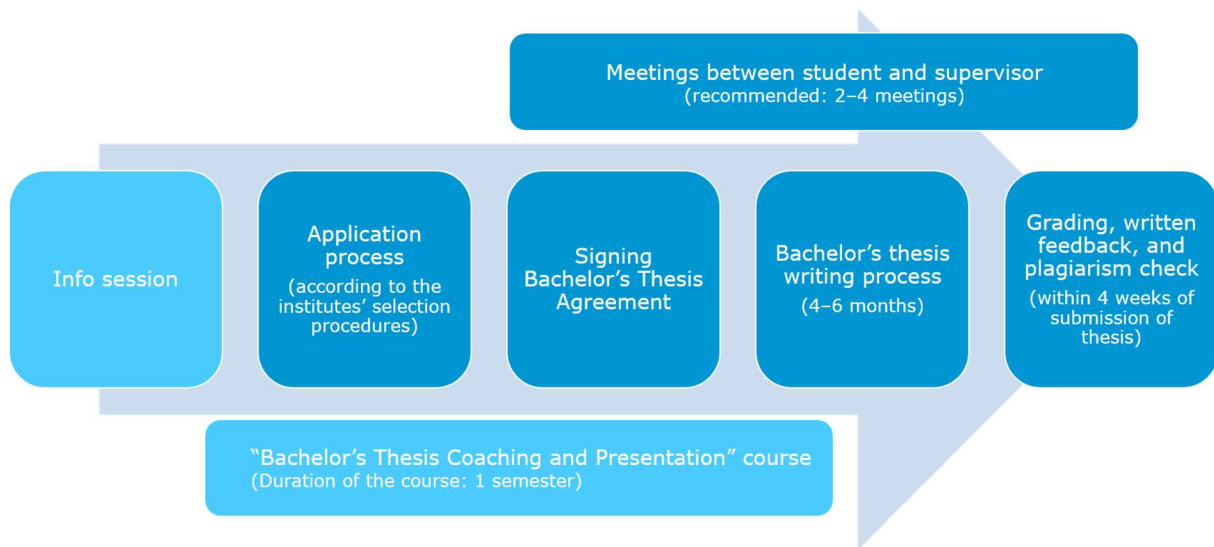
Two or more students can work on a joint topic for their bachelor's thesis, as long as each student's individual contribution can be clearly identified and graded separately. The combined workload involved in writing a joint bachelor's thesis is proportionally higher than that required for a single-author thesis.

10. How is the supervision process structured?

1. An information session is held by the BBE program managers once per semester. It is not part of the "Bachelor's Thesis Coaching and Presentation" course. In this session, students receive information about how the bachelor's thesis process is organized.
2. Bachelor's thesis topics are assigned to students in a decentralized manner, based on the standards and procedures of the individual departments. A new element in the bachelor's thesis process is the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement,

which is intended to provide a binding basis for the thesis writing process. The Bachelor's Thesis Agreement must be signed by both the student and the supervisor. It is provided by the BBE program management team.

3. All bachelor's supervision arrangements must be registered in the BACH online database by the supervisor. Students have to upload their Bachelor's Thesis Agreement in LEARN.
4. The thesis must be graded within 4 weeks after submission.
5. Starting in the 2020/21 winter semester, the workshop-type course "Bachelor's Thesis Coaching and Presentation" will be offered every semester.



11. How are bachelor's thesis topics assigned to students?

Bachelor's thesis topics are assigned in a decentralized manner by the individual departments. The departments have to provide a sufficient number of topics in English. The departments also have to provide all the necessary information for students on their websites in English.

12. What happens if students are unable to find a supervisor in the regular topic assignment process?

Students are asked to contact the BBE program management team if they have trouble finding a supervisor. If they have sent 3 convincing applications for supervision, have successfully completed the subject "Academic Skills" (Logic and Methodology of Social Sciences; Bachelor's Thesis Coaching and Presentation), the BBE program management team will assign these students to available supervisors or institutes no later than in the following semester to avoid delays in their academic progress.

13. What is the content of the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement?

The Bachelor's Thesis Agreement should include the following elements:

- The student's name and student ID no. and the supervisor's name and institute affiliation

- The reasons why the topic and/or the underlying research problem are considered particularly interesting and relevant
- Specification of preliminary research goals and/or questions for the thesis, corresponding to the appropriate scope for a bachelor's thesis
- Rough overview of the relevant academic literature and existing research results that serve as a point of departure for the research question chosen
- Thoughts on the implementation and feasibility of the project (data required, methods to be used, etc.)
- Preliminary table of contents (incl. mandatory information on the planned page counts for the individual parts of the outlined thesis structure)
- Rough schedule (milestones)
- Submission deadline for the bachelor's thesis
- Date and signature of the supervisor and the student

14. How many supervision meetings should be held as part of the thesis supervision process?

The supervision meetings start once the supervision agreement has been made. As a general rule, 2 to 4 face-to-face supervision meetings are recommended, including the final feedback meeting. The supervision meetings must be held in English. In any case, the supervisor has to ensure that the student receives feedback quickly. It is recommended to clearly establish the rules for giving feedback in the first supervision meeting, e.g. when feedback will be provided and in which form, etc.

15. What should be discussed during supervision meetings?

How the supervision meetings are used is up to the supervisor and the student to decide. However, the first supervision meeting should be used to discuss the expectations and roles of everyone involved and to plan the subsequent supervision process. During the first supervision meeting, the supervisor also has to conclude the Bachelor's Thesis Agreement with the student.

In at least one further supervision meeting, the bachelor's thesis should be discussed with the student.

16. Is there a specific course that accompanies the thesis writing process?

Students are required to complete the course "Logic and Methodology of Social Sciences" before starting their bachelor's thesis. There is also the workshop-type course "Bachelor's Thesis Coaching and Presentation," which is worth 2 ECTS credits or 1 credit hour and can be completed independently from the thesis supervision and writing process. This course deals with key topics such as correct citations and plagiarism. Ideally, students should take this course in the same semester in which they write their bachelor's thesis. Supervisors provide the students with information on the methodology and on how to deal with the specific topic at hand.

17. What else must be taken into account when grading bachelor's theses?

As part of the grading process, a grading matrix (rubric) must be completed in the BACH application. On this basis, the application automatically generates a written assessment that can be sent to the student as a form of feedback.

In any case, supervisors have to provide some kind of short written feedback to the students after grading and explain the reasons for the grade awarded. Supervisors must

also inform students of completion of the plagiarism check. Optionally, it is possible to hold a final supervision meeting to clear up any remaining questions.

18. What are the grading criteria?

Form-related evaluation criteria
Completeness of the submitted thesis (cover page, table of contents, references section, if applicable, list of abbreviations, tables and figures, annex)
Clear thesis structure (overall structure, chapter structure)
Correct language use and orthography
Correct use of sources (it must be possible to find and check the referenced sources)
Correct citations

Content-related evaluation criteria
Independent work (content taken from other sources is clearly separated from the student's own argument)
Fulfilling objectives (successfully answered research question)
Clear arguments, logical structure (logical and coherent)
Use of technical terms and literature
Quality of empirical study, if the thesis is based on an empirical study

There is no longer an assessment protocol PDF. The assessment happens directly and exclusively in the database

19. Plagiarism

Students submit their thesis online using LEARN. All uploaded theses are automatically subjected to plagiarism testing. It is not possible to carry out a preliminary plagiarism check in advance. Supervisors are notified by email once the results of the plagiarism test are available on LEARN. Supervision can be marked as complete as soon as the thesis has been submitted. All relevant data appear in the supervision database. Then the examiner can proceed to enter the grade awarded for the thesis. Detailed information on plagiarism is available here: <https://www.wu.ac.at/en/staff/information-for-teachers/courses-exams-and-theses/theses/plagiarism>

More information on bachelor's thesis supervision, including the relevant forms, can be found here: <https://www.wu.ac.at/en/staff/information-for-teachers/courses-exams-and-theses/theses/guidelines-on-bachelors-theses>