

Guidelines for writing the BSc thesis (YAS-80312)

Introduction

Below is a general description of what a thesis could look like. Each chair group often has its own study guide on what theses should look like; e.g. the size and language of the thesis. It is very important to make agreements about this (in the first interview) with the supervisor. E.g. in consultation with the supervisor, a thesis can be chosen in the form of an English-language scientific article. Write down and sign all agreements made in the learning agreement.

Work plan for the thesis

Student makes a work plan (research proposal) for the thesis and submits it to the supervisor. The plan includes a time and activity schedule on the following basis:

1. Start, draft proposal and first discussion with the supervisor
2. Discussion concept research proposal for the thesis, adjustment
3. Submitting first concept of the thesis to supervisor
4. Receive and discuss comments from supervisor
5. Submit final version of the thesis
6. Presentation (colloquium)
7. Finish: final oral defence

Contents of the thesis

Below are guidelines, but several forms are possible; discuss the setup with your supervisor! The thesis is a report of research. This research can be a literature study, but also other forms are possible: experiment, lab analysis or analysis of a dataset. The thesis includes the following sections in chapters. Start each chapter on a new page. The maximum size of the thesis is 20 pages, excluding any appendices (but discuss this with your supervisor). The language is in English.

1. Title

The definitive title need not be the same as the original wording of the investigation. It should indicate concisely but clearly what the reader can expect in the thesis. Do not forget to mention the subject code (YAS-80312), your name and registration number, date (at least year), chair group, supervisor, etc. on the title page.

2. Preface (not compulsory)

In the preface you describe the framework in which the research described in the thesis has been carried out, as well as comments about it that cannot be made elsewhere.

3. Summary

On no more than one page you give a clear description of the content of the thesis, without any references: this piece should be read and understood separately and independently. This could also be a summary of e.g. 250 or 400 words (agree this with the supervisor).

4. Table of contents

A numbered list of chapters, sub-chapters and paragraphs. Do not go beyond a chapter classification up to 2 levels of detail (e.g. 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2 etc.).

5. Introduction (chapter numbering usually starts with the Introduction)

The introduction includes the reason for the investigation and the current state of the art in the discipline concerned, any controversies, opinions and what is not known on the subject of the investigation. You refer to existing sources (e.g. books and journals from scientific literature), which you briefly mention by name (e.g. Jansen, 1999). At the back of the thesis you give a complete reference list to the source.

This leads to the precise formulation of the aim of the research, the research question and the definition of a sharply defined problem definition. Pay particular attention to the scope of your problem definition: what are you going to investigate and what are you not going to investigate? Draw up a hypothesis in which you propose a possible solution for the formulated problem. You will test this hypothesis with the present research. For a literature study, the formulation of the hypothesis is not a requirement.

6. Material and methods

Here you describe the material on the basis of which you carried out the research. This can also consist of a set of data already collected, or a combination of materials. You also indicate here with which methods (e.g. laboratory techniques) you worked on the material and with which statistical methods you worked. In a literature study you describe how the articles were searched for (search terms and databases) and selected (which criteria for selection).

7. Results

In this chapter, the results are presented, if possible in tables or figures, with appropriate headings and captions and a concise description and explanation. Do the results, as seen so far, provide an answer to the research question? Is there a reasonable conclusion to be drawn? In a literature study, the chapter Results may consist of several chapters with relevant titles (the chapter with the name Results will then not exist).

8. Discussion

It describes to what extent the results may depend on the (literature) data used, whether there was enough material available to answer the question asked, whether there were alternatives, and so on. So here you take a critical look at the result and the way in which it has been achieved. All this is underpinned by scientific literature.

9. Conclusion

Here you briefly summarise the results and, taking into account elements from the discussion chapter, determine the end result, culminating in the conclusion: to what extent has my research question been answered and the problem solved? Has the hypothesis drawn up in the Introduction been confirmed or rejected? If desired (e.g. if the conclusion is very short) you can combine this chapter with Discussion. Also a paragraph with recommendations can be added.

10. Reference list

Here you mention which literature sources you have used. There are several methods to list your sources. Take the description from a journal that is representative and well known for the field of your thesis as an example. Avoid references to the Internet. If you do, give the date at which the internet site was accessed.

11. Appendices (if applicable).

If you wish, you can add detailed information to the thesis in an appendix, subdivided into parts or not.