



Academic writing

Die Bibliothek Wirtschaft & Management | Guideline



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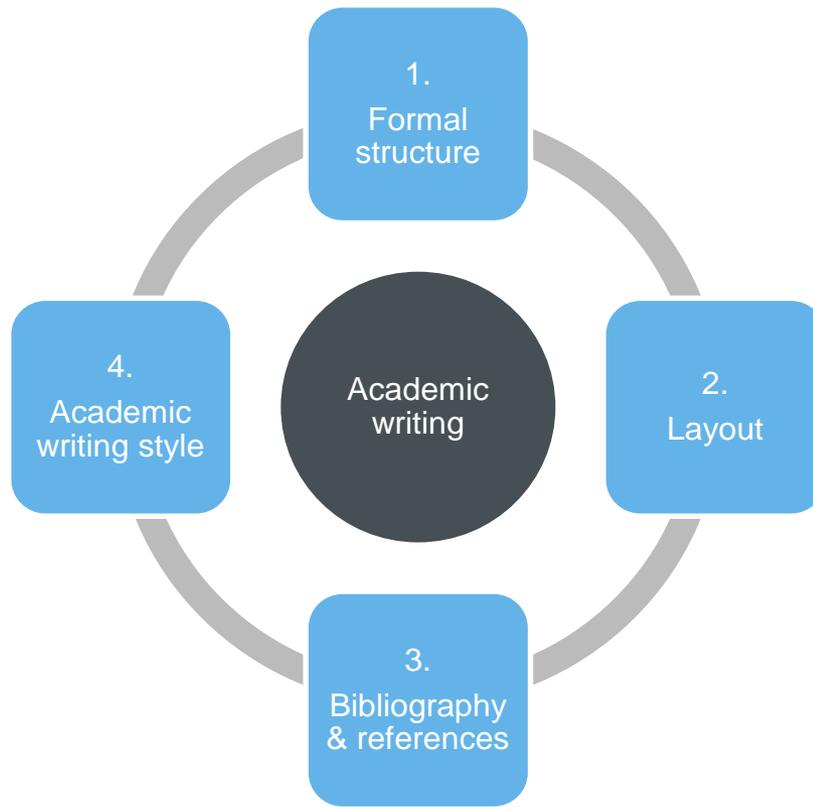
What is academic writing?

„Easy reading is
damned hard
writing“
(Nathaniel Hawthorne)

- Academic writing is the ability to acquire knowledge, evaluate it in regard to a specific research question, **structure the findings**, and **put them in writing**. It is therefore a key academic skill.
- **Objectivity** instead of subjectivity and therefore **replicability** for others is particularly important.
- Not just stringing together what was read but your own **critical discussion** of a topic.
- This guideline shows **important basics** of academic writing but **does not make any claim to completeness**.
- Please also read your **department's guidelines and requirements**. Those have priority.



Formalities of academic writing



By clicking on the boxes you get to each of the topics!



1. Formal structure - basics



- The structural outline is a **logical organization** of the paper
- The outline points should **fit** with the paper's **overall topic**
- The **hierarchical structure** of the individual points corresponds to their **relevance** for the topic
- The outline points on the same structural level do **not overlap**
- The scope of the individual outline points should be between around **0.5 and 3 pages**
- The sub-points (1.1, 1.2, etc.) break down overarching points according to a **common criterion**
- For each main point there are **at least two sub-points**
- The main points are **meaningful and easy to understand** and are not formulated as sentences or questions
- The sub-points are **not called the same** as the main points
- The **text** is only to be found on the **lowest structural level** (1. no text; text appears under 1.1 and 1.2, etc.)



1. Formal structure (I/III)



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- Title page
- List of abbreviations
- List of tables and figures
- Introduction
- Main part
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Annexes
- Bibliography
- For final theses, affidavit



1. Formal structure (II/III)



Introduction

- Why is this **topic important**? What is **special** about my topic?
- What are the paper's **objectives**?
- **What** did I **research**?
- How did I **proceed**?
- How is the paper **structured**?

Main part

- Where did I **derive** my **conclusions from**?
- Am I **arguing logically** from the general to the specific?
- Are my thought processes, conclusions, and findings all oriented around a **common theme**?
- What are my **conclusions**?
- Are all aspects **really relevant** or can I get rid of some to make the paper more focused?



1. Formal structure (III/III)



Discussion

- What **implications** do the findings have **for scientific research** on the topic?
- What **practical implications** do the findings have?

Conclusion

- Do I **summarize** my paper's **findings** in the conclusion without introducing any new insights or sources?
- Do I **answer** my **research question** here?

Annexes

- **Additional** Information
- **Only relevant information** should be included in the annex, e.g. surveys, inaccessible sources, etc.



2. Layout



- Margins, font type, font size, line spacing, accuracy and completeness of the lists, etc. → Please consider your **department's guidelines and requirements**.
- **Page numbers:**
 - Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV...) from the title page to the first page of text
 - The title page counts as the first page but you do not write the page number
 - Starting with the first page of text, the numbering is done using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.)
 - No page number on the affidavit
 - Pages are printed one-sided and only pages with print are counted
- **Graphics and tables:**
 - Visualize complex information in a reader-friendly way, increasing understanding
 - Text direction horizontal if possible
 - Only include essential information
 - They should be self-explanatory without text (use legends, clear labels, labels for axes, etc.)
 - Number continuously and set up a separate list for figures and tables



3. Bibliography & references



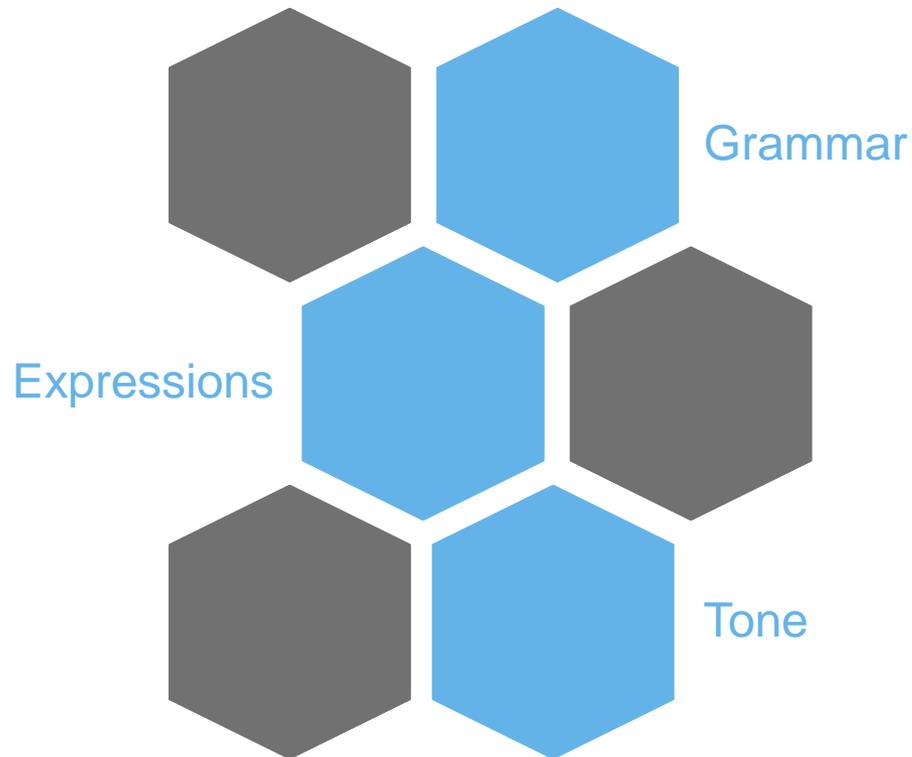
Look at our guideline
“Citing correctly and avoiding
plagiarism”
and test your knowledge
with our quiz.

By clicking here you get to the
dokument:

- [Guideline](#)
- [Quiz](#)



4. Academic writing style



Hint:

When reading the literature, pay attention to the academic writing style and learn from it for your own papers!



4. Academic writing style

Grammar

- **Use active** instead of passive whenever possible
- **Avoid** the “**Perfekt**” tense
- **Flawless grammar** and **orthography** are essential

Expressions

- **Do not use the “I” form** to maintain objectivity
- **Do not write long, convoluted sentences**
- **Formulate** comprehensible but also **concrete / precise**
- **Do not use fillers**
- Use **adjectives sparingly**
- **Do not use clichés**
- **Use subject terminology** including English terms
- **Avoid repetitions** (except for subject terminology)
- **Do not use colloquial language:** “The big bucks...”

Tone

- **Rational** explanation and discussion



Avoid typical mistakes



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- **Formalities are not followed**
- **No time plan** is made
- **Lack of focus** due to distractions
- There is **no end** to researching the literature
- Text files are **not formatted** correctly
- **No common theme**
- What was read is strung together **without critical reflection**
- **Mistakes in citing**
- Schreibprozess ist **chaotisch**
- **Underestimate time** needed for proofreading



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