

# Checklist for Academic Writing Projects

## Content / Did you include all of the relevant components?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• title page</li> <li>• (abstract)</li> <li>• table of contents</li> <li>• (list of images, list of abbreviations, etc.)</li> </ul>  | <p>All of these components are relatively standardized.<br/>Follow respective guidelines accordingly.</p>   |
| <p><b>introduction and main body</b><br/>with subject-specific (sub)chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research problem</li> <li>• research question(s) and objective(s)</li> <br/> <li>• methodology, chapter design</li> <br/> <li>• (definitions; theoretical framework; state of research / technology)</li> <br/> <li>• analysis/results</li> <li>• interpretation and discussion</li> <li>• (recommendations)</li> <li>• <b>conclusion</b> and outlook</li> </ul> | <p><b>This text explains/presents ...</b></p> <p>→ the <u>relevance</u> of your topic<br/>→ <u>what exactly you are investigating</u> and for which <u>purpose(s)</u> this is useful</p> <p>→ which <u>method(s)</u> you are using to answer the question(s) / reach the objectives and why the chapter sequence within the main body makes sense<br/>→ keywords from the topic; models, theories or concepts which are central to your topic; important academic publications and/or technological developments of the field</p> <p>→ the <u>findings</u> that come up when you apply the chosen method(s)<br/>→ the <u>significance</u> of the findings in the larger context of the topic</p> <p>→ whether you were able to (partially) answer the research questions and achieve the objectives</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bibliography = list of references</li> <li>• (appendix)</li> <li>• declaration of academic integrity</li> </ul>  | <p>All of these components are relatively standardized.<br/>Follow respective guidelines accordingly.</p>   |

→ Does the **number of pages** in each chapter reflect the importance of that chapter within the complete thesis? Consider your text proportions!

## Language and Style

- Does your project **title** include the most important **keywords** of your topic? Are you using the exact same keywords consistently throughout all headings and text pages of your paper?
- Does your **table of contents** clearly indicate the structure of your paper? Are all (sub)headings meaningful? Avoid empty phrases that tell the reader nothing about the content of a chapter.
- Have you **updated** the table of contents? Are references/numbers within your entire paper correct? Are all abbreviations listed?
- Is every **text** section **comprehensible**? Avoid overly complex sentences. Choose a formal style of writing and use the specialized vocabulary typical for your discipline.
- Are your **grammar, spelling and punctuation** correct?

## Sources

- Did you give a **citation reference** for all directly and all indirectly quoted sources?
- Did you write a **bibliographical entry** for each of the quoted sources into your list of references? Be aware, that the publications that you have only read – but that you didn't actively use to write your paper – should not be listed in your bibliography.
- Did you use **academic publications** from library catalogues, scientific databases (such as ACM, EBSCO, Springer, Statista), scholarly search engines, etc.? Ask our librarians for help.
- Does your appendix include appropriate supplementary material (such as data tables, graphs or interview transcriptions for an empirical study)?

## Formatting and Layout

- Did you use the (required) **citation style** consistently (all footnotes or all brackets)?
- Did you meet all of the other **requirements regarding format**? → See guidelines for: total number of text pages, font size, font type, line spacing, paragraph alignment, footnotes, page margins, header/footer, page numbering, headings, images, tables, etc.
- **Does your page layout help readers find their way around?**  
Is each page coherent and as visually pleasing in itself as possible?
- Did you **number** pages, chapters, images, etc. **continuously** correct?
- Does your paper look even throughout (and not chaotic)? Are you **consistently** using the same type of font, size, heading, margin, bold/cursive/underlined type, etc.)?

## Final Draft

- Did you sign the **declaration of academic integrity** and include it in your final document?
- Did you use the correct **file format**? Did you give the file the correct **name**?
- Did you save a **backup** of your (final) file at a secondary location?  
→ Email the finished work to yourself!
- **Do you know where to send your file for submission?**
- Do you know at **what date and what time** of day your deadline actually runs out?
  
- Do you need to submit a **hard copy** of your work?  
Does this copy contain any paper or ink errors that need to be fixed?  
Did you check the opening hours of the university office responsible for submissions?

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*Tip: Ask someone else to read your paper early on in the process – even if you have only just written a couple of pages. The sooner you receive feedback, the easier it will be to implement it directly while writing the rest of your paper.*

*Always ask for specific feedback regarding the comprehensibility of the content, your linguistic expression and the way your document is designed. Someone that reads your paper and then tells you that "It's good." is not really telling you much about how it can be improved.*

*Thank everyone that provides feedback in advance to your final submission – and then decide for yourself which parts of each feedback you want to implement in your final version.*