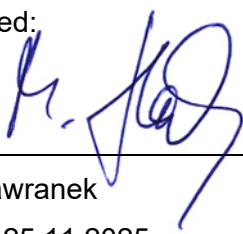


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Master's thesis guidelines

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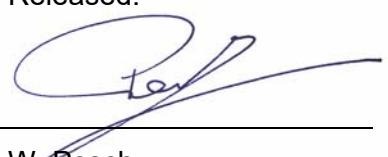
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1 Introduction

Master's theses are scientific papers that serve to demonstrate the ability to work on scientific topics independently and in a way that is justifiable in terms of content and methodologically comprehensible. A master's thesis at the Chair of Economics and Business Management (WBW) is at the end of a montanistic study and serves the independent implementation of the theoretically acquired economic and business fundamentals in operational practice. In carrying out the master's thesis, you will be confronted with a practical problem for which you are to work out possible solution. This work, which is to be regarded as project study, can be a very effective learning experience for you. In addition, you have the opportunity to get to know the operational-social field of tension just before you graduate, without already being involved in it yourself.

Students writing a master's thesis at the Chair of Economics and Business Management are required to participate in the master's thesis seminar. Students must register for this seminar via the MU-Online portal.

The aim of these master's thesis guidelines is to provide you with guidance on the master's thesis and to make your work easier by giving you appropriate advice. You will have to develop your personal working method yourself, taking into account your individual needs, and adapt it on an ongoing basis.

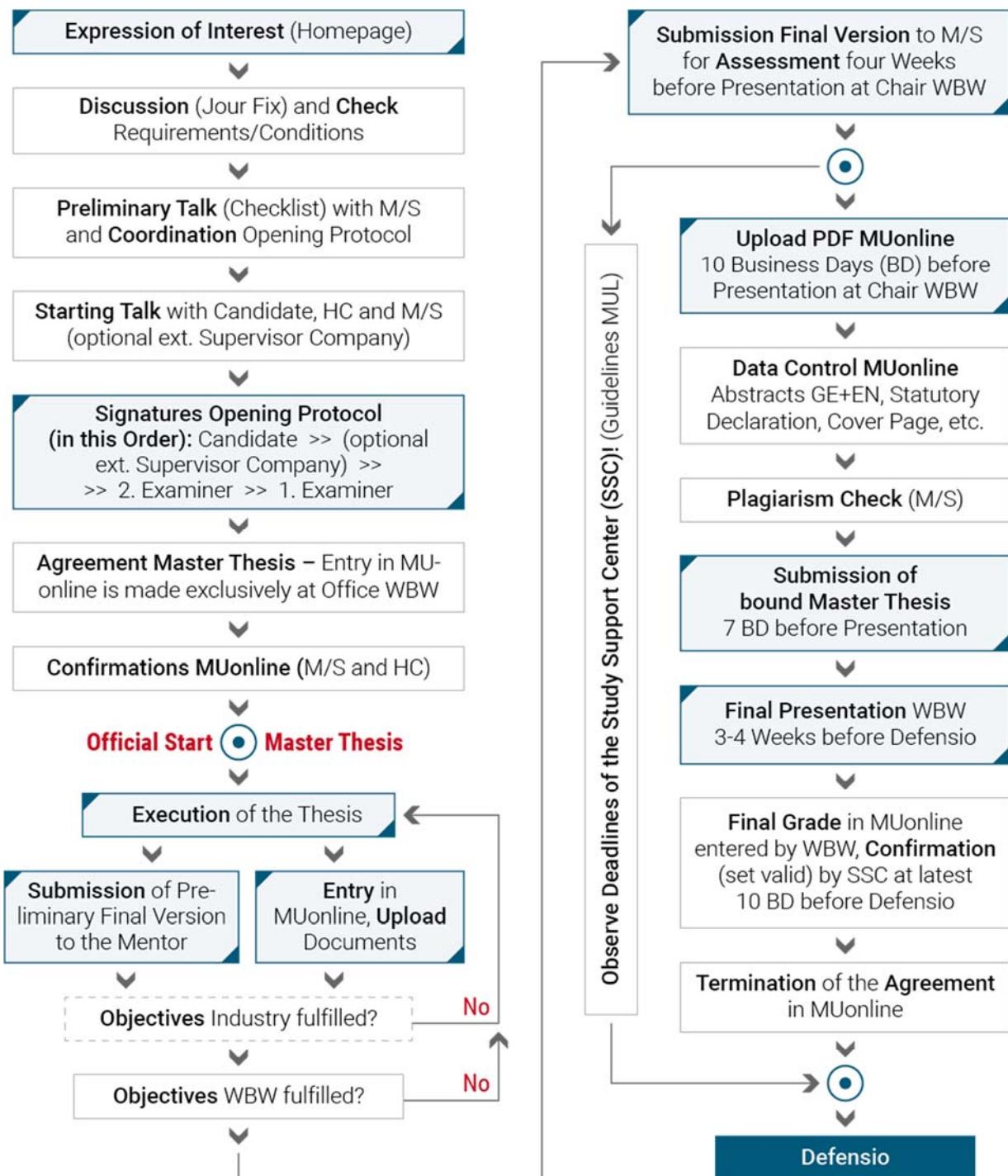
2 Expression of interest

Students who are interested in writing a master's thesis at the WBW are requested to do so by registering on the WBW homepage via <Teaching> → <Master Theses>. Here, students can specify:

- whether they are interested in a topic advertised at the WBW,
- whether they bring their own topic or have a topic suggestion,
- or if they would like to write a master's thesis in a certain area,
- or if they are still open for topics.

3 Flowchart

Figure 1 the schematic flow of a master's thesis at the chair WBW:



M/S ... Mentor/Supervisor (can be the same person) | HC ... Head of the Chair WBW

 Process Step must be completed by the Candidate

4 Preliminary talk

Once a topic or area of interest has been found, a preliminary meeting is arranged with the assigned mentor or supervisor (M/S) to discuss expectations or the possibility of implementing the chosen topic as well as the further procedure. In the course of the preliminary meeting, the opening protocol (to be completed by the student) is also discussed. The template for this will be handed out to the student by the assigned mentor/supervisor. Any changes must be incorporated by the student in the opening protocol by the time of the starting talk. The protocol serves as a basis for the starting talk.

The opening protocol includes, among other things, the following:

- Concretization/Specification of the task, description of the initial situation, objectives of the theoretical part and the practical part, suggestions for the execution
- Expected duration, schedule (milestones, interim reports, final deadline) as well as general conditions and further important information
- Determination of the examiners – this is the student's responsibility and must be done on his/her initiative (basically only one examiner from the chair WBW)

5 Starting talk

In the starting talk, the student, the company supervisor (optional), the head of the chair WBW and the mentor/supervisor discuss the points set out in the opening protocol. Subsequently, the opening protocol is to be signed in the following order: student, company supervisor (optional), 2. Examiner, 1. Examiner. After that, the thesis is entered in MUonline (Agreement) by the office WBW. The confirmation of the agreement by the head of the chair WBW and the mentor/supervisor is considered as official start, now the master's thesis can begin.

6 Execution of the master's thesis

6.1 Determining the procedure

In order to get an overview of the possible workflow and to decide on the adequate approach, an analysis of the problem situation and/or the formulation of research questions is required. Depending on the orientation of the thesis, these can either correspond to practical questions or questions derived from the literature.

The planning of the work includes the following:

- Presentation of the problem structure / Formulation of research question(s)
- Justification of the relevance of the work for the target group(s) addressed
- Identification of the need for information / research
- Establishment of the schedule with milestones
- Procedure for editing

There are numerous process models for determining the procedural steps in the processing of the work. In general, it will be the task of the students to find feasible, possibly new ways and solutions. This includes the formation of abstract models as well as the consideration of the conditions of the practical environment.

It is a crucial factor, that the student develops a schedule and procedure plan to keep an overview. The following questions should be considered:

- How is the field of investigation to be delimited? Where does the problem begin, where does it end, and what influences it?
- What is the structure of the problem?
- Which influencing variables will be effective in the future? All models and proposals that are developed, must be future-oriented, i.e. they must take into account influencing factors that will be effective in the future
- Which possible solutions are conceivable? Here, not only suggestions from the company supervisor should be included, but also the literature and/or the theoretical knowledge learned.
- Does the task correspond to your own view on the problem? If this is not the case, suggestions for changing the task must be considered.

6.2 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The author must declare any use of software, that is based on artificial intelligence algorithms. The use of AI must be stated either in a preamble or in the appendix of the thesis. The type and scope of the information to be declared are based on the University of Leoben's guidelines for the use of AI-based generative tools and must be submitted to the supervising chair in a suitable electronic form.

7 Supervision of the student

Students are supervised by the chair as well as by the company during the execution of the master's thesis, whereby the student's independence is a prerequisite.

7.1 Supervision by the chair

The student is advised by the mentor/supervisor of the chair, especially in the theory of the subject questions and also in methodological matters (project management). For this purpose, regular discussions take place between the student and the mentor/supervisor. The student has to provide a short, written report to the supervisor (at intervals agreed), which covers the following:

- Review – What has happened so far? (since last report)
- Actual situation – current table of contents of the thesis, status of work and a description of any difficulties encountered
- Preview – planned steps (until the next report)

Results are to be briefly recorded by the student and handed over to the supervisor. The progress of the work and the further procedure are to be discussed at the agreed time (checkpoints) between the representative(s) of the company, representative(s) of the chair and the student.

7.2 Supervision by the company

The supervisor of the company should be familiar with the operational conditions and should support the student both during the introduction and during the work (company-specific / content-related as well as organizational advice).

8 Interim presentations

Interim presentations serve to present results to representatives of the company and the supervisor of the chair WBW, to discuss them and to clarify the further procedure. For the presentation it makes sense to use all possibilities of presentation techniques that underline the results of the ongoing work. The aim of such a presentation is to present the current status, as well as important basics for decision-making processes concerning the progress of the master's thesis, in a compact form. The results of the interim presentation should already be summarized in writing after the presentation in order to obtain synergies for the final report (or parts of the master's thesis).

9 Structure of the master's thesis

The results of the master's thesis are summarized in a written report (the actual master's thesis) and presented by the student. Detailed information on the formal and content-related structure of the master's thesis can be found in the guideline for the preparation of scientific papers. This document, as well as the Word-Template for scientific work, is available for download on the WBW-Homepage.

10 Literature research

Detailed information on proper citation and design of a bibliography, as well as sources for databases, can also be found in the guidelines for the preparation of scientific papers.

For support in citing, either the software "Citavi" (www.citavi.com), which is available as a free download (Windows) for all members of the University of Leoben, or "Zotero" (www.zotero.org), which is available as a free download (Windows, macOS, Linux) are recommended. In the download area of the WBW-Homepage style files and manuals for both programs are available.

11 Finalization of the master's thesis

This chapter describes important points regarding the finalization of the master's thesis.

11.1 Entry on MUonline

According to the SSC (Study Support Center), it is recommended, to make the required entry for recording the master's thesis on MUonline one month before the master's examination. Students must refer to the current university guidelines for more detailed information.

When entering the master's thesis, please make sure that the head of the chair WBW is entered as „Supervisor (internal) and the respective supervisor WBW (see opening protocol) as „Co-Supervisor (internal). Furthermore, a German and English abstract of the master's thesis has to be entered on MUonline, which has to be released by the respective supervisor.

11.2 Summary

The abstract is a significant part of the master's thesis. As support for the preparation of a good summary, the document "Guideline for the preparation of a summary" is available on the WBW homepage.

11.3 Plagiarism check

The plagiarism check has to be initiated by the mentor/supervisor or the office, after the final version is uploaded on MUonline. The plagiarism report is to be sent to the head of the chair and the mentor/supervisor. The mentor/supervisor must confirm receipt of the report, upload it on MUonline and release the thesis.

11.4 Evaluation scheme

The evaluation of the thesis is carried out by the chair WBW in the form of an expert report, whereby the evaluation of the industrial supervisor is also taken into account. Furthermore, it is pointed out that the first version of the thesis has a significant influence on the assessment, so already this version should be free of formal deficiencies. The on-time completion also has an influence on the assessment of the master's thesis (max. processing time 6 months). The evaluation is based on the following criteria:

- Quality and scope of the results: achievement of objectives, feasibility, processing/structure/conclusiveness of the work, literature research
- Problem-solving cycle, structure, systematics: technical processing, use of methods and instruments, independence, creativity
- Formal aspects: format templates, spelling/grammar/language, correct citation
- Time management: milestones/deadlines, total processing time
- Presentation

11.5 Submission

At least one bound copy of the master's thesis is given to the chair WBW, another copy is given to the company, if necessary. Furthermore, students have to observe the guidelines for the submission of a bound copy to the Study Support Center (SSC). If there is an intention to take the next master's exam, the bound copy must be given to the chair WBW one week before the presentation (see also section 12 – final presentation). Dates for the final presentations as well as for the submission of the bound thesis can be found on the WBW homepage (<Teaching> → <Final Presentations>). In addition, the electronic version uploaded in MUonline must be submitted digitally as a PDF-File to the Chair WBW.

Checklist for the submission of the master's thesis:

- Download title page master's thesis in MUonline → this is to be used as title page
- Printing guidelines for the bound master's thesis:
 - Black cover with gold lettering
 - printed on one side
 - Name on the book spine as well as on the lower right of the front cover
 - Hammer and mallet and "Master's Thesis" on the front side
- Submission of a bound copy of the thesis to the chair WBW
- Submission of the electronic version of the thesis to the WBW mentor/supervisor
- Submission of the final presentation (PowerPoint) in electronic form to the mentor/supervisor
- Submission of a bound copy to the SSC (see current university guidelines)

11.6 Publication, promotional awards

Suitable theses are published in professional journals with the participation of the students. For particularly excellent master's theses, there is the possibility to apply for a sponsorship award or an industrial scholarship. Information on this is available via the homepage of the University of Leoben.

11.7 Locking of the master's thesis

Only the author of the master thesis has the right to lock his master's thesis for a maximum of five years. A possible blocking should already be addressed at the opening meeting in order to be able to take it into consideration in the conception of the thesis (scope of the data provided by the company). The corresponding form for the application for locking is to be downloaded by the student in MUonline, furthermore, the form must be filled out and submitted to the monocratic study law body by upload. After review, the monocratic study law body issues the decision and sends it to the student. A copy is sent to the main library and to the chair WBW. Even in the case of a hold, a bound copy and an electronic version must be submitted to the WBW. The bound thesis and the electronic version are kept under lock and key for the corresponding period of time.

12 Final Presentation

Students must give a short, final presentation at the chair WBW, lasting approximately 10 minutes. Current presentation dates and a PowerPoint template can be found on the WBW homepage. The final presentation at the chair WBW allows students a kind of test run for their presentation as part of the final examination (Defensio), and gives them the opportunity to better prepare for the master's exam due to critical questions and the feedback received. The presentation should also take place as a final presentation to the extent mentioned above in the company involved.