

## Tips and tricks for writing a master's thesis

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**The topic selection:** At the beginning of your thesis you should ask yourself the following questions in order to find right topic for you.

- What subjects am I interested in?
- Which topics were appealing to me during the course of my studies?
- Are there any questions regarding course content that I wanted to investigate for some time now?
- Have I gained experience during internships or practical phases that are useful as master's topics?
- Are there topics or suggestions from professors and instructors from the faculty of MRM? Are there any research projects in the MRM faculty which are appealing to me?

**Advisor:** In our study program / the MRM faculty there is a pool of advisors which you can choose from for your master's thesis.

Your topic needs to be clarified beforehand with the MRM faculty management. Ideally, you already have a good idea of the research question(s) you want to work on. A sample exposé helps to convince your preferred advisor of your topic. If you are passionate about your topic, chances are that you can work on your desired topic.

**The literature search:** You should definitely look for a library to find textbooks and specific scientific literature. You can find books, "offline" or tap into scientific databases for your literature review. Make sure that you enter the right keywords when doing your literature search. Our tip: The MRM faculty attaches great importance to the processing of scientific literature during the Master's thesis. This means: textbooks are not scientific literature, nor are articles from journals.

In our department the following scientific journals are relevant:

### Journal of Marketing

(<https://www.ama.org/publications/JournalOfMarketing/Pages/Current-Issue.aspx>)

### Journal of Marketing Research

(<https://www.ama.org/publications/JournalOfMarketingResearch/Pages/current-issue.aspx>)

### Journal of Academy of Marketing Science (JAMS)

(<http://www.springer.com/business+%26+management/journal/11747>)

### European Journal of Marketing

(<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/loi/ejm>)

### Industrial Marketing Management

(<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/industrial-marketing-management/>)

### California Management Review

(<http://cmr.ucpress.edu>)

### Journal of World Business

(<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-world-business/>)

### Journal of Business Research

(<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-business-research/>)

### German Business Administration (DBW)

(<http://www.dbwnet.de/index.php>)

### marketing ZfP

(<http://rsw.beck.de/cms/?site=Marketing>)

Please contact the Department of MRM if you have no access to these magazines in the local library.

**Approach to empirical research:**

In our department, empiricism is required. You have the option of using a qualitative or quantitative approach to collect and analyze data. With qualitative research, the following rule applies: When a so-called saturation effect occurs with your in-depth interviews / focus groups / observations (meaning there is no new data generated), then you have interviewed and observed enough people. Typically, this effect occurs at about 10-12 in-depth interviews (note that this depends mainly on the sample homogeneity).

With quantitative research, note the following: Typical data generation methods are questionnaires or experiments. The questionnaires in the Department of MRM n = 200; in experiments n=100 per group.

To generate quantitative data, we have the online survey tool Unipark available. For all those who write their master's thesis in the MRM faculty, Arno Kinzinger is available for questions and access data: arno.kinzinger@fh-salzburg.ac.at

**Plagiarism and correct citation:** How do I quote direct and indirect quotations? How do I assign multiple resources properly? When is a text considered a plagiarized text? We recommend that you look at the BWI citation guidelines in advance in the context of the course of your study program. This is important to prevent you from - perhaps unintentionally - including texts which are not properly quoted (plagiarism) in your Master's thesis. For your information: our Master's theses are put through software that checks whether parts of your text have been taken from somewhere else. You will find hints on this in the guide for writing a scientific paper. A tip: archive your text sources from the beginning in a structured way (e.g. using the program Citavi) and check thoroughly for completeness at the end. The effort is worth it, because the MRM faculty requires proper citation for a Master's thesis to be considered positively.

**Book:**

Ellis, T. (2010). *The New Pioneers: Sustainable business success through social innova-tion and social entrepreneurship*. London: Wiley.

**Journal:**

Ambrosini, V. & Bowman, C. (2009). "What Are Dynamic Capabilities and Are They a Useful Construct in Strategic Management?. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 11, 1, 29-49.

**Collecting contributions:**

Gershon, R. (2013). *Facebook: A Business Perspective on the Power of Intelligent Net-working and social media*. In: Friedrichsen, M.; Mühl-Benninghaus, W. (HG): *Handbook of Social Media Management. Value Chain and Business Models in Changing Media Markets*. Heidelberg. Springer Verlag GmbH. 375-390.

**Conference:**

Terstriep, J. & Totterdill, P. (2014). *Economic foundation of social innovation: new modes of policy production*. Paper presented at RIP 2014 - 9th Regional Innovation Policies Conference. University of Stavanger, 16-17 October 2014: Stavanger University.

**Time management:** The nuts and bolts at the beginning of a scientific paper is time management. Plan enough time for choosing the theme and finding an advisor. At the beginning of your scientific work you write an exposé for which you usually have a period of three months. Ideally, start early with your exposé. Writing an exposé is not easy, and normally you go through several drafts. The creation of an exposé is like "walking through the eye of a needle": you find your focus, you work through a lot of literature, you find your research target and you describe your research questions. Furthermore, you should already have an idea of the research approach you will choose for your master's thesis.

After approval of the exposés, it's up to you how fast you write your master thesis. Plan enough time for proofreading and binding of the final thesis.

As an example you can see here how a schedule might look.

DEADLINE	MILESTONE	WORK STEP
13.01.201 5		delivery of exposé
13.02.201 6	<b>M1</b>	acceptance of exposé
14.02.201 6		Introduction and Procedure
23.02.201 6		Drafting and presentation of the theoretical basis: customer satisfaction
07.03.201 6		Drafting and presentation of the theoretical base: Corporate Blogs
07.04.201 6	<b>M2</b>	Proofreading of the theoretical part
09.04.201 6		Formulation of the empirical research design
10.04.201 6	<b>M3</b>	Derivation of hypothetical constructs
12.04.201 6	<b>M4</b>	Empirical research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Construction of interview and subjects</li> <li>□ Definition of variables</li> <li>□ Definition of concrete questions</li> </ul>

15.04.2016		Graphical layout of questionnaire
17.04.2016		Implementation of internal pretest
20.04.2016		Conducting the investigation
20.05.2016	<b>M5</b>	Looking over obtained data & evaluation of data
28.05.2016		Textual recording of empirical results
03.06.2016	<b>M6</b>	Checklist of corporate blogs based on results gained
10.06.2016		Proofreading of the empirical part
13.06.2016	<b>M7</b>	Creation of Conclusion
17.06.2016		Creation of contents, bibliography and table of figures
20.06.2016	<b>M8</b>	Proofreading of thesis
25.06.2016		Printing and binding of Master's thesis
01.07.2016	<b>M9</b>	Submission of the thesis

**The problem of motivation:** If you come to the point where you can no longer motivate yourself and your master's thesis is only annoying - we have a few tips ready:

1. Always remember: this is only temporary - then you can hit the ground running (with whatever you're doing!)
2. Reward yourself for completed work: watch an episode of your favorite series or meet friends for ice-cream.

3. Plan realistically: It does not help when you have to postpone a milestone - that's demotivating for sure.

4. Flock together: This rule applies even when writing a master's thesis: A problem shared is a problem halved. Talk about each other's experiences, maybe someone can help you with a problem - in case of an emergency, there is also your advisor from the MRM faculty :-)

### **Here's a checklist so that nothing can go wrong!**

✓ Find and collect suggestions for topics

✓ Check topics for suitability and literature review

✓ Think about which instructor might be the right advisor for you

✓ Consult an advisor and discuss the topic. If necessary, do further literature research

✓ Set a final topic with your advisor

(Please note: It is important to coordinate with the faculty management when using your own topic)

✓ Registration of the thesis in Fhsys

✓ Accurate reading of the literature and notes of relevant aspects

✓ Empirical part and structuring of the results

✓ Writing phase

✓ Revision phase

✓ Correction phase

✓ Have someone else proofread the work

✓ Print work and have it bound

✓ Submission of the thesis