

Thesis Guidelines @IBT

The content of this document holds for theses at both the bachelor and master level.
Where applicable, distinctions are articulated.

Some words upfront:

Writing a thesis at IBT should be an engaging experience. While it represents a formal requirement for your graduation, crafting a thesis is also your chance to explore an intriguing question in depth and hone the skills learned during your studies undoubtedly benefitting your professional life: Analytical thinking, concise communication, rigor, relevance, persistence, and time management. We expect you to apply these skills and make your own decisions along the process. Eventually, the thesis will be your personal contribution to the chosen research field. Of course, your supervisor will support you, but it is you who will take charge of this project.

In choosing the IBT you have the chance to work on timely topics related to the intersection of humans and technology within a community that has a true interest in your research. Enclosed, you will find the most relevant information for registering and writing your thesis with the IBT. Please consult this document to inform yourself about the formal processes, writing, and expectations.

I. Thesis registration and selection of supervised theses @IBT

I.1. Registration

Registration for a topic should preferably take place through the thesis application portal on our [website](#). There you will find open topics, the supervisor in charge, prerequisites, and information on the required application documents. Choose one topic that aligns with your interests and skills and fill out the application interface.

Your potential supervisor will assess your application and get back to you regarding the next steps found below.

In case you have approached a supervisor with your own topic idea in one of our [research areas](#), and the supervisor expressed interest in this topic, the following procedures are the same:

I.2. Hand in research proposal and timeline:

I.2.1. Research proposal

A good proposal:

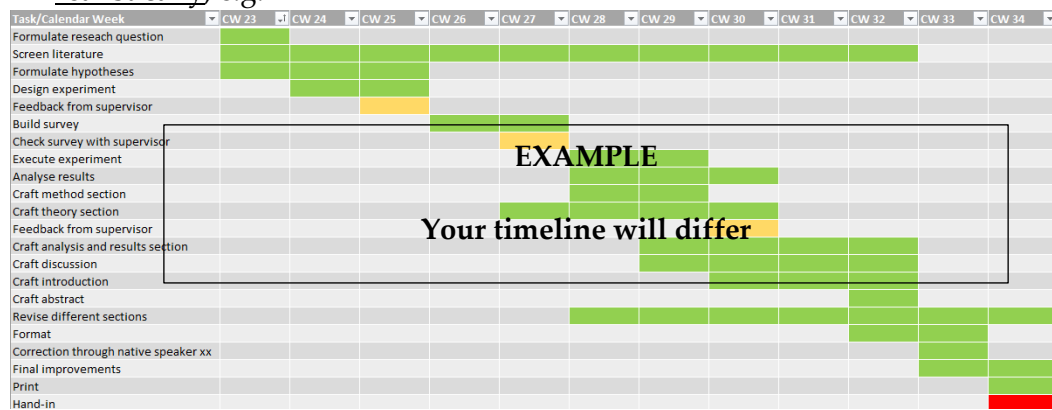
- is 2-3 pages in length,
- describes your research idea, its relevance, theoretical and practical implications,

- specifies the research question and identifies relevant literature,
- contains a first hypothesis,
- outlines the planned nature of the research (conceptual, exploratory, hypothesis testing etc.) and methods.
- [further tips](#)

1.2.2. Timeline

In your timeline:

- specify calendar weeks and planned subtasks performing/completed realistically, e.g.



- update dates in consultation with your supervisor

We won't control the exact fulfillment of your timeline. Be sure to observe the HSG deadlines for thesis submission. Please be transparent about any plans related to working or doing an exchange that may interfere with your thesis.

Based on the proposal and timeline, we will make the final decision regarding supervision. Please note that a rejection of supervision is still possible until the official supervision document is signed.

On the next pages, you will find more information on writing your thesis and grading of the thesis.

2. Thesis writing @IBT

2.1. Thesis supervision process

A good rule of thumb is to plan 2 to 3 in-person meetings with your supervisor (e.g., see timeline). Of course, this number is not set in stone.

2.2. Thesis formal requirements

2.2.1. Structure

The structure should resemble the one below and you can find an IBT thesis template [here](#). The “main part” is the crucial component of your thesis and should resemble academic articles in, e.g. the [Journal of Consumer Research](#) or [Journal of Marketing Research](#). Compared to a journal publication you should describe your methods in greater detail, while you are not required to perform as many studies and to test as many constructs. Your work structure might deviate if you do not work empirically.

- Title page (see example Title page on our website)
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations
- List of figures
- List of tables
- Main part
 - Introduction,
 - Theory and Hypothesis,
 - Methods,
 - Results,
 - General Discussion
- Appendix
- List of references
- Declarations (as can be found [here](#))

2.2.2. Length

A good thesis is concise. At IBT, we prefer reading a short thesis articulating research process and key findings. That is, always given, you reflect the literature, theory and methods in appropriate depth and broadness. Your main part should not exceed 40/60 pages for a BA/MA thesis respectively ([see HSG guidance](#)), which at the same time does not mean you need to aim for these numbers. If you run short of pages or have additional intriguing insights, use the appendix.

2.2.3. Language

The previously mentioned journals will give you a good impression of the expected linguistic style (terminology, syntax, semantic and grammar). Theses at IBT are exclusively written in English.

2.2.4. Layout

- One-sided DIN A4 portrait mode with numbered pages
- Borders - Header: 2.5 cm, Footer: 2.5 cm, Left margin: 2.5 cm, Right margin: 2.5 cm
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Font: Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri (12 pts.)
- Text alignment: justification

2.2.5. References

Concentrate your sources on peer-reviewed works in major scientific outlets (Please consult one of [these pages](#) for more information). Please follow the [APA reference style](#). We strongly recommend using a reference manager such as Mendeley or Citavi.

3. Thesis Grading @IBT

What we generally wish to observe in a thesis is that students prove their capability to work as an independent researcher. The eventual grade will be determined in line with university specifications and based on the grading schemes for BA and MA theses.

Besides the outlined expectations, we particularly consider whether students: independently pursue their research; formulate a relevant and timely research question; prove their critical reading of the pertinent literature to theoretically derive conceptualizations and hypotheses; test these with sound methods in an error-free and target-oriented manner; conclude meaningful findings and interpret them with the problem and extant theory in mind; articulate their overall research process concisely and eloquently with relevant stakeholders in mind; approach and eventually craft their thesis as if it was to be published in a scholarly journal (structure, content, language etc.).