

# **Guidelines for students to prepare their thesis at the Department Consumer Behaviour in the Bioeconomy**

## **1. Start up – how your idea becomes a successful project**

You already have an idea of a topic you will be dealing with in your master or bachelor thesis? Wonderful! We can show you how you can create your concept for your thesis with your topic.

Or are you still looking for a suitable topic? No problem. In this case these guidelines can render important information to initiate your project.

## **2. Focus your own interests**

It is important to localize your own interests and preferences. The following questions can be very helpful to get closer to your project called thesis and thus make it easier for you to narrow down your direction and concentrate on a certain target course:

- Have you always been interested in consumer behaviour?
- Are you fascinated by questions on Bioeconomy?
- Do you intend to get more insight in upstream and downstream firms of the agricultural and food industry?
- Have you always been fascinated by statistics?

Finally, you chose the topic you are intending to intensively deal with for the coming weeks and months. Your convinced motivation to work on a specific topic is an important part of your success.

What is to be considered: your bachelor or master thesis is an important step of your carrier planning. Think about your future curriculum vitae:

- Would you like to work in industry? Your bachelor or master thesis is an important signboard for your job application. Personnel manager like to know, how you made use of the working time: Did you write within the framework of an internship? This will add extra weight in the employers' decision-making process in job interviews.
- Are you intending to join your parents' firm? In this case it is useful to choose a topic important to this firm and your future position as operations manager.

- Are you planning an academic carrier? In this case it is helpful to cooperate with a research institute. Additionally, partners from research and practice can support you in your working process, i.e. in gaining data.

### **3. Choosing a topic**

If you are still looking for a suitable topic, it will be useful to get an overview on the topics currently offered by our department. It is also possible to turn to us with your own ideas.

Are you interested in a topic directly related to practice? Very often firms in industry like students to analyse certain problems in a bachelor or master thesis. You are welcome to contact firms independently or you submit the problem agreed upon with a concrete partner firm.

To examine a topic carefully, we do recommend getting an overview of the available literature on the topic and reading in on the state of the research at an early stage. In doing so, your decision for (or against) a topic becomes easier and facilitates formulating the research question and target course of your own work. Useful can be Google Scholar, ISI web of knowledge, ebsco or KIM comprehensive catalogue.

### **4. Making the final decision**

Have you decided on a topic? Have you found a research gap that your work will fill? Now is the time to contact our chair to agree on further proceedings. Additionally, you need to look at the following questions and initiate their discussion in the first appointment:

- Why exactly do you intend to work on this topic?
- What is your aim?
- What kind of data do you intend to determine and evaluate?
- Can existing data be used?
- What is the time framework of your assignment?

In this first talk a summary of the credits gained so far is very much appreciated. Have you successfully completed all the necessary modules and exams? Congratulations. Then you can concentrate on writing your final thesis. Are still exams to be taken? No problem. Explain the supervisor briefly your time management for the coming months and how you plan to successfully master all the requirements.

## 5. Develop a concept

Read comprehensively the literature of the topic at this early stage. Looking for the relevant literature can take some time and must not be neglected due to time pressure. We urgently recommend an early research start to facilitate the wording of your research question and your target.

The theses in our chair are to be submitted in paper form. This means that an assignment consists of 20 pages text followed by literature and appendix. It does not necessarily mean that this is easier than writing an assignment with 60 pages, for a shorter assignment requires a clear and concise writing style, from which you will benefit in your later work life. Assignment languages are German or English. With your consent we would like to publish outstanding empiric assignment in order to reach a broad audience.

It is often advisable to (re)attend an introduction into structured literature research offered by KIM (<https://kim.uni-hohenheim.de/index.php?id=96226>). Please make sure you checked on the following points with your supervisor:

- Why is this topic relevant?
- What is the wording of your research question or what are the assumptions?
- What is the target course?
- What is the contribution of your assignment for science and / or practice?
- What makes your assignment unique or innovative?

In the case of your cooperation with a firm or institute you need to define your course of action:

- How do you proceed?
- How do you access your data for the practical part?
- Can you define your independent achievement of the assignment?
- Are you developing a new evaluation model, empiric investigations or evaluating existing information?
- Do you have access to the necessary software licences?

Experience has shown that dealing with the above questions before the actual writing time is an absolute necessity. Only when all your questions are answered unambiguously your project is likely to be successful. You should therefore think carefully on the answers and

discuss them with your supervisor. Calculate enough time for the preparation. Then specify our topic in drawing up a written draft of your research thesis. It should consist of the following points:

- Working title
- Motivation for choosing topic
- Target course / Research question
- Preliminary structure

Present your project layout to your supervisor and finally clarify all the remaining open questions. Then you can really get going.

## **6. Now is the time to sign up and submit your thesis**

Please check the sign-up formalities and deadlines by the examination office. The given time for working on the bachelor and master thesis is defined in the examination regulations. Please remember that the clock counts as soon as you have signed up and determined the final submission date. Please check if you think you can really meet the deadline. Your time management skills are important. It is up to you to decide on the working pace and the working pressure. Your supervisor will leave it up to you, because it is up to you to successfully submit your thesis.

## **7. Last but not least: Two more hints**

During your concept and working time of your thesis it is advisable to consider all the hints of Hohenheim university on academic writing: „Academic Writing Aid materials“ ([https://agrar.uni-hohenheim.de/academic\\_writing\\_aid](https://agrar.uni-hohenheim.de/academic_writing_aid)).

You can always turn to your supervisor in the case of questions or unclarities. He or she will be happy to be staying up to date on your progress.