

# 1 Rules and Guidelines: Supervised Bachelor's and Master's 2 Theses

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## 34 Initial Communication: Documents and Further Information

35 1. Please send your supervision requests jointly to Professor Dr. Andreas Blumer  
36 (andreas.blumer@unisg.ch) and Dr. Iva Mihaylova (iva.mihaylova@unisg.ch). Always put  
37 both Dr. Iva Mihaylova (iva.mihaylova@unisg.ch) and Prof. Dr. Andreas Blumer  
38 (andreas.blumer@unisg.ch) in copy (CC) in all of your emails. Please also check your HSG  
39 email account regularly and do not write to us from private email addresses, as such emails  
40 may not reach us.

41 2. When you contact us for the first time, please send:

- 42 a. A complete and up-to-date curriculum vitae in English or German.
- 43 b. Grade transcripts showing all grades from your previous studies. If you are a Master's  
44 student, this means a current Master's transcript, as well as Bachelor's and  
45 Assessment Level transcripts from HSG, if applicable.
- 46 c. A writing sample, such as a thesis, term paper, or Bachelor's thesis that you have  
47 written as the sole author.
- 48 d. Your motivation for writing your Bachelor's or Master's thesis with us.

- 1 e. The period during which you would like to write your Bachelor's or Master's thesis and  
2 the number of hours you plan to dedicate to it per week. Please note that, according  
3 to HSG rules, 1 ECTS equates to 30 hours of work.
- 4 f. Please read the supervision rules to ensure you understand the workflow and its  
5 content.
- 6 g. In case your maximum submission deadline – that is, the deadline that results from  
7 your maximum study period at the HSG (**see the section “Maximum Study Duration  
8 at the University of St. Gallen” below**) – is in less than the usual 12 months, for  
9 example because your maximum study time at the University is coming to an end within  
10 12 months, or because you have to start working within the next 12 months, you must  
11 state this clearly in your first email to us.
- 12 3. If you would like to suggest your own topic, please explain your idea in an attachment to your  
13 first email. This gives you a better chance of receiving a positive response than if you expect  
14 us to provide you with a topic. When describing your idea, please use the draft template that  
15 all students should use when writing a thesis under our supervision. However, before doing  
16 so, please read the section below entitled 'What Kind of Topics Should Be Developed as  
17 Part of a Bachelor's or Master's Thesis?' to ensure that your proposed topic is acceptable.
- 18 4. Please contact us only if you intend to write your Bachelor's or Master's thesis under our  
19 supervision, not if your strategy is to contact many professors simultaneously. Based on our  
20 experience, we must explicitly request that you state the following in your initial email:
  - 21 a. Please confirm that you wish to undertake a Bachelor's or Master's thesis under our  
22 supervision. Do not contact us if you intend to approach multiple professors  
23 simultaneously.
  - 24 b. Whether you have contacted, or plan to contact, other professors regarding the  
25 supervision of your thesis at the same time as us.
  - 26 c. Whether we are your first choice for supervising your thesis.
  - 27 d. Whether you commit not to contact other professors for supervision while we are  
28 considering your case.
  - 29 e. Please include an explicit answer to these questions in your email.
- 30 5. Please note that, unless we have agreed otherwise, you should submit your research  
31 proposal (see the rules below) and sign the supervision form within five weeks of the initial  
32 communication. If you do not meet this deadline and we have not made other arrangements,  
33 we will automatically close your file. This means that we will not work together on your thesis.
- 34 6. Please carefully read all rules and deadlines on HSG's Intranet  
35 (<https://universitaetstgallen.sharepoint.com/>). If no information is available on the Intranet,  
36 you should contact the administration.
- 37 7. Before contacting us by email, please first read this PDF with the supervision rules together  
38 with the optional methodological 'Self-Help Optional Student Help Desk' PDF on our ACA  
39 page (<https://aca.unisg.ch/de/themen/andreas-blumer/bachelor-/masterarbeiten/>). Most  
40 questions asked by email are already answered there; please email us only if this does not  
41 resolve your question.
- 42 8. Please check the ACA page regularly for updates and always work with the current version  
43 of these rules.
- 44 9. Please consult the StudentWeb intranet regularly, as almost all administrative matters are  
45 explained there, to avoid unnecessary emails. If this does not help, please ask the DAO at  
46 [master@unisg.ch](mailto:master@unisg.ch) or [bachelor@unisg.ch](mailto:bachelor@unisg.ch).

## 1 Our Subject Areas

2 You can write your Bachelor's or Master's thesis with us in the following areas:

- 3 • Accounting for banks and insurers
- 4 • External and internal audit and internal control
- 5 • Governmental supervision system of the financial industry
- 6 • Risk management and control
- 7 • Corporate governance of financial institutions
- 8 • Current issues in the context of regulatory requirements for financial institutions, e.g., money
- 9 laundering prevention, investment suitability, capital adequacy requirements, risk distribution
- 10 requirements, and liquidity requirements
- 11 • Other current issues in the financial industry (e.g., cross-border issues, tax issues,
- 12 innovation, AI, outsourcing)
- 13 • Sustainability accounting and reporting at banks, insurers, and asset managers, including
- 14 investment funds, and the use of ratings and avoidance of greenwashing
- 15 • Human capital management in financial institutions
- 16 • Political economy and financial institutions
- 17 • A topic you propose that falls within our area of expertise. Please read the section on
- 18 acceptable topics below.

## 19 What Kind of Topics Should Be Developed as Part of a Bachelor's or 20 Master's Thesis?

21 When students suggest their own topic, they often provide only a literature review. This is not  
22 permitted by HSG. However, if current literature is available, a literature review should form part of  
23 your thesis and inform the development of your research questions. Below is an example of an  
24 unacceptable topic (this is merely a literature review; furthermore, the topic has been thoroughly  
25 explored):

26 *“My proposed topic aims to take an exploratory approach within the area of Behavioural*  
27 *Accounting. Specifically, I would like to investigate the presence of cognitive biases (such*  
28 *as confirmation bias or overconfidence) in two major accounting scandals, one before and*  
29 *one after the implementation of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX). The goal would be to*  
30 *analyse how regulatory measures like SOX may have influenced audit reporting and*  
31 *decision-making processes. The thesis would rely on the analysis of secondary literature*  
32 *and psychological models and aims to generate hypotheses for future research.”*

33 **Please note:** our help in finding a topic does not mean that we check whether your data have  
34 been obtained, correctly coded and calculated, whether the relevant literature has been read,  
35 or whether your data are sufficient for a sound, analytical thesis. This remains your independent  
36 responsibility.

37 **Against this background, five main types of empirical topics are feasible for a bachelor's or**  
38 **master's thesis:**

### 39 Content Analysis-Based Thesis

40 This type of thesis consists of coding disclosures (for example, on a scale of 0, 0.5, or 1 against  
41 objective rules). Currently, we offer these topics on the new platform  
42 <https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/> as they are the most straightforward.

43 Example: You can download from EDOK - Home and read the master's theses of Robert Haun,  
44 Felix Aschenbrenner, and Christoph Halwachs. They are based on content analysis.

## 1 Interview-Based Thesis

2 This type of thesis builds on interviews for which you must find interview partners at the stage of  
3 writing the research proposal, not after the official start of the thesis. Please include a list of specific  
4 interview partners in the research proposal that you send us for the first supervision meeting (see  
5 the section on 'Supervision Meetings Regarding the Thesis'). Unfortunately, we cannot assist you  
6 in finding interview partners. However, many students have successfully found interview partners  
7 via LinkedIn, HSG clubs, their own networks, HSG's Facebook page, etc.

8 Examples: You can download from EDOK - Home. You can read  
9 [https://jebtonline.com/en/article/2738-7453\\_2024\\_5\\_1\\_28-44](https://jebtonline.com/en/article/2738-7453_2024_5_1_28-44) and Dembetembe, G.G.  
10 Organizational Responses to Institutional Complexity in the Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Field.  
11 J Bus Ethics (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-025-06130-6>

## 12 Case Study-Based Thesis

13 As part of this type of thesis, you will develop a case study. It is highly relevant to clarify in advance,  
14 at the stage of writing the research proposal and not after the official start of the thesis registration,  
15 with the organisation of your choice whether it agrees to participate and, if so, under what  
16 conditions. The relevant questions you must clarify are: Does your organisation want your thesis to  
17 be anonymous and confidential? Is it willing to participate?

## 18 Quantitative Analysis Thesis

19 This type of thesis requires you to use quantitative methods to answer your research question(s).  
20 In addition to being familiar with the methods, please be aware that you must independently verify  
21 whether data are available for your topic and describe them with sufficient detail in your research  
22 proposal.

23 Example: You can download from EDOK - Home and read the theses of Mauritius Klein, Thomas  
24 Noel, and Lennart Stichler.

## 25 Mixed Methods Thesis

26 Of course, theses that use mixed methods are also welcome.

27 **Important:** We emphasise that, in line with standard HSG practice, it is beyond the scope of  
28 supervision to teach you any research methods (for instance, case study methods, quantitative  
29 methods, interviewing, qualitative methods, etc.), to assist you with details such as writing your  
30 interview questions, programming, citations, or scientific writing, or to work closely with you on  
31 the analysis. You should either learn independently or have attended courses that cover this  
32 content. In line with the HSG definition of independent academic work, supervision is limited  
33 support for you in your independent work; it is not joint work.

34 **Important:** Before registering your thesis on the new platform  
35 <https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/>, you must write a research proposal in the format below,  
36 incorporating our potential feedback. For all milestones, see the 'Supervision Meetings  
37 Regarding the Thesis' section and the table 'Summary of the Whole Supervision Process and  
38 Workflow'.

## 39 Content and Structure of the Research Proposal

40 **Language:** English or German. **Length:** 4 to 8 pages.

41 **Aim:** The research proposal should provide an initial overview and clarity about the content and  
42 structure of your thesis.

43 **Title:** The title of the thesis should reflect the research question. The final title that we agree on as  
44 part of Milestone 1 (see the 'Supervision Meetings Regarding the Thesis' section and the table  
45 'Summary of the Whole Supervision Process and Workflow') should be registered after this

1 Milestone 1 meeting on the new platform <https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/>. When you submit your  
 2 thesis, the title must match the title on the new platform. If you need to change your title for any  
 3 reason, you must write to your supervisor to justify the necessity of the change. Do not involve your  
 4 co-supervisor in this process. On the new platform, please do not upload your research proposal;  
 5 enter only the title and your research questions, concisely. The title registered on the platform must  
 6 match the title of the submitted thesis.

7 **Problem Statement and Problem Description:** The intended problem should be set out in the  
 8 problem statement (Problemstellung) as precisely as possible, drawing on scholarly literature and  
 9 other sources. The problem description (Fragestellung) should explain the subject area and  
 10 demonstrate the context in which the research topic is being considered. It should also explain why  
 11 the problem is relevant from scientific and application-oriented perspectives. Specifically, it must  
 12 identify the scientific research gap or motivation (e.g., comparable work in the research field has  
 13 not yet considered the intended task) and the practical relevance (e.g., potential applications in  
 14 companies according to studies, surveys, and literature sources). Concerning research gaps, it is  
 15 helpful to read: Miles, D. A. (2017, August). A taxonomy of research gaps: Identifying and defining  
 16 the seven research gaps. In Doctoral student workshop: finding research gaps, research methods  
 17 and strategies, Dallas, Texas (Vol. 1, pp. 1 to 10).

18 **Research Question:** The research question clearly and unambiguously sets out what is to be  
 19 investigated. It should be defined only as broadly as necessary, but as narrowly as possible. It  
 20 forms the basis for the content of the thesis.

21 **Working Questions (if any):** The working questions should help answer the research question.  
 22 They divide the research question into sub-questions and serve to answer them. Each working  
 23 question should be answered by at least one concrete (partial) result (e.g., evaluation of a survey,  
 24 regression analysis, text analysis, etc.). The focus should be on a few essential questions. The  
 25 entire structure of the thesis and the research proposal should follow the research and working  
 26 questions.

27 **Literature Review:** A short literature review (for instance, half a page) with key references. Please  
 28 do not provide lists of references at the end of the document that are not discussed in the main text  
 29 of the research proposal. The idea is for you to present the literature to the reader.

30 **Methodological Approach:** The methodological approach describes in detail the scientific  
 31 procedure for writing the thesis. For each research or working question, it should be specifically  
 32 explained how it is to be addressed and how the desired (partial) result is to be achieved. Use  
 33 existing literature to guide your methodological approach. You should be concrete and realistic.  
 34 Please always verify whether you can secure interview partners on your own before contacting us,  
 35 and provide a concrete list of people who have agreed to give you an interview. It is not permissible  
 36 to claim in the proposal that you will conduct interviews without any prior verification, which you  
 37 certainly should do before contacting us. If you state that you rely on interviews and you are not  
 38 100% certain that you will obtain them, you should explain what you will do as an alternative if your  
 39 interview partners do not give you interviews. The idea is for you to assess all risks, take  
 40 responsibility for them, think about solutions, and avoid deadlocks that you would later need to  
 41 resolve independently. Therefore, it is advisable to verify whether you have (enough) data. If you  
 42 rely on interview partners, you should be certain that they will participate. Please note that we do  
 43 not search for or provide interview partners.

44 As a rule of thumb for the structure of your thesis: theory and methodology together make up  
 45 about half of the main body (excluding the bibliography), and the empirical part together with  
 46 the discussion makes up the other half. Please choose your sample independently in line with  
 47 this rule and ensure that your thesis is not merely descriptive but analytical. Please do not ask  
 48 us 'Are the data sufficient?' or 'Is the sample suitable?'. Already at the stage of writing your  
 49 outline (Grobdisposition), check your sample and test-code your data; do not wait and discover

1 months later that no data are available. If you do not check your data early, you must find a  
2 solution on your own at a later stage.

3 **Important:** Our experience shows that we must emphasise that you must complete and explain  
4 all these verifications in the research proposal before Milestone 1 (see the section 'Supervision  
5 Meetings Regarding the Thesis').

6 **Expected Results:** The expected results of applying the methodological approach to the research  
7 question should be described here as specifically as possible. An outlook should be given for each  
8 research question indicating in which form the expected (partial) result would be presented (e.g.,  
9 evaluation of a survey, table with statistical test results, figure, programme code, etc.).

10 **Outline Structure:** The rough outline must be completed up to the second level.

11 **Short Bibliography:** The bibliography contains relevant publications identified up to the  
12 submission of the proposal. In addition to basic specialist literature on the subject area, this includes  
13 in particular articles from specialist journals.

14 **Timetable with Milestones:** The timetable includes the most important milestones of the work for  
15 scheduling purposes and approximately when they are planned to be achieved. If your maximum  
16 submission deadline is in less than the usual 12 months (for example, because your maximum  
17 study time at the University is ending within 12 months, or because you have to start working within  
18 the next 12 months), you must also state this clearly here in your timetable.

## 19 Administrative Rules Regarding Your Study Programme

20 Please consult the rules for your programme on the Intranet, StudentWeb. In case of doubt, please  
21 contact [bachelor@unisg.ch](mailto:bachelor@unisg.ch) or [master@unisg.ch](mailto:master@unisg.ch), depending on your case. In addition, you can ask  
22 the programme committee of your programme.

## 23 Maximum Study Duration at the University of St. Gallen

24 The University of St. Gallen sets a maximum study duration (Studienzeitbeschränkung) for every  
25 level of study. Planning your thesis so that you submit within this limit is your own responsibility.  
26 The maximum durations are:

- 27 • Assessment year: maximum 6 semesters.
- 28 • Bachelor's level: maximum 10 semesters.
- 29 • Master's level: maximum 8 semesters.

30 The following rules also apply:

- 31 • Leave semesters (Urlaubssemester) and semesters abroad both count towards the  
32 maximum study duration.
- 33 • If you exceed the maximum on any level, you are automatically de-registered  
34 (exmatriculated) and a permanent study ban takes effect: from that point you can no longer  
35 study at the HSG, including at doctoral level. The Rector may grant exceptions.
- 36 • Changing your major (Bachelor) or your programme (Master) does not reset the semester  
37 count.
- 38 • If you start a second degree at the HSG, the count begins again.

39 Source: Studienzeitbeschränkung – Erläuternde Bestimmungen sowie Übergangsregelung  
40 (Rectorate decision of 4 October 2011), University of St. Gallen: [https://erlasse.unisg.ch/blb-  
41 II\\_B\\_1\\_08\\_DE.downloadpayload](https://erlasse.unisg.ch/blb-II_B_1_08_DE.downloadpayload)

42

## 1 **Length/Further Rules Regarding Your Thesis**

2 Please consult the rules for your programme. In case of doubt, please contact bachelor@unisg.ch  
3 or master@unisg.ch, depending on your case. In addition, you can ask the programme committee  
4 of your programme.

## 5 **Deadline Extensions for Writing the Thesis**

6 The following rules apply to extensions of the deadline for writing your thesis:

- 7 1. Extensions are granted **only** in the case of pregnancy, military service, or illness, and not in  
8 the case of a heavy workload (including workload at your job).
- 9 2. A maximum of two such extensions is possible at this university, exclusively for the reasons  
10 mentioned above and proven with supporting documents.
- 11 3. Requests are processed only **after** the required **documents** have been uploaded to the  
12 relevant platform.
- 13 4. Requests must be submitted at least two months before the deadline, not at the last moment.
- 14 5. All details on deadline extensions are explained on the intranet (StudyNet). Please read them  
15 there.

## 16 **Layout of the Thesis**

17 The following main criteria apply to the layout of the research proposal and your thesis:

- 18 • Citation style: APA7
- 19 • HSG has an official template in English and German (see the Bachelor-Arbeit and Master-  
20 Arbeiten pages on <https://universitaetstgallen.sharepoint.com/>).
- 21 • Font: Arial or Times New Roman, 11 or 12 pt
- 22 • Line spacing: 1.3 to 1.5
- 23 • Page setup: Use the defined setup in the template on the Intranet (top, left, and right 2.5 cm,  
24 bottom 2 cm).

## 25 **Useful Links**

26 Theses (Bachelor and Master): Decrees of the University of St. Gallen.

27 EDOK - Home: A list of submitted theses.

## 28 **Supervision Meetings Regarding the Thesis**

29 All supervision meetings are voluntary and optional. They require time and bilateral preparation in  
30 advance, rather than at the last moment.

31 There are three milestone meetings: the first is part of the standard process; the second and the  
32 third are voluntary feedback meetings.

33 Below, we provide information on how to organise such meetings efficiently. Students should  
34 contact us to arrange a meeting and allow sufficient time for us to respond. Meetings cannot  
35 normally be organised at short notice. We require at least two to three weeks' advance notice.

36 Supervision meetings are used to discuss milestones and a small number of focused, relevant  
37 questions that you send us in advance. For clarity, a small number of clusters with themes that  
38 include a large number of sub-questions is not appropriate and will not be considered. Between  
39 meetings, students work independently. Based on our experience, it is important to note that there  
40 should normally be several months between meetings.

1 Sending us a large number of questions or questions that show you have not undertaken any  
 2 research indicates that you are not prepared for a supervision meeting, and hence no meeting will  
 3 be organised. First, you must conduct further independent research, and then reduce the number  
 4 of questions to a manageable amount.

5 Each feedback meeting lasts a maximum of 30 minutes. This is the maximum time that can be  
 6 claimed for a limited number of questions, and our own preparation also takes no longer than 30  
 7 minutes. Please prepare the documents described in these rules in advance and bring a limited  
 8 number of questions; prioritising your questions is recommended. If you submit extensive work,  
 9 only selected points can be discussed, not all of them.

10 When writing your outline (Grobdisposition), please do not enter fixed dates for potential feedback  
 11 meetings, as we may be unavailable on those days. Meetings are arranged as described in these  
 12 rules: first submit the documents, then wait, and please do not reserve a time slot months in  
 13 advance without having sent the documents. Thank you for understanding that we do not arrange  
 14 supervision meetings during our holidays.

15 If the time of a 30-minute meeting is not sufficient, the remaining questions and files cannot be sent  
 16 to us by email afterwards; there are no extensive follow-up emails and no additional ad hoc  
 17 meetings. We do not look for interview partners and do not intervene if an interview partner drops  
 18 out. Please also do not make your continued work on the thesis conditional on our answers.

## 19 **Organisation of Supervision Milestones for Empirical Quantitative Research,** 20 **Content Analysis, or Case Study**

21 This example is based on our experience and the fact that if some of the proposed intermediate  
 22 steps are skipped and/or items in the table below are not provided by the student, it may be difficult  
 23 or impossible for us to understand you.

Milestone	Description
<b>Initial Email Correspondence</b>	Initial communication by email.
<b>Supervision Meeting (Milestone 1)</b>	<p><i>Duration: max. 30 min.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discussion of the research proposal.</li> <li>2. Registration of your thesis on the new platform <a href="https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/">https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/</a> AFTER (and not before) this meeting.</li> <li>3. Discussion of next steps, in particular that you should prepare the items and milestones in the table if you want to attend a supervision meeting.</li> </ol>
<b>2nd Supervision Meeting (Milestone 2)</b>	<p><i>Duration: max. 30 min.</i></p> <p>Discussion of approximately 50 to 60% of the written draft thesis.</p> <p><b>Materials that the student must proactively send (in one Word document) before requesting a meeting:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bullet points of research and working questions (if any).</li> <li>2. A draft literature review with sufficient detail (it does not need to be the final one). This should be explained as text and preferably as a table or tables at the end of the literature review.</li> <li>3. Written draft of section 'Data and Methods'.</li> <li>4. Written draft of section 'Empirical Results'.</li> </ol> <p><b>Note 1:</b> There should be clear and easily visible logic and coherence between points 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the submitted materials (roter Faden in German).</p> <p><b>Note 2:</b> It is worth reading Libório, M. P., Martins, C. A. P., Laudares, S., &amp; Ekel, P. I. (2023). Method of preparing an international and</p>

	national literature review for novice researchers. MethodsX, 10, 102165.
<b>3rd Supervision Meeting (Milestone 3)</b>	<i>Duration: max. 30 min.</i> Discussion of the draft bachelor's/master's thesis after the student sends a draft (in one Word document) with 70 to 80% of the final text. We are not supposed to read additional files and try to orientate ourselves on what exactly you do.

1 **Please note** that no feedback is provided on the same material more than once, as this would  
2 constitute close co-authorship rather than supervision.

### 3 **Organisation of Supervision Milestones for Interviews, Surveys, Case Study** 4 **Method, or Mixed Method Approach**

5 This example is based on our experience and the fact that if some of the proposed intermediate  
6 steps are skipped and/or items in the table below are not provided by the student, it may be difficult  
7 or impossible for us to understand you.

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Initial Email Correspondence</b>	Initial communication by email.
<b>Supervision Meeting (Milestone 1)</b>	<i>Duration: max. 30 min.</i> 1. Discussion of the research proposal. 2. Registration of your thesis on the new platform <a href="https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/">https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/</a> AFTER (and not before) this meeting. 3. Discussion of next steps, in particular that you should prepare the items and milestones in the table if you want to attend a supervision meeting.
<b>2nd Supervision Meeting (Milestone 2)</b>	<i>Duration: max. 30 min.</i> Discussion of approximately 50 to 60% of the written draft thesis. <b>Materials that the student must proactively send (in one Word document) before requesting a meeting:</b> 1. Bullet points of research and working questions (if any). 2. A draft literature review with sufficient detail. From the literature review, it should become clear why certain questions are proposed in the questionnaire. This should be explained as text and preferably in a table like the example in Figure 1 below. 3. Questionnaire with questions and how they will be measured (Likert scale, yes/no, 0/1, qualitative, etc.). <b>Note 1:</b> There should be clear and easily visible logic and coherence between points 1, 2, and 3 in the submitted materials (roter Faden in German). <b>Note 2:</b> It is worth reading Libório, M. P., Martins, C. A. P., Laudares, S., & Ekel, P. I. (2023). Method of preparing an international and national literature review for novice researchers. MethodsX, 10, 102165. You can read this article to see an example of how to organise the interpretation of interviews.
<b>3rd Supervision Meeting (Milestone 3)</b>	<i>Duration: max. 30 min.</i> Discussion of the draft bachelor's/master's thesis after the student sends a draft (in one Word document) with 70 to 80% of the final text. We are not supposed to read additional files and try to orientate ourselves on what exactly you do. The final draft that you submit to the administration must contain all transcribed interviews. We should know the names and contact

information of all interview partners. If you decide to anonymise the interview partners, then the final thesis that you submit should not contain this information (but you need to provide the referee and co-referee with a list of the names).

1 **Please note** that no feedback is provided on the same material more than once, as this would  
2 constitute close co-authorship rather than supervision.

### 3 **Summary of the Whole Supervision Process and Workflow**

4 Against the background of the above-mentioned workflow, the optional supervision meetings  
5 should follow the timeline below:

<b>Email correspondence, plus pre-kick-off meeting (if necessary), plus research proposal, then Milestone 1*, plus registration** on the HSG platform (after the meeting)</b>	<i>Months of independent work</i>	<b>Milestone 2*</b>	<i>Months of independent work</i>	<b>Milestone 3*, then submission on the HSG platform</b>

6 \* After a feedback meeting, please do not send us your updated thesis or the parts we discussed  
7 asking whether we can read it all again and provide feedback on whether you have integrated our  
8 suggestions sufficiently and whether there are any remaining issues. Correcting the same material  
9 multiple times goes beyond the scope of supervision and enters the realm of close co-authorship  
10 and evaluation. As mentioned in the 'Evaluation of Your Thesis' section, it is beyond the scope of  
11 supervision to discuss evaluation-related questions.

12 \*\* **Mandatory registration of your thesis on the new platform.** If we agree to supervise your  
13 thesis, please register your thesis on the new platform (Meine Abschlussarbeit - Kundenservice)  
14 on the same day on which we meet with you regarding our first meeting in the section 'Supervision  
15 Meetings Regarding the Thesis'. Please do not register your thesis on the new platform  
16 <https://businessplatform.unisg.ch/> before we meet for the first time, as we could adapt the title and  
17 parts of the proposal during the meeting. Regarding the options for oral presentation, see the  
18 information further below. All information about the platform is available on the Intranet and  
19 StudentWeb, where information for writing the thesis is provided.

20 The purpose of supervision meetings is to provide and receive feedback on a limited number of  
21 relevant issues. Students should prepare for these meetings and work independently. Please note  
22 that if you skip the second supervision meeting (Milestone 2) and wish to discuss the content of the  
23 third supervision meeting (Milestone 3) directly, you will not be allowed a longer third meeting or  
24 longer email correspondence. In other words, if you skip Milestone 2 and go straight to Milestone  
25 3, you will not be given more supervision time.

26 Please note that if you have decided to submit your thesis on a certain date, you cannot expect us  
27 to align our schedule with yours or hurry supervision meetings simply because you have decided  
28 to hurry. This means that you should plan your time proactively and in good time to avoid time  
29 pressure. Furthermore, please inform us well in advance of your plans. Ideally, you should include  
30 your timeline in the research proposal and adhere to it.

31 **Figure 1**

## Vertrauen:

	Elmasry et al. (2022)	Eriksson (2008)	Hollensen et al. (2023)	Khurana (2022)	Koohang et al. (2023)	Mystakidis (2022)	Ooi et al. (2023)	Park (2021)	Zealelem (2021)
F 2.1	S. 46	-	S. 119	-	S. 748	S. 487 / 489 / 494	S. 1836 / 1837 / 1842	●	●
F 2.2	S. 46	-	S. 119	-	S. 748 / 754	S. 486 / 494	S. 1830 / 1838	●	●
F 2.3	S. 55 / 56	-	-	-	S. 754 / 755	S. 486 / 492	-	●	●
F 2.4	S. 50	-	-	-	S. 756	S. 493	S. 1842	-	-
F 2.5	S. 46	-	S. 119	-	S. 754	S. 494	S. 1838	-	-
F 2.6	-	-	-	-	S. 737	-	S. 1834 – 1836	●	-
F 2.7	S. 6 / 8 / 26 / 37	-	S. 119	-	S. 743 / 754	-	S. 1835	●	-
F 2.8	S. 46	-	S. 123	●	S. 737 / 755	-	S. 1834 / 1836	●	●
F 2.9	S. 50	-	S. 121 / 122	●	S. 740 / 743 / 747	S. 492	S. 1835	-	●
F 2.10	S. 46 / 52	-	S. 123	-	S. 737 / 739 / 747 / 758	-	S. 1835 / 1836	-	-
F 2.11	-	S. 31 – 39	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F 2.12	S. 46 / 52	-	S. 123	-	S. 737 / 739 / 747 / 758	-	S. 1835 / 1836	-	-

1  
2 Note: F 2.1 to 2.12 are interview questions. These references were discussed before providing the  
3 table.

#### 4 Further Information

##### 5 Frequently Explained Issues and Further Information

- 6 1. The student is responsible for independently and promptly informing themselves about all  
7 relevant issues regarding their Bachelor's or Master's thesis and for adhering to all HSG  
8 rules (including, but not limited to, relevant legal information at Bachelor's and Master's level,  
9 plagiarism, scientific writing, citation rules, and deadlines).
- 10 2. The student must be proactive in planning their time so that they attend regular feedback  
11 meetings during the supervision period and inform their supervisor of all circumstances  
12 relevant to the supervision.
- 13 3. If you prefer, you are welcome to work intensively on your own topic and submit your thesis  
14 at a time that suits you, even after one week or one month. However, please note that this  
15 is your personal choice. We cannot organise urgent feedback meetings to align with your  
16 preferences if you are in a hurry to submit.
- 17 4. Bearing in mind the above, we do not offer a second supervision meeting (or a third  
18 supervision meeting if you did not attend the second supervision meeting) as described in  
19 the section 'Supervision Meetings Regarding the Thesis' within the last 1.5 months before  
20 thesis submission. This is because there is little time left for you to integrate our feedback  
21 and you have already produced substantial content. Contacting us at this stage would  
22 require further urgent meetings and explanations in all cases. Furthermore, at least 1 to 1.5  
23 months should elapse between the second and third supervision meetings, during which you  
24 should work independently. However, you can still ask short questions that are not covered  
25 by these rules in the last 1.5 months before submitting your thesis. Please note that we are  
26 unavailable during vacation periods and on official holidays.

- 1 5. Based on our experience, we should explain that if we email the student during the  
2 supervision period or within three months of submitting the thesis, they should respond within  
3 ten working days. Please avoid sending several emails per day or per week, as well as  
4 emails that require an urgent reply shortly before a deadline, and please do not expect us to  
5 react at short notice. Of course, if we have initiated the communication, especially if  
6 something is urgent, emails at a higher frequency are fine.
- 7 6. A signed declaration of independence must accompany all academic work at the University  
8 of St. Gallen.
- 9 7. If you receive help from third parties (e.g., consultations or translations), this must be  
10 approved by us before the supervision process begins and clearly marked as such in your  
11 thesis.
- 12 8. If you are conducting interviews for your Bachelor's or Master's thesis, you must provide us  
13 with the interview transcripts during the supervision process. Two weeks before submitting  
14 your thesis, you must provide us with the final version of the interview transcripts. Please  
15 note that at HSG, if they are not confidential, interview transcripts must be submitted as an  
16 appendix to the thesis. Please note that we cannot accept any responsibility for your data  
17 and interviews. We are only responsible for checking that they exist and are properly  
18 documented.
- 19 9. If you are conducting qualitative or quantitative research, you must provide us with your data  
20 and programming code (where applicable) during the supervision process. Two weeks  
21 before submitting your thesis, you must provide us with the final versions of your data and  
22 programming code, as well as the names and contact information of your interview partners  
23 and any other primary data. If you cannot meet this deadline, we can arrange an extension  
24 by mutual agreement. The data must be prepared in such a way that a person with no prior  
25 knowledge can replicate it. This should include a clear workflow showing what you did,  
26 sources with page numbers, coded data, etc. We can discuss this if you have any questions.
- 27 10. If you plan to publish your thesis, please inform us before the start of the supervision or at  
28 any time thereafter, and ask us if we agree to participate in your planned activities. Potential  
29 publication requires additional considerations that we need to discuss.

## 30 Evaluation of Your Thesis

31 During the supervision process, you must not ask questions of the following type: 'If I do X, will you  
32 grade me better/worse?' or 'Is a certain aspect fine?' In general, you may not ask us any questions  
33 that require our judgement regarding the grading of your work.

34 **There is no pre-grading ("Pregrading") at the HSG.** This means that we do not check your  
35 data, coding, texts, calculations or methods, we do not arrange additional or longer ad hoc  
36 meetings, and we do not confirm that 'something' or 'everything' is fine.

37 What we can offer instead is the following: we will read the new parts of your draft and share what  
38 we, from our experience, would do or change. These remarks are entirely optional, and you should  
39 implement them only where your own analysis has already convinced you that you would do the  
40 same. In this way, the work, and the judgement of what is adequate, remain yours, while you still  
41 benefit from our perspective.

42 To help you, the University of St. Gallen provides a grading scheme or raster for already submitted  
43 written theses on the Intranet (StudentWeb, see the section 'Initial Communication: Documents and  
44 Further Information'). This may help you understand what to pay attention to when writing your  
45 thesis, so that you do not have to ask us for feedback on how you would be graded on a specific  
46 element of the marking scheme.

1 In this grading scheme, you will see that your language skills will be graded. We therefore advise  
 2 you to write your thesis in English or German, depending on which language you are more  
 3 comfortable with.

4 Please note that Master's students do not give a presentation, whereas Bachelor's students do.  
 5 We emphasise that Bachelor's students should contact us proactively to schedule this presentation  
 6 well in advance, months ahead and not at the last moment shortly before a deadline, rather than  
 7 waiting for us to remind them.

8 Bachelor's degree students should present their thesis during the supervision period or after  
 9 submitting it. The presentation can be graded or not graded. If you would like us to grade the  
 10 presentation, we provide our grading criteria below. Your written Bachelor's thesis will be graded  
 11 according to the grading scheme or raster on the Intranet (see above for details).

12 **Important:** Bachelor's students, please proactively contact us to schedule your presentation,  
 13 depending on the option agreed upon and written in the signed supervision form.

## 14 **Criteria**

### 15 **A. Structure and Content**

- 16 • Meaningful topic and focus. Explained why we should care about this topic.
- 17 • Structure (e.g., introduction, overview, main section, conclusion).
- 18 • Balanced presentation of the most important contents.
- 19 • Transparency of the objective.
- 20 • Common thread of the content (comprehensible, supporting understanding).
- 21 • Time management (duration of the presentation: max. 10 to 15 minutes).

### 22 **B. Discussion**

- 23 • Precise, logical, and qualified answers to questions.

### 24 **C. Linguistic and Technical Aspects of the Presentation**

- 25 • Correct and understandable language (incl. slides). No grammar, punctuation, or spelling  
 26 errors on the slides.
- 27 • Fluent speaking. Free speaking (not just reading the slides).
- 28 • Persuasiveness.
- 29 • Meaningful and balanced use of presentation media.

30 Please note that the presentation meeting is not a feedback meeting and has the sole purpose of  
 31 you presenting your thesis. Optional, ad hoc feedback or questions, especially if something is  
 32 unclear to us, can be provided or asked. The duration of the meeting is 20 minutes.

## 33 **Use of Artificial Intelligence**

34 HSG's rules regarding the mandatory declaration of the use of artificial intelligence in theses are  
 35 constantly evolving. If you are in any doubt, please check the website or contact the relevant  
 36 department at unisg.ch. It is your responsibility to ensure that you follow the most recent rules.

37 Please also be aware that AI tools frequently generate references to sources that do not exist. You  
 38 remain fully responsible for checking that every citation in your thesis is real, accurate, and  
 39 verifiable; fabricated or erroneous references can constitute a serious breach of academic integrity.  
 40 For evidence on the scale of this problem, see Naddaf and Quill (2026), who report that tens of  
 41 thousands of publications from 2025 may contain invalid references generated by AI.

42 **Reference:** Naddaf M, Quill E. Hallucinated citations are polluting the scientific literature. What can  
 43 be done? *Nature*. 2026 Apr;652(8108):26-29. DOI: 10.1038/d41586-026-00969-z. PMID:  
 44 41922707.

## 1 **Submitting Your Thesis**

2 Please follow the rules explained on the Intranet. Do not send us your thesis. The administration  
3 will officially forward your thesis to us.

## 4 **Checklist: Before Submitting Your Thesis**

5 You can optionally go through the following checklist on your own, without involving us. Please note  
6 that you are not permitted to interview us or ask for our opinion based on the checklist.

### 7 **A. Structure and Logic**

- 8 • Does the thesis as a whole address the research question?
- 9 • Are the individual sections of the thesis organised and structured in a meaningful way?
- 10 • Is the structure of the thesis as a whole logical and meaningful?
- 11 • Are the chapters clearly delineated and distinguishable from one another in terms of content?
- 12 • Do the chapter titles accurately reflect the content of the subsequent text?
- 13 • Does the structure of the chapters make sense?
- 14 • Does each section or paragraph contain a core statement?
- 15 • Does each section or paragraph have a clear train of thought? Are the sentences logically  
16 organised?
- 17 • Are the transitions between sections, subsections, and chapters smooth and logical?
- 18 • Is the length of each section and paragraph appropriate?
- 19 • Is the number of sub-chapters appropriate?
- 20 • Have you checked that you use the same terms consistently throughout the text? It is  
21 advisable to avoid using different synonyms for the same key concepts within the text.
- 22 • Does your introduction have a triangular structure, explaining the broader context and the  
23 research gap you are addressing, and outlining your research questions and the structure of  
24 your thesis, with key references from the related literature?
- 25 • Does your abstract follow the conventional steps provided in the 'Self-Help Optional Student  
26 Help Desk'?
- 27 • Have you ensured that the theoretical section is no longer than half of your thesis and is  
28 directly relevant to your research topic, focus, and research (working) questions?

### 29 **B. Formal Aspects**

- 30 • Is the thesis complete, including the cover page, table of contents, and bibliography?
- 31 • Is the table of contents up to date?
- 32 • Do the citations adhere to the HSG guidelines for accurate referencing?
- 33 • Is the bibliography complete and accurate?
- 34 • Are the figures and tables correctly labelled?
- 35 • Are the lists of figures and tables correct and complete?
- 36 • Is the list of abbreviations necessary and complete?
- 37 • Are external ideas appropriately indicated (i.e., cited and sourced)?
- 38 • Have you used direct and indirect quotations and paraphrases?
- 39 • Is the relationship between your text and the quotations correct?
- 40 • Are longer direct quotations explained? Does the transition between text and quotation flow  
41 logically?
- 42 • Have you checked that you have included all the aids you have used in the annexe for aids  
43 used (Hilfsmittelverzeichnis)?

- 1 • Did you send us your data, software code, and the names and contact details of your
- 2 interview partners before submitting? Have you received our confirmation that they are
- 3 acceptable?
- 4 • Did you use the HSG thesis template?
- 5 • Did you use the recommended layout, line spacing, and font size?
- 6 • Have you declared the use of artificial intelligence in accordance with the most recent HSG
- 7 rules?
- 8 • Have you properly disclosed in your thesis declaration any help received from third parties
- 9 (proofreading, counselling, feedback, etc.)?

### 10 C. Language and Writing Style

- 11 • Is the wording clear and easy to understand?
- 12 • Are the main headings and subheadings meaningful and unambiguous?
- 13 • Is the syntax of the main and subheadings consistent?
- 14 • Has the grammar been checked, paying particular attention to case, complete sentences,
- 15 and plural/singular verb agreement?
- 16 • Has the spelling been checked and is it correct?
- 17 • Is the sentence structure and choice of words varied?
- 18 • Is the language used appropriate for the topic and target audience?
- 19 • Is the terminology factual and rational? Is the text free of judgemental terms and metaphors?
- 20 • Have superfluous and meaningless filler words been removed?
- 21 • Have unnecessary passive sentences been avoided?
- 22 • Have important terms that may be unfamiliar to the educated reader been explained?
- 23 • Have long sentences been checked and eliminated? Ideally, sentences should be around
- 24 25 words long.
- 25 • Do your paragraphs have a meaningful length of 200 to 350 words?
- 26 • Have you contacted the Writing Lab
- 27 (<https://www.unisg.ch/en/studium/studentguide/beratungsangebote/writing-lab/>) for quick
- 28 queries? They offer consultation appointments via Zoom.

29 **Please note** that on our webpage, under the Supervision section  
30 (<https://aca.unisg.ch/de/themen/andreas-blumer/bachelor-/masterarbeiten/>), we have uploaded  
31 a PDF document entitled '**Self-Help Optional Student Help Desk.**' This resource addresses  
32 many common questions and practical aspects related to your thesis. We kindly ask that you  
33 consult it before reaching out with questions, as you may find that your query has already been  
34 answered there.