

MEDICAL UNIVERSITY  
OF VIENNA

# Guidelines

for writing theses at  
MedUni Vienna

(applicable to master's, undergraduate and doctoral theses for full-time degree programmes and continuing education programmes)



# 1 Introduction

These guidelines for the production of degree/doctoral theses<sup>1</sup> at MedUni Vienna are intended to provide guidance and support, as well as a general overview of the MedUni Vienna regulations applicable at the time of writing (June 2022).<sup>2</sup> The regulations for the various degree programmes and continuing education courses can be found in the latest versions of respective curriculums posted on the MedUni Vienna website.

Last updated: September 2022

Written by: Plagiarism Working Group  
[Vice Rector for Education, Representatives of the Curriculum Directors, Evaluation and Quality Management Unit, University Library, Studies and Examinations Department and Legal Department]

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<sup>1</sup> At MedUni Vienna, “degree/doctoral theses” refers to undergraduate theses, master’s theses and doctoral theses.

<sup>2</sup> Further information can be found in the Austrian Universitätsgesetz (Universities Act) 2002, Federal Law Gazette I No. 120/2002, and in the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna, no. 22, vol. 9 Mitteilungsblatt, 2003/04 academic year, as amended.



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## 2 General

### Dear students,

it is important to remember that your undergraduate or master's thesis is not just part of your degree programme; more importantly, it is your personal academic calling card. Following approval, your thesis will be uploaded to the Medical University of Vienna repository and will be freely accessible online. This may be your first such publication and it can be cited by people around the world at any time.

This means it is important to pay close attention to quality in terms of the content and format.

### When preparing a degree/doctoral thesis, you must comply with the following regulations:

- » Good Scientific Practice – Ethics in Science and Research guidelines: available at [www.meduniwien.ac.at/gsp](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/gsp)
- » The feasibility of writing an undergraduate, master's or doctoral thesis in a particular organisational unit must be confirmed by the head of the unit in question before work on the thesis begins. In this regard, the requirements of sections 81(3)(2) and 83(2) Universities Act regarding the use of financial resources and equipment must be taken into account.
- » The topic of the degree/doctoral thesis must be related to one of the disciplines represented at the Medical University of Vienna or included on the curriculum (see section 59[1][5] Universities Act and sections 17a[4] and 17b[4] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).
- » Students are permitted to work jointly on the selected topic, but it must be possible to separately assess the performance of each student (sections 81[3] and 83[2] Universities Act).
- » The student must notify the curriculum director of the topic and the name of the degree/doctoral thesis supervisor in writing by submitting a detailed description of the planned research before starting work on the thesis (see sections 17a[7] and 17b[7] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).
- » Once completed, the degree/doctoral thesis must be submitted to the curriculum director for assessment (sections 17a[11] and 17b[12] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).

<sup>3</sup> The requirements for supervisors are specified in sections 17a and 17b of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna. Please note the differences between undergraduate, master's and doctoral theses in this regard.

**The following regulations apply to supervisors:**

- » Teaching guidelines regarding data protection and copyright
- » The degree/doctoral thesis must be supervised by a member of MedUni Vienna or a recognised post-secondary institution in Austria or abroad; detailed information on the individuals who may act as supervisors is provided in the MedUni Vienna statutes.<sup>3</sup>
- » **Undergraduate and master's theses:**  
pursuant to section 81(2) Universities Act, the scope must be defined in such a way that completion of the thesis is possible and reasonable within six months.
- » The supervisor must provide the student with specialist support and advice, and be available for discussions while the student is writing the degree/doctoral thesis, to the extent agreed in the project study/thesis proposal.
- » The degree/doctoral thesis must be assessed within the period specified by law.
- » The supervisor must review and assess the undergraduate/master's thesis within six weeks of the date of submission. If the undergraduate/master's thesis is not reviewed and assessed within this period, at the student's request the curriculum director must assign another member of the university to carry out the review and assessment in accordance with section 17a(2) or (3) of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna (see section 17a[11] of Part II of the statutes).  
The reviewer assigned by the curriculum director must review and assess the doctoral thesis within four months of submission (see section 17b[12] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).

- » If deficiencies that significantly impede assessment are identified in the course of the plagiarism review and/or during assessment of the undergraduate, master's or doctoral thesis, the student must be given the opportunity to rectify these deficiencies and re-submit the revised thesis or dissertation (see section 17a[11a] and [11b], and section 17[13] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).
- » The supervisor may not be assigned as the reviewer (see section 17b[12] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).
- » If the student is participating in a project, the supervisor must contact the Legal Department at MedUni Vienna regarding the Agreement on Participation in Projects by Students.

**2.1 Data protection and ethical considerations**

Please note that once completed, your degree/doctoral thesis will be published online in the MedUni Vienna University Library repository (or after a maximum of five years if the publication is blocked pursuant to section 86[4] Universities Act). Therefore, please avoid providing personal data such as your CV<sup>4</sup>, address, signature, telephone number, matriculation number, etc. wherever possible. Students must also avoid publishing information that could endanger the well-being of other people (e.g. use of interviews or other personal data).

Please also note that if you would like to address questions focused on individuals or patients, or topics that form part of MedUni Vienna's teaching and learning research, you must consult and obtain the approval of the university's Data Protection Committee, the Ethics Committee and/or the Clearing Board for Teaching.

<sup>4</sup> An academic CV may be provided voluntarily.





## 2.2 Characteristics of contents of academic papers

In general, there are three types of degree/doctoral thesis. This depends on the topic addressed, which can be examined from a quantitative or qualitative viewpoint:

- » Exclusively theoretical papers: e.g.
  - Literature research with summary and conclusion
  - Literature review or systematic review
  - Historical study
  
- » Empirical papers using qualitative methodology (extrapolating results from individual cases to the general public)
  - Case study/case report: academic presentation of particular cases from clinical practice that are suitable for publication
  - Studies using qualitative data collection tools, e.g. expert interviews, observation of patients, etc.
  
- » Empirical papers using quantitative methodology (applying findings for the general public to individual cases)
  - Study including an analytical or experiment-based section, taking into account e.g. aspects of laboratory medicine
  - Retrospective study based on evaluation of patient data or sample material using appropriate statistical analysis
  - Involvement in a clinical trial, provided that an aspect of the topic can be meaningfully addressed in an independent degree/doctoral thesis

## 2.3 Supplementary information on literature reviews (systematic reviews) as part of undergraduate or master's theses

In principle, the content of a degree/doctoral thesis can take the form of a systematic review of clinical studies. However, clear fulfilment of the following compulsory quality criteria must be demonstrated and described in detail in the methodology section of the paper:

1. The degree/doctoral thesis must be based on a clearly formulated hypothesis that can either be proven or disproven by means of literature research.
2. The degree/doctoral thesis must contribute to extending the level of knowledge in the respective research field.
3. The quality of the papers reviewed in the literature research, and the systematic strategy used when searching for literature in databases must be defined in detail.
4. The following types of study can be used to test hypotheses related to questions on
  - medical interventions: randomised control trials only
  - medical diagnostics: only studies including an objectively defined, diagnostic "gold standard" using blind data analysis
  - the aetiology of diseases: only comparative, controlled trials using blind data analysis

## 2.4 Phases of writing an academic paper

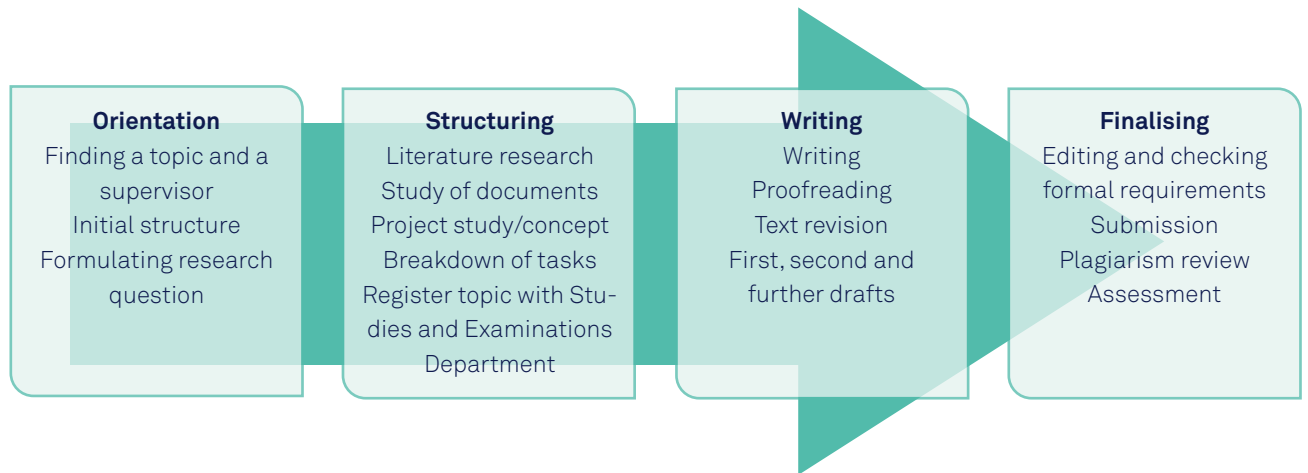


Figure 1: Completing a degree/doctoral thesis

**After the writing phase, it is important to complete the following tasks as quickly as possible:**

- » Upload the degree/doctoral thesis to MedCampus in PDF/a format for the plagiarism review (see information on creating a PDF/a document)

## 2.5 Copyright, obligation to publish and blocking request

Section 86(1) Universities Act states that a graduate must publish an academic thesis that has received a positive assessment before they can be awarded their degree. At MedUni Vienna, students fulfil this obligation by uploading the final electronic version of their thesis to the repository at the University Library.

Publication of a student's thesis is required before award of their degree. When submitting an academic paper in this way, the author is entitled to request that access to the uploaded paper is withheld for a maximum of five years from the date of submission. Under section 86(4) Universities Act, the request must be approved if the student demonstrates that publication would jeopardise material legal or economic interests. This means that not every possible hindrance to the student's interests is sufficient to allow the request; it must be a material impairment of their interests.

The provisions of the Austrian Urheberrechtsgesetz (Copyright Act), Federal Law Gazette No. 111/1936, as amended must be considered in the course of working on the topic and supervising the student.

**Note: under the Austrian Copyright Act, publication of a full-text version of an academic paper satisfies the requirements for (initial) publication.**

### **Important: blocking request**

- » Blocking requests must be entered in MedCampus
- » In the MedUni Vienna repository, click on the "Yes" option
- » The blocking request cannot be changed once the publication has been submitted!

## 2.6 Publication in the repository

After assessment, the degree/doctoral thesis will be published in electronic form in the institutional repository maintained by the MedUni Vienna Library.

Metadata are collected for the purpose of entering bibliographical references in library catalogues and repositories.

Metadata is descriptive information that is required to allow your degree/doctoral thesis to be found online. These data are searchable and visible, even if the electronic version of the relevant publication is blocked and is not displayed.

### **The library catalogue contains the following metadata:**

- » Author
- » Title of paper
- » Number of pages
- » Submission date
- » MedUni Vienna organisational unit where the paper was written
- » Supervisor
- » Keywords
- » Duration of requested block on publication
- » Once the block on the paper has expired, abstracts and the full-text version of the degree/doctoral thesis can also be downloaded.

In addition, versions of doctoral theses that receive a positive grade (taking into account the blocking notice) are also transmitted in electronic form to the Austrian National Library (see section 86[2] Universities Act).

## NOTE: Cumulative degree/doctoral thesis

### Cumulative doctoral thesis

This type of doctoral thesis consists of several articles on related topics/with related content. Before republishing your articles (for example, in a doctoral thesis), it is important to ensure that publication rights are held by the author and have not been transferred exclusively to the publisher.

Prior to publication of the doctoral thesis (through an institutional repository) it is important to inform the respective publishers whether and in what form you would like to republish your own articles. Many publishers demand an embargo, or only permit the additional publication of particular versions (e.g. preprint) of your articles.<sup>5</sup>

The most straightforward and beneficial approach is to publish the articles in open-access form under a Creative Commons (CC) licence (see [creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)).

**In this case, it is important to cite the individual articles correctly and provide the following information: authors (co-authors), title, name of journal, DOI (if available) and version details. (DOI: digital object identifier; [www.doi.org](http://www.doi.org))**

It can only be assumed that a paper was written independently if the student is listed as the lead or senior author, or as an equally contributing author (in the case of interdisciplinary papers), in a top or standard peer-reviewed journal. The paper must be an original research paper that has been accepted for publication or has already been published.

### Cumulative undergraduate or master's thesis

Decisions on the possibility of writing a cumulative undergraduate or master's thesis are taken on a case-by-case basis. Academic papers written as part of continuing education courses must comply with the regulations set out in the respective curriculum.

**In order to reduce the workload for students, MedUni Vienna permits doctoral students to include their own publications in the results section of their dissertation in the form of reprinted PDF versions of their journal articles, subject to approval by the publishers. If such reprints are not available, the student may include PDF versions of their accepted papers bearing a watermark. As the standard of writing in the doctoral thesis is an important criterion for the award of a doctorate, the introduction and the discussion section must be completely rewritten. Although a previously published article containing an overview of the topic may be included in the introduction, at least ten pages of the introduction must be newly written. In contrast to section 3 "Structure of degree/doctoral theses", the following structure must be used:**

### Contents

#### Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. General introduction	1–29
1.9 Objectives (three to six separate objectives)	30

#### Chapter 2: RESULTS

2.1 Prologue	31
2.1 PDF version of first thesis	32–40
2.1.1 Interlude	41
2.2 PDF version of second paper	42–50
2.2.1 Interlude	51
2.3 PDF version of third paper	52–60

#### Chapter 3: DISCUSSION

3.1 General discussion	60–79
3.9 Conclusions and outlook	80

#### Chapter 4: MATERIALS and METHODS

4.1 Materials	81–82
4.2 Methods	83–100

REFERENCES	101 ff
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Table 1: Cumulative doctoral thesis – structure

## End of Note

<sup>5</sup> For further information see also: [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)

## 2.7 Predatory publishers and journals

Publishing your academic paper through a publisher sounds tempting, especially if you are contacted by a publisher without approaching them first, and encouraged to publish your paper. However, please be careful – such predatory publishers often employ questionable business practices and ignore the standards that respectable publishers adhere to.

### **We encourage you to find out more before you make a decision.**

Often, a quick internet search is enough to uncover details of dubious business models. Remember that all rights of use of the publication will be transferred to the publisher once you give your permission for the paper to be published. Usually, it is not possible to withdraw your approval. If in doubt, please consult your supervisor.

MedUni Vienna attaches great importance to the academic achievements of its researchers. The quality and visibility of publications and conference papers plays a central role in this respect. Against the backdrop of electronic media and open access – a welcome development, generally speaking – a number of dubious journals and conferences have become established, with recent media reports rightly denouncing predatory publishing, fake journals and fake conferences.

The business models of many such publishers and journals involve demanding money from authors for publishing services that are not performed. Quality checks such as peer reviews are not carried out, and the reliable, long-term availability of the articles is not guaranteed. In some cases, renowned academics have been listed as publishers without their consent.

The aim of such offers is not to publish high-quality research findings, but to publish as many articles as possible at the lowest possible expense, in order to maximise profit.

Distinguishing between trusted and dubious journals can sometimes be difficult. Often, journals are given titles that can be easily confused with those of established counterparts. Other forms of deceit relate to details of the impact factor, even though the journal is not included in the latest JCR database, or to the use of opaque or questionable metrics (such as the general impact factor).

Useful tips on identifying predatory journals can be found on the MedUni Vienna University Library website at: [ub.meduniwien.ac.at/services/open-access-publizieren/predatory-publishing](http://ub.meduniwien.ac.at/services/open-access-publizieren/predatory-publishing)

## 2.8 Accessibility

It is useful to create a PDF/UA (c) version of the document in order to enable universal access to academic papers in electronic form. Further information on web accessibility can be found at: [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI).



## 3 Structure of degree/doctoral theses

Please note the following format requirements when writing a degree/doctoral thesis for submission:

- » DIN A4 portrait page format
- » Left margin 3cm, right margin 2.5cm, header and footer both 2.5 cm
- » Only fonts that are not subject to third-party rights may be used. We recommend using Times New Roman (serif font) or Arial (sans serif). If you use a font that does not meet this requirement, it may be replaced when exporting the PDF/a document. In this case, the appearance of the paper will change either completely or partly, and this can lead to problems when printing out the paper. (More information is available at <https://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/studierende/mein-studium/diplomstudium-humanmedizin/diplomarbeit/formulare-richtlinien-links/>)
- » Recommended settings for body text: 1.5-line spacing, 12pt. Larger fonts for headers (14 or 16pt), preferably a sans serif font
- » German or English (abstract and title in both German and English)
- » Citation rules: Vancouver or Harvard style
- » Please remember to use uniform formatting throughout
- » Page numbers
- » Information on the length of the different types of degree/doctoral thesis can be found in the respective curriculum or on the homepage of the respective institute.
  - The number of pages in the main paper includes, e.g. summary (DE and EN), introduction, materials and methods section, results section, discussion, references
  - The number of pages in the main paper does not include the cover page, table of contents, acknowledgements, list of illustrations, list of abbreviations and list of tables, project schedule, appendix, etc.
- » Use of gender-reflective language<sup>6</sup>
- » Formulas must be generated using a formula editor
- » Formulas must be numbered on the right-hand edge of the page, in accordance with chapter number (to simplify corrections), e.g. (1.1), (1.2)
- » Illustrations and tables must be numbered according to the chapter number (to simplify corrections), e.g. 'Figure 1.1: [Description]'; 'Figure 1.2: [Description]')

<sup>6</sup> See also: [www.meduniwien.ac.at/diversity-resources](https://www.meduniwien.ac.at/diversity-resources) (German only)

The following table provides an overview of the different structure elements which must be included in every degree/doctoral thesis.

Element	Mandatory/optional	Page numbering
Title page	Mandatory	None
Affidavit	Mandatory	Roman numerals for page numbering
Acknowledgements	Optional	Roman numerals for page numbering
Foreword	Optional	Roman numerals for page numbering
Summary/abstract	Mandatory	Arabic numerals for page numbering
Table of contents	Mandatory	Arabic numerals for page numbering
Main text	Mandatory	Arabic numerals for page numbering
List of illustrations	As required	Roman numerals for page numbering
List of tables	As required	Roman numerals for page numbering
List of formulas	As required	Roman numerals for page numbering
List of abbreviations and symbols	As required	Roman numerals for page numbering
Bibliography	Mandatory	Arabic numerals for page numbering
Glossary	As required	Roman numerals for page numbering
Appendix	As required	Roman numerals for page numbering

Table 2: Overview of sections and page numbering

The most important elements are described in more detail in the following chapters.

### 3.1 Title page (see sample)

MedUni Vienna's guidelines for the design of the title page are in accordance with the ÖNORM A2262 standard.

**The title page must include the following information:**

- » University logo
- » Type of degree/doctoral thesis (master's, undergraduate or doctoral thesis)
- » Title (optional: subtitle) of degree/doctoral thesis
- » Prospective degree and degree programme or (where applicable) elective
- » Name and address of MedUni Vienna (i.e. the university where the thesis was submitted)
- » Internal or external organisational unit where the thesis was written
- » Name of supervisor and (where applicable) co-supervisor
- » Name of author
- » Submission date, relevant details of place of submission

Please note that for data protection reasons, the matriculation number must not be included on the cover page or in the text.



# Diplomarbeit

## Titel

### zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Doktor:in der gesamten Heilkunde  
(Dr. med. univ.)

an der  
Medizinischen Universität Wien

ausgeführt am:  
Institut/Klinik für ...

unter der Anleitung von:  
Name dem:der Betreuer:in  
Name des:der Co-Betreuer:in (wenn vorhanden)

eingereicht von  
Vorname Zuname

---

Wien, am

### 3.2 Affidavit

The affidavit is a declaration that the student has carried out the work independently, and serves as verification of the student's academic integrity, as reflected in references to other authors and respect for copyright. As the thesis is submitted in electronic form, it is not necessary to sign the hard copy/copies.

The affidavit is signed electronically by means of the abbreviation "eh".

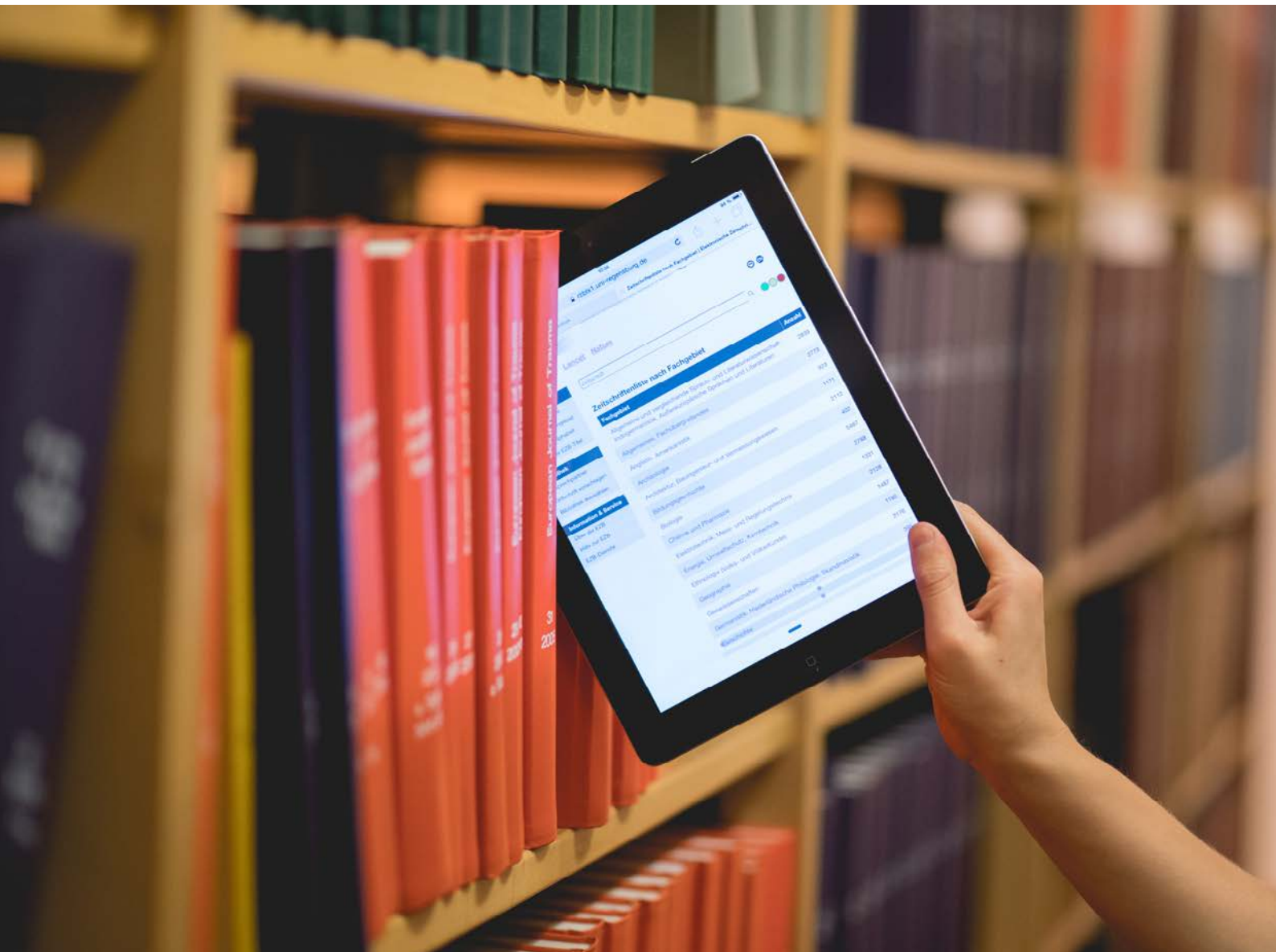
#### Sample affidavit:

I hereby solemnly declare that this thesis was written independently and without the assistance of third parties, that other sources besides those cited were not used and that excerpts from the sources used – both content and verbatim quotations – are indicated as such.

Vienna, (date)

Signature, eh

A declaration containing details of the unit(s) where the thesis was written (institutes, laboratories, etc.) and any parts of the work that were carried out by individuals other than the author (e.g. contributions by employees, technicians and supervisors) should also be included. The requirements for proper identification and recognition of such information can be found in the MedUni Vienna Affiliation Policy.



### 3.3 Acknowledgements (optional)

The acknowledgements should be no longer than one page. They usually refer to the following individuals:

- » The supervisor of the degree/doctoral thesis
- » External individuals who provided support
- » Any institutions outside MedUni Vienna that contributed to the completion of the degree/doctoral thesis
- » Colleagues and fellow students
- » Family and friends  
Please check in advance whether (private) individuals agree to be mentioned by name.

### 3.4 Foreword (optional)

Your reasons for choosing the topic can be explained in the foreword; acknowledgements can also be included.

In doctoral theses, the prologue should help readers to link the introduction with the first inserted, previously published paper, and highlight the student's specific contribution to that work. Similarly, interludes should be used to draw connections between the previously inserted papers and the next, again to help readers, and to underline the part played by the author in the research described.

### 3.5 Summary/abstract in German and English (max. one page in each language)

The summary is often described as the most frequently read section of a degree/doctoral thesis, so it should include the key details of the research and encourage readers to read the entire thesis. With this in mind, the summary/abstract should contain the following information:

- » The topic area (background) and research problem/reasons for carrying out the research
- » Approach, rationale and methodology
- » Results, conclusions, and/or possible practical applications

In order to be displayed in MedCampus, the summary/abstract must be max. one page long in each language.

**Please note that only summaries/abstracts of up to 5,000 characters in length can be saved in MedCampus.**

### 3.6 Table of contents

The table of contents reflects the structure of the degree/doctoral thesis and the breakdown must therefore be identical to that in the thesis. A maximum of three numbered levels must be used (i.e. 1.1.1 followed by 1.1.2, and so on). The position of each chapter in the text must be clear from the page numbering.

Please remember that the table of contents is read almost as frequently as the summary/abstract, so chapter headings and subheadings should be as informative as possible.

### 3.7 List of illustrations/tables/formulas (optional)

All figures in the text must be accompanied by a description, all tables must include a heading and all formulas also require an appropriate description. Lists of illustrations, tables and formulas must be provided in the thesis, including a clear reference to their position in the text (page number, etc.). The descriptions of illustrations and tables in the text must be identical with those in the list.

### 3.8 List of abbreviations and symbols (optional)

The list of abbreviations contains all of the abbreviations used in the degree/doctoral thesis, listed alphabetically. Specialised abbreviations and symbols must also be briefly explained.

### 3.9 Bibliography and list of sources

A uniform, customary and common format should be used for the bibliography. Where possible, please use a literature management program. (See also section 5 Citation.)



### 3.10 Main text

The text should be written using a general format and is divided into sections (introduction, main text, findings). This means that the degree/doctoral thesis consists of several chapters, which in turn may also be grouped into parts.

The following structure is required for doctoral theses: introduction, findings, discussion, materials and methods, (appendix).

#### 3.10.1 Introduction

The introduction provides brief information about the background, research topic, objectives and scope of the degree/doctoral thesis, as well as the materials and methods employed. All in all, this represents a short introduction to the project. The introduction should also clearly explain the reasons for carrying out the research.

#### 3.10.2 Main text

The main section of a degree/doctoral thesis describes in detail the research problem, the methods used to investigate it and the approach applied. The chapters must be logically structured and coherent in themselves. Readers must not be assumed to have any information that has not been covered in one of the preceding chapters.

In the case of practical work, the main text can be split into a theoretical and a practical section.

Embedded illustrations, tables and formulas must be introduced and explained in the text and not simply inserted without explanation.

For studies that require the approval of an ethics committee, the relevant Ethics Committee reference number must also be provided.

### 3.10.3 Findings – interpretation and discussion

The most important findings of the student's surveys/experiments/research are presented after the main text. The findings must be presented separately from the discussion.

When interpreting the findings, reference should always be made to the research questions raised in the introduction; these questions should also be answered.

#### The following points can be addressed in the discussion:

- » Comparisons with (the student's) previous research
- » Conclusions/comparative explanations
- » Critical analysis of content and methods
- » Theoretical and practical implications
- » Outlook and possibly suggestions for further research projects, or description of additional research required
- » Comparison with findings of other studies
- » Description of limitations that had an effect on the study findings

### 3.11 Appendix

The appendix contains all elements that were important for carrying out the research, e.g. questionnaires, project plans, status sheets, programme listings, print layouts, measurement tables, indexes, measurement reports, case report forms, medical history reports, notice of

ethics committee approval (optional), additional detailed findings (tables, diagrams), publications compiled while carrying out research for the degree/doctoral thesis, etc. The pages in the appendix must be numbered using Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.).



## 4 Requirements for structuring the text of degree/doctoral theses

Students must follow the requirements for the structure, subdivision and form of expression when writing their degree/doctoral thesis (see also the information on the form, structure, writing style and wording for degree/doctoral theses).

The structure must follow the requirements for academic papers set out in the Vancouver or Harvard guidelines.

**The style of the degree/doctoral thesis must take the following aspects into account:**

- » The student's own work should be presented in such a way that readers can immediately distinguish between sections taken from the literature and those produced by the student.
- » The selected style must ensure that facts are presented as such, while conjecture and assumptions must be recognisable as such and only appear in the discussion.
- » Facts established using specific techniques should be described in an abstract or general form, i.e. without using sentences written in the first person.
- » The research problem must be formulated in the past tense ("The aim of this thesis was ..."), as the problem should have been solved by the time the degree/doctoral thesis is written.
- » Value judgements about processes, methods and forms of implementation should only be included in the discussion in an abstract form (avoid expressions such as "The xxx process is bad.>").





## 5 Citation

One of the main characteristics of a degree/doctoral thesis is that the sources used are carefully selected and correctly referenced. This is true of direct (word-for-word) quotations, as well as text written by the student that is based on other authors' ideas. Besides the literature used, references must also be included for internet sources, images, etc.

All degree/doctoral theses must include a list of sources or bibliography.

### 5.1 Quotations – general information

When writing your degree/doctoral thesis, please remember that using other people's ideas without clearly referencing them is an infringement of copyright. In addition to the risk of committing plagiarism, which could mean having to change or completely rewrite your degree/doctoral thesis, copyright breaches may also result in legal action under criminal or civil law.

As well as the need to comply with the citation rules agreed with your supervisor, when using other people's ideas you must ensure that they are taken from work that has already been published. Work is considered to have been published if it is available in the form of a journal article or book, or in a publicly accessible repository. Articles and other texts posted on the internet are also deemed to have been published if they have been made available to the public with the copyright holder's consent.

When you find potential sources online, you should ask yourself whether the author intended to make the work available to the general public. If the source is a homework assignment or set of notes that were produced by another student and were uploaded to a platform that is not generally accessible, such as Moodle, the chances are that the answer to this question is "no". If the source is a specialist article posted on a generally accessible platform, the answer is clearly "yes".

### 5.2 Referencing pictures and photographs

If you wish to use illustrations in your degree/doctoral thesis that you did not produce yourself, they must be correctly cited (in the list of illustrations and/or next to the illustration), and the agreement of the publisher must be obtained (evidenced by e.g. the invoice number, licence number and date of approval). If you do not use a diagram or picture in its originally published form, but in an edited form instead, this does not require a citation. In such cases, special consent must be obtained. The consequences of using illustrations created by third parties without an appropriate citation are the same as those outlined above regarding quotations. Infringements of copyright can result in criminal or civil charges being brought.

Support with obtaining permission from other authors is available at [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com).

In the case of use of illustrations or images published under a free or CC licence, the terms of the licence applying to the work in question must be observed.

Please note that in most cases, pictures found on the internet are subject to copyright and cannot simply be copied and used. For such images, either a licence/right of use must be obtained from the copyright holder, or the licence terms applying to the work must be observed.

### 5.3 Appropriate citation: basic rules

Generally speaking, all ideas from third parties that you incorporate into your thesis must be properly referenced.

There are two types of quotation: direct quotation, when passages or sections are taken word-for-word from other texts, and indirect quotation, where only the content of another text is cited. Both forms must be clearly identified as quotations.

#### In any event, quotations must meet the following requirements:

##### 1. Identification

Direct quotations must be clearly identifiable as such, either by using quotation marks or italics. In order to avoid plagiarism, it is particularly important to provide a reference, including the page number in the original source, at the end of the quotation.

##### 2. Referencing

The form and manner in which the reference for the quotation is provided differs from one academic discipline to the next. If you are unsure about the citation rules that apply to your thesis, please consult your supervisor. As a basic rule, the quotation must be referenced as precisely as possible so that it can be easily found in the source work. The title of the work and the name of the copyright holder must be included in any event. If a reference that only includes the title and the name of the copyright holder is not sufficiently clear, additional details should be included, such as the place of publication, the publisher's name, etc.

#### Please also note the following points regarding citation:

- » References for illustrations, graphics, tables and formulas taken from literature must include the exact page number or, if applicable, the illustration/graphic/table/formula number in the original publication.
- » References for direct quotations must include the exact page number in the original publication.
- » If formulations such as "A number of studies have shown that ..." are used, the studies (publications) must also be referenced directly in the part of the text where such formulations appear.
- » If specific figures are stated in the text, they must be clearly supported by a citation.
- » Academic literature (including academic literature published online) must always take precedence over other publications.

## 6 Plagiarism review

Academic papers written and supervised at MedUni Vienna undergo a plagiarism review following submission to the university (i.e. upload to MedCampus), and following assessment they are made publicly accessible via the University Library repository (<https://repositorium.meduniwien.ac.at>).

Please note that theses are made available indefinitely.

### Golden rules for avoiding plagiarism:

1. Make sure you understand the significance of plagiarism, self-plagiarism and deception of reviewers. Present new text and findings.
2. **Do not copy anything, anywhere** in your work.
3. If you have transferred exclusive copyright to a publisher, ask the publisher for permission if you want to use works that have already been published, including your own.
4. You are permitted to use plagiarism-checking software to identify possible instances of plagiarism in your thesis before submitting the final version.

### 6.1 What is plagiarism?

According to section 51(2)(31) Universities Act, “An act of plagiarism is [...] committed when text, content, or ideas are appropriated and presented as one’s own. This encompasses in particular the appropriation and use of text, theories, hypotheses, findings or data by directly quoting, paraphrasing or translating them without appropriate acknowledgement and reference to the source and the original author.”

Plagiarism is the unlawful incorporation of another person’s intellectual property into one’s own work, without acknowledging the other person’s work as such. However, plagiarism takes various forms and is not limited to word-for-word copying. In practice, mixed forms of the types of plagiarism covered below can occur.

### A distinction can be made between the following forms of plagiarism:

#### Full plagiarism

This involves passing off another author’s work as one’s own without their consent.

#### Translation plagiarism

This means translating foreign-language works or parts of foreign-language works and incorporating the translation into one’s own work without acknowledging and referencing the source.

#### Self-plagiarism

This is the use of one’s own existing and/or published texts without acknowledgement or correct referencing.

#### Plagiarism of ideas

This occurs when ideas, opinions or findings are incorporated without appropriately acknowledging their source.

#### Plagiarism of structure

This refers to a particular form of plagiarism of ideas, where the structure of another author’s text is fully or partly appropriated (e.g. table of contents, chapter structure, sequence of presentation).

#### Image or illustration plagiarism

Image or illustration plagiarism occurs when illustrations from a plagiarised text are appropriated, or illustrations produced by another person are explicitly presented as the author’s own work. This includes full or partial plagiarism of photos, graphics, videos, pictures, tables, diagrams, etc., when the true source is not mentioned or not correctly referenced, or the required permission has not been obtained.

#### Copy and paste | shake and paste | find and replace

These terms refer to instances of plagiarism where texts are not independently produced by the author but are assembled from sources that are sometimes acknowledged and sometimes unacknowledged. “Find and replace” plagiarism is a form of invalid paraphrasing, where individual words are replaced by synonyms.

#### “Pawn Sacrifice”

This form of plagiarism comprises word-for-word incorporation of passages of text under the guise of paraphrasing. The footnote refers only to an insignificant part of the original text, large sections are appropriated from the same source without referencing, and quotation marks to denote quotation are missing.

**Code plagiarism**

The use of programming code, algorithms, classes or functions without permission or reference (see Maurer, H. A., Kappe, F., Zaka, B. [2006]. Plagiarism – A Survey. Journal of Universal Computer Science, 12[8]: 1050-1084).

**Citation plagiarism**

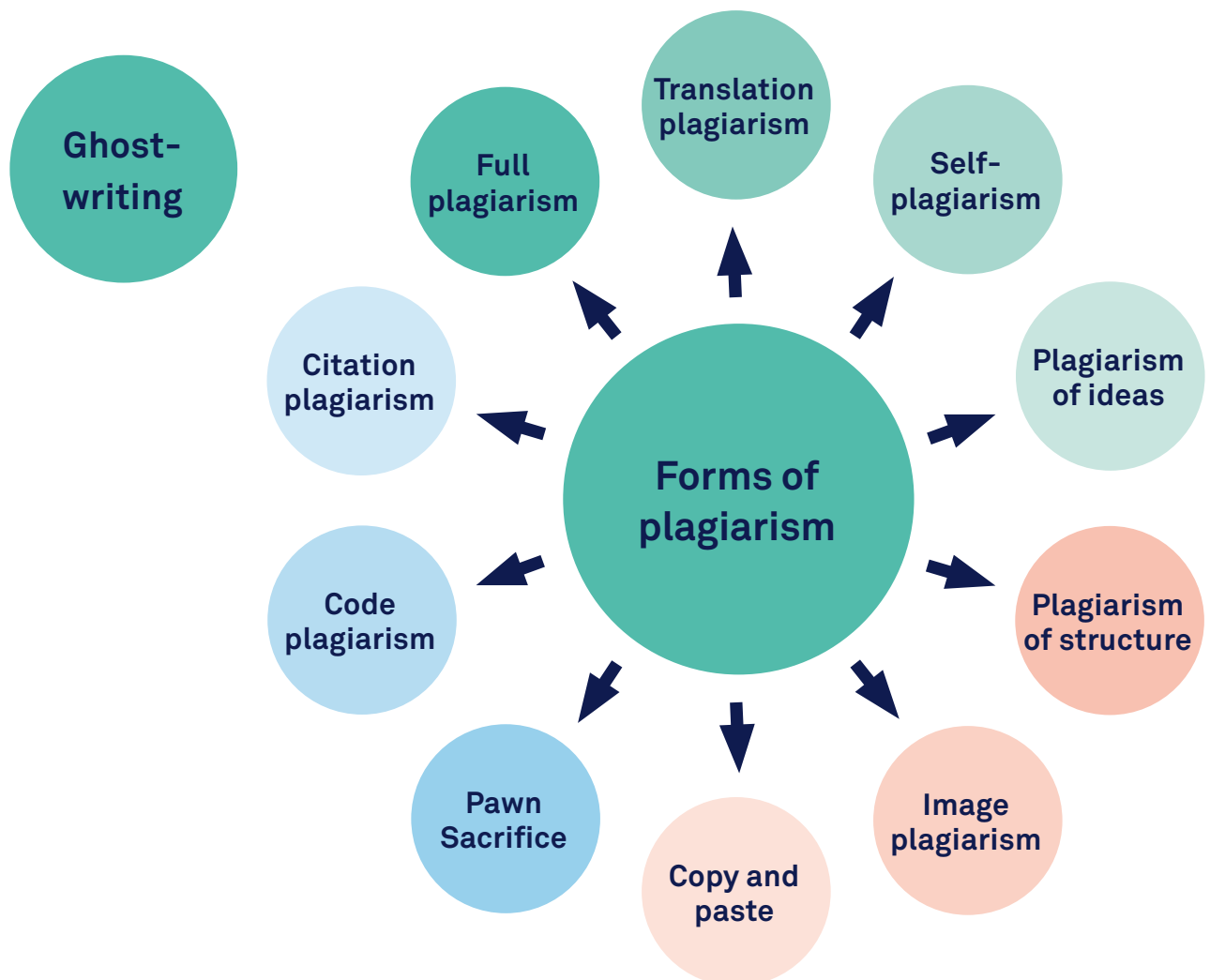
Citation plagiarism occurs when references, including bibliographic information, are taken from other sources without acknowledgement.

**Self-plagiarism**

This is the use of one's own existing and/or published texts without acknowledgement or correct referencing.

**Ghostwriting**

This involves passing off another author's work as one's own with their consent.



## 6.2 Consequences of plagiarism

It is important to remember that plagiarism is not a trivial offence, and in addition to consequences that have become well-known due to reports in the media – such as revocation of an academic degree and nullification of assessments that have already taken place – there may also be legal consequences under criminal and civil law. Plagiarism is intellectual property theft and can be punished accordingly. As a result, the student may be ordered to pay damages to the original author, and certain deliberate acts of copyright infringement may be punished by up to six months in prison or a fine of up to 360 day-fines.

In case of plagiarism, sanctions under university law may also be imposed in accordance with the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna.

If deficiencies that significantly impede assessment are identified in the course of the plagiarism review and/or during the assessment of the undergraduate, master's or doctoral thesis, the student must be given the opportunity to rectify these deficiencies and resubmit the revised thesis (see section 17a[11a] and [11b], and section 17b[13] of Part II of the Statutes of the Medical University of Vienna).

If it is determined in the course of assessment that a degree/doctoral thesis contravenes the rules of good scientific practice, the thesis must be awarded a fail grade (section 15a[2] of Part II of the statutes).

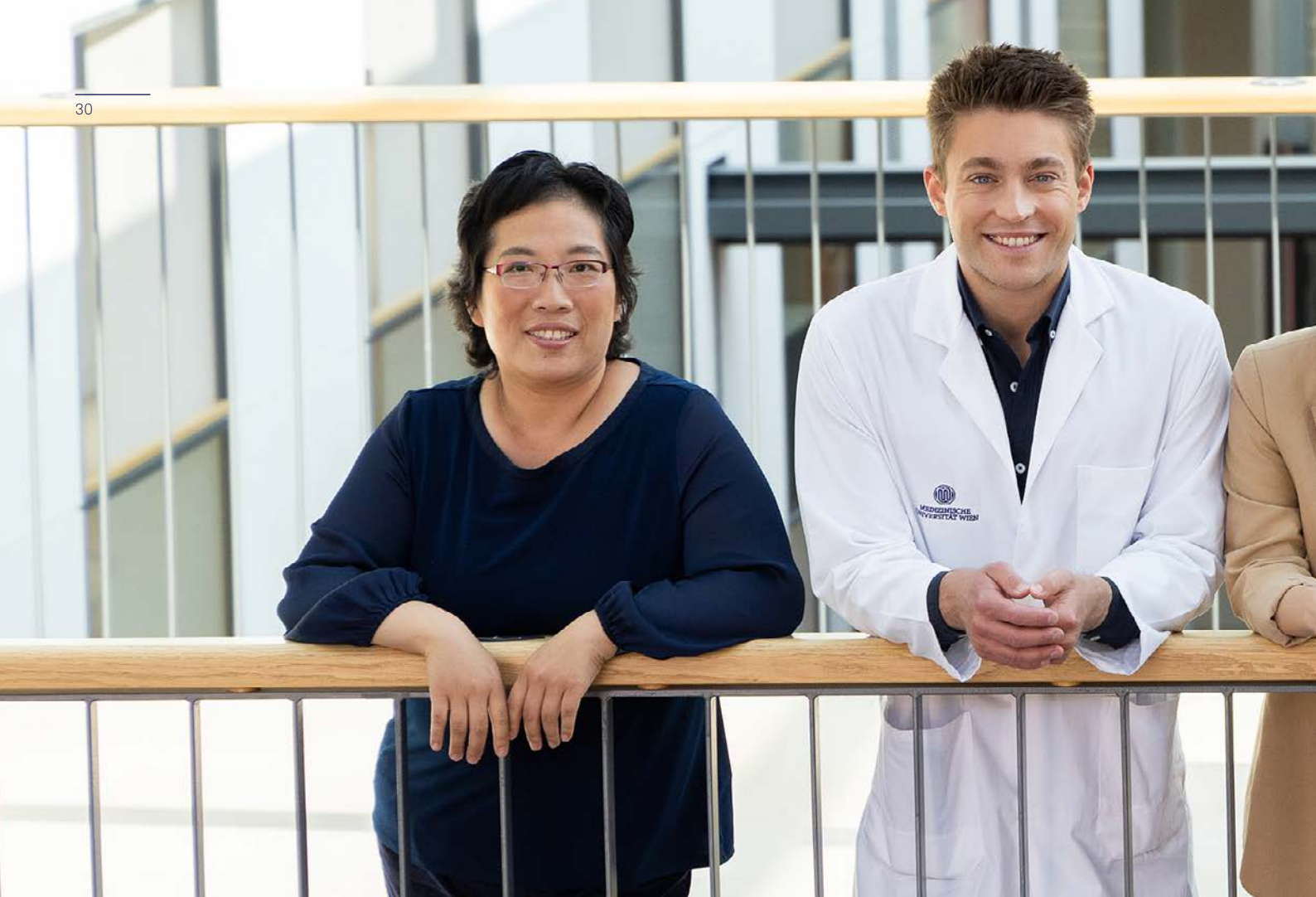
If it is determined after assessment and before graduation that a degree/doctoral thesis contravenes the rules of good scientific practice, in accordance with section 73 Universities Act the assessment must be nullified, by notice of the curriculum director (see section 15a[3] of Part II of the statutes).

If it becomes clear after graduation that the academic degree or title has been obtained under false pretences, in particular by means of the pretence of scientific or artistic achievements, the academic degree or title is to be revoked pursuant to section 89 Universities Act.

## 7 Degree/doctoral theses completed as part of research projects

If a student's thesis will be written as part of a research project, an agreement between the student and MedUni Vienna must be concluded in advance (except in the case of doctoral candidates who have an employment contract

with the university). Supervisors can obtain the contract template (Agreement on Participation in Projects by Students) on request from the Legal Department.



## 8 Other requirements

When writing a degree/doctoral thesis at MedUni Vienna, in addition to the generally applicable legal regulations, care should be taken that the following guidelines and regulations are observed, where relevant:

- » The Austrian Arzneimittelgesetz (Pharmaceuticals Act), Medizinproduktgesetz (Medical Products Act), Gentechnikgesetz (Gene Technology Act), Tierversuchsgesetz (Animal Experimentation Act) and Tierversuchs-Verordnung (Animal Experiments Order), as amended
- » Copyright Act, Federal Law Gazette No. 111/1936, as amended
- » The Declaration of Helsinki:



[www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects](http://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-helsinki-ethical-principles-for-medical-research-involving-human-subjects)

- » Good scientific practice and ethics in science and research: Medical University of Vienna Guidelines on Good Scientific Practice – Ethics in Science and Research:



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/gsp](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/gsp)

- » MedUni Vienna Ethics Committee regulations (German only):



[ethikkommission.meduniwien.ac.at](http://ethikkommission.meduniwien.ac.at)

- » MedUni Vienna Data Protection Committee regulations:



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/en/about-us/organisation/committees/data-protection-committee/](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/en/about-us/organisation/committees/data-protection-committee/)



- » MedUni Vienna Data Clearing House regulations:



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/  
daten-clearingstelle](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/daten-clearingstelle)

- » Where applicable: Regulations of the MedUni Vienna Data Clearing House for Teaching (German only):



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/ueberuns/organisation/organisationseinheiten-mit-spezieller-servicefunktion/teaching-center/clearing-stelle-lehre-der-meduni-wien](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/ueberuns/organisation/organisationseinheiten-mit-spezieller-servicefunktion/teaching-center/clearing-stelle-lehre-der-meduni-wien)

- » Guidelines on the protection and utilisation of intellectual property; Mitteilungsblatt of the Medical University of Vienna, 2020/2021 academic year, Vol. 28, No. 31:



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/fileadmin/content/serviceeinrichtungen/rechtsabteilung/mitteilungsblaetter\\_2021/28\\_Mitteilungsblatt\\_21052021\\_IP\\_Richtlinien.pdf](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/fileadmin/content/serviceeinrichtungen/rechtsabteilung/mitteilungsblaetter_2021/28_Mitteilungsblatt_21052021_IP_Richtlinien.pdf)

- » Vancouver style:



[www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/  
NBK7262](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK7262)

- » Harvard style:



[www.usq.edu.au/library/referencing/  
harvard-agps-referencing-guide](http://www.usq.edu.au/library/referencing/harvard-agps-referencing-guide)



» Cite Them Right



Print or online version:  
[www.citethemrightonline.com](http://www.citethemrightonline.com)

» Topic bank for the Medical Informatics master's programme:



[cemsis.meduniwien.ac.at/  
 master-medinf/studium/  
 themenboerse](http://cemsis.meduniwien.ac.at/master-medinf/studium/themenboerse)

» Topic bank for the Medicine undergraduate programme:



[ssm.meduniwien.ac.at/n202/  
 block24/vleiter.html](http://ssm.meduniwien.ac.at/n202/block24/vleiter.html)

» Website for MedUni Vienna students (German only):



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/  
 studierende](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/studierende)





- » Information on gender-reflective language, and support tools for gender and diversity-related aspects in research (German only):



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/diversity-resources](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/diversity-resources)

- » MedUni Vienna Open Access Policy (German only):



[ub.meduniwien.ac.at/services/open-access-publizieren/](http://ub.meduniwien.ac.at/services/open-access-publizieren/)

- » MedUni Vienna Affiliation Policy:



[www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/fileadmin/content/serviceeinrichtungen/rechtsabteilung/compliance/220801\\_Affiliation\\_Policy\\_2022\\_EN.pdf](http://www.meduniwien.ac.at/web/fileadmin/content/serviceeinrichtungen/rechtsabteilung/compliance/220801_Affiliation_Policy_2022_EN.pdf)

## 9 Degree/doctoral theses – quality checklist

### Before submitting the project plan

- » The student selects a topic and registers their undergraduate/master's thesis with the Studies and Examinations Department
- » Check whether approval must be obtained (e.g. from the Ethics Committee or Committee for Animal Experimentation) – the relevant authorisation number must be stated in the thesis or, alternatively, a note included confirming that approval has been obtained
- » Is the approval of the Data Protection Committee/Data Clearing House for Teaching required?
- » Does an agreement need to be concluded between the student and MedUni Vienna (if the thesis will be written as part of a research project)? In case of doubt, please contact the MedUni Vienna Legal Department (rechtsabteilung@meduniwien.ac.at)

### Before writing

- » Careful choice of literature/knowledge management system
- » Thorough literature research: academic literature (including academic literature published online) must always be given precedence over other publications (for assistance with database research, e-journals and use of the library, please contact the Teaching Library at: schulung-bibliothek@meduniwien.ac.at)
- » Make reference to the degree thesis in publications prior to approval, describe the contribution of the degree thesis and include references to it where applicable

### During the writing process

- » Include complete and correct references in line with the chosen citation style, both in the text and in the bibliography
- » Guides to the various citation styles are available in the University Library

#### Vancouver style:



NLM (Citing Medicine)



AMA (Manual of Style, 11th Edition)



APA (Publication Manual, 7th Edition)



Chicago (Manual of Style, 17th Edition)



IEEE (Reference Guide)

#### Harvard style:



z.B. AGPS



Chicago (Manual of Style, 17th Edition)

### Footnote system:



Chicago  
(Manual of Style, 17th Edition)

#### » Overview

Cite them right



Cite them right in Buchform



Cite them right Online-Version  
Login: "Medizinische  
Universität Wien"

- » Cite and write – make a note of relevant references (including exact page numbers where applicable) while writing
- » Indicate other authors' thinking, ideas and content as such
- » Insert references directly at the relevant point in the text (not just at the end of the paragraph)
- » Attribute specific figures clearly to the relevant source
- » Always specifically reference any studies referred to (exception: secondary quotations)
- » Use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations, with a reference to the exact page number
- » Include page numbers at points in text that are very similar to the original source text
- » References to illustrations, tables, graphics and formulas must include the exact page number (where appropriate, provide the original number of the illustration, table, graphic or formula)
- » Proper numbering of illustrations, tables, graphics and formulas
- » Make reference to changes made to illustrations, tables and graphics (e.g. adapted from, amended from, based on), and obtain a licence for modification of the illustration, etc. from the publisher/rights holder
- » Source reference and the publisher's declaration of consent (evidenced by e.g. the invoice number, licence number, date of approval) must be obtained and included in the thesis, e.g. in the list of illustrations or next to the illustration in question
- » For assistance with obtaining approval, visit [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)
- » Where applicable, mention the research project within which the thesis is being written
- » List publications where the thesis or part of the thesis has previously appeared (e.g. poster presentations, abstracts), reformulate texts taken from such publications, and reference relevant parts of the publications, including exact page numbers
- » Methods section: use your own words as far as possible – do not copy and paste from published works or other degree/doctoral theses)

## Before uploading

- » Make sure the pages are properly numbered
- » Use Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.) for the pages in the appendix
- » Ensure that you have followed formatting requirements
- » Make sure that the structure of the thesis meets the requirements:
  - Table of contents
  - List of illustrations
  - List of tables
  - List of formulas
- » All chapters must be included in the table of contents
- » All illustrations, tables, graphics and formulas must be properly numbered and include a title in accordance with the relevant standards
- » Make reference to adapted illustrations, tables and graphics (modified from, adapted from, etc.)
- » Ensure that permission has been obtained from copyright holders
- » Check the quality of quoted sources
- » Check the bibliography to make sure it contains all of the quoted sources
- » Check the bibliography to ensure that information on all sources is uniform and correct
- » Check URLs and links in the bibliography to ensure that they function properly



# 10 References

This document does not contain any references. In addition to MedUni Vienna's regulations regarding degree/doctoral theses, this manual is based on:

- » Reports by the Electronic Publishing – Friendly FAQ working group
- » The guidelines for writing master's/undergraduate theses for the Medicine and Dentistry undergraduate programmes and the Health and Nursing Science master's programme at the Medical University of Graz
- » Information on plagiarism on the University of Vienna website: <https://studienpraeses.univie.ac.at/infos-zum-studienrecht/wissenschaftliche-arbeiten/plagiat/> (German only)
- » Glossary for Academic Integrity – Erasmus+ project "European Network for Academic Integrity" (ENAI), 31 January 2018 (<https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/>)
- » Weber-Wulff, D. (2014) False Feathers – A Perspective on Academic Plagiarism. Ed 1. Heidelberg: Springer Verlag Berlin.

## 10.1 List of illustrations

Figure 1: Completing a degree/doctoral thesis p. 10  
Figure 2: Cover page template p. 17

## 10.2 List of tables

Table 1:  
Cumulative doctoral thesis – structure p. 12  
Table 2:  
Overview of sections and page numbering p. 16

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