

Materials for project work

# Working aid for the formal design of project reports



Although the assessment of student papers is primarily focused on content, formal requirements are also placed on their structure and design. Those requirements must be fulfilled for a text to meet the criteria of a scientific paper. Not least, the variety of literature on formal design of a scientific paper shows that there is usually not only one, but several ways to meet the respective requirements and expectations, which may vary between different academic communities, traditions, and subjects.

The following paragraphs introduce important formal aspects for written assignments, especially regarding A and F-projects. The recommendations are based on years of experiences at our Department of Spatial Planning. Please note that, in addition to the general recommendations outlined below, potential subject-specific details may have to be coordinated with the responsible supervisor or advisor.

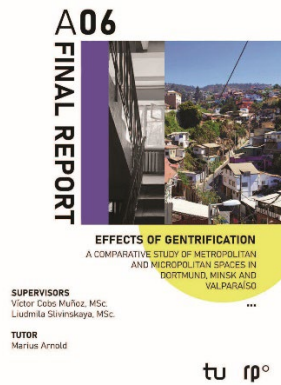
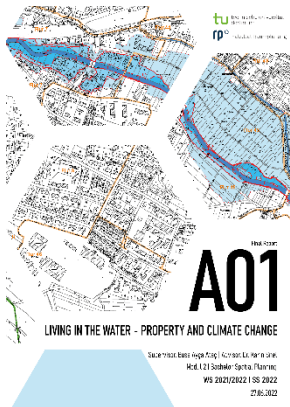
Module 1: “Was ist Raumplanung (abbr. WiR)?” comprises a hands-on lab conveying important principles of academic writing. The WiR lab takes place compactly in the first half of every winter term, so that the first-semester students can already apply these skills in their A-projects. This lab also offers tips on the design of the (“Exposé” in German), including structuring meaningful paragraphs, the use of appropriate language, correct and consistent use of professional terms and jargon, avoidance of abbreviations, the appropriate use and labeling of charts, among other aspects. All students are also advised to follow the faculty citation guidelines (found online) outlining how to cite other works unless anticipated otherwise by supervisors and advisors of a particular project.

### **Title and cover page**

The cover page conveys the first impression and should therefore be designed as informative and appealing as possible. Figures used to illustrate the project topic, for instance, should be thematically related to the report that follows. If the figure is not self-created, the corresponding source should be indicated on the back of the cover page. The title shall correspond to the project title given in LSF; it makes sense to coordinate possible changes in advance with the supervisor and advisor. The title of the final report is the one that will be entered into the BOSS system and will appear in the Bachelor's transcript. It is therefore advisable to carefully think about the title of a report not only for it to be descriptive of the contents but also strategically in terms of communicating the topic to future employers.

The cover page shall contain the following information:

- ✓ Name of university and faculty
- ✓ Title of module and course
- ✓ Title of the report
- ✓ Type of the paper (function), i.e., proposal/ interim report/ final report
- ✓ Project number and academic year
- ✓ Submission deadline (optional; according to the supervisor's preferences)



## Table of contents

The table of contents provides readers a first idea of the argument presented and, at the same time, provides a first insight into structure and content of the report. Each chapter heading, indicated by an ordinal number, indicates on which page of the report the respective part begins. In the text, it must then be possible to find the outline chapters again in an easily recognizable form as identically formatted headings (consistency is key to efficient communication).

Crafting a good headline is not easy. Headlines should be concise and incisive and, at the same time, serve to briefly characterize the associated text. They should also be designed appropriately, i.e., neither too concise nor too detailed. A chapter headline such as "Theory" or "Background" is – without further addition – too general and can at best be presented to the reader as a basic structure of the own paper. Make sure that such general headings are explicated by meaningful sub-sections or in other ways. Furthermore, do not over-structure your work by using too many chapter/section levels (e.g., 1.1.2.2.2). In most cases, a maximum of 3 levels will be sufficient (e.g., 1.1.2). Also, please not that sub-sections should only be introduced if there are at least two of them.

Hint: Most word processor programs (e.g., Microsoft Word) offer format templates and automated macros. The latter will allow you to create the tables of contents automatically and thus reduce the risk of typos, errors, and inconsistencies.

In summary, make sure that your table of contents conforms with the following criteria (see also Figure 2)

- ✓ At least the top three levels of chapter outlines are listed explicitly in the table of contents.
- ✓ Present a list of tables, list of figures, list of abbreviations, , and, if applicable, preface and appendix.
- ✓ Acknowledgements and the title/cover page are never listed in the table of contents.
- ✓ For all items listed, the appropriate page references in the report should be listed in the right margin.
- ✓ Section levels are not concluded by periods (e.g., 1.3 but not 1.3.).

A10 - Reclaiming the City: Moving from Over-tourism to Sustainable Tourism in a Post-COVID World

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F02 - "I here is an app for that": Intelligent urban mobility, its impact and future.

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Figure 2: Exemplary tables of contents of two proposal(A03 2019/2020; A11 2019/2020)

## Figures and tables

Figures are any kind of supporting abstract representations that cannot be presented in tabular form, such as photos, diagrams, maps, and graphs. Figures should also be clearly readable in print format. This may be an issue because screens and printers use different color models – make sure to test your figures by printing them before submission. Graphical representations are useful when they allow to condense a large amount of information into an easier-to-read graphical representation. Complicated issues can thus be explained easier in the text based on supporting illustrations. Note that figures have to be self-standing elements and should be intelligible without having to read the text. Nevertheless, it is necessary to refer to a figure within the text and thus to establish a reference to it (figures would otherwise remain without any meaningful thematic embedding). In contrast, tables are used for presenting quantitative data or to compare information. They thus serve a different purpose than figures. In short: Figures and tables are never decorative and should only be used if they are related to the content of the text and serve a meaningful purpose. Additional figures or extensive tables that are not crucial (yet still somehow informative) for the immediate understanding of the text may be included in the appendix of the report.

The following information is required for figures and tables (see also Figure 3):

- ✓ Tables and figures are numbered separately and consecutively.
- ✓ Each table and figure must be provided with a meaningful heading and a descriptive caption allowing the reader to understand the item.
- ✓ Potential sources are indicated in small font directly below the illustration or (using normal font) as part of the figure caption.
- ✓ If symbols are used in an illustration, they must be explained adequately in a legend (or, again, in the figure caption).
- ✓ Figures and tables must always be listed in the respective index! Only the headings of the tables and figures should appear in those lists.
- ✓ The list of figures and tables appears in the report right after the table of contents.

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Figure 3: Examples of lists of figures and tables (F03: final report 21/22)

### List of abbreviations

Abbreviations should only be used if they are established and in case they would not cause a considerable loss of clarity and readability. All abbreviations should be spelled out in full upon first usage in the text.

Lists of abbreviation contain:

- ✓ All abbreviations used and their full spelling (in alphabetical order).
- ✓ Technical or subject-specific abbreviations.
- ✓ Commonly used abbreviations such as “etc.,” “i.e.” are not listed. Units of measurement and currency symbols (cm, m<sup>2</sup>, ¥, €, \$) or other commonly used characters (©, &, ™, ∑, §) are also no abbreviations. Measurement units may have to be explained though in case they are not standardized SI units.

As with the other lists introduced the list of abbreviations is placed after the table of contents.

### Appendix:

The appendix lists all supplementary materials and additional information, such as statistics, survey results, questionnaires, or interview transcripts that are either too long for being including in the main text or of detailing, informative character. It is required for each appendix to be referenced in the text in order not to leave them isolated and unintegrated (i.e., the appendices should also serve a meaningful purpose).

When the appendix is created, please note:

- ✓ The appendix is not a numbered chapter but appears as an unnumbered chapter after the bibliography.
- ✓ If the appendix is extensive, it is necessary to introduce it with a separate list of appendices after the table of contents.
- ✓ If the appendix is very extensive, the materials contained can alternatively be submitted to supervisors digitally in PDF format or using other media (e.g., USB drive, download link). The desired form should be discussed in the projects with supervisors and advisors.
- ✓ A version without an appendix is often created for forwarding one's own paper, as this primarily serves to document one's paper in detail, but never has to be necessary for understanding the paper itself.
- ✓ The report must include the names and matriculation numbers of all authors. In report copies for distribution to external partners or the SPC, this personal information should be deleted for reasons of data protection.

### Footnotes:

Annotations to the contiguous text are usually provided in the form of footnotes. Each footnote is referred to using a unique superscript number in the text. The numbering of the footnotes should not be reset to 1 in each chapter but should be done chronologically in the order in which they appear (here, also, insertion and numbering are usually automated by word processor programs). Footnotes always appear in the footer of the page on which they were inserted in the text. Some scientific publications work with endnotes, i.e., the notes are collected at the end of a chapter or at the end of the entire work. This presentation is more suitable for shorter forms of communication and thus rather unusual for project reports. Please discuss this option with supervisor in case you would like to use it. References to other chapters or specific pages of the report, as well as to specific figures or tables are always included in round brackets in the text and not inserted as footnotes (please note that footnote referencing is common practice especially in the humanities; you may come across this style in some of your readings).

### Spelling rules:

The following writing rules must be followed for any (scientific) text:

- ✓ A blank space character is placed after all punctuation marks, even when dots are used for numberings and abbreviated names (e.g., "p. 23", "4<sup>th</sup> line" or "H. P. Meier"). Units of measurement are not to be prefixed with a space character (e.g. "23m" instead of "23 m" and "23%" instead of "23 %"), not before or after hyphens (when these are used to concatenate words into compounds), and never before question marks and exclamation points. Brackets and quotation marks are ways to structure the text beyond space characters.
- ✓ Especially in case of dashes, abbreviations, or abbreviations of page numbers (e.g., p. 23, ch. 4.7, etc.), it may be useful to suppress the line break by a protected space (Ctrl+Shift+Blank Key);
- ✓ Sentences end without period if the last character of the text is already a period, e.g., from an abbreviation at the end of a sentence like "etc.".
- ✓ Numbers from one to twelve are generally spelled out. Exception: In texts with frequent numbers, a number notation may be more reader friendly.

### Page numbers:

Please implement the following instructions on page numbering of your work:

- ✓ If present, the preamble (list of tables, list of figures, list of abbreviations, and the table of contents) is page-numbered with small Roman numerals and usually forms the first page. -This is done to make clearer the separation between formal elements and the actual contents presented in the main text.
- ✓ The title/cover page and any pages inserted at the beginning containing the author's contact details, declarations, etc. are never included in the page numbering.
- ✓ "Arabic numerals should be used from the first page of the main text starting with ordinal number 1.
- ✓ The bibliography forms part of the text and is therefore included in the page numbering.
- ✓ The appendix is page-numbered with large Roman numerals, starting with number I.

### General structure and layout:

Student papers may have to be submitted in printed form. It is important to have a uniform layout so that the paper is clearly arranged. Here, both the visual appearance of individual pages and good overall readability of the text must be considered. The layout should support the conveyance of the content of the paper and should thus be kept simple yet efficient. Your work can be designed with an individual note but the extent to which this is still acceptable should be discussed with your supervisors. A paper that is to be submitted digitally should also be printed in advance, as obvious errors in the layout are often more clearly visible and can then still be corrected. When assessing a student paper, the layout is not the main focus, but it adds to the content as it either impedes or facilitates the intelligibility of your work. The time spent on this should therefore always be sufficient but proportionate.

The following aspects should be considered:

- ✓ The page layout should provide sufficient margin on all sides to allow for noting comments and to accommodate for high-quality binding. Thus, about 2.5cm margin should be left on the left-hand side (this will be the inner side of your printed and bound report; pay attention to the type of binding and consult a typography/binding expert if necessary). On the right-hand side (for double-sided printout: the outer side) leave a 3.5cm margin for corrections and annotations.
- ✓ The spacing of the main text to the top and bottom of the page should be at least 2cm.
- ✓ Formatting should be done in justified type with automatic hyphenation. However, incorrect or unsightly hyphenations made by the software should be corrected for manually at proofreading stage.
- ✓ The page numbers are numbered consecutively and right aligned (on the outer sides in case of double-sided layout). This makes it easier for readers to locate specific pages. Page numbers should 1.5cm from the edge of the page and are indicated in the header or footer respectively.
- ✓ In the text, chapter headings should be set off from the rest of the text. Also, headings of a higher-order chapter are to be distinguished from those of subordinate sections. This can be achieved, for example, by using a larger font size and/or boldface.
- ✓ Colors should only be used where necessary and helpful. Also, please bear in mind that color printing incurs higher costs.
- ✓ In addition to the title of the paper, the chapter names, for example, can be inserted here for better clarity. The separation to the text part is usually done by a solid line.

- ✓ When choosing the font, the following things should be considered:
- ✓ No more than two fonts should be used so that the text does not become too "choppy". The main text is always written using one font consistently. In addition, a second font may be chosen, e.g., for headings, page numbers, footers, illustrations/tables, etc.
- ✓ Whether to use a serif font such as "Times New Roman" or a font without serifs such as "Arial" is a matter of taste. It should be noted that they take up different amounts of space at the same size. Proportional fonts are generally recommended for body text. Non-proportional fonts such as "Courier New", in which each character always takes up the same amount of space, should not be used as they are harder to read.
- ✓ The font size depends on the selected font. The usual font size for plain text ranges between 10 and 12 points. It is important that the font should be easily readable without effort also within tables and figures.
- ✓ Line spacing should be between 1.2 and (better) 1.5 lines. It should also be chosen depending on the font used. With serif fonts, a smaller line spacing is often harder to read than with sans-serif fonts.

**Print:**

Project reports are usually printed on both sides. Care should be taken to ensure that paper of a sufficient quality is used so that illustrations do not show through on other pages and disrupt the reading flow. It should also be checked whether grayscale printout works as intended. Figures in particular should be checked and revised in case they do not provide enough contrast to allow for grayscale printing. Care should also always be taken to ensure that illustrations are of sufficient geometric quality. They may appear pixelated otherwise.