

FORMAL AND CONTENT CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH PRACTICE

I. RESEARCH PRACTICE: AIM AND COURSE

Students are obligated to complete four research practices during the six semesters of the BA Programme. The individual courses are assigned to a specific semester.

Course	SEMESTER					
	I.	II.	III.	IV.	V.	VI.
Research practice in general psychology				x		
Research practice in developmental psychology					x	
Research practice in personality psychology					x	
Research practice in social psychology				x		

The aim of the research practice is that students will learn the specific skills required for scientific research. After the semester students must be able to apply their knowledge and work autonomously during empirical research. During the processes of research practice students are going to be able to: 1) read and synthesize the scientific literature keeping a critical edge; 2) plan scientific research with the concern of ethical ramifications; 3) operationalize and execute the scientific research on their own.

There are two types of research practice for the students to choose from:

- **Empirical**
- **Critical synthesis and review of the scientific literature (Essay)**

It is up to the student to decide in which form they want to execute either four research practice – which one they want to do in an empirical form or an essay form. Important: during the four research practice the students **must choose each form at least once**. After choosing the form at least once the form of the remaining research practices can be freely chosen by the student.

The work schedule of the research paper is decided by the supervising lecturer. It is the lecturer’s decision to determine the deadlines for 1) first draft; 2) hypothesis; and 3) the final version. Frequent consultations between the lecturer and the students is an important requirement for the course.

The paper should be written in English!

Structure of theoretical research papers:

- *Title page* includes title of the research paper, designation of the module (e.g., Social psychology research paper); name and NEPTUN code of the author; name and title of the supervisor
- *Abstract*: write the abstract on a separate page after the title page. Abstract should sum up the content of the research paper in no more than 150 words. Provide 3 to 5 keywords after the abstract.
- *Presentation of the topic, hypothesis, presentation of theories, pros and cons with own point of view*: according to the type of paper (see I.2.).
- *Discussion, conclusions*: summarize the ‘take home message’ of your paper.
- *References*: APA style. For the number of required references see section I.2.

Evaluation of the research practice (both empirical and essay), grading the final paper (Appendix 4. & 5.)

All four research practice have the same criteria for evaluation.

The final paper or essay are being evaluated by the supervising lecturer. Evaluation is based on formal and content criteria – the final grade is based upon meeting those criteria.

Evaluation scheme:

- 54-60 excellent / A
- 46-53 good / B
- 38-45 average / C
- 31-37 satisfactory / D
- 0- 30 failed

The formal and written evaluation is being carried out by the supervising lecturer on Evaluation sheet (Appendix 4.-5.).

Beyond the essential formal criteria it is advised for the students (author) to use the following competencies, during the writing of the final paper:

- The author knows, presents and explains the literature of the paper in a scientific manner.
- The author knows the terminology and technical expression of the specific topic and able to use them in the written form.
- The paper is structured, coherent and has a clean logical ark throughout.
- The author understands and applies the corresponding (best fit) statistical analysis for answering the hypothesis of the paper.
- The author is able to interpret statistical results and can draw conclusions based on the results – also can understand whether the results confirm or falsify the hypothesis
- The author also able to reflect and make connections between the results and the points made at the theoretical introduction. (for example which points got confirmation; what are the theoretical and methodological ramifications; what are the potential practical applications of the results)
- The author is able to reflect on its work, can look at it from an outsider's point of view (for example: possible insufficiencies; validity and reliability of the data; possible weakness of the data collection etc.)

General guidelines for writing a scientific paper can be found:

http://sydney.edu.au/library/subjects/downloads/citation/APA%20Complete_2012.pdf

Citations should be given in APA style (6th edition)

You should use citation in the following cases (not an exhaustive list):

- you literally cite a part of a written or oral publication (irrespective of length; you have to give page numbers as well)
- you summarize a part of a written or oral publication in your own words
- you present the theory or opinion of another person
- you use the theory or opinion of another person to build or support your own line of reasoning
- you use facts, statistical data, tables, figures of another person (you have to give page numbers as well)

II. The author should not plagiarize!

- In the case of plagiarism the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1). In certain cases plagiarism can lead to suspension. In the case of plagiarism students only have the opportunity to write a new paper in the next semester. A statement of plagiarism should be

attached to each research paper! You can download this statement from the website of Institute of Psychology.

- *What is plagiarism?*
- 'Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional.' (source: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>)
- *What is not plagiarism?*
- In certain cases you might find the words of others as more appropriate to utter your ideas. That is perfectly OK. In the case of literal citations – in line with APA style – you have to give not only the author and date of citation, but also the page(s) you cite from (e.g., Watson, 1920, pp. 9-10). One single literal citation should not exceed four sentences. Literal citations over this limit are considered as plagiarism even if it is correctly cited (with page numbers).

I.1. FORMAL AND CONTENT CRITERIA OF AN EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PAPER

During an empirical research that will be carried out under the guidance of a supervisor, students can choose from the following possibilities:

1. ***Taking part in an ongoing empirical research.*** Students can obtain information from the current ongoing research topics of the departments from the institutional website, the notice boards, or directly from the potential supervisor. During the course, the supervisor makes the students familiar with the aim of the study and with the measurement methods. Having consulted with the supervisor, the students carry out a certain part of the research (i. e., focusing on one or more variables) independently, based on the previously prepared research scheme (Appendix 1) which has been discussed with the supervisor. The independent work involves the elaboration of the theoretical background of the phenomenon being studied, the digitalization of the data, carrying out the appropriate statistical processing, and the presentation of the results in a paper of 15-20 pages, corresponding to formal and content criteria of scientific and professional publications (see section Length and format of the research paper).

Participation in a study should not be limited to data processing!

2. ***Elaboration of an own research idea under the guidance of a supervisor.*** The requirements that the students should keep to are identical to that in the previous point, with the only difference that in this case the students work out their own ideas. The students prepare a research scheme (Appendix 1) to underpin their research ideas, which they fulfil after having consulted with their supervisors (or having obtained their approval), while they keep themselves to the normative and ethical guidelines of scientific research.

I.1.2. Length and format of the research paper

The main text of the paper should be between 10 and 20 pages (excluding title page, references, appendices). Format: font type Times New Roman, size 12, line spacing 1.5, margins 2.5 cm.

I.1.3. Structure of an empirical research paper

- *Title page:*
 - Title of the research paper (size 16, upper case letters)
 - Name of the author (size 14)
 - Name of the institute
 - Title of the course
 - Name of the supervisor

- Date (year, semester)
- *Abstract*: on a separate page after the title page a summary of the paper in 10-15 sentences that includes the most important features of the paper (research question, main points of the reasoning, conclusions). Provide 3 to 5 keywords after the abstract.
- *Table of contents*: contains the title as well as the number of the chapters (i.e. I. Introduction; II. Hypotheses; III. Method; IV. Results; V. Discussion; VI. References; VII. Appendix), sections and subsections (e.g. 3.1. Participants; 3.2. Instruments; 3.3. Procedure). It also indicates the page number on which the given chapter/section/subsection starts in the text.
- *Introduction / theoretical background*: in the introduction section, the problem that has been designated as the starting point of the research will be presented, then its theoretical background and the aim and justification of the study will be presented. The train of thought which leads to the hypothesis of the study a „from the broadest to the narrowest“-like approach should be applied.
- *Hypotheses*: clearly and accurately formulated research questions that are inferred coherently from the theoretical introduction.
- *Methods*:
 - *Participants*: presentation of the procedure for sample selection, sample size, and the relevant demographic attributes of the sample.
 - *Measurements*: presentation of measures and equipments used in the study, with accurate references.
 - *Procedure*: presentation of experimental instructions (if any), the experimental manipulation and the exact procedure of the study.
- *Results*: the author should present a coherent summary of the results by presenting the applied statistical methods, aided with tables and/or figures (table and figure captions are compulsory).
- *Conclusions, discussion*: the author should discuss the results of the study within the context of the theories. Limitations of the study or detected errors and difficulties should be addressed.
- *References*: according to the APA-style, references of the paper should be listed alphabetically.
- *Appendix*: data from crucial statistical analyses should be attached (e.g., spss output file data).

In empirical research papers at least 8 references should be cited.

I.1.4. Additional complementary criteria for empirical research

In the case of plagiarism, the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1). A statement of plagiarism should be attached to each research paper after the title page. This statement can be downloaded from the website of Institute of Psychology from the “documents” menu.

Participants’ **informed consent** should be obtained for any study where anonymity of the participants is at risk (e.g., experiments, self-report studies where participants can be identified).

During your developmental psychology research paper the rules described below should be followed:

- If the participants are under 3, the necessary information has to be handed to the parents in written form, and only they are entitled to give an agreement on behalf of the child. The statement can be downloaded from the website of Institute of Psychology from the “documents” menu.
- If participants are between 3 and 14, a written consent from a parent is necessary in every case, and the verbal consent of the child has to be obtained as well.
- If participants are older than 14, both the adolescents and the parents give their informed consent. If the study is anonymous, passive consent from the parent is sufficient (the parent is informed in written form, and the parent has to sign, if he/she is against the participation of his/her child).

The statement can be downloaded from the website of Institute of Psychology from the “documents” menu.

I.2. CONTENT AND FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS OF A LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a theoretical research project whose main goal is to enable students

- (1) to read and understand academic literature,
- (2) to synthesize and summarize the scientific works read,
- (3) to highlight the main points and to organize the possibly diverging content into one coherent unit.

There are several ways of achieving these:

1. Out of the theories / psychological phenomena discussed in classes, the student can choose one for which there are different approaches. The task of the student is to determine the nature of the problem by collecting literature, to present the different viewpoints mentioning their advantages / disadvantages (possible shortcomings) and to take a firm stand on the phenomenon - which should be justified in the paper.
2. The course instructor selects a theoretical problem / psychological phenomenon, to which at least two relevant sources are made available to the student. It is the student's task to collect relevant supplementary literature, and to explore the problem based on the literature read and to take a firm stand on the phenomenon - which should be justified in the paper.
3. Presentation of an applied area of a psychological theory (e.g. prejudice in the workplace, cognitive skills at school). In addition to linking the chosen theories / approaches to the applied field, the paper also expresses critical comments in which the author states their scientific point of view on the subject. The latter does not mean the author's own opinion in an everyday sense, but rather the author's scientific commitment to or against the different approaches which position is explicitly expressed in the paper.
4. Comprehensive theoretical analysis: the exploration of the scientific development and research directions of a classical theory / psychological phenomenon from the beginning to present days. (E.g. the changes in the scientific development of attribution theory over the years. What research is being done on this, and how have these classical attribution theories been shaped [Kelley, Jones and Davis, Heider]. Only in this case the minimum requirement is 20 references.

In case of a theoretical paper it is also necessary to prepare a literature review plan (Appendix 2), which has to be approved by the course instructor.

Further requirements of a theoretical paper:

- After the processing of relevant literature, the student develops their own position, which is clearly presented in the paper as a “hypothesis”.

- The paper cannot be evaluated if it presents the different approaches only in a descriptive way. It is the condition of evaluation that the student's position / opinion on the given phenomenon is explicit and supported by appropriate scientific arguments based on the literature.

I.2.2. The length and formatting of a literature review

The expected length of the paper: minimum 10 pages, maximum 20 (without the title page, references and appendices).

Format: Times New Roman, size 12 fonts, 1.5 spacing and 2.5 margins

I.2.3. The structure of a literature review

- *Title page:*
 - Title of the paper (capital letters, font size 16)
 - Author's name (font size 14)
 - The name of the Institute
 - Course name
 - Instructor's name
 - Date (year, semester)
- *Abstract:* on the first page after the title page there is the summary of the paper in 10-15 sentences, which contains the most important features of the work (objectives, main points of argument, conclusion). 3-5 *keywords* after the abstract are necessary.
- *Table of contents:* contains the title as well as the number of the chapters (i.e. I. Introduction; II. Hypotheses; III. Discussion; IV. References), sections and subsections. It also indicates the page number on which the given chapter/section/subsection starts in the text.
- *Presentation of the research topic:* the presentation of the research topic begins on page 3, which is a coherent text that the student can divide into any number of logical subtopics. These subtopics should be indicated adequately. (The page numbers of the dissertation also begin here.)
 - In the **introduction**, the student clarifies the conceptual frameworks of the problem, clarifies the significance of the problem and the purpose of the present review. The purpose of the introduction is to give the reader a clear picture of the nature of the problem, its significance and its main theoretical or empirical reasoning.
 - **Hypothesis** (clear description of the problem)
 - In the **discussion** section, the author presents in detail the problem outlined in the introduction based on relevant literature. The main content requirement of the discussion is that the author's logical thinking should be visible in their exploration of the initial problem.
 - **Conclusion:** The author gives an objective answer to the problem raised in the introduction.

In the case of a theoretical work, **the minimum literature requirement is 10 references used** (at least 5 in English). Reading / using original works in English if available is mandatory.

II. APA STYLE CITATION – PLEASE CONSULT APA CITATION.PDF

III. PLAGIARISM

Students have to attach the **NON-PLAGIARISM DECLARATION FORM** to their papers (Appendix 3).

What is plagiarism?

'Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional.'

(source: <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>)

During the evaluation of a research paper supervisors are mostly interested in the knowledge of the students, including their ability to process and synthesize the theories and research data published in the literature as well as to express their own ideas regarding the topic of the research paper. This does not mean that students cannot quote other authors at times, however. In certain cases you might find the words of others as more appropriate to utter your ideas.

In the case of literal citations – in line with APA style, i.e. using quotation marks – you have to give not only the author and date of citation, but **also the page(s)** you cite from (e.g., Watson, 1920, pp. 9-10). One single literal citation **should not exceed four sentences**. Literal citations over this limit are considered as plagiarism even if it is correctly cited (with page numbers). Every other instance where you borrow someone else's ideas without either using quotation marks or providing the appropriate references is considered as plagiarism.

In the case of plagiarism the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1). In certain cases plagiarism can even lead to suspension. In the case of plagiarism students have the opportunity to write a new paper only in the next semester. Students have to attach a non-plagiarism declaration form to each research paper, respectively! You may [download](#) the non-plagiarism declaration form from the website of the Institute of Psychology.

Only original papers are accepted.

You shall NOT submit a paper that you have submitted before as a (partial) fulfilment of another course. Even if you wish to reuse some parts of one of your earlier papers you must refer to them according to the APA standards. Submitting someone else's work as your own is absolutely prohibited, too.

You have to use references... always!

The sources have to be named if...

- you borrow ideas from a publication word-by-word (i.e. **quotation**)
- you summarize a publication or parts of a publication with your own words (i.e. **paraphrasing**)
- you **describe** or **review** a theory/model/idea
- you borrow or recreate already published **statistical data** (e.g. charts, diagrams, etc.)
- **you reuse one of your own earlier work**

You are encouraged to **use primary sources** as far as possible. However, you should only refer to sources that you have **actually** read. If the primary source is unavailable, you may refer to the secondary source, too. In such cases you are required to **list both sources in the text**. In your **references section** you should only include the source that you have read, however!

General format:

In-Text Citation (Paraphrase):

(Author Surname, Year qtd. as cited in Author Surname [of the source you read], Year)

In-Text Citation (Quotation):

(Author Surname, Year qtd. as cited in Author Surname [of the source you read],
Year, page number)

Examples:

In-Text Citation (Paraphrase):

Fong's 2003 study (as cited in Bertram, 2009) found that older students' memory can be as good as that of young people, but this depends on how memory is tested.

References:

Bertram, S.A. (2009). *How we Remember: Testing our capacity to remember*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Hint: do **not** include Fong (2003) in your References; **do** include Bertram (2009).

In-Text Citation (Quotation):

According to Parker sexual conflict is defined as "a conflict between the evolutionary interests of individuals of the two sexes" (Parker, 2006 as cited in Buss, 2017, 307).

Reference:

Buss, D. M. (2017). Sexual conflict in human mating. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 26(4), 307-313.

Hint: do **not** include Parker (2006) in your References; **do** include Buss (2017).

II. Language and spelling

The research paper should be written in **English**. Both UK and US English are acceptable if they are used consequently. **If the number of grammatical and/or spelling errors exceed 20 the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1)**. You are highly advised to use some kind of spell checker software before submitting your paper.

III. The paper includes all the essential components

If crucial sections (e.g. title page, references, appendix if necessary) are missing, the paper is automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1).

IV. Deadline of submission

Submission deadlines are according to supervisors' requirements. Papers submitted after the deadline are automatically evaluated as unacceptable (1).

Appendix 1

Title:

Name:

Topic:

1. **Short introduction of the topic (2-3 pages)** including the following aspects:
 - a. Reviewing the literature the study is based on
 - b. Where does the idea of this study come from (inspiration)?
 - c. What variables are to be included in the study (aim)?
 - d. What are the predicted connections among the variables (propositions)?
2. **Hypotheses**
3. **Introducing the sample (Who? From where? How many?)**
4. **Data collection methods**
 - a. What are the instruments you plan to use (e.g. questionnaires; codes and methods of the content analysis; visual or auditory stimuli)?
 - b. Introduction of the experimental manipulation
5. **Introduction of the dependent and independent variables of the study**
 - a. Dependent variable(s):
 - b. Independent variables:
6. **Statistical analysis of the data** (i.e. what specific statistical tests do you intend to analyse your data with and why?)
7. **References** (APA style)

Appendix 2

Title:

Name:

- **The core proposition / question of the paper (hypothesis)**
Introduce the aim and problem of the essay which you intend to analyse later in your paper.
- **The theoretical / empirical background of the problem that justifies the analysis of your core proposition**
 - Sum up the theoretical and empirical bases of the core proposition as well as list pros and cons regarding the main question of the paper
 - Schematically introduce your thread of thoughts
 - Introduce your predicted conclusions
- **References**