

Procedure to start a bachelor or master thesis with us

1. Contact

- Please email your preferred supervisor: Prof. Peter Biedermann, Dr. Tim Burzlaff or Dr. Vienna Kowallik
- At least 3 months before the start of the thesis
- Include your request, the period of research and your research interest, rough/specific ideas about the direction of the work and whether you would like to do field research, laboratory research or a combination of both.
- When choosing your project, consider where your interests lie, where you would like to work in the future and what qualifications you would like to acquire as part of your research (i.e. application-oriented or fundamental research, molecular / microbial / taxonomic methods).
- Attach a short CV and list which courses you have attended with us, if this applies.
- We recommend attending the courses “Entomological Project Work” (for BSc students) or “Insect Communities and Dynamics” and/or “EntoLab” (for MSc students). In these courses you can develop projects yourself, which you can expand on as part of a final thesis.
- We will give you feedback as soon as possible and arrange a personal meeting
- If we have agreed on a topic and take over the supervision, you would first write an exposé, which should help you to deal with the research topic and to plan the practical work in a target-oriented manner. Your supervisor will help you with relevant literature for your topic. Even if this may sound like extra work at first, what you have written will help you with the structuring, give you more (self-)confidence and also make the final writing of the bachelor’s or master’s thesis significantly easier.
- The aim of the work should always be to carry out a project which, under optimal conditions, will lead to a scientific publication.

2. Guidelines for preparing an exposé for bachelor and master theses

Scope of the exposé: 2-4 pages (bachelor theses) or 3-6 pages (master theses)

- **Topic of the work:** Choose a meaningful title
- **Relevance of the topic** (max. half a page): justification for the choice of topic; the "big picture" -> for example current relevance/problems, reference to other studies (can be deepened in the section on the state of research)
- **State of research:** List of the relevant research literature (scientific books and articles in scientific journals, scientific studies; rather brief for bachelor's theses, somewhat more well-founded for master's theses).
- **Research gap, research question** (2-5 sentences): This is the heart of your work. The research gap or the research question results from the sections on topic relevance and research status, here the goal of the work is formulated somewhat more comprehensively with sub-goals and hypotheses, if necessary.
- **Relevance of your research question** (1-3 sentences). How does answering your research question advance the research field, why is it important to study these questions? While the wording of the research gap is important, it is not enough as the sole motivation ("No one has done XY yet" -> well...many things have not been done yet). Therefore, you should use the research gap in combination with the topic relevance to convince WHY something should be studied.
- **Methodological approach:** Which methods are used to answer the research question. Describe exactly how you want to proceed experimentally, consult existing literature as an aid. Explain the experimental design (pay attention to sample size, reasonable controls and also further laboratory and analytical steps (e.g. DNA extraction and Sanger sequencing followed by analysis to identify species...)), self-made graphs often facilitate the presentation.
- **Schedule:** description of the timing; serves to check whether the work can be completed in the planned period (can be shown in writing, in tabular form or as a flow chart, etc.)
- **List of references** (does not count into the total page length): List of the relevant literature used at the time the proposal was prepared.