


Course Outline

Thesis Seminar Finance



NB: this document covers both the “Bachelor’s Thesis and Thesis Seminar Finance for Economics” and the “Bachelor’s Thesis and Thesis Seminar Finance for Business” courses.

Bachelor year: 3

Course: 2023/2024, semester 2

Amount of EC’s: 6

Semester: 2

Period: entire semester



1. Introduction

The thesis seminar offers students general guidance in writing their bachelor thesis for the Finance specialization. This specialization, and therefore the thesis, is part of both the Bachelor in Economics and Business Economics

Students will receive advice how to set up their thesis, and based on a list of possible topics and research questions, they will be matched with a supervisor for the actual writing process.

The thesis supervisor is the ultimate person who will remain responsible for individual supervision as well as the grading of the thesis. This seminar course lays the foundation; as such, it only provides general guidance and information.

2. Recommended and required prior knowledge

When starting the thesis seminar the participants must have acquired at least 120 EC, as well as meet the entry requirements for the Finance specialization. Please refer to the course guide for the appropriate entry requirements. For BA, there may be a requirement regarding 'research credits' as well; *please note that the team for this course does not administer those nor any of the entry requirements – we cannot help you with questions on this topic!* Contact the appropriate program management,

3. Objectives

The aim of the seminar is to help students complete their theses on time, while achieving quality research results. As thesis writing is the last phase of the bachelor program, we expect students to have acquired the required knowledge, skills and attitudes as delineated in "Intended Learning Outcomes Bachelor's Program" upon completing the seminar.

Upon completion of this course students are able to:

- formulate a clear and academic research question and translate this to (testable) hypotheses;
- critically read, evaluate and review relevant academic literature, and use this literature in a way that advances the arguments and choices made in a thesis;
- make a well-informed choice between existing conceptual frameworks or design one's own theoretical framework;
- analyse and interpret empirical data;
- report on the research findings in a clearly structured and well-written manner;
- work in a professional and ethical manner.

4. Course format

The course consists of several stages. (See the more detailed schedule in Section 6 below.)

1. The first part takes place in block 4. It focuses on explaining the procedures and the preliminary actions that need to be taken to get the process started.

- We start with three introductory lectures (for all groups together) where students are informed about the rules and procedures and get acquainted with the topics they can choose. Furthermore, students get information about data sources and tips on how to structure and write a thesis.
 - Simultaneously, the students will receive a list with thesis topics, with each topic containing a research question, several variations on sub-question (called 'slots'), an indication which data should be used and a set of references to the literature that will get them started. Topics outside this list are not allowed. Students will have to indicate their preferences (in order).
 - Based on your preferences, and availability of supervisors, you will be allocated a topic and a slot within that topic. (The slots represent sub-questions of the main research question, for example an application on a particular dataset or investigating the influence of a particular variable on the research question at hand, and cannot be chosen by the student).
NB: our supervisor capacity is quite limited. Even with the use of advanced algorithms to optimize the match, it is unlikely everyone will be allocated the topic of their first or second preference. There is no appeal against the allocation of topics (and therefore supervisors) or slots. Students should not contact supervisors outside the allocation made by the coordinator.
 - After the allocation you're advised to meet with your supervisor with a week (maximum two) to discuss the content in more detail. It's also imperative you agree on the method and frequency of meetings/feedback. It's at the discretion of the supervisor whether meetings are in person or online; in general accommodations will be made if either party is abroad.
2. The next stages consist of the actual research and writing the thesis itself, they roughly correspond to blocks 5 and 6.
- Students who volunteer to do so will present their proposals and discuss others' proposals during the tutorials in weeks 15+17. Students can only present if their work is far enough advanced. As this means that a lot of work has been done quickly, the students who successfully present will be obtaining a higher grade on the process criterion.
NB: these presentations will be done in three smaller workgroups. Which group you enroll for is immaterial, we redistribute students so that the topics are more closely matched. Be available for all three tutorials!

Overview study load

Lectures	3 x 2 hours	6 hours
Tutorials	2 x 2 hours	4 hours
Self-study <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing presentations • Write thesis 		158 hours
Total: 6 EC (6 x 28 hours)		168 hours

Note: 1 EC equals 28 hours of study activity.

5. Literature

No specifically required literature. All additional documents and information can be found on Canvas.

6. Schedule

Please respect all deadlines.

Students who do not meet **all** the requirements (including attendance at the first meeting and the defense) of the Thesis seminar cannot obtain a grade for their Bachelor's thesis and are required to follow the Thesis Seminar again, and meet all requirements anew in the next year.

Note that the deadline for the draft thesis may be moved by your supervisor.

7. Requirements

Language

The thesis has to be written in English.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory at the first meeting with your supervisor and the defense. It's highly recommended for lectures and seminar/tutorial sessions, even if you have already given your presentation. Due to student numbers exceeding lecture hall capacity, lectures will be recorded though. In the tutorials you are supposed to learn from the presentations of others as well, including the feedback given to them - often it is applicable to a large number of students, even though the presentation of just one person raised the issue - so attend them!

First meeting with your supervisor

Students who come unprepared to the first meeting with their supervisor, or do not come at all without a valid excuse, can be removed from their supervision slot. Given the scarcity of such slots, it's doubtful if you can finish the thesis in this semester under those circumstances.

At this first meeting, you should have at least:

- About half a page with the research question, and your slot, plus a brief explanation why these questions are academically relevant (to prove you understand the issue and have done some preliminary reading).
- At least one equation with the model (usually a regression equation) and the statistical hypothesis you need to test to answer the research question for your slot.
- An overview with the references you have thus far, with at least 3 extra papers on top of the ones mentioned in the template.

Intermediate stage product

In order to better monitor the progress students are making, (it is not allowed to 'submerge' – i.e., not contact your supervisor – and then suddenly emerge with a completely finished thesis. The process needs to be supervised) and to aid with the prevention of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), you're required to send an intermediate stage product (i.e. a draft text of two chapters, or extensive notes plus some writing on nearly all chapters) to your supervisor and upload this on Canvas. We reserve the right, subject to examinations board approval and technical availability, to use these texts for AI detection too.

Changelog

Together with your final thesis, you will submit a log that details all significant changes (in methodology, data choices, variable selection, ordering of sections of the text, etc.) you made between the intermediate stage product and the final version, with a clear explanation *why* you made these changes.

Thesis text and references

A condition for obtaining a thesis grade is that the thesis is a coherent work, containing all customary elements in such a way that they're aligned. All references should contain also the page number of the precise text that is being referenced or quoted.

Defense

A new element this year is that the final product must be defended as well. This will take place during the last meeting of the thesis supervision process, before submitting the thesis, and will be recorded. The main purpose here is for the student to answer critical questions and prove your mastery of the material. This session will last approximately 15 minutes per person; your supervisor can start straight away with the questioning. *Attendance at this meeting (digital or in person) is mandatory; without a defense your thesis cannot be graded.* The defense meeting can be held digitally, via zoom, but at a time chosen by your supervisor, which may be just before or after the submission deadline. You're to remain available up to and including July 9th for this.

NB: the defense is, by itself, a requirement to graduate, not a component on the grading grid. No separate grade for the defense will be given. However, the thesis process is part of the grading grid, and includes all interaction between student and supervisor. Through this indirect route, the defense can have a small impact on the grade.

8. Assessment

Students do not obtain a separate grade for the thesis seminar. However, in order to get a grade for their thesis, students need to meet **all** requirements of the thesis seminar. These requirements are:

- Participate in all meetings of the thesis seminar.
- Register on time for the allocation procedure
- Prepare the first meeting with the supervisor as described above
- Write their thesis in the English language
- The thesis is a coherent work, containing all customary elements in such a way that they're aligned and with page numbers as part of the references.
- Prove mastery of the material by answering questions during the defense

After obtaining a passing grade for the thesis, no new assessment is possible, one cannot resubmit an adjusted version of the thesis for a higher grade.

Course evaluation

The Faculty of Economics and Business values the monitoring of the quality of its educational programmes highly. One of the ways in which this is realized is by collecting information regarding the student satisfaction, through course evaluations. Therefore, every course is evaluated annually.

Fraud and plagiarism

Fraud and plagiarism are defined as any act or omission on the part of the student that makes an accurate assessment of his/her knowledge, insight and skills, or those of another student, partially or wholly impossible. Plagiarism is a form of fraud. For more information read Chapter C of the Rules of the Examination board. These and other rules can be found on the following website:

It should be noted that the use of texts generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI, ChatGPT and similar) is strictly prohibited!

Digital dissemination

All class material – including particularly any graded assignments or exams with and without their solutions – is covered by a copyright. It is therefore prohibited to distribute any material without prior explicit permission of the instructor outside this course in any digital or any other format. This restriction includes anonymous posting on any open or closed third-party online forums or websites, which constitutes a punishable offense. (Please note that even anonymous posts can be typically traced back.) University guidelines also prohibit non-authorized voice and video recordings.