

Writing your thesis at the Chair of Prof. Karolin Frankenberger

There are two ways to write your final thesis at our chair: (1) we regularly advertise topics on our website; (2) you may apply to us to write on your own topic. This document lays out how you apply to write your thesis with us in either case, as well as the process how we will assist in completing your thesis.

1. Application

For any final thesis, we expect you to submit an application including a cover letter indicating your motivation to write your thesis (1) on the specific topic and (2) with us. In addition, we expect a current CV, including an up-to-date academic record. In case we have more than one application per topic, or more applications than capacity, we will select students based on successful completion of core courses in strategy and innovation of your degree program, in particular if with us, overall proceeding of your academic career, motivation and further qualifications, and personal circumstances.

Early in the process, we also ask you to submit a proposal. In case you want to suggest a topic on your own, this is a requirement; in case you apply to one of our topics, it will be the first thing you will do once you have been assigned the topic.

We will expect a short proposal from you: a short proposal should be around one page (single-spaced), standard font size (Times New Roman 12) and clearly specify (1) your research question, (2) how this research question ties into an ongoing academic debate and which research topic/theme/field is addressed, (3) how, for this debate, your question is at least to some degree novel, interesting, and relevant, (4) how you plan to answer your research question (e.g., method, sample), and (5) a preliminary schedule.

Accordingly, we expect to see substantial engagement with academic literature already in the proposal, including (but not limited to) a list of key references. We will then (see below) work with you to advance the short proposal into a long one: a long proposal may be up to two pages. You may also choose to skip the short proposal and go directly to working out a long one.

Please be advised that we do not accept proposals that focus on practice-only topics – still, we strongly approve of theses that are written together with companies. The reason for this is simple: university education should qualify you to see general patterns in specific problems. Thus, solving a specific problem from practice should not be much of a challenge to you. However, scrutinizing a specific problem to understand how it is representative of a general class of problems, and how solving this one problem enriches our understanding of solving any instance of this class of problems means that you have the potential to contribute to an academic debate.

Too early applications (e.g., start in eight months) will not be considered. Clearly communicate your timeline and refrain from thesis applications to only reserve a spot without actively working on the thesis as this will block capacities for your fellow students.

2. Procedure

Following your application, we will first scrutinize your documents for completeness, and then for fulfillment of our selection criteria. In case of a positive evaluation, we will invite you for a first meeting where we will discuss your proposal in detail. We expect you to take this feedback to heart and include it into a revised and extended thesis plan (the long proposal) that sketches a first complete outline of your thesis as well as how you intend to complete it.

Given sufficient progress, we will discuss this document with you in a second meeting, which indicates us that you write the thesis with us. Here, we expect you to include a research schedule.

Over the course of your thesis, we will provide feedback on a case-by-case basis. In addition, we offer students the opportunity for a feedback meeting after the completion of their thesis. While our job is to advise you, we will take strict note of the amount of advice we provide and its importance to your successful thesis completion. Should we realize that it is in fact us who are writing your thesis, this will negatively reflect on your grade. Of course, we will make sure to signal the emergence of such a situation well in advance, so when in doubt, do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Regarding the language of your thesis, if not said explicitly otherwise in topics advertised by us, you are free to either complete them in English or German.

Please consider that you are responsible for the registration of the thesis at the Dean's Advisory Office.

3. Grading

We grade each thesis individually, focusing on the output you produced. Here, we refer to the HSG evaluation dimensions of Formal and Contextual Aspects, which further organizes in sub-dimensions such as Structure of the Thesis, Topic and Approach, or Literature and Sources. These evaluation criteria are pre-defined by the university and present a standardized evaluation framework.

We would like to point out that we will adhere to rules of good academic practice to the utmost degree. In this vein, we will for example also automatically have each thesis scanned for plagiarism.

4. Further inquiries

In case of further questions not addressed in this document, please send your inquiry to Christina Frei-Reber.