

Bachelor of Business Management with a Major in Marketing

> Thesis Manual B-ODISEE-OBF18A

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Part 1 – How to do your research

1.1 Introduction

When doing your research, you receive guidance from:

The supervisor: is the Odisee professor you have been assigned to guide you during the writing of your thesis. In some cases, this will also be your work placement supervisor.

The mentor: is the person at the company who gives you useful information about the company and feedback on your research. This is usually also your work placement mentor.

Conducting **your research and writing about it should be done in parallel**. In other words, start writing – if only drafts – right from the start and do not wait until the end!

There are important **deadlines to keep in mind**, please verify Toledo for specific details for this academic year.

The main channel of communication is via Toledo 'Bachelor Thesis [OBF18a], subtitles 'Announcements', 'Gatekeeping Approach', 'Assignments, 'General Information' and 'ECTS'.

1.2 Essential Steps

To write a good bachelor thesis, you should take the following steps:

- 1 Identify an issue that prevents a company from reaching its goals and identify its causes.
- 2 Collect information through desk research- the company
- 3 Collect information through desk research- academic literature
- 4 Collect information by doing field research interviews, surveys, case studies,
- 5 Analyse the data and combine your findings to draw relevant recommendations.
- 6 Write the conclusion and identify areas for further research
- 7 Present the results to the company
- 8 Finalize your thesis: formatting, table of contents, proofreading.

Step 1: Identify an issue that prevents a company from reaching its goals and identify its causes.

Identify an **issue** in the company and discuss with your mentor. **Make sure that you clearly understand it** and that you are able to explain why the company is facing that issue (and why it actually is an issue), for whom it is an issue, and what impact it has on the business or the development of the industry.

Use clear language. Your research topic should be a one-liner. **Frame the issue in the form of a question. This is your research question** which will guide you and the reader through your entire research.

<u>Step 2 Collect information through desk research- the company.</u>

There are various sources from which you can gather information. Do not choose these randomly; it is important that you should be clear and rigorous about your choice. This choice is your methodology. You have to explain why you have chosen certain research methods and why they are appropriate for your thesis topic.

Desk research is the initial stage of your research. Use **existing sources:** the internet, literature, (government) statistics, etc. Bear in mind that your sources should be reliable

Make sure you keep some **academic objectivity**: don't just copy the inflated language used in promotional material – e.g. "XX company offers their customers a unique mix of expertise and mind-blowing creativity..."

Your desk research should include the following elements:

Overall objectives of the company or organization and its strategy: Discuss with your company mentor how you can find information about the company and their organizational strategy. Don't forget the necessary references to your sources.

Describe the value generated by the company: Describe the company's activities, how they differ from competitors, their market share, USP (Unique Selling Point). Make a link with the company strategy and objectives and state the sources of your information.

Customer segments: Identify the (potential) customer segments and their size.

Channels: Describe how the company reaches its clients: what are the current distribution channels?

Customer relationship management: How is each customer segment targeted, informed and reached? Describe the communication and distribution strategies.

Key partners or strategic partners: Describe the company's network of suppliers and partners. Who are they? What key resources and services do they provide?

Key activities, key resources: Review the key processes and business flows within your company.

Benchmarking: Compare your research case to similar problems or processes in similar companies. How did they solve the problem? What problems did they encounter?

On the basis of the information gathered above, develop a **SWOT analysis** with relevant insights for the company's management. **Please check Toledo for relevant tutorials.**

<u>Step 3: Collect information through desk research- academic literature.</u>

Gather and analyse information available either in print or online. Look for academic sources, use Google Scholar which will give you many academic results. Browse and select. Choose sources that have a clear connection with your research question.

Consult the <u>Odisee/KU Leuven library website</u> and do initial research with your key words. You will probably find books, scholarly articles and journals related to your field of research.

Reflect critically when reading- and make a distinction between academic sources and promotional materials published by the company.

Academic reading: Read the sources you have found and reflect critically on what you read. Identify key concepts and theories related to your research topic. You must be able to tell why you have selected these texts.

While you are reading, open a document on your computer or take a notebook, and write down all essential elements that might help you. This information can then be integrated into your desk research, and you can use it to confirm /deny/ contextualise any findings you will obtain through other research methods.

While you are reading, try to connect your findings with theoretical models or concepts which you have studied in previous classes. You can link up your findings with a variety of business analysis models you have studied previously.

<u>Step 4: Collect information by doing field research- interviews, surveys, case studies or other.</u>

Field research is the second half of your research. Several types of field research could be relevant for your thesis: interviews, surveys, polls... The purpose of field research is to generate new information yourself or gather information which has not yet been published. Ideally, your field research should be carried out after you have collected most of your desk research data.

Be mindful of your choice of field research methodology. Make sure you choose the right methodology for your research question. Always include multiple perspectives (company itself, customers, competitors, other stakeholders ...). You should discuss this choice with your supervisor, he/she will give useful advice. There are different methods of field research.

Interviews: Prepare them carefully. Choose the people you want to interview carefully; they actually need to be able to give you insights on your topic. Write the questions to obtain the information you want to get out of the interview.

Surveys or polls: Go and have a look at your courses on Academic writing, Research Skills, Statistics for Market Research, Business Communications and Reporting Techniques, and Market research and Analysis. Please check Toledo for relevant tutorials.

Surveys are essential to getting feedback. Ensure that your sample is representative (calculate the needed sample size). Discuss questions with your promoter before starting to collect data.

- Keep them short. Focus on relevant questions.
- Think about the level of measurement of your questions.
- Use tick boxes, e.g. " always " never " sometimes.
- Also use open-ended questions to know what your respondents are really thinking.
- Clearly define your target audience, which should be representative for the target audience of your company/research.

Other field research methods include (but are not limited to): focus groups, direct observation or participant observation, case studies, ...

<u>Step 5: Analyse the data and combine your findings to draw relevant recommendations.</u>

Analysis

First, analyse the data you collected in your field research.

- For all types of field research, you should discuss the representativeness of the applied method (does it properly reflect the target audience / stakeholders involved?).
- Provide a critical analysis of the findings, underlining gaps or inconsistencies in certain narratives. Show contrasting opinions and surprising facts.
- For surveys specifically:
 - Think about a cross-analysis of your findings. (Example: Q1 is about the preference for product A/B/C and Q2 about the age of the customers. Look at the response on Q1 for different age groups, to detect patterns/preferences).
 - Include statistics and statistical tests *where needed and relevant*. (Example: when you claim that the majority of customers prefers A over B, you should test whether this can be concluded for all customers using a confidence interval).
 - Refer back to your course "Market Research and Analysis" for this.
- You don't need to include all aspects of your analysis in your thesis: decide which elements are relevant in properly answering the research question.

You are now in the possession of your research results, both from your desk research (on the company, plus academic literature) and from your field research. (surveys, interviews, case studies, observations...).

- Look for connections between theory and practical outcomes from the field research. Summarize these connections and analyse them critically.
- In order to analyse your findings critically you can contrast, compare, look for similarities, look for significant differences, synergies.
- This analysis can be supported by graphs or tables, or quotes from interviews or focus group reports. Think about how you represent this in the best way.

In doing so you are linking the outcome of your field research with your desk research. The analysis of your findings should be an answer to your research question. If your findings do not provide a clear answer to your research question, you might want to go back to the step where you collect your data. (Steps 3 and 4). If you are stuck at this point or unsure on how to proceed, please talk to your supervisor.

Recommendations

Based upon the outcomes of your research, formulate precise and specific recommendations on how the company can tackle the issue presented in your research question.

In this section, the reader can find a series of solutions you propose to deal with the issue you identified in the beginning of your research. All of your solutions should be based upon your research, either from your desk research or from field research.

Make sure that the solutions you propose are realistic and actionable. The company should be able to make your solutions work, both practically and financially.

Step 6: Write up your conclusion and identify areas for further research

Conclusion

Your conclusion is a summary of everything you wrote previously. You include your research question, and the methods you have used to answer it. You also include your research outcomes, both from the desk research and from the field research. You add a concise analysis of your research results. You also add the recommendations you have provided to the company.

The purpose of a conclusion is to allow someone who hasn't read your thesis to understand and learn the essential elements by simply reading your conclusion.

Identifying areas for further research

While you were working on your research, you were probably confronted with certain limitations. A good research question is a very specific question. Other relevant and related questions or topics might have presented themselves. However, they fall beyond the scope of your initial research question.

In this section you will identify those topics and establish the connection with your original research question, taking into account the specific situation of the company.

Step 7: Present your results to the company

Now the time has arrived to present your results to your company mentor and/or your colleagues with whom you worked closely. They will provide you with useful feedback.

Step 8: Finalising your thesis: proofreading, formatting, bibliography, annexes.

Make sure there is harmony in the formatting and all the required information is included.

Part 2 – From findings to bachelor thesis

2.1 - Writing, proofreading and editing the text

Proper language is one of the major assessment criteria of your thesis. It is the student's responsibility. Supervisors are not obliged to correct your spelling and grammar mistakes. Ask a native English speaker to proofread your draft.

Amongst other things, make sure you check:

- Sentence and paragraph construction; subject-verb agreement, use of tenses and punctuation.
- Linking words to make your argument clear: Nevertheless, however, therefore, although... (For the above points, we encourage you to refer to the material posted in your English Communication Advanced 2 course.)
- Check spelling of proper names and acronyms. Make sure the name of the organization the acronym stands for is given in full the first time you use it.
- Make sure your headings and subheadings are consistent all through the text: positioning, font size, capitals or small case, bold/italic, ...
- Check your numbering system for tables, graphs, figures, photographs etc. Standardize their format and title/caption layouts, attribute their sources, and check each one is mentioned in the text.
- Check that all the references cited are listed in the reference list or bibliography.
- Be consistent: use either American or British English.

2.2 APA Referencing style: Tables, Figures, Illustrations, Footnotes

All references must follow the APA Style Guide. See:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guid e/general_format.html

Tables, figures and other material that are referred to directly in the text should be inserted into the text at the appropriate point before or after it is first referred to and should be given clear headings. Other material should be grouped as appendices. Avoid excessive data and text in these appendices.

All illustrations should be numbered, titled and either fully annotated or referred to in detail in the text. They should be sourced where applicable. All illustrations should be inserted into the text as close as possible to the point where reference to them is first made. All illustrations should be produced to acceptable quality standards and should be referred to as Figures and numbered in consecutive order.

2.3 Academic integrity and plagiarism

As part of the KU Leuven Association, Odisee will follow the generative artificial intelligence guidelines implemented by KU Leuven.

How can you use GenAI?

A GenAl model can be used for all sorts of assignments. Certain uses are very similar to what we already do with other tools and do not require additional transparency. Other uses could potentially hide your own input and are therefore not allowed, with some exceptions.

GenAI: What is allowed?

- Using GenAl As a language assistant for reviewing or improving texts you wrote yourself, provided that the model does not add new content. In this case, the use of GenAl is similar to the spelling and grammar check tools we already have today, so you do not need to explicitly mention using GenAl for this. Again, you always make sure that the use of GenAl does not interfere with an examiner's evaluation of your achieved learning goals.
- Using GenAl as a search engine to get initial information on a topic or to make an initial search for existing research on the topic. This way of gathering information is similar to using an ordinary search engine when working on an assignment. After this initial search, look for scientific sources and conduct your own analysis of the source documents. Interpret, analyse and process the information you obtained; don't just copy-paste it. If you then write your own text based on this information, you do not have to mention you used GenAl. Note If you do copy-paste certain parts of GenAl output (for instance because of the nature of the assignment), you have to cite your sources.
- Note The output that ChatGPT (or similar tools) generates is not always correct and could be different for each prompt. ChatGPT is not a reliable tool for factual information. You always need to verify the generated information by consulting other sources. (See also: <u>Tips and considerations for a responsible use</u>
- If the teacher explicitly allows it, you can use GenAl to generate some code as part of a larger assignment.

GenAI: What is definitely not allowed?

- Any form of copy-pasting of any content generated by GenAI without fully acknowledging the source (citing, referencing). After all, if you want to produce any academic work, you need to check the original sources. Using GenAI with proper referencing can only be done in exceptional situations.
- Any use of GenAl that prevents the teaching staff from assessing your skills. For example: using paraphrasing tools on texts you did not write yourself to cover up plagiarism, misuse of translation software.
- Any use of GenAI during on-campus examinations or other forms of assessment when the teaching staff have indicated that the use of GenAI is not allowed.

How can you be transparent about the use of GenAI?

Referring (and citing) is the first step to being transparent. Being transparent is essential to ensure that the teaching staff can always assess your knowledge, understanding and/or skills correctly.

A good way to be transparent is **to keep track of how and why you used GenAI**. This can be done in different ways:

- Make screenshots of the complete exchange with GenAl. You can highlight any relevant parts in these screenshots.
- Explain how GenAI was used (for instance to generate ideas, text fragments, longer pieces of text, arguments, evidence, illustrations of concepts ...)
- Write down why GenAl was used: to save time, to combat writer's block, to stimulate reflection, to manage increasing stress, to better understand a concept, to translate, to experiment with GenAl, etc.

In addition to **citing the source** and **including the use of GenAI in the references**, the teaching staff can ask you to **add the elements mentioned above to a section on (materials and) methods used, or to an appendix**. If there are no additional indications, use the guidelines in this university-wide framework. You can consult the full guidelines <u>here</u>.

Additionally, if you wish to use AI tools **you should at all times be able to "show your work"**. For example, you should be able to provide in detail explanations on the tools you used, what you found and how and where you integrated the findings into the paper.

Formal inquiry proceedings will be instigated if there is any suspicion of plagiarism or any other form of misconduct in your work. During the writing process you will have the opportunity to submit your work for a single preliminary check on Turnitin (in Gateway 3).

For your final submission you should upload your final version of your thesis plus the proof of uploading your work into Turnitin.

GENERAL RULE: AI CAN HELP YOU WRITE, BUT IT CANNOT WRITE FOR YOU.

2.4 Gateway process and deliverables

The thesis gateway process has been introduced to increase your chances for success. The gateway process is a formal and interactive guidance integrating the 8 steps mentioned above.

A thesis is a project requiring intermediate steps, milestones to be successfully completed by the student. It also requires sufficient quality interactions between the student and his/her supervisor.

Hereby you find the minimal criteria to pass each gate successfully:

Criteria

Green light to pass GATE #1, if:

- You've had effective 1-to-1 interaction with your supervisor.
- Your supervisor has approved (*≠*received) your research topic and research question.
- You've explained the rationale for your research and have identified the potential impact/relevance for you, the BBM program and the company.

٠	You've drawn up an initial bibliography, with at least 5 specific and 3 generic
	academic sources that are relevant to your topic.

Green light to pass GATE #2, if:

- You've had effective 1-to-1 interaction with your supervisor.
- You've adequately described the results of your desk research in a coherent text (*two thirds finalized, so no draft, not just a long list of articles or copy-paste*).
- Your supervisor has validated (*≠*received) your field research approach (*interviews*, *survey*, *focus groups*, *observations*).
- You've established a clear link between field and desk research.
- You've applied business theory models to your research, with at least a full SWOT analysis related to the company's business.
- Your methodology has been approved and you have participated in the mandatory methodology workshop.

Green light to pass GATE #3, if:

- You've had effective 1-to-1 interaction with your supervisor.
- You've collected and analysed valid data from at least two field research methods (including relevant target audience & minimum sample size in case of a survey).
- You've submitted a first version (V1) and have revised this version based on your supervisor's feedback.
- You've submitted a second version of the thesis (V2), which is 75% finished and has been checked by Turnitin.
- You've formulated actionable recommendations (i.e. need to be feasible, relevant & specific to the company, include basic ROI for each recommendation).
- You've identified areas for further research.

Thesis submission and oral presentation:

- Final Thesis 100% finished.
- Turnitin confirmation that no plagiarism was observed.
- Presentation support (in PowerPoint) with focus on conclusions & recommendations.

2.5 Deadlines gateways, final submission, and oral presentation.

The ultimate dates to pass each gate successfully after evaluation by the supervisor are:

Thesis submission in Exam Period 1 (EP1)

- Gate 1 closure on October 2nd, 2023, at noon.
- Gate 2 closure on October 23rd, 2023, at noon.
- Gate 3 closure on December 18^{th,} 2023, at noon.
- Final Submission: January 22^{nd,} 2024, at noon
- Oral presentation: February 2^{nd,} 2024.

Thesis submission in Exam Period 2 (EP2)

- Gate 1 closure on December 11^{th,} 2023, at noon.
- Gate 2 closure on March 11^{th,} 2024, at noon.
- Gate 3 closure on May 5^{th,} 2024, at noon.
- Final submission: June 10^{th,} 2024, at noon.
- Oral presentation: June 20^{th,} 2024.

Retake - thesis submission in Exam Period 3 (EP3)

- Gate 3 closure on July 5th, 2024, at noon.
- Final Submission: August 26th, 2024, at noon.
- Oral presentation: September 6^{th,} 2024.

Gate deliverables need to be fully completed **before** the dates shown in this table. Hence, student needs to pass each gate **BEFORE** it closes, so these are not regular deadlines. Considering all constraints & requirements, you need to ensure timely completion of deliverables to pass the gate before it closes.

Important note

You are expected to consult and proactively follow up on all information regarding the gateway process in a continuous manner.

The main channel of communication is via **Toledo 'Bachelor Thesis [OBF18a]**, subtitles 'Announcements', 'Gatekeeping Approach', 'Assignments, 'General Information' and 'ECTS'.

2.6 Structure of your Bachelor Thesis

Your target audience consists of the decision-makers in the company or organization, as well as your supervisor and your thesis jury.

The structure of the bachelor thesis will vary depending on the type of research you have done, but the structure presented below can be adapted for most Bachelor theses.

- A. Pre-printed front page
- B. Title page
- C. Abstract
- D. Contents page
- E. List of tables and illustrations
- F. Acknowledgements
- G. Body of the text
 - I. Research question (step 1)
 - II. Methodology (step 1)
 - III. Desk, literature and field research (steps 2-3-4)
 - IV. Critical analysis (step 5)
 - V. Recommendations (step 5)
 - VI. Conclusion and areas for further research (step 6)
- H. Appendices (step 8)
- I. Bibliography (step 8)

A. Pre-printed front page: Use the template provided on Toledo > Bachelor thesis > front page.

B. Title page: Black print. Use the template provided on Toledo > Bachelor thesis > title page.

C. Abstract: A summary of the bachelor thesis and an opportunity to spur the reader's interest: most readers will turn first to your abstract. It serves as an explanation of the topic of your paper, methodology, observations and results, allowing readers to better determine the relevance of your research. Write this (250 to 300 words) at the very end, after completing your bachelor thesis. Below the abstract, specify word count of the abstract and of the main text.

D. Table of contents: This should include numbered chapters, section headings, references and appendices. This page should be in accordance with the APA citation style and Odisee style guidelines.

E. List of tables and illustrations: Make sure they are clearly labelled (titles / captions) and the correct page number is indicated.

F. Acknowledgements: Write a short text to thank all the people who helped you in writing your thesis. All sources of assistance should be acknowledged.

G. Body of the text: See Chapter 7: Structuring the body of the text of your thesis. (Check number of chapter below- Edgar)

H. List of Appendices: The documents in your appendices allow readers to verify that your research was done with rigor. The following can be included in the appendices:

- If you have used AI according to the guidelines, you should include proof of your search terms or questions, AI outcomes and how/ where you integrated these into your work.
- A copy of a questionnaire or interview questions
- Raw data or complex statistical tables (excluding any analysis or conclusions).

- Brief material referred to throughout your thesis, e.g. pieces of legislation, transcripts of interviews

The number of appendices should be limited. Do not continually refer to material presented in an appendix as this may disrupt the continuity of your text. If you are in doubt whether a document should be added as an appendix, ask your supervisor.

Always state that some particular material is to be found in a specific appendix, and adopt a clear appendix numbering or lettering system (Appendix 1, appendix 2, etc.)

I. Bibliography

A bibliography is an alphabetical list of every source used to research and write the paper. All references in the text must appear in the Bibliography. Sources that are not cited in the body of the essay but were important should also be cited.

2.7 Structuring the body of the text of your thesis

If you are struggling with the structure of your chapters, what to include, what not to include and how to arrange information for any of your chapters, please see your supervisor.

Pay attention to the **structure of your text within each chapter**. Make your readers' lives easy by writing in clear, separate paragraphs, and using **headings** and **subheadings** wherever necessary. These visually represent how information is organized in your paper, and succinctly tell the reader what is in each section. Keep headings short and parallel in structure. Subheadings can be slightly longer, as they are essentially expanding on the headings. Use them like a roadmap: readers should be able to skim subheadings to get an idea of the content. Also, do not forget to **number** your chapters, headings and subheadings. *See section 5 above for an example*.

Chapter 1: Research Topic – Outlining the problem and the present situation

This chapter should be brief. It corresponds to the question raised above: "What is this thesis about"? This is a non-exhaustive list of questions that might help you structure this chapter.

- What was the process that made you and the organization identify the problem or challenge?
- Starting from the one-liner, describe the different issues.
- Estimation/assessment of the impact of the problem if it were not tackled.
- How urgent is this problem from the company's perspective? If it is helpful, you may of course refer to findings in your SWOT-analysis.

Chapter 2: Methodology

All bachelor theses must include a methodology chapter. This chapter will describe **why you chose certain research methods** and **why they are appropriate** for your particular research topic.

Field research methods can include formal interviews; informal interviews; surveys; polls; questionnaires with qualitative and quantitative questions (explaining why); participation observations... etc.

Make sure you explain how data was generated, under what conditions and which data analysis tools were used (e.g. SurveyMonkey or Qualtrics).

Where interviews were conducted, the selection process must be described. For surveys, you need to break down the number of participants, age, gender, location if relevant...

Chapter 3: Desk, Literature and Field Research

- **Desk research.** Show how your research relates to the existing literature and secondary data. This literature review should include key, well-known sources on the research topic. *Don't just describe your selection of literature, justify it.*
- **Field research.** You will need to identify and generate data directly relevant to your research topic. Tell the reader: what it is you want to investigate through interviews, surveys, polls etc. *Don't forget to explain why you made this particular selection in the methodology chapter* (see "Chapter 2" above).

Chapter 4: Observations and Critical Analysis

Once the desk and field research have been presented, the primary and secondary data will need to be critically analysed. The observations should aim at developing clear arguments that would support your thesis. If there are results or data that do not support this thesis, this will need to be addressed.

Chapter 5: Recommendations and possible solutions

If you want your thesis to be convincing you need to make a link between the previous chapter, presenting your research, and this chapter. Your research is the ground on which your recommendations are founded. You might want to offer several options and to justify which one the company might want to favour.

Part 3 – Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Student's responsibilities

The bachelor thesis is your responsibility. Supervisors and mentors are there to help if asked, but in the end, it is up to you to plan, manage and complete your work.

Students should take the initiative in approaching supervisor and mentor, and email draft texts before a meeting to facilitate the discussion.

Students should always make appointments, and reply to their emails within 48 hours.

Students can expect a reply from your promoter within 3 working days if your mail is a simple question, with 10 days if you are asking for feedback on texts.

You are responsible for keeping in touch with your supervisor as well as with your mentor to discuss progress. How often you see her/him will depend on you. Do make enough use of them, even if you are confident about your paper. Don't expect them to help if you call on them at the last minute.

Outgoing Erasmus students contact their supervisor and mentor on a regular basis via e-mail, Teams, or any other means at their disposal.

Guidance from academic staff is limited to a set number of hours for each individual student and this covers the whole year. Academic staff availability is not inexhaustible. You need to be aware of this and plan your meetings throughout the year.

What is covered in academic staff time are: face-to-face or virtual meetings; email replies; review of material as discussed in meetings; reading and commenting on text.

3.2 Mentor's Responsibilities

Within the company or organization, the mentor should:

- give you access to relevant information sources and useful contacts within the organization.
- encourage you to develop new insights and ask critical questions.
- read and discuss your work as it progresses (providing you submit it on time).
- read your final bachelor thesis, taking into account the criteria set out in this manual.
- attend your presentation and give advice to the jury.

3.3 Supervisor's Responsibilities

The supervisor, one of your Odisee professors, should:

- help you word the research topic and set up a research strategy (methodology and research instruments).
- follow up the research process and check whether the different steps are followed, within the gateway process.
- give advice on the structure of the paper.
- read the different stages of your draft (provided they have been submitted according to the timeline in the gateway process) and give feedback at the student's request. This take place through face-to-face interviews in person or online, as well as emails or phone calls.
- comment on the analysis of your findings and the link from those to your recommendations
- The student takes notes of the feedback received during face-to-face guidance moments and integrates the comments into his/her thesis.
- The supervisor keeps a calendar of the appointments with the student and also, where necessary, contacts the mentor.
- The supervisor gives a grade (score) for each step in the gateway process based on his/her evaluation of the required published deliverables per gateway.
- The supervisor advises the student on whether or not s/he should defend the bachelor's thesis.

It is **not** the job of the supervisor to rewrite texts or correct language errors. For this, the student should seek help from a proofreader.

3.4 BBM Bachelor Paper Coordinator

- Makes adjustments to the Bachelor Paper Manual and drafts all necessary documents and forms.
- Informs and instructs the students in time about all aspects of the realization of the bachelor paper.
- Organizes various instructions, information sessions and tutorials for the students throughout the academic year and especially during the second semester.
- Keeps the supervisors informed.
- Organizes and coordinates the approval of the research topic.
- Allocates the promoters, primarily on the basis of their research interests matching the topic, or randomly.
- Organizes the jury and the formal presentation sessions of the bachelor papers.
- Organizes the Assessment Board.

Part 4 – Evaluation

4.1 How is your bachelor thesis marked?

	Maximum score	Rationale
Written paper	Max. 10 points (out of 20) (50% of course total)	 To succeed the course, the student needs at least 5 points on written paper (in case of <5, then overall course grade capped at <= 8/20)
Oral presentation	Max. 6 points (out of 20) (30% of course total)	 On campus presentation 12' presentator 10' Q&A
Gatekeeping process	Max. 4 points (out of 20) (20% of course total) • o or 1 point at gate1 • o or 1 point at gate2 • o or 2 points at gate3	 Binary score: o or maximum (published gate criteria to be met) Gate 1 is mandatory: 'kick-off' Missing gate 2/3 does not stop the process, yet points are lost. The student can continue.

Your thesis (written paper) will be read by your supervisor and a second reader. The score is given by consensus and is based on the criteria you can find below in the grading rubric. Below the grading rubric you can find the grade distribution for every topic evaluated in the rubric. It is a clever idea to read the rubric to find out which aspects and how your thesis will be evaluated.

Please engage with your supervisor r before your presentation for guidance and support.

Refer to rubric The rubric mentioned below is used for evaluating the written paper.

The Board of examiners for the oral presentation consists of the supervisor, the 2nd reader and , if possibly one or two other jury members. Each jury member completes an evaluation sheet for each student. The final score for the presentation is given by consensus.

Your presentation is public. Your work placement mentor is welcome to attend your presentation but does not participate in the evaluation.

4.2 Assessment criteria for the bachelor thesis (paper)

Criterion	Complete Fail	Fail	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1. LANGUAGE	The language used by the student is absolutely insufficient.	The language used by the student is insufficient .	The language used by the student is of a satisfactory nature .	The language used by the student is correct .	The language used by the student is consistently correct.
a. <i>Spelling</i>	There are spelling mistakes galore in every paragraph.	There are multiple spelling mistakes, several on each page.	There are some spelling mistakes, but they do not have an impact on the quality of the thesis.	There are a small number of spelling mistakes, few and far between.	There are no spelling mistakes.
b. <i>Punctuation</i>	The student is unaware of the use of proper punctuation. It seems to have been written without ever having been read thereafter.	The student uses a limited scope of punctuation marks. Insufficient punctuation hinders reading and comprehension.	The major punctuation rules have been respected throughout the thesis, with some flaws here and there.	Some care has been taken towards correct punctuation.	Special care has been taken towards correct punctuation.
c. Grammar	The student is unaware of basic grammar rules. Verbs are not conjugated. (No agreements, wrong past participles)	The student shows limited knowledge and application of English grammar rules. The numerous mistakes have an impact on the quality of the thesis.	The student has shown an adequate knowledge and application of English grammar rules. There are some small errors, but they have no impact on the quality of the work.	The student shows a decent (here and there) use of specific grammatical structures proper to an academic use of the language.	The student shows a consistent use of specific grammatical structures proper to an academic use of the language.
d. Word order (syntax)	Syntactical structures are literally translated from another language and do not make any sense in English.	There is some syntactical interference from another language and this interference occasionally hinders reading and comprehension.	There is no syntactical interference from another language, and English syntax is respected throughout the thesis.	The student shows a decent use of specific syntactical structures proper to academic English.	The consistent use of syntactical structures proper to academic English enhances reading and comprehension.

2 FORMAL PRESENTATION					
a. Abstract	Absent or student confuses the abstract with the acknowledgments	Repetitive, unfocussed.	May be sound but unfocused, limited in scope.	Provides a good summary.	Excellent summary: concise round-up of the whole thesis; explanation of the thesis' title, focus and relevance.
b. House-style	The student did not apply any of the Odisee templates for the thesis, such as the pre- printed front page, the title page and the abstract, as instructed in the thesis manual.	The student did apply some of the Odisee templates for the thesis, such as the pre- printed front page, the title page and the abstract, as instructed in the thesis manual, but not all of them. Some of the vital information has been left blank.	The student has applied all of the required Odisee templates for the thesis, including the pre-printed front page, the title page and the abstract, as instructed in the thesis manual. All necessary fields have been filled out; however, the accuracy of some of the fields is not satisfactory.	The student has applied all of the required Odisee templates for the thesis, including the pre-printed front page, the title page and the abstract, as instructed in the thesis manual. All necessary fields have been filled out as accurately as possible.	The student has applied all the required Odisee templates for the thesis, including the pre-printed front page, the title page and the abstract, as instructed in the thesis manual. Excellent house style use throughout the whole document.

c. Thesis structure and layout	There is no logical structure to be found throughout the thesis. It looks like an unfinished text.	The student has applied structure to the thesis; however, this structure is not in line with the instructions in the thesis manual.	The student has applied the overall structure of a bachelor thesis, as instructed in the thesis manual.	The student has applied the overall structure of a bachelor thesis, as instructed in the thesis manual and has added a personal layer of subtitles to the body of the thesis which adds value to the structure.	The student has applied the overall structure of a bachelor thesis, as instructed in the thesis manual and has added a personal layer of subtitles to the body of the thesis which adds value to the structure. The student makes use of Word Styles, enabling Word Navigation Pane and Word References, and applies an automatic Table of Contents. Automatic Multilevel List numbering has been linked to these headings. The presentation is very well organized and would be worthy of dissemination/publication under appropriate conditions.
d. Chapters and sections	There is no noteworthy Table of Contents; therefore, the overall structure of the thesis is not clear at all.	The student has written a basic Table of Contents; however, this does not provide a lot of structure to the reader.	The student has implemented a basic Table of Contents, which provides sufficient structure for the reader to better understand the thesis.	The student has implemented a clear and well-structured Table of Contents, with all the elements provided to the student in the thesis manual.	The student has implemented a clear and well-structured Table of Contents, with all of the elements provided to the student in the thesis manual. The student has been using Word Styles to apply structure to the thesis, and has applied an automatic Table of Contents
e. Tables and figures	No tables and figures are added where they would have been needed. Tables and figures do not add any value to the thesis.	Tables and figures add limited value to the thesis. No or insufficient labels have been added to tables and figures.	Tables and figures are adding sufficient value to the thesis. All of them are clearly labelled.	Tables and figures add sufficient value to the thesis. All of them are clearly labelled using Word features and, therefore, no manual captions.	Tables and figures add a lot of value to the thesis. All of them are clearly labelled using Word features and, therefore, no manual captions. An automatic List of Tables and Figures has been generated by using the appropriate Word functionality.

f. Bibliography	There is no bibliography to be found in the thesis.	There is a bibliography to be found at the end of the thesis; however, not all sources which have been referred to in the thesis have been included.	There is a bibliography to be found at the end of the thesis and all sources which have been referred to in the thesis are included. However, referencing is not always done accurately.	There is a clear bibliography to be found at the end of the thesis and all sources which have been referred to in the thesis are included. Referencing has been done accurately.	There is a clear (in alphabetic order) bibliography to be found at the end of the thesis, and it has been added by using the Bibliography reference tool in Word, making use of the built-in bibliography templates.
g. APA citation structure	The student has not referenced material correctly throughout the thesis to any significant degree, let alone even used the APA technique as requested in the thesis manual (part 3).	The student has been referring to sources; however, the student has been consistently negligent and/or has not used APA style as requested in the thesis manual (part 3) or as specified in the APA Guidelines provided by Odisee BBM.	The student has been referring most of their sources; however, this has not been done in APA style, as requested in the thesis manual or as specified in the APA Guidelines provided by Odisee BBM.	The student has been referring to most of its sources and has applied APA referencing as requested in the thesis manual (throughout most of the thesis.	The student has been referring to sources throughout the thesis in perfect APA style as requested in the thesis manual and as laid out in the APA Guidelines manual provided by Odisee BBM.
h. <i>Turnitin</i>	Most of the thesis is highlighted by Turnitin as similarity (which might indicate plagiarism).	Much of the thesis is highlighted by Turnitin as similarity (which might indicate plagiarism).	A portion of the thesis is highlighted by Turnitin as similarity (which might indicate plagiarism). Items that are highlighted typically include general expressions, bibliographic references, etc.	A small portion of the thesis is highlighted by Turnitin as similarity (which might indicate plagiarism).	Practically none of the thesis is highlighted by Turnitin as similarity (which might indicate plagiarism).
3. PROBLEM OUTLINE (RATIONALE) AND RESEARCH QUESTION	The work does not reach the standard outlined by the Odisee thesis manual. The research question is too broad in scope, not	The purpose and focus of the research are not clearly identified and explained. The research question is vague, not clearly expressed. The Rationale	The purpose and focus of the research are not clear and/or appropriately identified and/or explained. The research question is present, but partly unclear.	The purpose and focus of the research are only partially appropriately identified and explained. The	The purpose and focus of the research are clear and appropriately explained, showing an excellent level of understanding. The research question is clear, focused, precise and forward- looking. Develops a concrete, clear

	focused on the company problem.	for the research question is not appropriate, does not clearly direct the reader to the problem.	The Rationale for the research question is available, but difficult to follow; does not guide the reader directly to the problem.	research question is clear. The Rationale for the research question is reasonably developed. The reader can discern the problem.	Rationale for the research question; guides the reader directly to the problem.
4. KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING					
a. Knowledge of the company	There is no evidence of knowledge and understanding of the company, its industry and context. The work includes fewer than 4 items from the checklist.	There is limited evidence of knowledge and understanding of the company, its industry, and context. Limited use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts. The work includes fewer than 4-6 items from the check-list.	There is appropriate evidence of knowledge and understanding of the company, its industry and context. Superficial use of subject-specific terminology and/or concepts. The work includes more than 8 items from the checklist.	There is good evidence of knowledge and understanding of the company, its industry and context. Good use of subject- specific terminology and/or concepts. The work includes more than 10 items from the checklist.	There is strong and accurate evidence of knowledge and understanding of the company, its industry and context, showing excellent and effective knowledge. Excellent use of subject- specific terminology and/or concepts. The work includes more than 12 items from the checklist.
b. Choice, relevant	The work does not	There is a limited selection	There is a satisfactory selection of 2	There is a good	There is an excellent selection of more
application and	reach the standard	of 1 relevant business	relevant, appropriate business	selection of 3	than 4 relevant business management
understanding of business tools,	described in the Odisee thesis manual regarding	management tool, technique and theory, and	management tools, techniques and theories, and these are superficially	relevant, appropriate business	tools, techniques and theories, and these are skillfully applied. And/or
techniques and	selection, application of	these are not applied.	applied. And/or SWOT analysis	management tools,	SWOT analysis, with all 4 elements, is
theories	business management	SWOT analysis contains	contains 2-3 errors in the framework,	techniques and	appropriate without any application
	tools and	more than 4 errors, no	no deepening of the elements,	theories, and these	errors, and deepening of the elements,
	theories. SWOT	deepening of the elements,	showing satisfactory understanding.	are suitably applied.	showing excellent understanding.
	analysis is absent	showing limited	Satisfying integration of researched	And/or SWOT	Excellent integration of researched
	and/or is inadequate.	understanding. Limited	data with the theoretical framework.	analysis contains 1	data with the theoretical framework.

5. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION	No other business management tool. No adequate integration of researched data with the theoretical framework.	integration of researched data with the theoretical framework.		error and deepening of the elements, showing good understanding. Good integration of researched data with the theoretical framework.	
a. Desk research	Minimal search of possible literature sources, focusing on general articles, a failure to access academic, marketing or business sources and journals. Showing a clear failure to link literature search to research question. Review of accessed literature poor and inadequate.	Some attempt to access and review appropriate literature but still below the level needed to adequately complete a thesis. Room for improvement on the range and types of literature sources drawn upon. Despite trying, this work still fails to fully link the literature review to the research question. Not enough thought given to connecting literature review to primary research.	Draws on literature from a range of sources, including academic, marketing, industry and company sources; however, it could have gone deeper in this area. Clearly demonstrates an adequate attempt to link literature review to the research question in general but could have drilled down to focus on specific areas and questions covered by the thesis. There are satisfactory links between the literature review and the primary research.	Offers good evidence of having drawn on a wide range of literature, from a variety of sources, in conducting the literature review. Shows the literature search and review addresses the complex issues and questions embedded within the research question. There has been a successful effort to link the literature review to different elements of the primary research.	Demonstrates a high level of critical thinking and creativity in both accessing and reviewing a wide range of literary sources from all possible areas. Literature clearly offers a deep insight into all the areas and issues that are explicit and implicit in the research question. There is a complex and enriching bind between the literature review and the primary research.
b. Methodology –	Minimal	Incomplete methodological	A suitable methodological framework,	Clear and logical	Outstanding and comprehensive
explanation and justification of desk	methodological framework, with no explanation of why	framework with minimal clarification of why	with a reasonable explanation of why particular methods have been chosen	methodological framework with a strong mixture of	methodological framework. Showing an excellent choice of methods with a full and logical explanation of why

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research and field research	particular methods have been chosen	particular methods have been chosen.		appropriate methods with a rational explanation of why each of the methods has been chosen	these methods are appropriate for the research
c. Field research - setup and execution	Offers no or very limited evidence of appropriate, varied data collection. Questions are not focused on the research question.	Some attempt to conduct appropriate field research but still below the level needed to adequately complete a thesis. Limited relevance for the research question.	Field research methods offer satisfactory evidence of appropriate, varied data collection. Acceptable and relevant choice of questions, focused on answering the research question.	Relevant field research methods are systematically applied. Good relevant choice of questions, focused on answering the research question.	Appropriate and relevant choice of field research methods which are systematically applied. Exceptional and relevant choice of questions, focused on answering the research question.
d. Field research analysis	No (correct) discussion of the representativeness of the field research. Highly vague or irrelevant analysis of data, not contrasting the findings amongst each other. No usage of statistical methods where relevant.	Representativeness is discussed vaguely or erroneously. Some analysis of the field research is done, but no contrasting of findings. Superficial analysis. Incorrect usage of statistical methods OR non-relevant usage of methods OR lack of understanding of the methods used.	Discussion of the representativeness of the field research. Acceptable analysis of the field research, contrasting findings amongst each other. Acceptable depth of analysis, but questions remain open. Correct usage of statistical methods where relevant. Usage could be more focused and better explained, lacking some degree of understanding.	Relevant discussion of the representativeness of the field research. Relevant analysis of the field research, contrasting all the findings amongst each other and uncovering patterns and insights. Selective usage of statistical methods where relevant. Clear understanding of the	Thorough and relevant discussion of the representativeness of the field research. Exceptional analysis of the field research findings, contrasting all the findings amongst each other and exhibiting clear insights. Selective usage of statistical methods where relevant. Clear understanding of the methods and findings.

				methods and findings.	
6. CRITICAL THINKING	No sign of any critical reflection.	A basic degree of critical reflection is evident.	Critical reflection is demonstrated.	A good level of critical reflection is demonstrated.	Excellent critical reflection is demonstrated.
	Information is taken from source(s) without any interpretation/ evaluation. The student merely repeats information provided; the student takes it at face value as if it were based on proven 'facts', without counter-checking its validity or reliability.	Information is taken as mostly fact, with little questioning.	Information is taken from (several) source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, with a sufficient degree to develop a coherent analysis.	Information is taken from source(s) with a good degree of interpretation/evalua tion to develop a good and coherent analysis.	A range of relevant information is taken from sources with an advanced degree of interpretation/evaluation to develop a coherent and convincing analysis. The student engages very critically [i.e., in an appraising manner] with a range of relevant sources consulted and makes good sense of the information therein. The student examines the evidence as well as the sources of evidence, their underlying methodology, and critically examines its accuracy, relevance, completeness [or otherwise] and significance.
a. Academic writing	There are more than 30 problems, of different sizes (relating to both APA and the writing itself); this would be a	There are around 20 problems, pretty significant howlers, I mean. The language is affecting the quality of the work to such	The piece is relatively clean, clearly the product of care and careful inspection (it feels like it has been read over at least once). The problems are there, certainly, but they don't completely	This thesis has only minor academic writing issues, looks and feels like the product of great care.	The work is pretty spectacular in terms of execution and the register in which it is written is both academic and free of errors and oversights to a significant, near flawless, degree.
	thesis in which the reader stops at practically every sentence to search out the intended meaning	a degree that it is impossible to be objective about the work's quality. It's not awful exactly, but it	knock the reader over the head, and I still get what you are trying to convey. There are still concerns that this may not be an academic work in execution	This student wants to communicate an idea and realises that the language used is the wrapping paper in	There are no observable oversights in terms of APA execution. Critical, analytical, sophisticated, engaging closely with

	or for a missing citation. It is impossible to see the woods for the trees and the language employed is to blame.	feels careless (APA system is not observed).		which this gift appears. Some oversights still appear in terms of the APA's implementation (missing citations or incorrect bibliographical inclusions)	the research question. Logically and rigorously argued.
b. Line of reasoning	Absent line of reasoning. The train of thought appears largely muddled; it remains completely unclear how the different parts are linked together.	Unclear/incoherent line of reasoning. The text is highly fragmented and unbalanced; it contains many and/or big logical jumps. It is mostly unclear how the different parts are linked together.	The line of reasoning is sufficient, and mostly but not always clear or coherent. The text contains some logical jumps; the internal linkages are not always consistent and explicit.	The line of reasoning is almost always clear, coherent and logically consistent.	The line of argumentation ('golden thread') is always clear and coherent, the flow of ideas logically organized and well-focused. The paper Includes linking text which explains to the reader what was done, how and why, guiding the reader through in an easy- to-follow, convincing way and clearly and explicitly linking the different chapters/sections together.
7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS					
a. Recommendatio ns	No/very low quality recommendations.	Low quality recommendations. The recommendations are very unspecific; they do not provide any kind of added value to the company under investigation. Recommendations are not based on the actual research at hand.	Satisfactory quality of recommendations. The recommendations are sufficiently specific to provide some added value to the company under investigation. Recommendations are based on the actual research at hand.	Good quality of recommendations. The recommendations are quite specific to provide reasonable added value to the company under investigation. The student has included some critical	High quality recommendations. The student gives a sound answer to the research question; valuable, feasible and tailor-made recommendations to the company, incl. pro-cons/risk indication per solution, are provided.

				reflection upon the feasibility of the recommendations.	
b. <i>Conclusions</i>	The conclusion does not mention the research findings and/or does not link research output and business theory, no perspectives for further research are addressed.	The conclusion mentions some research findings vaguely and might link some of the research output with business theory. Some vague perspectives for future research might be mentioned.	The conclusion mentions all the research findings and links up most of the research output with business theory. Some general perspectives for future research are mentioned.	The investigation and key findings are well summarized, and even reflected upon critically here and there. All the research output has been linked with business theory. Good perspectives for future research are mentioned.	The investigation and key findings are excellently and competently summarized, including critical reflection and linking research output and business theory. Excellent perspectives for future research are addressed.

Grades per section

Criterion	Title	Grade
1	Language	10 %
2	Formal presentation	15 %
3	Problem outline (rationale) and research question	15 %
4	Knowledge and understanding	15 %
5	Methodology and data collection	20 %
6	Critical thinking	10 %
7	Recommendations and conclusions	15 %
	Total	100%

Content	Structure	Mode of Delivery	Delivery & timing	Response to questions	Grade indication
Concise and focused presentation, demonstrating an extensive, detailed and thorough knowledge of the subject. A thought-provoking presentation that shows breadth and depth and inevitably invites questions from the audience.	Clearly structured and logically organized. The presentation begins with an informative overview. Sections of the talk and slides flow seamlessly together and the audience is always aware where the speaker is in the presentation. The main messages of the presentation are clearly emphasized, and also highlighted in the final slides(s).	Professional quality. Slides* are informative and complement the oral presentation perfectly. Slides are dominated by well-chosen and original visual aids, with minimal text. Good quality images, which enhance the use and presentation of evidence. Graphics are simple and sophisticated.	Presentation delivered to a standard expected in a professional context. Talk is eloquent, fluent, perfectly audible, and well-paced. Speaker exudes confidence and keeps eye contact with the audience. Perfectly timed presentation, not running under or over time.	Responses to questions are handled in a confident, professional manner, reflecting excellent subject knowledge and understanding. Answers expand on detail given in the presentation, and demonstrate real academic insight.	Excellent
Very good presentation, demonstrating detailed and thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject. Content is correct and accurate, and knowledge mainly comes from wider reading beyond taught materials.	Clearly structured and logically organized. Presentation has a meaningful title, and begins with an overview of the talk. Slides are logically sequenced and discussion flows from one slide to the next. Presentation ends with a clear summary that highlights the key message(s) of the talk.	Slides support the oral presentation, providing a summary of what the speaker is saying rather than the speech word-for-word. Slides are well laid out. Perfect balance of text and visual aids. Visual aids are well chosen and original. Good quality images, which enhance the use and presentation of evidence.	Talk clearly delivered, perfectly audible, well-paced. Delivered with confidence. Speaker makes occasional reference to notes or the screen, but still engages with the audience. Perfectly timed presentation, not running under or over time.	Responses to questions are handled in a confident manner, reflecting good subject knowledge and understanding. Answers expand on detail given in the presentation, rather than repeating the same information.	Good

4.2 Assessment Criteria for the Presentation

Presentation demonstrates fairly good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Content is accurate and may be substantial, but is primarily descriptive. May contain occasional errors.	knowledge and ling of the subject.occasional moments of confusion.accurate and may tial, but is primarily . May containPresentation has a meaningful title, introduction and conclusion. Yet, audience	Slides acceptable, but contain too much text, especially large blocks of text rather than bullet-point summaries of the oral presentation. Some material on slides may not be relevant. Visual aids used, but could be used to better effect. Images of reasonable quality.	Presenter speaks clearly and generally holds the audience's interest, although uses notes and screen. Mostly delivered in a confident and audible style. Quality of speech is not perfect but fairly satisfactory and understandable. Presentation slightly under or over time.	An attempt is made to respond to questions, but answers may contain errors or be confused.	Satisfactory
Presentation shows satisfactory knowledge of subject, Content is largely accurate, but primarily descriptive, May contain errors and/or omissions.			Delivery not always clear and some parts of presentation may be mumbled, hard to hear, spoken too fast/slow. Speaker does not always hold the interest of the audience, which could be a result of reading from the slides, or facing the screen too much. Presentation may be considerably under or over time.	Hesitant attempt to respond to audience questions. Responses are confused and/or contain errors.	Fail

Weak content that is descriptive and general. Insufficient material to demonstrate basic knowledge of the subject. Content contains imperfections, and key material is omitted. Shows an inability to summarize information.Poorly structured and organized. Sections of presentation do not always link together. Presentation lacks a clear introduction and conclusionLittle or no evidence of background reading and research.Poorly structured and organized. Sections of presentation do not always link together.	Very few slides, which are poorly designed. Too text heavy. Slides contain irrelevant material. Insufficient use of visual aids and images are poor quality. Data sources not given.	Delivery unclear. Presenter cannot be followed due to fast, delivery, inaudible voice and/or mumbling. Does not engage with audience. Badly timed, considerably under or over time.	Does not respond properly to audience questions.	Complete Fail
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