



UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Bachelor of Science in International Business Administration

COURSE SYLLABUS 2015-2016

201200015 - Bachelor Thesis IBA - 15 EC

Language of the course: English

Preparation Period: IBA Module CHANGEL in 3rd year / 3rd quartile

BSc Thesis Research: 4th quartile (direct after CHANGEL)
OR 1st quartile of study year following CHANGEL

Pre-requisite:

- *TEM students(135 EC in total):*
All obligatory modules of IBA (Modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11)
+ one programme related elective (Modules 7, 8)
- *students of cohorts 2012 or before:*
1st year Bachelor & 75 EC (135 EC in total)

Contact: Programme Coordinator
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1. Introduction

In the Bachelor Thesis course you show your acquisition of competences as mentioned in the intended learning outcomes of the BSc-programme in International Business Administration. Two quartiles of the BSc Programme in International Business Administration are reserved for the execution of the research proposal for a bachelor thesis: the fourth quartile for nominal studying students and the first quartile for those with an adjusted study planning (also fourth quartile of next year of study can be used).

The bachelor thesis project in all cases start within the module CHANGEL, the 11th IBA module. The research proposal for the bachelor thesis need to be set-up and approved within CHANGEL in order to be allowed to start the bachelor thesis.

If you have obtained 135 EC in the scheduled study pace (including all the obligatory IBA modules - modules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 11 - together with at least one of the programme related electives - module 7 and 8) you can start your Bachelor thesis in the 4th quartile. Otherwise you start as soon as the requirements are met, in quartile one or four.

The research proposal, that is part of the bachelor thesis course, has to be prepared *within CHANGEL no longer than half a year before the project itself!* (see programme specific part of EER).

The Bachelor Thesis course enables you to explore a topic of interest in detail and to demonstrate gaining in-depth knowledge and competencies as mentioned in the intended learning outcomes of the BSc IBA programme.

1.1 Learning objectives

Upon finalizing the Bachelor Thesis course you are expected to show proficiency in:

- formulating a research question;

- applying fundamental business management concepts and/or theories to analyse the research question; develop a research framework (model if applicable); and/or design a solution for a business problem;
- adopting a coherent research design, and using appropriate data collection and analysis techniques for the validation of the empirical findings (if applicable);
- demonstrating the scientific contribution and practical relevance of the research carried out;
- providing a consistent, well-structured and -argued text of a Bachelor Thesis article;
- planning and managing your own learning process; and
- presenting and defending results of your Bachelor Thesis course during the Students' Bachelor Thesis Conference .

1.2 Deliverables

As a result of finalizing the Bachelor Thesis course you are expected to deliver:

- A research proposal for your individual research project;
- Intermediate submissions reporting your paper-in-progress (planned together with your supervisor);
- An individual final report, comparable with a scientific article (prepared for a possible contribution to a conference, book, and/or journal manuscript); fixed deadlines per quartile – in-line with the conference template;
- Presentation of your bachelor thesis project results at the Students Conference.

Ψ: In this format, you do not hold a bachelor thesis colloquium. Instead, you present your thesis at a student conference that is the final stage of the course.

1.3 Types of assignments for the bachelor thesis

The Bachelor Thesis course is a research-oriented assignment, with justified choices towards theoretical, empirical, or design contribution to existing knowledge within the International Business Administration field of inquiry.

Whatever placement you choose (together with supervisors), the Thesis assignment should contribute to running research projects within the International Business Administration field of inquiry at the University of Twente.

The thesis project can be conducted in either:

- The University of Twente (so-called "internal assignment"); in case of an empirical research, you will visit organizations as an outside observer.

Ψ: In this option you take part in research projects generated by faculty members (see 2.1, Finding Research projects)

- A company (so-called "external assignment"); you will conduct research from within a company, with a focus on participative research.

Ψ: It brings additional challenges, however. Please be aware that it may cause delay in the thesis progress: conducting external assignments needs extra and serious time management (because of the involvement of an external organization). Your thesis supervisor must approve the subject, so timely contact is a necessity! Students have the initiative.

- A foreign university (so-called "international assignment"); you may choose to participate in international research, with a focus on international management aspects within a specific knowledge domain.

Ψ: Preparations for an international assignment should begin at least two months prior to leaving The Netherlands. Again, because another organisation is involved, time management is very important.

NB! As oriented towards knowledge development, the Thesis cannot be treated as a confidential document. In case of sensitive empirical data, it is your responsibility to ensure the anonymity of the data, analysis, and results. It is also your responsibility to reach a consensus with the hosting organization on a public version of the thesis. *This particularly applies to external assignments.*

2. Thesis research project & supervision

2.1 Finding a research project

Business Administration research groups formulate bachelor thesis circle topics. These bachelor thesis circle topics are themes for 4-6 interrelated individual bachelor thesis projects that will be supervised by a team of two researchers. Bachelor thesis circles are ordered based on tracks that represent the research groups and research expertise within the knowledge areas of (International) Business Administration in the BMS faculty. The information on the bachelor circles offered for a calendar year is published on the Blackboard site of the IBA Bachelor thesis (201200015) in January of the actual study year (so in quartile 1 students need to use the Blackboard site of the previous year of study –the study year of the preparation within CHANGEL). Bachelor circles are valid for theses in 4th and 1st quartiles.

Ψ: The topics for the bachelor theses are published once per year (January), and hold through 4th and 1st quartiles.

Topics are a subject to annual changes, depending on the status of running research projects within the groups.

Be advised to monitor the formulated bachelor thesis topics at the Blackboard site before the Information market and the start of the subscription.

Ψ: The topics for the bachelor theses need to be chosen in the third quartile within the module CHANGEL, the module in which the research proposal is set-up. This holds also for students who plan their BSc thesis in 1st quartile.

Students apply for a research project in two steps. The first step is applying for participation in a bachelor circle which is arranged within the module CHANGEL. The second step is writing a research proposal and submitting it to their supervisor before the start of the bachelor thesis. Based on the research proposal the supervisor decides for a "go" or "no-go" decision to supervise the thesis. In case of a "no-go" decision the student formally has to re-apply for a bachelor thesis project in the next year of study within CHANGEL. In case the supervisor estimates that a "no-go" can be repaired within a limited period the student will be offered a repair option + the option to start the bachelor thesis, in case of a successful repair, in the first quartile of the succeeding year of study. In case of a disagreement regarding a "no-go" decision, students are free to submit an appeal to the BSc thesis working group via the programme coordinator. The motivated appeal should be submitted within 2 days after the "no-go" decision.

Your supervisor needs to have approved your research proposal before the start of your BSc Thesis project (and need some time for that)! Often supervisors ask for improvements of the proposal before they will approve the proposal. Be aware of this and take care of a planning such that your supervisor has seen a

draft proposal in time for timely approval.

2.2 Supervision

You will receive guidance from two UT-supervisors (BMS faculty members) whose responsibility it is to give you academic advice in writing a good Thesis paper.

The 1st supervisor (also known as the lead supervisor) is an expert in the field of the bachelor thesis circle. The 2nd supervisor is invited as a "reading committee member" to monitor and help, if needed, in the progress of the thesis. Guidance includes reading and assessing drafts and the final article during the research project, and assessing the presentation and defence of the final thesis.

The official start of Thesis work is marked by signing the Bachelor Thesis Project form (so-called "SMS" assignment form. SMS stands for Student Mobility System).

In general students meet with their supervisor(s) and the other students of the bachelor thesis circle at least twice within CHANGEL and agree on a planning of meetings during the Bachelor thesis project. In week 5 or 6 of the research part supervisors may decide – after consulting with the Programme Coordinator – to discontinue providing supervision, if they, after several advisory sessions observe that you fail to sufficiently progress in the project. In such instance, you have to start a new project in the next time the bachelor thesis is offered. In case a new research project need to be started this formally needs to be done in quartile 3 within CHANGEL. The supervisor decides whether the thesis can be continued or a new research project needs to be started.

External supervisor

When working on an Thesis project in an external organization, it is essential that you have a contact at the organization, who acts as an external advisor. This external supervisor must have sufficient knowledge and experience to supervise the BSc student in the Thesis project.

The external supervisor is:

- 'sparring partner' with regard to the project content;
- source of information with regard to data acquisition and project implementation;
- organisational gatekeeper in so far as relevant to project implementation;
- process advisor during the project implementation;
- adviser with regard to the assessment of the project results, the Thesis and the student's performance.

NB! Although the external supervisor is involved in the Thesis project's successful execution, the UT supervisors are responsible for grading your Bachelor Thesis, in accordance to the IBA BSc programme learning goals and related criteria. **The UT is not responsible for an external project and will therefore not sign Thesis agreements with external parties.** This is a matter between student and external organisation.

ψ: Make sure to have a meeting with UT and external advisor(s) together at the very beginning of the project.

2.3 Working in Bachelor Thesis research groups (bachelor thesis circles)

Every Bachelor Thesis project is individual work, and is graded individually. However, it is recommended to consider combining research effort in a group with peers, to obtain better and timely results.

The process of setting up a research proposal is organised in the offered

bachelor thesis circles. The group of students and supervisors forming a bachelor thesis circle have a joint responsibility in planning and co-operation. It is advised that students peer review each other's documents and discuss their work in order to improve quality of all individual research proposals and after that the theses. A bachelor thesis circle should be acting as a research group in which ongoing research and related literature is critically and constructively discussed. It is recommended that these circles plan their co-operation for the bachelor thesis project within CHANGEL.

In any scenario, research proposals with a possibility for team work and individual contribution should be discussed with supervisor(s).

2.4 Your role in this course

Be pro-active and think in advance about your research interests in business studies; prepare all formalities and read necessary documents on time.

Study activities in this course include individual (and group) work:

- Individual work – reading articles, writing your research proposal, conducting peer review of other research proposals, writing the Thesis (article), and presenting it at the Students Conference.
- Group work – discussing literature and mutual feedback.
- If your project is part of a group project, team work and clear agreements on planning and tasks is essential. In all cases the bachelor thesis is an individual report.

3. Assessment

The final Thesis article will only be accepted for the Students' Conference with a mark of 6 or higher (known as green-light decision); in case the mark is 5, you must revise before the conference (deadline a week before the conference).

In case your mark is below 5 you have to do a new Bachelor thesis project. Two weeks before the conference supervisors decide on “green light”, the permission to present the thesis on the conference based on a draft thesis that will be grade by 6 or higher. The student may use the feedback of the supervisors to reach a higher grade for the final thesis to be delivered a week before the conference.

Appendix 1 shows the assessment matrix that supervisors will use to evaluate the final version of the thesis.

The graduation committee (consisting of your UT supervisors) assesses the Bachelor thesis using eight criteria:

- Research question
- Literature review & Theoretical framework
- Research method / design
- Data collection and analysis / Validation of the design
- Conclusions & recommendations / Contribution to theory & practice
- Writing structure and style
- Independence and professional skills
- Oral presentation and defence

These criteria are not equally-weighted. The quality of the content of the thesis and the contribution of the research / design to the relevant academic field may weigh more heavily than student's performance at the oral presentation & defence. You must earn at least a 6 for the Bachelor Thesis Course.

Each UT supervisor fills in the assessment form (Appendix 1) separately; and after the presentation of the thesis, supervisors (including external ones if appropriate) discuss the final mark.

You will be asked to fill in an evaluation form about this course, to enhance its quality. The forms are to be handed in digitally before the students conference.

4. Academic conduct

Along with the Thesis article, you will submit the check-list where you declare to have followed the academic integrity rules in preparing your bachelor thesis.

Any student found to have engaged, or attempted to engage, in any of the following while within the university's jurisdiction, will be subject to disciplinary action by the program.

5. Thesis in UT repository & Confidentiality

The IBA BSc thesis is a public document. It is only by way of exception that a thesis can be declared “confidential”. A written request for confidentiality must be submitted by the student after obtaining the approval (i.e. signature) of the 1st supervisor to the Examination Board which then takes the final decision. The Exam Board can also decide whether the thesis or only a part of it contain confidential elements. A thesis that receives the label “confidential” is not freely accessible. But, in that case, an additional public version of the thesis must be submitted which would be freely accessible. A graduating student will not receive the diploma supplements until the public version of the thesis is uploaded to the UT repository.

6. Thesis formalities

6.1 Bachelor Thesis project start

Once the lead supervisor accepts a thesis proposal, the student must formally register by completing the ‘Graduation Assignment Form’. In order to arrange the signature needed from the supervisor a paper version of the form need to be delivered together with the proposal delivered to the supervisors. The required information must be entered within the web application Student Mobility System (SMS),

webapps.utwente.nl (login to your ICT account).

Students are responsible to check whether they fulfilled the requirements to start the thesis project beforehand (135 ECs in total before the start of the bachelor thesis project (Q4 or Q1) itself

including required modules /courses. For cohorts 2012 and before: EC's based on educational activities in the quartile of the bachelor thesis project (Q4 or Q1) are not taken into consideration).

7. Planning the bachelor thesis project and milestones (general)

Bachelor Thesis preparation : research proposal Within CHANGEL (module 11) quartile 3				
Bachelor thesis in:		Activity	Grade	Remarks
4 th quartile	1 st quartile			
Quartile 3: CHANGEL Research proposal participation in module CHANGEL to set up a research proposal within a bachelor thesis circle;		Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enroll for CHANGEL in OSIRIS - Orientation for track and bachelor thesis circle of interest. Information about bachelor thesis circles is provided at the bachelor circle information market, on which supervisors can be met. - Apply for bachelor thesis circle according to procedure published on Blackboard. - SET-up research proposal within the bachelor thesis circle and deliver according to deadline in CHANGEL schedule (13 April 2016 before 15:30) TOGETHER with the research proposal students deliver to their supervisor a paper version <u>of the filled out SMS assignment form!</u> Supervisors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide information on bachelor thesis circles at information market 24 Februari 2016. - Coach students and facilitate bachelor thesis circles. - Decide on approval of research proposals at (preferably before) start of Q4 (also needed for pass of CHANGEL). In case of approval the SMS assignment form is signed and delivered to BOZ before 22 April 2016! Decision about yes or no of approval is send to programme coordinator by mail before 22 April 2016. 	Pass or fail for the research proposal. Consequence : Fail for research proposal results in fail for CHANGEL as well and also means: No permission to start bachelor thesis in Q4 or Q1 within a year after CHANGEL. In case of fail: re-do module next year of programme. Only in restricted number of situations a repair option for a proposal will be given.	Students subscribe for IBA bachelor thesis circles. The circles provide them with a research project and a supervisor for the BSc thesis project as close as possible to the students interests. Students set-up a research proposal as part, assignment, of CHANGEL. <u>Students need to register in SMS (Student Mobility System) by its application form and assignment form before they deliver their research proposal to their supervisor.</u> SMS is to be found in Student Portal (MyUTwente). <i>Students are not able to arrange changes after filling out the SMS forms ! In case needed BOZ is able to support!</i> <u>To be delivered as Appendix of research proposal (deadline 13 April 2016):</u> <i>As part of the bachelor thesis research proposal students write a (max 0, 5- 1 A4) reflection on the future work challenges related to their bachelor thesis.</i>

Bachelor Thesis project: research & thesis writing & presenting thesis at Conference (Q4 or Q1)				
<i>Bachelor thesis in:</i>		<i>Activity</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Quartile 4;	Quartile 1;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual research co-operation and discussion of intermediate results within bachelor thesis circle 		Students: submit an SMS assignment form (paper) signed by supervisor to BOZ at latest 1 st day of quartile.
Quartile 4; Week 4/5 23 May 2016	Quartile 1; Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students: submission of the paper-in-progress <u>at latest 23 May 2016 but conform agreement with supervisors.</u> Supervisors: estimation for the timely and sufficient completion of the project. 		
Quartile 4; Week 5/6 26 May 2016	Quartile 1; Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor: decides on sufficient progress and informs student and programme coordinator at latest 26 May 2016. A student with insufficient progress has to stop BSc thesis project. 	Go / no-go decision for sufficient progress in paper to finish the BSc thesis project	Supervisors inform their Trackcoordinator and programme coordinator about decision.
Quartile 4; Week 7 13 June 2016	Quartile 1; Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students: submission of the pre-final submission (greenlight version) of thesis <u>at latest 13 June 2016 but conform agreement with supervisors.</u> 		Thesis should be submitted in conference format (according to template). The paper version of the green-light form need to be delivered together with the pre-final submission of thesis.
Quartile 4; Week 7 17 June 2016	Quartile 1; Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor: decides on Green-Light In case of green-light the green-light form signed and student is responsible for delivery of form to BOZ at latest 20 June. 	Green-Light decision for finishing BSc thesis project	The thesis need to have the quality to be graded by minimally a 6 to get green-light. After positive green-light student has the opportunity to improve thesis.
Quartile 4; Week 9	Quartile 1; Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students: final submission of the thesis to supervisors according to agreement. 		Thesis should be submitted in a conference format (according to template)
Quartile 4; Week 10 Monday 27 June 2016 9:00 AM	Quartile 1; Week 10 Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students: final submission of the thesis to University of Twente Student theses repository and by mail to the program coordinator programmecoordinator-iba@utwente.nl (Be sure it is the version supervisor gives approval to upload and deliver) 		Thesis should be submitted in the conference format (according to template)
Quartile 4; 1 July 2016	Quartile 1; Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' conference presentations Students fill in the evaluation forms and join the LinkedIn group of (I)BA BSc alumni. 	Final grade for the thesis	Graduation after the conference (altogether and also those who need to do one more module, best-paper awards).

Appendix1: Bachelor Thesis Assessment Matrix

Student Name:

Student number:

Assessment criteria	≤ 5	6	7	8	9	10
Research question	Unclear	Broad	Clear and specific	Clear, specific and well-defined	Clear, specific, well-defined and original	Excellent and innovative
Literature review & Theoretical framework	Almost no link with the scientific literature	Limited explanation of the scientific literature	Adequate explanation of the scientific literature; use of a loose conceptual framework	Well-explained and somewhat critical description of the literature; use of a clear conceptual framework	Critical evaluation of the literature; use of a very clear conceptual framework	Excellent; Profound and critical evaluation of the literature leading to a very clear conceptual framework
Research method / design	Disorganized; not based on the scientific literature	Limited explanation; vaguely justified using the scientific literature	Adequate explanation; appropriately justified using the scientific literature	Well-explained and well-justified using the scientific literature	Profound and critical explanation and evaluation of the research method	Excellent; original & innovative method.
Data collection and analysis / Validation of the design	Inadequately described; unclear analysis	Rather limited explanation; clear analysis	Adequate explanation; clear analysis	Well-explained; very clear analysis and validation	Profound demonstration of data collection and analysis; very clear validation	Excellent; application of latest, broad and in-depth analytical techniques, and validation
Conclusions & recommendations / Contribution to theory	Vague	Clear but not based on the reported findings	Conclusions based on the reported findings; appropriate recommendations for future research	Conclusions firmly based on the reported findings; valuable recommendations for future research	Profound conclusions; original recommendations for future research	Excellent; original and innovative contribution to the existing knowledge on the subject
Conclusions & recommendations / Contribution to practice	Vague	Clear but not based on the reported findings	Conclusions based on the reported findings; appropriate recommendations for practice, practical implications	Conclusions firmly based on the reported findings; valuable recommendations for practice, practical implications	Profound conclusions; original recommendations for practice, practical implications	Excellent; original and innovative recommendations for practice, practical implications

	≤ 5	6	7	8	9	10
Writing structure and style	Poor; illogical structure	Clear and consistent	Clear and consistent; adequately expressed	Clear and consistent; well-expressed; appropriately argued	Very clear and consistent structure; strong arguments	Excellent; enthuses and engages the reader
Independence and professional skills	Dependent on supervisors; poor demonstration of timely & well-prepared communication and other skills	Not so independent; satisfactory demonstration of skills	Semi-independent; good demonstration of skills	Rather independent; very good demonstration of skills	Very independent; superior demonstration of skills	Excellent; superior demonstration of skills, and helped other perform better in their project
Oral presentation and defense	Scrappy presentation; ambiguous answers	Satisfactory	Good	Very good; clear demonstration of engagement with the subject	Very good; superior demonstration of engagement with the subject	Excellent; superb demonstration of engagement with the subject
					FINAL MARK:	

Comments (if any):

Date:

Name of Examiner 1:

Name of Examiner 2:

Signature:

Signature:

