



**SSM**  
*Swiss School of Management*



**Doctor of Philosophy**

**PhD**

PROGRAM OUTLINE

# Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

TOP-UP OPTION  
Master of Research (MRes)

Swiss School of Management



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Program Outline

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## Imprint

Program Outline - Doctor of Philosophy

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# Introduction

## Our Mission

Welcome to our PhD program! The Swiss School of Management is pleased to introduce you to the Doctor of Philosophy in Economics and Management of the Swiss School of Management.

This program fulfills the challenging demands of best practices in doctoral education. The academic purpose is in contributing to knowledge through the building of new theories, or extensions of existing theories.

An option is to obtain a Master of Research (MRes) on the fly through completion of additional modules on top of the mandatory ones and by the successful defense of a high-quality research proposal.

The program supports you in your academic or professional career development. The program is relevant, rich, academically valid, and in line with national and international standards. It fulfills the criteria of the process of harmonization of higher education in Europe and the learning outcomes of the European Qualification Framework EQF-Level 8.

The PhD degree requires the demonstration of findings and conclusions based on data obtained from sound methodologies and couched in relevant and recent literature on the topic of research. We encourage you to relate your research to contemporary debates on issues that affect our economies and societies.

The program provides the level of training and support you need to produce high-quality research in your field of interest and specialization. You are not alone in your journey. You are guided by our internationally experienced faculty members who are experts in their fields. Our unique Research Lab provides you with all the help you need, at all stages of your research. We are looking forward to starting this journey with you!

Prof. Dr. Massimiliano Bracalé  
President  
Swiss School of Management

# Program Structure

The PhD is designed as a part-time program for people who do not want to put their careers on hold. Using a combination of online learning, self-study, and face-to-face teaching, the Doctor of Philosophy allows you to undertake a substantial piece of research without interrupting your professional or academic working life.

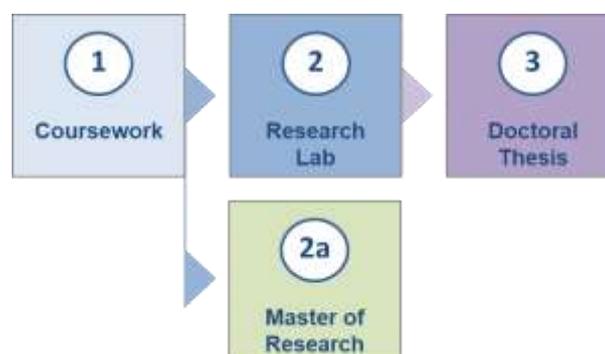
The full PhD program consists in general of three main consecutive stages as follows:



The following descriptions will guide you through the design and structure of the PhD program. The first stage you will pass is the Coursework phase, which will be completed with the write-up of the Research Proposal. On the basis of your Research Proposal you will enter the next phase the so-called Research Lab. During this phase, you will run the data collection and work on the data analysis. The research lab is the fundament, for the write-up your thesis - the third and last stage of the program. After approval of your thesis, you will defend your thesis in the viva voce (oral defense).

## Optional Track: Top-up to Master of Research

Within the PhD program, you have the option to to-up the mandatory coursework of Stage (1), to a Master of Research (MRes), by studying additional modules, and submitting and defending a research proposal in Stage (2) of the program.



Detailed descriptions about the optional track are found below, please read `Chapter Master of Research`.

# General Delivery

In the spirit of problem-oriented learning, the program will not overload you with coursework. Rather, we will take your initial research idea as the starting point. The first stage (coursework) consists of three (3) one-week workshops, which are a highlight of the program and provides a fantastic opportunity for networking and collaboration with academics and fellow PhD students.

During this time, you will develop skills you need to undertake your own, supervised research. Online coursework and workshop training in the research process (including research design, literature review, and research methods), will equip you with knowledge and skills that will not only underpin your studies but which will equip you for a career in academic, public, or private sectors.

As your research progresses from idea to literature review, methodology, and data collection, and analysis, you will be guided in learning about the appropriate tools and techniques that you need. Guidance comes from your dedicated supervisor, your mentor, and from our network of experts.

The PhD program is structured as follows:

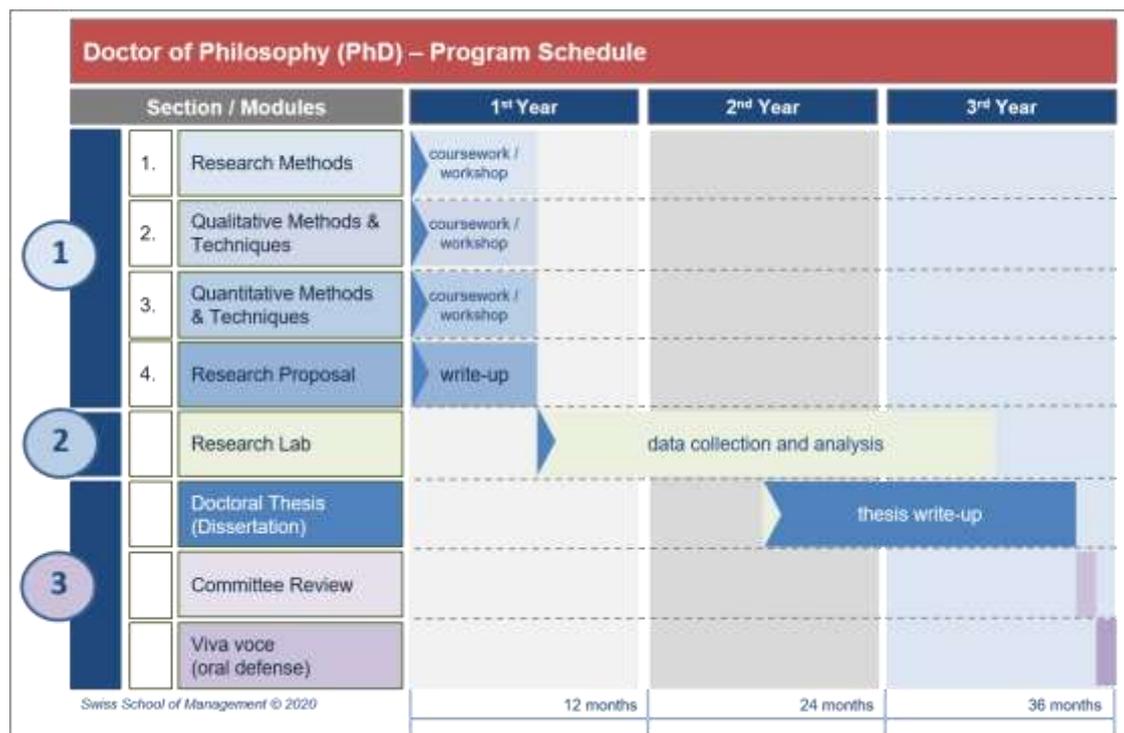


Figure: Time Frame Program Structure PhD

The second stage of your program (Research Lab) usually takes 12 months to complete. Having developed your research proposal in consultation with your supervisor, you are ready to begin work on the actual research.

Finally, you will defend your thesis at the 'viva' to justify your assumptions, data, and outcomes. Your research may be suitable for publication, as journal articles or books.

The normal period of study is three years, based on full-time studies. If the research is progressing and contributing to the goals of the program, students can extend their studies. Tuition and supervision are charged per semester. Extending the duration of the program must be approved by your supervisor, and the Academic Director.

## Your PhD in 10 steps – a brief description

In order to finish your PhD research project within three (3) years, we suggest using our **10-step individual study plan**.

First, you get a brief description of each step. After this briefing, you will find below detailed descriptions concerning the structure and organization of course work. Finally, on the following pages, it will give the course outline with detailed information to each module, with information about content, learning objectives, duration, recommended literature, and required textbooks.

### Step 1 – The Initial Research Proposal

1

With your application for the doctoral program, we ask you to submit an initial research proposal. The initial proposal consists of 5 to 10 pages in which you present your research idea, a template can be downloaded on our website. You can think of a working title for your research, introduce the topic, and why it is professionally and/or academically relevant. We do not expect a complete review of literature, but the first review of a small set of relevant publications will underpin your point. You can think ahead of what kind of data and analysis of this data, will answer your research questions.

### Step 2 – Coursework: Research Methods

2

The coursework consists of steps 2 to 4. The aim of the coursework is not to tell you everything there is to know about the methods that you can apply but to enable you to make an informed decision about the main methods that you are going to apply in your research. In step 2, we give a broad overview of all possible methods, with their pros and cons. Also, in step 2 you will be trained in critically reviewing relevant literature, as the basis for formulating your research model and designing your research. By the end of step 2, you are able to refine your initial research proposal, by formulating meaningful research questions, starting your review of literature, and selecting appropriate methodologies.

## Step 3 and 4 Coursework: Quantitative- and Qualitative Methods & Techniques

3

In steps 3 and 4 we will zoom in on quantitative and qualitative methods. Even if you opt for either quantitative or qualitative methods, you will find enough relevant material for your research in both parts. While the focus in both steps is on methods and techniques, the approach is broad, as the explicit aim is to further guide you in crafting your research proposal. While learning more methods and techniques, you will continue revising and extending your research questions, research design, and literature review.

4

Individual Study Plan - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)				
No	Step	Phase	Time Frame	Deliverable
1.	Initial Research Proposal	Start	At application	10-page initial proposal
2.	Research Methods		After 2 months	Draft chapter 1-3
3.	Quantitative Methods	① Coursework	After 4 months	Chapter 1 ready
4.	Qualitative Methods		After 6 months	Draft chapter 2 & 3
5.	Research Proposal		After 6 months	Chapter 1-3 ready
6.	Data Collection	② Research Lab	After 24 months	
7.	Data Analysis		After 30 months	Chapter 4 ready
8.	Thesis (write-up)	③ Doctoral Thesis	After 34 months	Draft thesis ready (Chapter 1-5)
9.	Committee Review		After 35 months	Final thesis ready and approved
10.	Viva voce		After 3 years	PhD-degree



## Step 5 – Research Proposal

5

This step is a very important one. It holds your plan of action, for all the steps that follow. There is no way back! We call it a research proposal, but ideally, the research proposal is equivalent to the first three chapters in a five-chapter thesis structure: introduction (including research questions, and academic relevance); literature review; and methodology. In many cases, your review of literature will not end here, as new literature is published during the implementation of your plan.

## Step 6 and 7 – Data Collection & Data Analysis

**6**

Steps 6 and 7, fall under the umbrella of what we call Research Lab. Designing questionnaires, collecting, editing, and analyzing data are specialized activities, many aspects that may be new to you. You and your supervisor are supported by our research lab, whenever it comes to handling data. By the end of steps 6 and 7, you can add the fourth chapter to your thesis.

**7**

## Step 8 – Draft Thesis

**8**

Now that you have collected and analyzed your data, you are ready to wrap up your research. You can rewrite and revise all chapters you have written so far, and start writing the concluding chapter. Your thesis should lead to the highest academic qualification, and the requirements are high. It is not uncommon to have several rounds of editing. Don't despair, it is normal and you're almost there!

## Step 9 – Final Thesis

**9**

Once your supervisor has approved your draft thesis, you can send it to the Viva Committee, consisting of a chairperson, two reviewers, and your supervisor. Any questions and comments by the reviewers have to be addressed appropriately, after which you can submit a revised version. If all committee members agree, then a date will be set for the viva voce (oral defense).

## Step 10 – Viva Voce

**10**

The definitive version of the thesis must be ready and printed, at the time of the defense. No changes are allowed afterward.



# Coursework

The first stage of the PhD program consists of coursework that gives you an overview of the entire research process and is aimed at acquiring fundamental research skills. You will be trained in basic research methods, and in quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques. Interactive lectures in all modules are emphasizing student engagement and will introduce you to essential philosophies and strategies of scientific research. We recommend taking part in academic conferences, research symposiums and are encouraged to publish your work in academic journals. The coursework takes six (6) months with a total amount of 30 credit points (ECTS European Credit and Accumulation Transfer System). <sup>1)</sup>

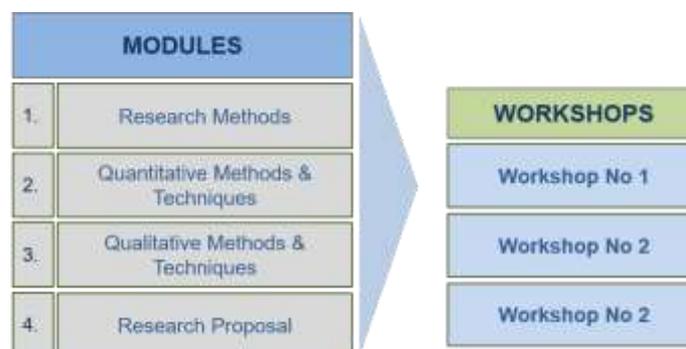
## Modules

The coursework consists of the following **mandatory modules**:

1. Research Methods
2. Quantitative Methods & Techniques
3. Qualitative Methods & Techniques
4. Research Proposal

## Workshops

The four mandatory modules are covered in three (3) **workshops**. Each workshop typically covers one or more modules.



All modules and related study materials can be accessed via our user-friendly e-learning platform, and have to be prepared before joining the workshop by self-study. You earn certificates (for Master of Research) for all modules covered when passing all required assignments. Workshops will be offered throughout the year.

How the mandatory modules are linked to the three workshops will be shown in the following table (see below):

		Workshops		
Topics		Workshop 1 Research Methods	Workshop 2 Quantitative Methods	Workshop 3 Qualitative Methods
Modules	Research Methods	☑	☑	☑
	Quantitative Methods & Techniques	-	☑	-
	Qualitative Methods & Techniques	-	-	☑
	Research Proposal	☑	☑	☑

Specialized modules may be needed to complete your studies. All mandatory and specialized modules are available on our e-learning platform.

## Attendance

Attending workshops is recommended. Apart from deepening your understanding of all parts of the research process, you will have the opportunity to present your research proposal to our faculty and your fellow students. You will find the feedback very helpful in developing your research! <sup>1)</sup>

## Assessment

Each workshop is assessed with an assignment. The assignments are typically composed of two parts:

1. The first part tests your module-specific knowledge and understanding.
2. The second part challenges you to apply the knowledge gained to your research project. This helps you in continuously rethinking and improving your research, in a gradual (and often iterative) manner.

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<sup>1)</sup> In the light of international travel restrictions due to Covid-19, we try to live stream the workshops and upload the recording to the e-learning platform.



## Research Proposal

The **modules** are assessed by applying the key concepts to your research proposal and build up to a high-quality academic research proposal. A research proposal approved by the Academic Committee allows you to move to the next stage.

The **research proposal** earns 9 ECTS credits. It contains the first three chapters of the doctoral thesis: introduction; literature review; and methodology.



The successful completion of the first stage of the PhD program allows you to enter the Research Lab and allows you to enter the optional **Master of Research** (MRes) track.

# Module Outlines

## Research Methods

Module Name:	Research Methods
Program:	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Delivery:	E-learning platform / Workshop
Credit Points:	7 ECTS
Mode:	Mandatory
Assessment:	Assignment

### Course Description

Professional and academic research are vital necessities for modern management to forge ahead. Research is the process of asking the right and relevant questions, and of gathering and analyzing the necessary data in a systematic and methodologically sound manner. An important aspect of sound professional and academic research is to embed the research within the body of existing knowledge (applied research), and to add to it (generating new knowledge).

This module will guide you through the research process, from the formulation of the topic, to critically detecting and reviewing relevant literature, designing the research project and choosing appropriate methodologies, collecting and analyzing the data, and writing the report. Especially for those who are new to research, this module will offer a helicopter view of the approaches that researchers use to answer research questions. The other modules will zoom in on specific parts of the research process, and on specific methodologies that can be employed.

In this module students will discuss particular advantages and disadvantages of different approaches to their intended research. The purpose of this module is supporting students to critically evaluate their own research project and in addition allowing them an in-depth and qualified assessment of published research in books, journals and conference proceedings.

### Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this module students will have studied to:

- Formulate research topic in clear terms.
- Formulate research objectives and questions, and hypotheses and propositions.
- Carry out a critical review of literature relevant to the topic at hand.
- Essential skills in reviewing literature: search for recent and relevant articles in (electronic) libraries and on the Internet; using tools to structure the review; know how to use systematic referencing; summarize the review.

- Understand the key methodologies used in modern research. Understand the advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Creatively combine various approaches to generate relevant data.
- Have a good knowledge of the various methods of data collection.
- Be familiar with statistical concepts like sampling, and hypothesis testing. Understand the main statistical (descriptive and inferential) techniques used to analyze data.
- Know how to structure the report, and the main requirements of a high quality professional or academic report.
- Be familiar with ethical considerations in research, including the concept of plagiarism.

## Assessment Details

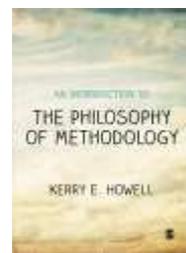
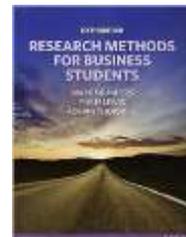
The assessment will be based on one assignment. You are invited to draft a rough plan for your research project. In the assignment you are asked to:

- Clearly describe the topic;
- Formulate research objectives and questions;
- Identify and summarize at least five articles relevant to the study;
- Design your research (in terms of approaches; methodologies; and strategies), and to motivate why the chosen design is effective in meeting the research objectives.

The allowed word count consists of 3,500 words (+/- 10%).

## Course Textbook

- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A. (2012). Research Methods for Business Students. 6th Edition. Pearson Education Limited. Harlow: Prentice Hall, ISBN: 978-0-273-75075-8
- Howell, K.E. 2012. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology. London: Sage Publications.



## Further Reading / Recommended Text

- Creswell, J.W. 2013. Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. 4th ed London: Sage Publications.
- Howell, K.E. 2012. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology. London: Sage Publications.
- Bryman, A. 2012. Social Research Methods. 4th ed Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Yin, R. K. 2013. Case Study Research: Design and Methods (Applied Social Research Methods). 5th ed Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Thomson, P. and Kamler, B. 2016. Detox Your Writing: Strategies for Doctoral Researchers. Abingdon: Routledge

Professional and academic research are vital necessities for modern management to forge ahead. Research is the process of asking relevant questions, and of gathering and analyzing the necessary data in a systematic and methodologically sound manner. An important aspect of sound professional and academic research is to embed the research within the body of existing knowledge, and to add to it.

## Grading

The student will be assessed and evaluated to quality and performance in the following areas:

Area:	Participation in program	Preparation and Homework	Presentation	Assignment	Total
Percentages:	20%	20%	20%	40%	100%

Grading structure see chapter “General Regulations and Policies”.



## Quantitative Methods

Module Name	Quantitative Methods & Survey Design
Program:	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Delivery:	E-learning platform / Workshop
Credit Points:	7 ECTS
Mode:	Mandatory
Assessment:	Assignment

### Course Description

Numbers play an important role in research. Statistical skills are critical to understanding a lot of what goes on in society. Many of us find statistics hard.

One reason is that understanding statistics requires mathematical skills. The mathematical skills needed in this module seldom go beyond operations that all students are familiar with – adding, subtracting, multiplication and division. This module will introduce basic and advanced statistics in an intuitive way. Concepts are introduced using examples that students will easily recognize from daily life. Although we refrain from discussing advanced topics in statistics, the workshop paves the way to exploring more advanced statistics.

A second reason why some students have a fear of statistics is the gap that exists between understanding the statistical concepts on the one hand and applying the concepts to reality. This workshop introduces the student to descriptive and inferential statistics. All techniques will be illustrated with easy-to-understand examples.

In the process, this workshop will zoom in on important topics in survey design: sampling techniques; validity and reliability; and data cleaning.

### Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this module students will have studied to:

Assess different research strategies, make an informed choice of methods with reference to time horizons and an effective use of data (primary vs secondary) for their particular research.

- Ability to design a survey (sample; questionnaire)
- Understand basic descriptive statistics
- Understand the concepts used in inferential statistics
- Understand which statistical tests and techniques can be used in a variety of settings
- Be able to perform, interpret and report statistical tests.

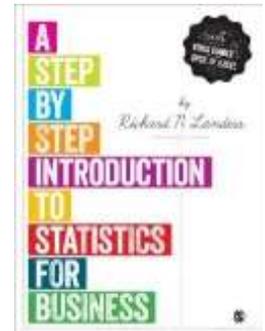
## Assessment Details

Students will be assessed in one assignment.

The assignment will challenge the candidate to draft a plan of analysis, for his or her research, based on a draft of the data collection instrument to be used in the research.

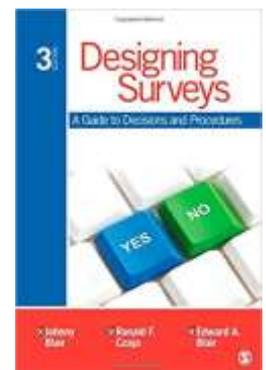
## Course Textbook

- Landers, N. (2014). A Step by Step Introduction to Statistics for Business. ISBN: 978-1-4462-08212-2 (pbk).
- StatMind (2017), Business Statistics: A Step by Step Introduction Using R. Version 3.5
- StatMind (2018), Business Statistics: A Step by Step Introduction Using STATA. Version 2.0



## Further Reading / Recommended Text

- Blair, J., Czaja, R.F. and Blair, E. (2014). Designing Surveys: A Guide to Decisions and Procedures, 3rd Edition. Sage
- Fowler, F. J. 2013. Survey Research Methods. 5th ed London: Sage Publications.
- Howell, K.E. 2012. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Methodology. London: Sage Publications.
- Walter M. 2013. Social Research Methods. 3rd ed Oxford: Oxford University Press



## Grading

The student will be assessed and evaluated to quality and performance in the following areas:

Area:	Participation in program	Preparation and Homework	Presentation	Assignment	Total
Percentages:	20%	20%	20%	40%	100%

Grading structure see chapter "General Regulations and Policies".

## Qualitative Methods

Module Name	Qualitative Methods
Program:	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Delivery:	E-learning platform / Workshop
Credit Points:	7 ECTS
Mode:	Mandatory
Assessment:	Assignment

### Course Description

This module is designed to help qualitative researchers with all aspects of their qualitative research project from start to finish. It discusses the key philosophies underpinning qualitative research and design – with a focus on research in management – and assesses the key advantages and disadvantages of the different approaches.

We will zoom in on aspects of research design for qualitative studies. The core part of the module elaborates qualitative research methods that have been touched upon in the workshop on research methods: action research; case study research; ethnographic research; grounded theory; interviews; participant observation; and document analysis. All techniques will discuss the various approaches of that technique, along with strengths and weaknesses, and examples.

In a separate block the workshop will discuss the analysis of qualitative data, which is fundamentally different from analyzing quantitative data. After an overview of the various methods and techniques that can be used when analyzing qualitative data – including the use of dedicated software – the principles of hermeneutics, semiotics and narrative analysis will be taught and trained.

In a concluding block the module will address issues of write-up and publication, with a focus on the differences from writing up non-qualitative studies.

### Course Learning Objectives

Students should be able to:

- Familiarize the participants with the fundamentals of qualitative research
- Understand the pros and cons of qualitative research as compared to quantitative research
- Have a sound understanding of the various methods and techniques in qualitative research
- Ability to use the various methods and techniques of qualitative research
- Obtain the various skills needed for carrying out qualitative research: formulating and asking questions; listening; summarizing; analyze qualitative data; write-up.

This course will not make use of software dedicated to analysis of qualitative research. The use of text mining, and related software, is the topic of an elective course.

## Assessment Details

The assignment will be based on the application of various methods and techniques of qualitative research to one's own research (even if the study will be mainly quantitative).

## Course Textbook

Myers, M.D. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Business and Management*. Sage Publications.



## Further Reading / Recommended Text

- Remler, D.K. and van Ryzin, G.G. 2010. *Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation*. London: Sage Publications.
- Ritchie, J. 2013. *Qualitative Research Practice*. 2nd ed London: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. 2013. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th ed London: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R.K. 2013. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 5th ed London: Sage Publications
- Birks, M. 2015. *Grounded Theory: Practical Guide*. 2nd ed London: Sage Publications

## Research Articles

All students are expected to read these works. These will be disseminated before or during the module and updated before it commences.

## Grading

The student will be assessed and evaluated to quality and performance in the following areas:

Area:	Participation in program	Preparation and Homework	Presentation	Assignment	Total
Percentages:	20%	20%	20%	40%	100%

Grading structure see chapter "General Regulations and Policies".

## Research Proposal

Module Name	Research Proposal
Program:	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Delivery:	E-learning platform / Workshop
Credit Points:	9 ECTS
Mode:	Mandatory
Assessment:	Assignment

### Course Description

Purpose and objective of this module is the elaboration of the final Research Proposal for the doctoral thesis. Based on students' learning in the prior Research Method modules, this module refines and clarifies essential details guiding their thesis.

Students are working with significant depth on the research design and will define a clear and feasible research strategy being specific and particular in and for their thesis.

Group discussions and peer-interaction under the lecturer's guidance will additionally support an individual student identifying and deciding on a research method, which is academically credible and empirically valid.

### Course Learning Objectives

Students should be able to:

- Identify clear aims and objectives, and reflect on precise questions to be informed in their thesis.
- Design a profound research proposal, which includes a critical review of the actual existing body of knowledge referring to their doctoral research.
- Identify a justifiable research strategy and data collection method(s).
- Defend the contribution to knowledge of their proposed research.
- Discuss research implications with reference to ethics.

### Assessment Details

This assignment requires students to elaborate a full research proposal consisting of a defensible argumentation:

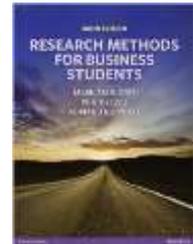
- Why this research of their doctoral thesis contributes to knowledge?
- Which way it will do so (methodological justification)?
- What precisely will be researched (aims, objectives, research questions)?

- Why it contributes to improving organizational practice (applied science)?
- Which also identifies the possible limitations and the potential ethical issues of the chosen methods and problems, which might be involved.

Subject to the essence of PhD studies, the research has to address business, economy and/or management issues or be related to these. The allowed word count consists of 3,500 words (+/- 10%).

### Course Textbook

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., and Thornhill, A. (2012). Research Methods for Business Students. 6th Edition. Pearson Education Limited. Harlow: Prentice Hall, ISBN: 978-0-273-75075-8



### Research Articles

All students are expected to read these works. These will be disseminated before or during the module and updated before it commences.

### Further Reading / Recommended Text

- Tranfield, D. & Denyer, D. 2004. 'Linking theory to practice: a grand challenge for management research in the 21st century?', Organization Management Journal, Vol. 1, No.1, pp. 10-14.
- Saunders, M. N. K. & Lewis, P. 1997. 'Great idea and blind alleys? A review of the literature on starting research', Management Learning, Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 283-299.
- Denscombe, M. 2010. The Good Research Guide. 4th ed Milton Keynes: Open University Press
- Easterby-Smith, M. and Thorpe, R. 2011. Management Research. 4th ed London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Clark, M.A., Wilkie E. and Szivas, E. (2010). Researching and Writing Dissertations in Business and Management. Andover: Cengage Learning.
- Thornbury, S.G. 2005. Beyond the Sentence: Introducing Discourse Analysis (Methodology). London: Palgrave Education

### Grading

The student will be assessed and evaluated to quality and performance in the following areas:

Area:	Participation in program	Preparation and Homework	Presentation	Assignment	Total
Percentages:	20%	20%	20%	40%	100%

Grading structure see chapter "General Regulations and Policies".

# Thesis and Research Outline

In the PhD program, you must submit a doctoral thesis, which fulfils the criteria of independent research on scientific level.

The research presented in the thesis has to be empirically robust and demonstrate superior levels of understanding theory, ability to do your research independently; the ability to draw critical conclusions by interpreting findings based on relevant, valid and reliable data.

## Thesis Topic

Candidates are requested to submit a doctoral thesis with a topic that has to be one of the following broad fields of research:

- Strategic Management
- Functional Areas of Business
  - Finance
  - Human Resource Management
  - Marketing
  - Production and Operations Management
  - Logistics Management
- Business Environment
- Public Policies
- International Economics
- Specific Sectors of the Economy

## Number of Pages, or Word Count

A PhD thesis typically consists of 120-150 pages (line spacing 1.5; excluding annexes, table of contents; acknowledgements et cetera), or around 50,000 words. We strongly recommend concise writing. Less is more.

## Admission to the Thesis

The successful completion of the coursework and approval of the research proposal is prerequisite to start the thesis.

## Formal Structure of the Doctoral Thesis

The doctoral thesis adopts the same format as the research proposal regarding fonts, size of fonts, referencing/citation, and other structural or formal components. Regarding the thesis chapters, the following five-chapter structure is the default.

1. Introduction and Background

2. Literature Review
3. Methodology
4. Data Analysis and Findings
5. Conclusions.

Please follow the Instructions for preparation of scientific and research papers which are described in the `Manual for Thesis Writing`. For the Research Proposal please exam the `Guidelines how to write a Dissertation Proposal`.

## Doctoral Supervision Process

As a PhD candidate, you are guided and supported by your individually allocated **doctoral supervisor**, who is selected on the basis of expertise in your subject area. The supervisor will assist you during the whole duration of their thesis.

You and your supervisor will closely work together and meet each other individually and mutually agreed on ways and forms of supervision. Supervision can take place by personal meetings and/or distance supervision using electronic communication channels. Supervision sessions have to be documented by the supervisor in progress reports.

You are entitled to 48 hours of supervision per annum. This regulation emphasizes the independent character of your research.

## Thesis Writing Duration and Extension

The elaboration of the research until the submission of the thesis is taking place within a period of twelve months as a standard period of stage 3 of the PhD program. This then is followed by three (3) months for assessment and corrections, and two (2) months for organizing the Viva.

In the case of unexpected interruption, illness or other serious affectations, you are invited to apply for mitigating circumstances. Applications for mitigating circumstances have to be accompanied by tangible evidence. The decision made by the **board of examiners** is final.

## Submission of the Thesis

Submissions can be made electronically via the online system and/or by three printed and bound hard copies sent to the Board of Examiners. Each thesis has to include the Declaration of Honor, in which the PhD candidate declares in lieu of an oath that their submitted work

- is purely their own,
- has not been submitted completely or in parts to any other Higher Education Institution before,
- is not copied from any third party,
- nor written by a so-called ghost-writer of any kind,
- that all use of third-party work is fully referenced by acknowledged standards of citation and referencing in Harvard style.

The Board of Examiners will call a **Viva Committee** of academics, of which two will individually assess the thesis during the viva in addition to the written reports admitting the thesis to the viva. The doctoral supervisor will only be a supporting member of the viva Committee, but can neither chair the Viva Committee, nor assess the thesis before the viva.

## Viva Voce

The Viva Committee will invite you to the oral defense of your thesis (viva) if and only if all members of the committee are satisfied with the quality of your research, and with the way you have addressed any of their comments.

For the viva you have to submit a presentation (e.g. PowerPoint) to the Chairman of the Viva Committee in advance.

In the viva you will defend the thesis in a summarizing presentation. Following the presentation, the Viva Committee will provide feedback on your academic achievements. Clarifying questions may be asked by the discretion of any member of the Viva Committee at any time during the viva.

The Viva Committee consists of a minimum of three academics. The Viva is open to the public. The class of the awarded degree will be achieved by the majority of the voting jury members of the Viva Committee. For their vote members of the Viva Committee will take into consideration

- The two written assessments before the viva
- The student's performance during their viva.

If your thesis is assessed as insufficient, you are allowed to make improvements and amendments. You will not be allowed to completely rewrite the thesis, or to write a new thesis.

# Top-up to Master of Research (MRes)

For topping up your coursework to Master of Research (MRes), you have to study three additional **elective modules**. This additional coursework plus a successfully defended research proposal qualifies for the Master of Research (MRes) degree.

This will involve an oral examination, similar to the formal **viva voce** that concludes a PhD. You will discuss and defend your research proposal in front of a panel of examiners. An MRes Viva will not be as intensive as a PhD Viva. It will primarily assess the relevancy of the research topic, approach and methodology, against the background of relevant literature on the topic.

The three elective modules and the research proposal takes six (6) additional months. Students, who have passed all modules (3 mandatorics plus 3 electives) and passed the MRes viva successfully are awarded the Master of Research (MRes). This optional program awards successful students 60 ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

The Top-up Master of Research within the PhD program is structured as follows:

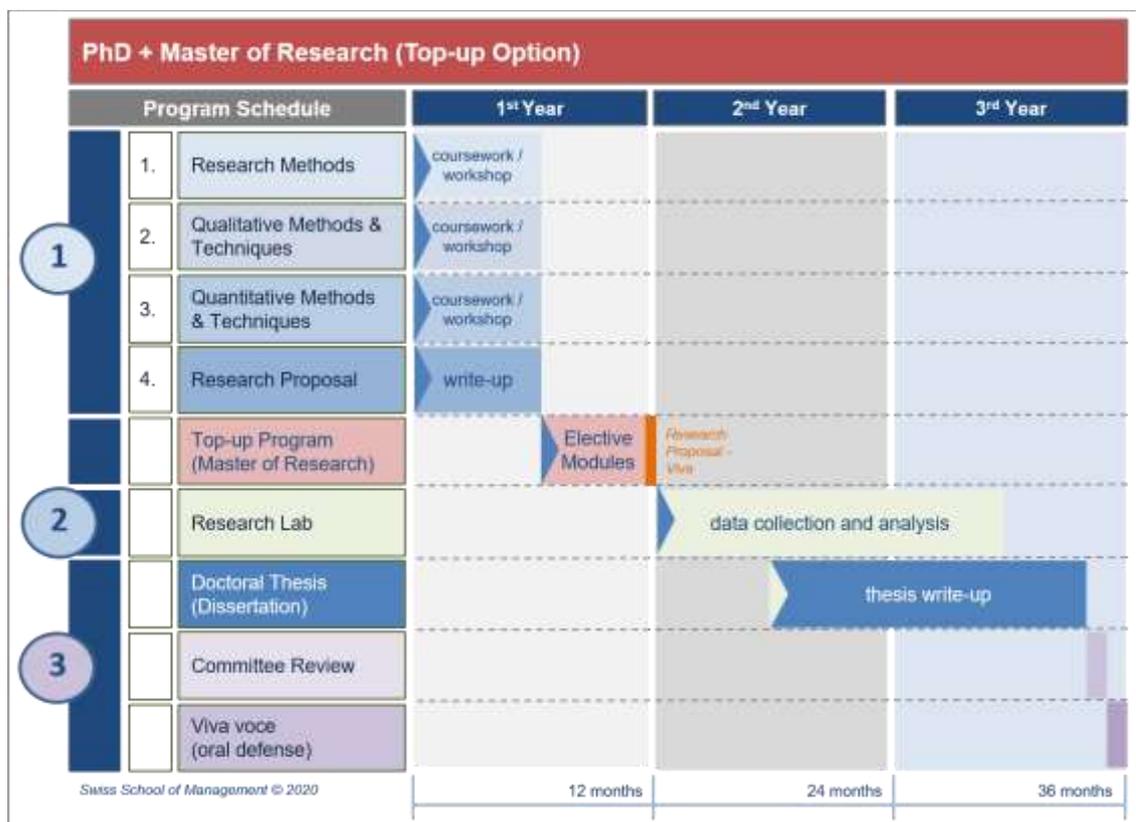


Figure: Time Frame Program Structure Top-up MRes

# The Research Proposal Outline

## (Master of Research - MRes)

The research proposal in the Master of Research (MRes) and the following doctoral thesis both are part of individual and independent research. The research proposal of the Master of Research is undertaken with the guidance of a supervisor.



Generally, there is no limitation for the topic, it only needs to be specific regarding economic sciences. Essential is that the research proposal supplies considerable evidence for a candidate's capability to undertake scientific research on the doctoral level, independently.

Within their research proposal students are requested to supply evidence of their intellectual capacity to undertake empirical research of scientific quality and value, which is defensible, robust, consistent and fully evidence based. The research proposal is the transitory step from the master's to doctoral level.

## Research Proposal Requirements

The research proposal typically consists of 40-50 pages. It includes the introduction (including research questions); the literature review (not necessarily completed); and the methodology to be used in the next stages.

## Admission to the Research Proposal

The research proposal module can only be given and approved when all (mandatory and elective) modules have been successfully completed.

## Structural Outline

The research proposal has to be submitted either electronically or printed in a bound style. The research proposal must present on the title page:

- ❖ The title of the research proposal
- ❖ Full name of the candidate
- ❖ Student number
- ❖ Date of submission
- ❖ Name of supervisor

On the following page the declaration of the originality of the work has to be presented, in which the student confirms that the submitted research proposal is their own work and that all citations, external graphics, reports, etc. are fully referenced.

On page 3 a full table of content has to be presented (incl. appendices), followed by the index of graphics, the index of tables, the index of abbreviations used.

- ❖ At the end of the thesis the full list of references is presented; the reference style is APA (American Psychological Association) or Harvard-Referencing System.
- ❖ Allowed fonts are standard fonts like Arial and Times New Roman at 11.0 or 12.0 size, 1.5 space
- ❖ Graphics and tables have to be numbered and to present a headline in bold, 10.0 size; for tables above the table, for graphics and illustrations below these.

Not meeting formal requirements may lead to rejection (fail). The same counts for repeated spelling and grammar mistakes. The language difficulties of non-native speakers will be respected, but to limited extent only. Therefore, non-native speakers are recommended to seek support by native speakers. It is clearly expressed that such language support is only allowed for:

- ❖ Language improvements
- ❖ Cannot alter, extend, or amend the content in any way or form
- ❖ Has to be stated in the given declaration to which an additional declaration adds confirming that such support was only related to language improvements of non-native speakers.

For native speakers, no such support is allowed.

## Topic of the Research Proposal

The topic of the Research Proposal must be fully aligned with the following doctoral research and the doctoral thesis. Students are advised to consider the research proposal as detailed preparation.

## Content of the Research Proposal

In their research proposal students will explain, why their doctoral research:

- will be important for their chosen field of knowledge in economic sciences,
- what the research will contribute in particular or,
- how it will extend the existing body of knowledge.

This part will constitute the background and justification of the doctoral research.  
The second part of the research proposal will:

- assess the existing and actual body of knowledge
- critically discuss the existing body of actual knowledge through literature – research and texts – identifying what knowledge exists, what it contributes, and where students have identified specific gaps to which their doctoral research will contribute

This part, which has to contain thoroughly rich secondary data, forms an inventory of what is known and to which extent the problematic of the doctoral research is relevant.

The third part is explaining and justifying the methodology of the doctoral research in the precise form in which consistency of the research philosophy and the according research strategy will demonstrate fit.

Fourthly, the research proposal will provide evidence of the methodology and the scientific contribution to knowledge through primary data, gathered, e.g., through a pilot test. This then is followed by an accurate research plan by which the doctoral research will be guided

## Assessment of the Research Proposal

The assessment of the research proposal is based on:

- relevance and scientific value of the doctoral research,
- level of academic depth and criticality,
- logic and relevance of the argumentation,
- robustness of the methodology,
- concise assessment of the existing body of knowledge in the specific field of the doctoral research incorporating a forward leading adoption of scientific and other academic literature, such as peer-reviewed and published research papers, conference proceedings, book publications, relevant statistics and other academically acceptable publications,
- narrative style, presentation and structure.

## Supervision

An individual supervisor will be allocated to each student. The regulation for supervision is that the work on the research proposal remains individual and independent.

The supervisor will review the chapter submitted and provide guidance, but no meticulous correction.

It is the task of the student to request supervision sessions and to arrange these with the given supervisor. The supervisor will not unnecessarily delay the request for supervision. Supervision sessions can be personal, by Skype, email, and chat forums or other means on which supervisor and student mutually agree.

# General Regulations and Policies

## Learning Support



Our problem-oriented and blended learning approach, is supported by:

- Textbooks and research papers for each module
- Online libraries
- Virtual learning environment, offering access to a vast range of additional modules for deeper learning
- Facilitation of peer-to-peer interaction and interaction with faculty for formative and summative assessment and feedback.

## Teaching & Learning Strategies

The orientation of the PhD program is academic. The program prepares you for carrying out scientific research at the highest levels (universities and business schools; research institutions; consultants).

The PhD program trains you to carry out high-quality scientific research critically and independently. The modules go well beyond the delivery of subject knowledge, and will incorporate knowledge and learning, discourse and informed dialogue, and self-development. Our teaching strategy is designed to facilitate a deep learning experience based on active participation.

## Academic Dishonesty Policy

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Cheating of any kind or plagiarism on test, exams, papers or other assignments will constitute grounds for dismissal. Students caught cheating will automatically receive a zero on their work and will be subject to further disciplinary actions.

## Broad-Based Goals

Broad-Based Student Learning Goals:

1. **Learning Goal 1:**  
Ensure students develop both knowledge and critical thinking skills
2. **Learning Goal 2:**  
Students will be familiar with the global business environment and the requirements of success in the corporate world
3. **Learning Goal 3:**  
Students will integrate the importance of ethical principles in the conduct of management

## Academic Misconduct

Students violating the Declaration of Honor of their thesis in any case, will be informed in writing that doubts exist about the origin of their work. These doubts will be accompanied by a written report.

On doctoral level such issue is assessed as being so serious that a formal Cheating Committee will be installed. This committee will consist of three academics who will evaluate the case presented. The student will be heard and can defend his case. If the student cannot provide full evidence that the doubts raised are unjustified, this may result in the student's exclusion from completion of the PhD degree. The decision of the Cheating Committee is binding.

Cheating Committees may take place even after a PhD candidate has graduated. This will be the case, if the Awarding Institution is made aware of academic misconduct, which has not been discovered earlier. If a graduate is found guilty this may lead to the deprivation of the PhD Degree awarded.

## Further Processes and Regulations

Further processes and regulations are documented in PhD Student Handbook. These are part of the documentation for this degree.

## Conclusion

Minor changes or amendments to this PhD Program Outline may be made in the effort of continuous quality and academic improvement. However, such changes will not affect the general structure of the program of studies. Neither these will reduce scientific or academic quality, nor negatively affect students being enrolled in the program. They may continue their studies as outlined in this documentation.

## Student Handbook

Further essential elements of importance for this program of studies are regulated and explained in the Student Handbook. Students are advised to read these carefully as a regulating part of the course's structure.

## Program Intended Student Learning Outcomes (Program ISLOs)

1. Students must contribute to the body of knowledge in a specific discipline
  - Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1
  - Key Learning Outcomes for Doctoral-Level Business Programs to which this Outcome is Linked: 4, 6 and 8
2. Students must show their capacity to analyze existing theories and draw data-supported conclusions
  - Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1 and 2
  - Key Learning Outcomes for Doctoral-Level Business Programs to which this Outcome is Linked: 5
3. Students must be able to integrate divergent or contradictory perspectives or ideas fully
  - Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1
  - Key Learning Outcomes for Doctoral-Level Business Programs to which this Outcome is Linked: 1
4. Students must be able to present and defend a thesis in applied research to be evaluated by a jury
  - Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1 and 2
  - Key Learning Outcomes for Doctoral-Level Business Programs to which this Outcome is Linked: 3 and 6
5. Students must demonstrate advanced knowledge and competence in a field of study of practical relevance
  - Broad-Based Student Learning Goals to which this Outcome is Linked: 1, 2 and 3
  - Key Learning Outcomes for Doctoral-Level Business Programs to which this Outcome is Linked: 4 and 7

## Student Responsibilities

You are expected to read and study the required material before class. You are held responsible for all material on tests, homework assignments, and class discussions even if you are absent. While in class you are expected to participate (see expectations for class participation below).

## Grading Structure

Through all modules a consistent marking scheme applies. The possible range of grades consists of:

GRADING SCALE FOR COURSE WORK/MODULES		
A	94.5% - 100%	4.00
A-	89.5% - 94.4%	3.67
B+	86.5% - 89.4%	3.33
B	82.5% - 86.4%	3.00
B-	79.5% - 82.4%	2.67
C+	76.5% - 79.4%	2.33
C	72.5% - 76.4%	2.00
C-	69.5% - 72.4%	1.67
D+	64.5% - 69.4%	1.33
D	59.5% - 64.4%	1.00
F	0% - 59.4%	0.00

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