



Center of International Programs (CIP)  
International Cultural Exchange School (ICES)  
Donghua University (DHU)

## **Thesis Handbook**

**For**

**Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of  
Marketing (BMK), & Bachelor of International Trade (BIT)**

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## **1 Introduction**

The Center of International Programs (CIP) requires graduating students to submit a comprehensive THESIS study relevant to their specialized business courses. This Thesis Handbook is written for graduating students like you within the academic year **2020-2021**.

The guidelines remain in effect until a new set of guidelines will be released by the Thesis Committee. The handbook's main purpose is to guide you not only on thesis preparation, writing and completion but also on graduation requirements and procedures. All information and guidelines written on this handbook should be strictly followed and implemented.

Your thesis reflects the quality of learning you have acquired in your undergraduate years. It is imperative that you consider thesis writing as one of the most significant stage in your learning curve and an opportunity for personal and professional development.

Therefore, as a graduating student, you are expected to have achieved the competencies required in thesis writing. These sets of competencies should equip you in applying theories in practical and professional business settings such as decision-making skills, managerial and organizational skills, critical thinking, etc. You are also expected to develop and demonstrate further such competence through an integrated approach during the research and the writing stages.

The authenticity and comprehensiveness of your paper will reflect the value of what you have learned in the university.

## **2 Goals Related to Qualification for Graduation**

Your ability to demonstrate profound ideas with accuracy, originality and coherence requires a well-developed research and writing skills. As thesis writing is a pre-requisite course for graduation, you are expected to achieve the following learning goals at the end of the semester:

- To independently deal with an issue from professional practice. This involves your being able to describe, analyze and assess the problem definition and for it to be researched properly, and in addition being able to provide your client with thorough, substantiated advice;
- To anchor your advice in theory (your own research);
- To make your own contribution more explicit, making it clear that you are able to apply the knowledge, insights and skills that you have attained during the course of the program in a situation in which you are expected to resolve a specific problem for a company;
- To clearly and logically describe the results, the approach and the substantiation of your activities;
- To demonstrate the competencies necessary to be able to function as a manager that has graduated from a university of applied sciences with an initial level of competence;

- To include, wherever possible, an element of sustainability.

The final thesis is equivalent to 17 credits with at least 289 hours in total. The paper must meet the academic standards set by Donghua University. It should also meet the international requirements of a well-written thesis paper applying the APA format.

### 3 Application

Students planning to graduate in the following semester are required to submit:

1. The application form “Undergraduate Application for Graduation” from CIP website;
2. Course Selection Guidance;
3. Logbook

The office will determine whether students are qualified to graduate and give them feedback by email.

### 4 Graduation Qualification

- Students should have paid all tuition fees and exemption fees for previous semesters.
- Finished most of the activities in the logbook, with the maximum number of activities to carry over the thesis writing semester listed below:
  - 4 International Forums
  - 5 Immersion Week Activities
  - 40 hours of Social Practice
  - 30 hours of Community Service

Requirements above are only for the application, students need to finish all activities before graduation.

### 5 Graduation Photo

- Every November, the school will arrange graduation photo taken at school, please go to the designated classroom to take the photo on site. The graduation photo will be posted on your diploma and graduation certificate.
- If students fail to take the photo at school, they must take the photo in the stadium below:

地址：上海市虹口区虬江支路 181 号 21 楼 2108 室

Address: Room 2108, Floor 21<sup>st</sup>, No 181 Qiujiangzhi Road

Time: 9:00-16:30 from Monday to Saturday

- Please make sure to go to this stadium and take your picture, since this is the only stadium connected with Chinese Education Department. Students will receive the photo immediately, please ask for a CD from the stadium and submit the CD and hard copies to the office.

### 6 Graduation Internship

To earn the credits, students are required to complete a minimum of one-month full time internship in a company (or minimum 3 days per week and about 160 hours in

total). It is in the final year of students' study in DHU and the internship could be in any countries as long as it meets the requirements.

An internship form including the evaluation of students' performance, signature of the supervisor and stamp of the company is required to get the credits. Students can download the form from the CIP website.

## **7 Logbook**

Students should submit the logbook to CIP office before the final thesis defense. Please fill all parts and get stamped in the logbook. If students miss some credits for practicum, they are not allowed to attend the thesis defense, graduation ceremony and receive diploma on time.

## **8 Retake Payment**

- It is your duty to contact with thesis supervisor frequently. If students fail to contact their supervisors, they are not allowed to attend the first thesis defense arranged in the last semester, in this case, students need to retake the thesis in the following semester and should pay for the 25000 RMB.
- The students caught plagiarism will receive a warning letter issued by the office and fail the thesis in current semester. The students must repeat thesis and attend the defense at the end of the following semester, and in this case, full amount of the tuition fee 25000 RMB is required.
- If students fail or don't attend the thesis defense arranged in current semester, they will need to retake it in the following semester and full amount of tuition fee 25000 RMB is required.
- If students failed the first round of defense, they have a chance to do the second round of defense, but the maximum score is 60.
- If students pass the thesis defense but fail some required courses in the last semester, they must repeat these courses in the following semester and pay the required fees of RMB 5000 plus RMB 1000 \* credits. RMB 5000 is the basic fee for continuing your studies after passing your thesis. For example, a student who fails a 3 credits course must pay  $5000+1000*3=8000$  the following semester to continue.

## **9 Graduation Ceremony**

Graduation ceremony is organized by Donghua University every semester. The office will inform in advance students who are qualified to attend the ceremony.

## **10 Visa & Insurance Fee**

- The office will extend students' visa until the office received their diplomas, please bring passport to ICES 122 to extend student visa before it expired.
- Students who graduate earlier need to change student resident permit to a temporary visa (One month). The rest of their insurance fees will be refunded (students pay four years insurance fees at the beginning for their study to get corresponding four years visa, and early graduation grants refund of the remaining fee).'

## **11 Thesis writing and Defense Process**

The thesis process covers 20 weeks spread over two consecutive semesters and details are provided in [错误!未找到引用源。](#). Students qualified to start the thesis writing process will be informed by CIP Office.

### **11.1 Find Supervisor**

- Students can indicate their preference for a supervisor (ONLY) by indicating this in the appropriate field on the thesis application form. Please note that there are no guarantees, and you might not be assigned your preferred supervisor. Whenever possible, the professional expertise of the supervisor should have a link with the nature of the student's thesis.
- Please ask the supervisor to sign on the acceptance form (Downloaded from CIP website) and submit the form to CIP office before the deadline. Students who fail to find a supervisor will be assigned to relevant supervisor by the CIP Office.

### **11.2 Thesis Information Meeting**

The office will arrange a compulsory thesis explaining session after finalizing thesis supervisors/students list. All students should make sure they can attend the session.

During the session, students are required to sign an agreement (provided by CIP Office) stating the conditional aspect of the pre-confirmation. Graduation qualification check will be conducted by the office at the beginning of following semester. Any students failing the check will be stopped from writing the thesis.

## **12 Roles & Responsibilities**

The progress that you are making with your thesis will be monitored during meetings between the student and the supervisor and the company coach. The supervisor will assess whether you are on the right track in relation to the objectives to be achieved.

### **12.1 Supervisor**

The supervisor acts as the only communicator towards the student regarding the thesis process. Any improvements the student is required to make in the thesis are given to the student by the supervisor alone.

The first meeting between student and supervisor should serve to set goals and manage expectations. It should be clear to both parties how supervision will be conducted, how often meetings will be held, how comments will be given and some expected research outcomes. Students should make an appointment with their supervisors in advance.

The supervisor is responsible for supervising the thesis writing process. Students should contact with their supervisor to receive feedback about their work. Whenever a student contacts their supervisor, the supervisor must formulate a response within 5 business days, if only to indicate that the message will be dealt with.

The supervisor continues providing feedback until he deems the thesis is ready for defense.

## **12.2 Second Reader**

The second reader aims to bring a second judgement before the student can defend the masterpiece. The reviewer provides a third party perspective and ensures the quality of CIP thesis defense process.

The second reader is not the second 'supervisor', he/she will not give comments on students' research. However, the second reader will discuss with the supervisor and raise specific improvements to ensure the student's research can reach at a passable level. After that the supervisor will relay the comments to the student, accompanied by his/her own advice on how to improve the research.

In this way, the neutrality of the second reader is maintained. It is therefore of utmost importance that the supervisor does not communicate with the student regarding defensibility of a thesis or acceptability of a thesis **before** this has been discussed with the second reader.

## **12.3 Thesis Coordinator**

Approves thesis applications and assigns supervisors and second readers to students.

In case of any issues between a student and supervisor, the thesis coordinator should always be contacted. He/she will make final decisions on continued action.

## **12.4 Thesis Committee**

In case of a content-related conflict between student and supervisor or between supervisor and second reader, the thesis coordinator can ask the thesis committee to act as the adjudicating body. The thesis committee will assess the thesis and when necessary, will designate and a third reader for a final assessment. The assessment of the thesis committee should always be available to the student, supervisor and/or second reader involved.

## **12.5 Responsibilities of the Student**

A thesis research project is your work and responsibility; it is the way in which you demonstrate your ability to work independently on a major piece of research. Also, it shows your understanding of the knowledge that you have acquired from the CIP.

One of the most important elements of the thesis is that all students are expected to do primary research, which means you need to properly keep in touch with your chosen business contexts such as companies and organizations. Students should collect and analyze the primary data, following the directions given in the corresponding section (13.3).

The whole research **MUST** be all your own work, not the work of your thesis team, friends or other research colleagues.

Regulations require that you should meet the agreed deadlines as laid out in the **Table 1** and **Table 2** below (or any planning tools agreed on with your supervisor). In the event a student does not respect deadlines, the supervisor can decide to put supervision on hold. Consequently, the student is likely to face severe delays in graduating since supervisors are only appointed once per semester.

The aim of the thesis is to assess your ability to undertake independent work. This means that you do not produce a **'PR report'** or a **'Business Plan'** for an organization or a company, passing it off as a piece of research.

The standard of English, style and overall presentation of the thesis report is your own responsibility. Therefore, it is important that your report is properly proofread in order to ensure that the format, grammar and spelling is proper; this is not the responsibility of the thesis supervisor

Your responsibility also includes arranging meetings with your thesis supervisor and providing, before the meeting, relevant information/questions you want to discuss with your thesis supervisor. When you submit new and/or revise material to your supervisor, indicate clearly (using highlights or the 'track changes' option in Word) what is revised and/or should be discussed with.

### **12.6 Distance Coaching**

Students who would like to write the thesis abroad or in another city need to provide their supervisor with a communication plan together with their thesis proposals. Communication plan must be planned in detail and the actions/precautions should be listed to ensure the frequent communications with the thesis supervisor. Students are ONLY allowed to conduct online coaching when the communication plan is agreed upon AND the proposal has been approved by the supervisor and the proposal defense committee.

In case you fail to observe the above or fail to keep communication while going abroad, the thesis coordinator may decide, after being informed by the thesis supervisor, to suspend the supervision process until certain requirements (to be decided upon by supervisor and thesis coordinator) have been met.

Students writing their thesis abroad are required to return to Shanghai at least two weeks before the final submission.

### **12.7 Proposal Defense**

Prior to the actual thesis writing process, students must write and fine-tune their proposal until it is accepted by supervisor and defended in front of a panel.

- Every student will have a specific presentation time when no other students can be around. Students are therefore required to arrive on the spot at the designated time to avoid losing the right to present.
- Every student will have 5 minutes to present the proposal. The teachers will ask some questions based on students' topics.
- The proposal requirements are detailed in Appendix 5.
- Students who change their topic after the proposal defense will resubmit their new version to the office, once it has been approved by the supervisor.

<b>Proposal Schedule for Students and Faculty</b>	
<b>Tasks</b>	
Week 3	Graduation application (Including 2 to 3 topics and choice of 2 preferred supervisors).
Week 5	Students approach preferred instructor by to get approval and signature on the application form by Wednesday of Week 5. Each instructor has two open spots as the

	supervisor. Administration finalizes supervision list by assigning the students with no signature on their form according the domain of expertise and topic area, and informs students on Friday of Week 5.
Week 6	Submit document by students: Instructor acceptance form and letter of assurance
Week 6-8	Finalizing topic with supervisor Set up regular meetings with your instructor to finalize the topic by Week 8
Week 12	Submit the draft proposal (2000 words) to the instructor. Late submission will not be accepted If you do not submit the proposal on time, your graduation process is cancelled for the current semester
Week 13-15	Modify proposal according to the instructions of the supervisor Instructor confirms the final name list of students eligible for proposal defense on Friday of Week 15
Week 16 (Tuesday)	Eligible students submit 3 draft copies of their proposal (for the defense team) Proposal defense
Week 16-17	Submit both final hard copy and soft copy to the office (hard copy is required to be signed by the instructor)
Holidays	Collect data and start writing the findings
Next Semester	Submission of first draft of the complete thesis on Friday of Week 5

Table- 1 Proposal Detailed Schedule and Deadlines

Under no condition a final thesis will be accepted without an approved proposal.

### 12.8 Originality Check

- Turnitin accounts will be setup for students to check plagiarism. Necessary modifications should be made before final submission. An over 20% Turnitin report will be recognized as plagiarism, and the thesis will be automatically rejected.
- Keep contact with your supervisor and submit the final version at least five working days before the deadline. Only students with supervisor's approval and their signature will be considered for grading and reviewing.
- Students who disappeared during the whole semester and reappear with a finished thesis are taking the risk of being rejected by the supervisor (a viva should ensure the originality).

### 12.9 Mid-term Evaluation

- The Mid-term Evaluation mark will account for 10% of the overall thesis grade.
- Drafted thesis will be uploaded to Moodle for supervisor's mid-term evaluation. A hard copy will be submitted to CIP office. The detailed schedule of the thesis finalizing semester is as follows:

<b>Thesis Writing Semester Schedule</b>	
	<b>Tasks</b>
Holidays	Finish data collection and summarize the findings
Week 1	Self-Information on diploma check and thesis meeting
Week 2-4	Meet with instructor frequently and finish writing your thesis
Week 5	Submit thesis soft/hard copy to instructor (based on instructor's preference)

Week 6	Instructor fill the Mid-term Evaluation Report Form
Week 7-8	Modify thesis according to the instructor's Mid-term evaluation report
Week 9	Upload the soft copy to Turnitin. Submit the final thesis to the instructor ( <i>soft and 1hard copy</i> )
Week 10	Instructor fill and submit the Final Evaluation Form to admin ( <b>Instructor's page</b> )
Week 11	Submit the final thesis to CIP office (3 copies, no need to bind) <i>Remark: thesis failed by the instructor will be reviewed by the thesis defense committee for a final decision. If the committee has the same opinion as the instructor, the student is disqualified for defense in the current semester, and must extend one semester.</i>
	Reviewers fill the Final Evaluation Form ( <b>Reviewer's page</b> ) <i>Remark1: The admin distributes the thesis to reviewers on Tuesday of week 11. Remark2: Reviewers fill the final evaluation form by Monday of Week 12.</i>
Week 12	Reviewer communicates with instructor about the evaluation if necessary.
	Reviewers submit the final evaluation form <i>Remark: When the reviewer fails a thesis, a third party will be involved. Students who still failed by the decision of the committee, may attend the second round of defense in week 16, if the modifications required are minor. Otherwise, a full semester extension will be required. Decision will be made by the committee.</i>
Week 13	Thesis Defense Defense Committee fills the Final Evaluation Form and notify the instructor whose students need modifications
Week 14	Moderators will submit the final evaluation form to the office
	Students need to modify if the Defense team give any modification advices. Students are required to print one official copy (DHU cover), get signed by the instructor and submit to CIP office.
	Graduation group photo
Week 16	The second defense for who failed the first defense. <i>Students will maximum get 60 points.</i>
	Graduation leaving process starts on.
Week 18 (Thursday)	Get the graduation gown. Graduation Ceremony

Table-2 Thesis Detailed Schedule and Deadlines

The office will finalize the thesis defense schedule and inform qualified students accordingly after all issues are resolved.

## 12.10 Final Defense

### 12.10.1 For Fall Semesters Graduates

- The first thesis proposal defense will be held in June in Spring semester.
- The first final thesis defense will be held in December in Fall semester.
- The second thesis proposal defense will be held in September in Fall semester.
- The second final thesis defense will be held in March in the following spring semester.

### 12.10.2 For Spring Semesters Graduates

- The first thesis proposal defense will be held in December in Fall semester.
- The first final thesis defense will be held in June in Spring semester.
- The second thesis proposal defense will be held in March in Spring semester.
- The second final thesis defense will be held in September in the following fall semester

### **12.10.3 Defense Schedule**

- Every graduate will be assigned to conduct his/her thesis defense alone. Thus, students are required to arrive on the spot at the designated time to avoid losing the right to present.
- Every graduate will have 30 minutes for the thesis defense. There will be an individual presentation lasts around 15 minutes and a Question & Answer section for about 15 minutes. Please prepare the PowerPoint slide for the final defense.
- Check Appendix 2: Recommended Structure for Thesis Presentation as reference.

### 13 Thesis Structure and Contents

- Once your thesis is confirmed qualified for review, you need to submit 4 hard copies. There is no need to prepare the *Donghua University Thesis Cover* unless the CIP Office announces.
- Once you pass the thesis defense and modify accordingly, you can print the final formal copy with *Donghua University Thesis Cover*. Please refer to the cover below. You can find the cover page in the printing shop beside West Yan'an Road gate.

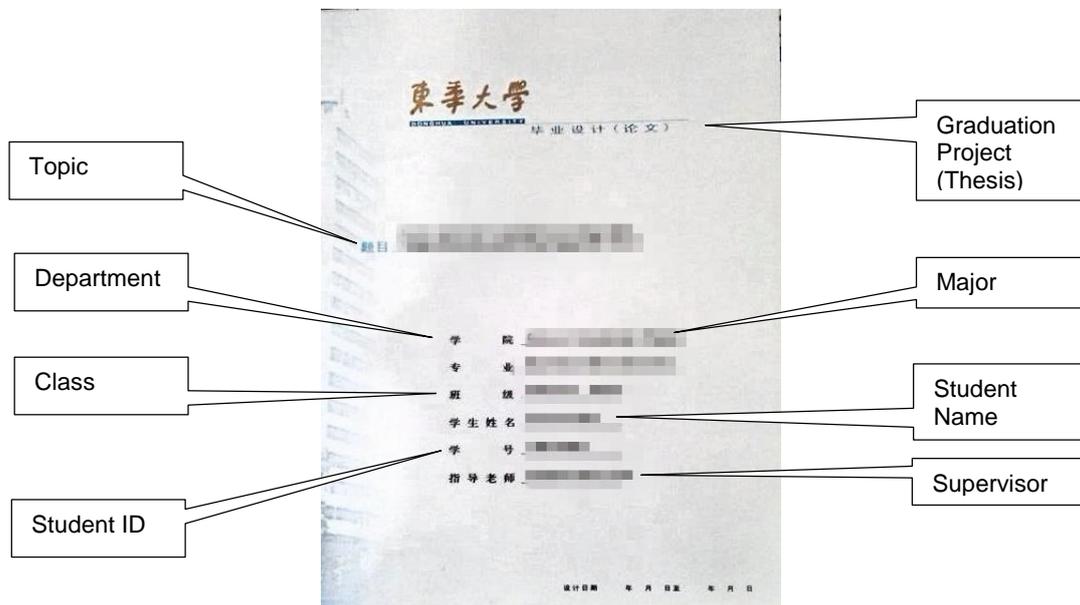


Figure 1 Donghua University Thesis Cover Page

- The thesis should be duly signed by you and your supervisor;
- Binding: The final report must be professionally;
- Word Count: **8,500-10,000** words (excluding abstract, references, and appendices);
- Maximum number of pages: 50 (excluding appendices);
- Appendices may not exceed 15 pages;
- Referencing and bibliography/list of works cited in APA format;
- Layout: All headings and subheadings must be in **Bold**, using Arial or Times New Roman fonts.
- Font size: 12 points for the main body, 14 for the subheadings and 16 for the headings.
- Alignment: Left for Heading and subheadings, and justified for the body
- The contents and structure of the thesis should follow the corresponding guidelines provided below.
- Students can have 100 RMB reimbursement for thesis printing. Please go to Lanqi print shop for printing.
- Please make sure to pass all courses you are taking in the last semester and fulfill all requirements for graduation, otherwise you are not allowed to attend the graduation ceremony and receive your diploma on time.

## **13.1 The Proposal Contents**

### Core document formatting

- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of figures and tables
- Overview of abbreviations

### Chapter 1 Introduction management issues and thesis objective

- Introduction (context)
- Presentation management issue (result/problem)
- Thesis objective
- Research objectives/hypotheses
- Research questions
- Chapter summary + Short intro next chapter

### Chapter 2 Theoretical foundation (Literature Review)

- Chapter introduction
- At least 8 theoretical concepts from books/journals are discussed: theories are described, compared, criticized and linked to the research context (relevance)
- Theories are categorized per research question
- Referencing of all theories (APA)
- Chapter summary
- Introduction next chapter

### Chapter 3 Methodology

- Chapter introduction
- Description research type
- Description of data gathering
- Data processing (primary + secondary)
- Sampling design and (Calculation of) sample size (in line with theory)
- Justification of interviews
- Explanation of Research framework
- Research planning and risks
- Reliability and Validity
- Chapter summary
- Introduction next chapter

### Chapter 4 Anticipated Results

- Speculation about outcome of interviews, observations surveys that will be conducted (provide alternative outcomes)
- Conclusions based on the above speculations

### Chapter 5 Tentative Schedule to Finish the Thesis/Project

## 13.2 The Thesis Contents

### Core document formatting

- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract in English
- Abstract in Chinese
- Table of contents
- List of figures and tables
- Overview of abbreviations

### Chapter 1 Introduction management issues and thesis objective

- Introduction (context)
- Presentation management issue (result/problem)
- Thesis objective
- Research objectives/hypotheses
- Research questions
- Chapter summary + Short intro next chapter

### Chapter 2 Theoretical foundation (Literature Review)

- Chapter introduction
- 15 theoretical concepts from books/journals are discussed: theories are described, compared, criticized and linked to the research context (relevance)
- Theories are categorized per research question
- Referencing of all theories (APA)
- Chapter summary
- Introduction next chapter

### Chapter 3 Methodology

- Chapter introduction
- Description research type
- Description of data gathering
- Data processing (primary + secondary)
- Sampling design and (Calculation of) sample size (in line with theory)
- Justification of interviews
- Explanation of Research framework
- Research planning and risks
- Reliability and Validity
- Chapter summary
- Introduction next chapter

### Chapter 4 Research findings/Results

- Chapter introduction
- Fieldwork described (issues presented)
- Response rate presented
- Present data, including both primary + secondary (Tables, Charts, Summary of Interviews, observations)
- Chapter summary
- Introduction next chapter

### Chapter 5 Discussions and Recommendations

- Chapter introduction
- Link the findings to the literature
  - Qualitative data organized according to themes identified according to the research questions and the literature review
  - Quantitative data presented per research question/theoretical concept.
- Research justification (deviations from the original design)
- Conclusion per research question
- Which (sub) objectives are most important?
- Section summary
- Introduction next section

### Chapter 6 Conclusions (based on the entire research), Recommendations and Feasibility

- Recommendations per research theme (based on the research questions and previous conclusions)
- Section summary with a clear overview of main conclusions/causes

### Appendices

- Scripts of interviews, data matrix, observations etc.

### Declaration of Originality

- Authorization to Lend and Reproduce the Thesis (with the signature of you and your Supervisor)

### 13.3 Detailed Contents for Thesis

Component	Weight	Word Count	Learning Outcomes	%	Details about the Contents
1. Development of research questions and literature	30 %	2000 -4000	Exploratory Research and Problem discovery	5%	<b>Introduction</b> 'who', 'what' and 'why' of your thesis. Brief Description of the company/organization, its services or/and its products. Explain how the problems were discovered (the exploratory research methods used) Hypotheses development Include the research questions, relevance and motivation of the proposed research
			Research Questions and Objectives	5%	<b>Aims and Proposed Methods:</b> Include the limitations [if any] of your research, such as time, cost, sample size, methodology, etc.
			Literature Review	20 %	<b>Literature Review</b> Create an opening section that outlines the literature that is going to be reviewed This is NOT a section for your opinions, but you should lead the reader through the review Make links to authoritative literature to justify the basis for your approach to the research. NUMBER THE SECTIONS (index link – this makes it much easier to make the connections later) All of the literature should focus on the research topic and research questions Recognize that there is other research out there but that it is outside the scope of your project Reference fully in accordance with APA guidelines.
2. Development of the research	30 %	2000-3000	Choice and Justification of Research Methodology: Research instrument; Sampling & data analysis;	15 %	Research Methodology Types of research (exploratory, descriptive, causal or explanatory) Approach (inductive, deductive) Sampling Population Sampling method (probability, non-probability, layered ...) sample size (justification of your size) Type of data (primary, secondary) Research instrument Survey questionnaire, interview questions, Structured/semi-structured, unstructured longitudinal/cross-sectional studies Justify the group of questions asked by linking them to the literature and your research questions Validity / Reliability If the Secondary data is mainly used for the analysis, do an evaluation of the data. Data collection methods (face to face, phone, online, social network ....) Explanation of any framework used to analyze the data
			Data Collection and Data/Case Analysis	15 %	<b>Data /Results</b> Use of analytical tools, tables, Charts as appropriate; Do not include your best guess as to why people responded in the way they did Do not include your opinions Do not make excuses for responses that you don't like Just tell the reader what the results were
3. Discussions	40 %	3000 -4000	Summary and Discussion of Findings	20 %	<b>Discussions</b> Summarize the findings It is critical that this discussion focuses on the research findings and on your major It is not an opportunity for you to put in your opinions Discuss the findings in the context of your research questions and the literature This is where index linking is really useful As noted in Section XX.X ..... (see Section YY) This is critical for making the link between sections, and between the data Refer to the research questions specifically This is not really the place for the introduction of any new topics
			Conclusions/Recommendations and outline of practical implications /feasibility study	15 %	<b>Conclusions, Recommendations and feasibility</b> Outline data and discussion-linked recommendations Discuss company specific implementation issues. Discuss the feasibility and limitations of the recommendation. Implementation of the recommendations. Link the recommendations to your data. Summary of key conclusions. Highlight how the organization would benefit from your recommendations. Reflect on positive and negative aspects and areas to improve in the future. Directions for future research.
			Structure and presentation of the overall report.	5%	Appropriate referencing (APA style) Authors listed in alphabetical order Appendices: Data, charts, graphs, interview scripts etc and other tools used in compiling this project. Glossary of terms When technical terms are being used.
Total				100 %	



## **Appendix 2: Recommended Structure for Thesis Presentation**

Agenda of Presentation

Overview of the presentation

Introduce the Company / Organization

Problem & Situational Analysis

Problem Identification

Analysis Using the Business Tools as Appropriate

Summary of Analysis

Recommendations and Feasibility

List and Defend Recommendations

Explain How it would be Implemented by the Company

Discuss the Feasibility and Limitations

Conclusion of the Report

Summary of Key Conclusions

Highlight How the Organization would Benefit from Your Recommendations.

Questions and Answers



## Appendix 4: Thesis Proposal



### Sample Proposal Submission Form

Center of International Programs  
International Cultural Exchange School  
Donghua University

Proposal for Undergraduate Research Project

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Passport Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student No: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Thesis Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction

In this section, you can lay the foundation for your research. Briefly introduce the company, the industry, the business environment, and explain the symptoms that drove your attention into conducting the research. Explain the exploratory research that you conducted, more importantly, justify how the results helped you to focus your research and clarify the situation at hand.

## Statement of Problem

*(Introduce the reason to choose this topic and the purpose of the research)*

In this section, you discuss the general field of business administration from which your research is to be drawn, and in which you explain the particular domain on which you will focus. For example, the general field may be strategic management, and the particular domain may be managerial behavioral issues, which in turn may be narrowed down to managerial expectations. However, the latter is also part of the organizational behavior literature, so for this example you would need to explain which of these general fields you would be working from; indeed, you may need to work from both. You should also give some explanation as to why it is important to do this research (for example, a general lack of knowledge in the literature), and why it is of interest to you (for example, to realize your career aspirations). If you have any experience in this area of study you should outline it here. It is important that you give these issues some attention. You need to show evidence of the different exploratory research conducted that lead to the research objectives. For example, did you conduct a focus group, an interview, some pilot studies, or did you just conduct a case study etc....

### 1. Research Objectives

In this section, you should explain what you are intending to achieve by conducting this research. These intentions should be derived from the existing body of knowledge, although there needs to be some originality in your research. Indeed, the results of research degrees are meant to contribute to further understanding of the literature, and should be of publishable quality. There are **several ways** in which your research objectives can be established, as follows:

- 1.1. **Hypotheses**; An assumed relationship between two or more variables. Several hypotheses may be established and the overall aim of the research would be to test the actual nature of these relationships with respect to the hypotheses.
- 1.2. **Propositions**; Statements can explain the phenomena that may be observed in reality, which do not include assumed relationships. Again the overall aim would be to test the nature of these actual phenomena with respect to the propositions.
- 1.3. **Objectives** or Questions; Objectives related to a set of aims or targets to be achieved through completion of the research. An alternative is to pose the objectives as a set of research questions. The overall aim is to satisfy the objectives or to discover feasible answers to the questions.
- 1.4. **Problems**; An unsatisfactory set of conditions will be identified and justified in detail. The aim is to discover solutions to these conditions.

This section is fairly important, as the research objective is the whole basis for completing the research. The value of the research is assessed in relation to the research objectives. Therefore, write **SMART** research objectives.

Please note that you do not have to include all the points above about the research objectives (for example, do not include hypothesis section if your research does not include one).

## **2. Review of Literature**

*(Summary the current research findings related to your topic and what is the value of your research, a research on the field where previous scholars are missing or an intensive study on certain aspects)*

In this section, you should demonstrate that you are already familiar with some of the literature relevant to your topic. You should outline existing knowledge within the area, making reference to paragraph and critique some researchers' research outcomes. This should include conceptual, prescriptive, and empirical works. For the latter, you should be able to show that you are aware of some of the previous research results that are appropriate to your research. It would also be useful to include an outline of wider literatures that may relate to your particular research domain.

## **3. Research Methodology**

*(Introduce and justify the research methodology you tend to use in your research)*

This section should focus on how the research will be undertaken. Therefore, the proposal should consider alternative methods of collecting data to either test the hypotheses or propositions, or to satisfy the objectives or questions, or to solve the problems. The proposal need to consider which alternative will be the most appropriate one. Consideration will need to be given to both primary and secondary sources of data. For primary data, the strategy can range from a census of the total population to a sample of the population, or to case studies of a few members of the population. These different strategies all have different purposes and will generate different types of data, and therefore it is important that you **explain and justify the method that you choose your research**. For secondary data, you must **explain the sources that have been identified**.

## **4. Budget**

Evaluate the cost of the whole procedure, including data collection fees, printing fees, subscription fees, etc., when applicable.

## **5. References List**

Articles you have read, and you have cited or are going to cite in your thesis/report

## **6. Appendixes**

Interview transcripts;

Observation forms;

Evidences of conduction of exploratory (preliminary) research...

## Appendix 5: Explanation on some Thesis Contents

### Abstract

This is of great significance to your report/thesis. After reading this abstract the reader should have a clear picture about your entire thesis. In the abstract, you should introduce the company or the market, related to the core concepts being used and studied. Present your main research hypotheses or objectives, research question(s), research design and the most significant research results. In addition, you should present your main conclusions and recommendations.

A standard APA abstract is 150 to 250 words long and contained in a single paragraph

### Chapter 1: Introduction

- Reflection on the **BBA/BMK/BIT** competencies (generic and professional) and the relevance to the research (including the challenges)
- Personal motivation
- Background of the topic

In the introduction you basically state the 'who', 'what' and 'why' of your thesis. The reader should be able to grasp the rough content of the thesis before him.

- Management issue: this might be either a problem or a desired end result.
- Thesis objective: this is the end product to be delivered to the company. Use verbs as identify, describe, determine, develop, establish, estimate etc.
- Research objectives: these are derived from the research questions and are the deliverables that need to be produced by the student.
- Research questions: which information do you need, i.e. which questions have to be answered in order to reach the thesis objective (and thus solve the management issue). The research questions all correspond to a specific, and separate part of the thesis objective; when all of the research questions have been answered, the thesis objective has been achieved

At all times, when ending a chapter, you need to introduce the next chapter in the transition paragraph. Example: The next chapter deals with the ...

### Chapter 2: Theoretical Foundation (Literature Review)

You can ONLY use academic sources such as journals, books and reputable online sources like Harvard Business review. Your literature review must be based on at least 15 reliable academic literature sources. Additional sources are also acceptable but cannot substitute the 15 academic research papers.

*What is essential of the literature review is that it gives the foundation of the research. This review results either in a conceptual model (set concepts) or very precise definition of the used key concepts.*

*NUMBER THE SECTIONS (index link – this makes it much easier to make the connections later)*

### **For example**

*This section outlined ... The following section will .....*

*To put ... into context, section xx (next section) outlines.....*

*To ....., Section 2.1.3 examines data and information as the .....and outlines the processes that influence .... Section 2.1.4 presents a brief ..... and Section 2.1.5 reviews the ways in which....*

Introductory paragraph (not numbered)

2.1 Introduction (What is discussed in the literature review? Why is this discussed in the literature review? Always start with definitions and make reference to the source of reference)

2.2 Per research question/theme:

Theory / concept 1

Description (Theory)

Motivation and comparison (Why this concept?)

Critical evaluation (Drawbacks and limitations)

Relevance for the research context

Etc. for theories/concepts 2-15

2.4 Summary (The summary must give a short overview of discussions of the literature review. It must give a comprehensive overview. This can be in the form of a conceptual model).

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

Introductory paragraph (not numbered)

3.1 Introduction (What is discussed? Why is this discussed?)

3.2 Research questions

Link to unit of analysis

Link to data collection instruments used:

- 1) *This can be the questionnaire, or*
- 2) *The questions used to guide the in-depth interviews, or*
- 3) *The observation criteria, or*
- 4) *Content analysis of organizational documents*

3.3 Research strategy and data collection\*

- Provide proper argumentation for the research strategy;
- Describe and motivate unit(s) of observation and unit of analysis;
- Describe and give proper argument for the choices made on sampling: sample size and sampling techniques;
- Describe and motivate (proper arguments) choice on approaching potential respondents or objects of research.

3.4 Assuring credibility of the research

Discuss and motivate measures which are taken to assure validity and reliability of the research results. Remember to demonstrate how you conducted a pilot test as the research instrument, which may prove the validity of your evaluation. As

conducting a pilot is necessary for you to reduce bias before collecting the final data.

Give limitations and important assumptions. Report on any incident which might have a bearing on the validity and reliability of the results.

### 3.5 Planning and execution of the research.

Report on planning and execution (per chapter). Highlight the deviation and causes of these deviations of the planning. Report on issues regarding research project risks.

### 3.6 Summary

Summarize and highlight the choices made for the key components of the research methodology and issues regarding validity and reliability of the research results.

## **Chapter 4: Research Findings**

Also, there must be a research justification at the start of this chapter (i.e. what has been realized compared to the design of chapter 3).

A description of how the fieldtrip was conducted, the response rate is presented.

The statistical tables and charts are presented; the answer of interviews are summarized according to the questions asked.

Introductory paragraph

#### 4.2 Research question 1

Answer to RQ 1

#### 4.3 Research question 2

Answer to RQ 2

#### 4.4 Research question 3

Answer to RQ 3

#### 4.5 Research question 4

Answer to RQ 4

#### 4.6 Chapter summary

## **Chapter 5: Discussions**

In this chapter the theories and/or theoretical concepts as introduced in chapter 2 must be used to analyze the findings.

Findings are presented per research question, including both primary and secondary data. (Start chapter with introduction and end with summary)

Introductory paragraph (not numbered)

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions & Recommendations**

For the introductory paragraph, you need to indicate two aspects that conclusions and recommendations are described in separate paragraphs.

### 6.1 Conclusions (based on the entire research)

Introductory paragraph (not numbered)

6.1.1 Conclusion per research theme (based on the research questions and previous conclusions)

Introduction next section (not numbered)

### 6.2 Recommendations (saying 'what' needs to be done)

6.2.1 Recommendations per research theme (based on the research questions and previous conclusions). These recommendations should clearly follow from your conclusions; they should be feasible and linked to theories and/or tools (e.g. project management, HR policies, 7S model) if relevant or helpful.

### 6.3 Chapter Summary