

Ming Chuan University

International Business and Trade Program

International College

Senior Thesis Handbook



IBT Senior Thesis Guidelines
Updated: April 2021

All students in the International Business and Trade Program must complete a senior thesis before the Bachelor of Science degree from Ming Chuan University is awarded.

Thesis requirements:

1. The thesis is to be a group project, with 2 to 4 students per group.
2. The thesis should be on a topic relevant to international business, international trade, international finance/investment, international marketing, or a related business discipline.
3. Groups can choose to do either an **Research Paper** or a **Business Plan** for their thesis. Each **Research Paper** must contribute to the existing literature by asking an original research question and collecting and analyzing data to answer this question, using a qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods design. Each **Business Plan** must provide set out a plan to establish a new business, with a detailed account of the business's future objectives and strategies for achieving them.
4. The *suggested* length of the main body of the thesis is 20-30 pages plus appendices. A business plan may also be complemented with, for example, a portfolio or visual displays (e.g., a poster). The final form and length of the thesis is to be determined in consultation with the thesis advisor. Formatting suggestions for research papers are provided below (pages 4 and 8). The format for business plans is to be decided in consultation with your advisor.

General:

1. Each thesis group must prepare a one-page proposal consisting of a brief description of the problem, the research question(s), proposed method and significance of the study by the 12th week of the second semester of the junior year. (See sample in Appendix A.)
2. Students should then show their one-page proposal to potential advisors. Any Ming Chuan University faculty member or adjunct faculty member can serve as a thesis advisor. Once a faculty member agrees to advise the group, s/he should sign the Advisor Consent Form and the signed form should be turned in to the IC office.
3. Groups should begin working with their advisor immediately in order to make productive use of the summer prior to their senior year.
4. If students want to change advisor, they can do so *no later than the fourth week in the first semester of the senior year*, and only with the permission of both the former advisor and the new advisor.
5. Students must consult with their advisor to assemble a three-member faculty committee and decide on dates for the oral proposal and defense meetings. These meetings can be scheduled for any time prior to the deadlines in the timetable below for the fall semester (proposal) or spring semester (defense). Each semester, students must submit a completed "Permission to Propose/Defend" form, signed by their advisor, to the IC office.
6. Students must bring midterm, daily and final grading forms from the IC office to their advisor. Grading: Midterm (Advisor) = 10%; Daily Grade (Advisor) = 50%; Final (Committee) = 40%.
7. All groups must adhere to these guidelines, the thesis timetable (see below), the formatting

guidelines (see below), and to additional instructions from their advisor. *If a group fails to do so, the advisor may discontinue his or her association with the group, after two written warnings. These groups will not receive a passing grade.*

8. After successful completion of the thesis, digital and/or paper copies of the thesis will be provided to the advisor and committee members. When the thesis has been finalized, a printed copy (and a digital copy in PDF format if requested) will be provided to the IBT office.

Senior Thesis Timetable

SEMESTER	WEEK	TASK	
Spring of Junior Year	17	Submit “Advisor Consent Form”, signed by advisor.	Nicky
Fall of Senior Year	1	Turn in finalized one-page proposal and outline of chapters.	Advisor
	9	Submit full proposal (for research papers: Microsoft Word file; thesis chapters 1-2: Introduction, Method; for plans: Microsoft Word file with appropriate section headings)	Advisor
	17	Oral proposal deadline	Committee
Spring of Senior Year	9	First draft to advisor (Microsoft Word file; paper if requested).	Committee
	11	Final draft to committee (Microsoft Word file; paper if requested).	Committee
	11	Submission of oral defense application form	Nicky
	13	Oral defense deadline	Committee
	14	Submit final printed copy to IC office.	Nicky

Senior Thesis Formatting

Structure and Components of the Research Paper:

1. Title. The title should briefly and clearly summarize the main idea of the study.
2. Title Page. Follow format of the sample shown in Appendix B.
3. Abstract. Brief, comprehensive summary of your entire, completed study.
4. Acknowledgements: Optional.
5. Table of Contents. Follow format of the sample shown in Appendix C.
6. Main body:
 - Chapter 1 Introduction
 - Background and problem statement
 - Purpose, rationale and objectives of the study
 - Significance of the study and expected contribution
 - Chapter 2 Literature Review (Review of the relevant research literature to arrive at research questions and hypotheses).
 - Chapter 3 Method (Design, including participants, materials and procedures)
 - Chapter 4 Results (Describe results of your data collection and analysis)
 - Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusion (Summarize results and their importance)
7. References (in APA style).
8. Appendices: Questionnaires, additional statistical tables, etc.

Formatting Instructions:

1. Title page and table of contents should use the formats shown in appendices B and C.
2. Tables and Figures should be placed in their most natural location within your text.
3. Font: Times New Roman, size 12.
4. Margins: 2.5cm top and bottom; 3cm left, 2.5cm right.
5. All additional formatting should follow APA guidelines, unless otherwise directed by your advisor. See *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition)*, Washington, DC: APA, 2010. Resources for APA style:

American Psychological Association – APA Style

www.apastyle.org

Purdue Online Writing Lab – APA Formatting and Style Guide

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Google Scholar – APA Citations

<https://scholar.google.com/>

(Find the article you wish to cite using the search function and click “Cite”.)

Business Plan Format:

1. Refer to the sample business plan at the link below:
<http://treasury.tn.gov/smob/Documents/BusinessPlanforStartupBusiness.pdf>

Grading Rubric for Research Proposal (Fall)

	F	D	C	B	A	Points
<p>Introduction: General topic background and importance clearly and concisely stated; the gap(s) in our existing knowledge is (are) highlighted. Purpose of this study and significance of filling this ‘gap’ in our knowledge is expressed, demonstrating independent thought and critical analysis and showing why the study is worth the time and effort.</p>						/10
<p>Literature Review: The main ideas, previous findings and current theories related to this issue are developed rigorously and in a way that is easy to follow. Research questions and hypotheses follow logically from this review of the literature and are expressed in a way that can be tested by this study. The relationship between the specific research question(s) posed and the broader question or issue is clear. Relevant literature on method is shown if needed. The literature review should NOT include irrelevant definitions and general explanations.</p>						/30
<p>Method: Research design shown (in diagram if possible). Participants and sample size, materials and procedures described in clear detail. Timeline for data collection is provided. Proposed method is feasible, realistic and able to answer the research questions. Ethics statement (informed consent), etc., is provided</p>						/40
<p>Discussion/Conclusion: Preliminary data and findings, and how they relate to the importance of study and method used. Statement of limitations: what your research will not try to do or be able to do. Summarize the significance and contribution.</p>						/10
<p>Written Proposal and Presentations: All English is clear and professional. Standard APA formatting used throughout. Presentation was clear and lively, with good use of visual aids; well organized and timed.</p>						/10
Total						/100

Grading Rubric for Research Defense (Spring)

	F	D	C	B	A	Points
<p>Introduction / Literature Review: Clear and concise. Incorporates changes suggested by committee during the proposal.</p>						/10
<p>Method: Research design shown (in diagram if possible). Participants and sample size, materials and procedures (including procedures to address ethical concerns, such as use of informed consent forms) described in enough detail for readers to fully replicate the study. Information on excluded cases, reliability statistics, etc., is provided.</p>						/30
<p>Results: Results are presented in a way that is meaningful and easy to understand for committee members with diverse areas of expertise. The analyses (statistical or qualitative) are appropriate given the nature of the data and the research questions asked. Presentation should highlight the key results. Supporting details and results from supporting analyses (for example, tests of statistical assumptions) should be available but should not be presented in a way that obscures the key findings by taking up too much time.</p>						/30
<p>Discussion/Conclusion: Summary of study and key results. Discussion of how the key findings fit with previous research. Clear statement of the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research. Conclusion states the significance and contribution of the study.</p>						/20
<p>Written Thesis and Presentations: All English is clear and professional. Standard APA formatting used throughout. Presentation was clear and lively, with good use of visual aids; well organized and timed.</p>						/10
Total						/100

Grading Rubric for Business Plan Proposal (Fall)

	F	D	C	B	A	Points
General Company Description: Company and product or service provided; goals and measurable objectives towards goals; philosophy; target market; nature of industry; key company strengths; legal form of ownership.						/10
Products and Services: Description of products and/or services; factors giving you competitive advantage or disadvantage; pricing, fee or leasing structures for your products/services.						/30
Marketing Plan: Proposal for doing marketing research (primary and secondary) to determine key facts about the industry, market size and trends, growth potential, entry barriers and plans to overcome them, perceptions about and expected nature of demand for your proposed product/service; characteristics of targeted customers; analysis of competitors; niche, strategy, promotional budget, pricing strategy, location, distribution channels, sales forecasts, etc.						/40
Operational Plan: Preliminary explanation of anticipated daily operations, including production, location, equipment, personnel, processes, suppliers, credit policies, management, professional support. Indicate areas where you propose to conduct further research.						/10
Finances: Propose research into personal finances for project backers, startup expenses and capitalization, 12-month financial plan, projected cash flow, opening day balance sheet, breakeven analysis.						/10
Total						/100

Grading Rubric for Business Plan Defense (Spring)

	F	D	C	B	A	Points
<p>General Company Description: Company and product or service provided; goals and measurable objectives towards goals; philosophy; target market; nature of industry; key company strengths; legal form of ownership. Incorporates changes suggested by committee during the proposal.</p>						/10
<p>Products and Services: Description of products and/or services; factors giving you competitive advantage or disadvantage; pricing, fee or leasing structures for your products/services. Incorporates changes suggested by committee during the proposal.</p>						/30
<p>Marketing Plan: Proposal for doing marketing research (primary and secondary) to determine key facts about the industry, market size and trends, growth potential, entry barriers and plans to overcome them, perceptions about and expected nature of demand for your proposed product/service; characteristics of targeted customers; analysis of competitors; niche, strategy, promotional budget, pricing strategy, location, distribution channels, sales forecasts, etc. Incorporates changes suggested by committee during the proposal.</p>						/40
<p>Operational Plan: Preliminary explanation of anticipated daily operations, including production, location, equipment, personnel, processes, suppliers, credit policies, management, professional support. Indicate areas where you propose to conduct further research. Incorporates changes suggested by committee during the proposal.</p>						/10
<p>Finances: Propose research into personal finances for project backers, startup expenses and capitalization, 12-month financial plan, projected cash flow, opening day balance sheet, breakeven analysis. Incorporates changes suggested by committee during the proposal.</p>						/10
Total						/100

Appendix A Sample One-page Proposals

Research Proposal: Spiritual Well-Being of Workers – A Phenomenological Study

by: David C. Trott

Problem: Organizational theorists have been advocating a more holistic orientation for work life improvement for decades (Barnard, 1938; Mayo, 1945; Deming, 1951; Argyris, 1958; Herzberg, 1959; McGregor, 1960; Likert, 1967; Galbraith, 1973; Ouchi, 1981; Lippitt, 1982; Mintzberg, 1983; Schein, 1985; Senge, 1991), yet none have provided an explicit discussion of the spiritual well-being of workers. Many multi-national organizations are exploring different strategies and approaches to enhance organizational cultures that foster an improved quality of work life not only for business purposes (Association for Quality and Participation, 1991) but for social purposes as well (World Business Academy, 1993). Systematic research that targets the spiritual well-being of all workers is essential in order to expand as well as guide improvement efforts of organizations.

Research Questions: What meaning(s) do individuals attach to spiritual well-being in their work lives? What higher callings or purposefulness are embedded in everyday workplace activities?

Method: The research methodology will closely follow that used in Barker (1989) study of the spiritual well-being of Appalachian women referent to the nursing profession: Participation of twelve workers who acknowledge that they possess spiritual well-being and are able to articulate their lived experience of the phenomenon will be solicited. Subject's rights will be carefully assured. Data will be generated using semi-structured, in-depth, audio tape recorded personal interviews after informed consent is obtained. Each interview will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The researcher's prior experience of spiritual wellbeing will be identified, verbalized, and bracketed prior to the interview and maintained until completion of the analysis phase of the research. The data will be analyzed using a method adapted from Colaizzi (1978) and Munhall and Oiler (1986). Scholarly rigor will be assured by means of an audit trail established to assure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Significance of the Study and Its Contribution to the Field: This study will provide significant insights into the meaning and experience of the spiritual well-being of workers. It will explore how individuals interpolate personal spirituality in order to construct meaning and understanding of their participation in continuous quality improvement endeavors. Exploration of the concept will generate a framework for further enrichment of organizational improvement cultures. This study will add depth to the body of knowledge that encompasses the human dimension of the work enterprise as well as expand the previously identified phenomenon of spiritual well-being. It will demonstrate the soundness of examining the connectedness of spiritual well-being with the continual pursuit of a higher quality work life.

Business Plan Proposal: Bowling Centre in Swaziland

By: Pamela (SID), Luyandza (SID), Cynthia (SID), Mindy (SID)

Rationale

Currently, there are not many family friendly entertainment facilities in Swaziland except for a single movie cinema and some sports facilities. Therefore, there is a need for such a family entertainment business in the country. Also, one of our group members is a Swazi citizen which will make it easier for us to understand and analyze the market and also to register the business. Lastly, we will have first market entry advantage which means we have little to no competition.

Company Description

Our proposed business plan is to establish a family entertainment centre – in particular, a bowling center that offers a few additional games such as darts and pool tables. The proposed location for this business is in Swaziland in a town called Manzini. We plan to have ten bowling alleys. Additionally, we will rent out some of our space to a popular food outlet in Swaziland called “Steers” a fast food franchise similar to KFC.

Elements of the Business Plan:

Products and Services: We provide 10 bowling alleys with all necessary bowling equipment and accessories, 6 pool tables, 10 dart boards, 1 eatery, and 30 lockers. We also plan to provide a bowling instructor free of charge for our customers. The instructor will teach newcomers (or anyone willing to learn) the rules of bowling and how to play the game. We find this to be a necessary service given the fact that bowling will be new to most people in our market.

Marketing: We will conduct a market survey proposing our idea to Swazi citizens. From the insights of the survey, we hope to acquire data that will give us information about the people’s optimism for such a facility, their willingness to pay and how often they think they would visit our bowling centre.

Strategy and Implementation: We are also benchmarking a similar business enterprise called “E7play” in Taiwan. E7play is a large gaming facility consisting of bowling areas, a playground, play area for kids, resting area, pool, and darts. Because of Swaziland’s small population, we plan to start small with one location. If our bowling business attracts more demand than expected, we will definitely expand as needed.

Management and Organization: We will hire full-time employees consisting of:

1 Cashier, 2 Bowling Instructors/Attendants, 2 Security, 2 Cleaning help, and 4 general workers.

Financial Management: Since the four of us are studying International Business and Trade in University, we have decided that we will handle all financial accounting ourselves. However, if we find any difficulties later on we will be willing to hire a certified accountant.

Projections: We estimate the cost will be approximately NTD 1,300,000 including purchasing all the equipment, decoration, building rent for a month, management team salary, and water and electricity bills.

Significance: A bowling facility will not only be a new industry for Swaziland, but it will also be a much-needed extension of family entertainment facilities. With few other options available, we expect that people will be excited to have something new to explore on a regular basis.

Ming Chuan University

International Business and Trade Program



Title: The Ethics of Marketing

Name: James Smith

Jennifer Bush

Advisor: Dr. Emily Chou

Date: June 5, 2017

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of
Science in International Business and Trade**

Appendix C Format for Table of Contents (Academic Research Paper)

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*Insert your own page numbers for all sections of your thesis.