Stockholm Business School

Stockholm University

Syllabus

for course at advanced level

Advanced Research Methods in Accounting and Operations Management
Avancerade forskningsmetoder i redovisning samt verksamhetsutveckling och styrning

7.5 Higher Education Credits
7.5 ECTS credits

Course code:	FE5826
Valid from:	Spring 2018
Date of approval:	2017-11-20
Department	Stockholm Business School
Main field:	Företagsekonomi
Specialisation:	A1N - Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Decision

This syllabus was approved by the Education Board of Stockholm Business School, Stockholm University, 2017-11-20.

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

Degree of Bachelor comprising at least 180 higher education credits, English 6 or equivalent.

Course structure

Examination code	Name	Higher Education Credits
5826	Advanced Research Methods	7.5

Course content

The course aims at preparing the student for writing a master's thesis. The goal is that the student, after having passed the course, should be well acquainted with different, quantitative as well as qualitative, methods of conducting empirically based research in the social sciences. The course demonstrates how scientific method can be chosen and performed depending on different research questions. Against this background, the student should be able to design and carry out an investigation based on a chosen problem.

The course deals with the following main issues:
• Formulation of research questions
• Choice of method and research design
• Collection of empirical data
• Theory-based analysis
• Scientific writing
• Scrutiny of scientific investigations

The course contains lectures, seminars, group assignments, presentations and discussions of own work as well as critical scrutiny and discussion of the work of peer groups.

In the course of the seminar work, the student will be given the opportunity for deepened knowledge in research methodology with different epistemological and methodological points of departure.

Learning outcomes

Intended Learning Outcomes

After completion of the one-year master's thesis course students are expected to be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding
1. Understand different scientific methods and approaches.

Competence and Skill
2. Formulate a scientific problem and the aim and research question for a scientific investigation.
3. Choose methodological design and carry out an empirical investigation to answer a research question.
4. Analyse collected data in order to draw empirical and theoretical conclusions.

Judgement and Approach
5. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of different methods and empirical data depending on the research question.
6. Identify and judge ethical challenges and dilemmas in scientific research.

Education

The course consists of a combination of lectures, seminars, group assignments and, to a large extent, self-studies. Assessment for the course will be continuous and is based upon the different course items.

The course workload comprises 200 hours equivalent to 7,5 ECTS (40 hours per week equivalent to 1,5 ECTS).

The language of instruction is English.

Forms of examination

Assessment for the course will be continuous and is carried throughout the different course activities. Each assessment task is weighted in relation to its importance in the overall assessment of the course. The student's results from the different assessment tasks are added up to a total course score that will then translate into the final grade for the course.

Assessment tasks

The course contains the following weighted assessment tasks:

1. Individual and group assignments: assesses learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; constitutes 70% of total course points.

2. Peer-review of assignments: assesses learning outcomes 1, 4, 5, 6; constitutes 15% of total course points.

3. Attendance and participation: assesses learning outcome 1; constitutes 15% of total course points.

Grading

After completion of the course, students will receive grades on a scale related to the intended learning outcomes of the course. Passing grades are A, B, C, D and E. Failing grades are Fx and F. A grade Fx can be completed for a grade E.

The course comprises 0–100 course points. Receiving a final passing grade requires ≥ 50 course points and ≥ 50 points from assessment task 2. The scale for the final grade is tied to fixed score intervals: A: 90-100; B: 80-89; C: 70-79; D: 60-69; E: 50-59; Fx: 45-49; F: 0-45. The grades correspond to the weighted average (of a total 100) that the student receives for the different assessment tasks that constitute the course's continuous examination.

Each assessment task is awarded 0–100 points. The score for a single assessment task is the number of points multiplied by its percentage weight, and the combined total of score points for all weighted assessment tasks for the course are added up to a final score between 0 and 100 which then translates into a corresponding final course grade between A and F.

Assessment task 1 and 2 are assessed on a discreet 0 – 100 points scale.

Assessment task 3 is assessed on a 0 -100 points scale in three intervals:

• Excellent: 80% = 100 points.
• Approved: 50% = 50 points.
• Weak: less than 50% = 0 points.

The student is responsible for completing the course's assessment tasks: that a sufficient amount of course points is earned and a passing course grade is obtained. The course's assessment tasks are only offered once.

A passing grade (A–E) in the course is obtained when a student has achieved ≥ 50 course points.

A failing grade (Fx or F) in the course is obtained when a student has not achieved ≥ 50 course points:

• If 45–49 course points are achieved, a grade Fx is obtained, which can be completed for a grade E within 3 semester weeks after receiving instructions from the examiner. If the complementary task is not completed within this time limit, the course grade Fx is confirmed, implying that the student must re-register for the course and that previously acquired course points are forfeited. Note that first-time registered students have priority access to the thesis groups.

• If 45 course points are achieved, a grade F is obtained, implying that the student must re-register for the course and that previously acquired course points are forfeited.

Re-registration implies that:

• first-time registered students have priority access to the thesis course's group registration.

• Assessment task 1 can be re-examined, without having to be present at the course's other learning activities and without including points from other assessment tasks. Alternatively, all assessment tasks can be re-examined.

Students receiving a passing grade may not retake the examination or complete the thesis to attain a higher grade. A passing grade may not be turned into a failing grade upon the request of a student.

Grading Criteria

Grading criteria are designed as overall assessments, combined qualitative descriptions of what the student is expected to do in order to demonstrate how well the course's learning outcomes are achieved. The grading criteria are based upon the general abilities as expressed in the degree objectives of the Higher Education Ordinance (appendix 2, System of Qualifications). The list of abilities below is a compilation of these degree objectives. To pass the course (grade E) students should demonstrate general ability to:

• recall, understand and explain course content, the course subject and its scientific basis and methodology;
• apply course content;
• critically analyse course content;
• problematise course content;
• orally and in writing, present and discuss course content;
• assess course content in terms of scientific, social, and ethical aspects;
• relate course content to current social issues;
• meet standards of written presentation and formal accuracy.

The following assessment criteria are used to decide to what extent students have demonstrated these abilities and hence fulfil the course's intended learning outcomes, whereby a grading decision can be made. A higher grade-level presupposes the abilities at lower levels.

A (Excellent)
The student demonstrates ability to evaluate and relate to the content of the course from a comprehensive, critically reflective perspective, as well as to transfer and apply insights in new, meaningful contexts.

B (Very Good)
The student demonstrates ability to, from an overarching and coherent perspective of the field, understand and use concepts to explain how different aspects of the course relate to each other, interconnect and become meaningful.

C (Good)

The student demonstrates ability to discuss the content, tasks and complex issues dealt with in the course from several well-developed but mainly independent perspectives.

D (Satisfactory)
The student demonstrates satisfactory ability to discuss the content, tasks and complex issues dealt with in the course in a way that, albeit in-depth and elaborate, is decidedly one-dimensional.

E (Sufficient)
The student demonstrates sufficient ability to discuss the content, tasks and complex issues dealt with in the course in a way that is decidedly one-dimensional.

Fx (Fail)
The student's knowledge, skills and abilities display minor flaws, overall or in significant parts.

F (Fail)
The student's knowledge, skills and abilities display major flaws, overall or in significant parts.

Interim

If the course is discontinued, or its contents are substantially altered, students have the right to be examined according to this syllabus once per semester for three further semesters.

Limitations

This course may not be included in a degree together with a course, taken in Sweden or elsewhere, of identical or partially similar content.

Misc

Exemption from assessment task.

Exemption from an assessment task is granted if the student presents a valid reason and a written certification (such as illness and a medical certificate), whereupon the student may re-sit the assessment task at a later date decided by the course director, and while maintaining previously acquired course points.

Application for exemption should be submitted to the Director of studies (Student Services) immediately after, or during planned absences well before, the date when the assessment task is carried out. A granted exemption expires at the end of the immediately following semester.

Required reading

Mandatory reading

• A selection of scientific articles (updated every semester, see Study Guide).

Recommended reading

• Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2015) Business Research Methods, 4th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

• Karlsson, C. (2016), Research Methods for Operations Management, 2nd edition. New York: Routledge