

Department of Marketing and Communication

Areas of Thesis Supervision

General information on supervision at the Department of Marketing and Communication

It is strongly recommended to start the process of choosing the supervisor early on (minimum 1 month before the declaration deadline). If you contact a potential supervisor only a few days before the deadline, it will be impossible to discuss all the necessary details or make any agreements.

The Department's priority is to supervise MA students who have specialized in marketing, thereafter other MA and MBA students and then highly motivated bachelor students. As a rule we recommend that to graduate, bachelor students choose the final exam.

Before turning to the potential supervisor

Compile a thorough outline which consists of the following:

- Tentative title of the thesis
- Research problem
- General goal(s) and the importance
- Research questions (if applicable).
- Brief overview of literature
- Description of data and research methods, justification of the research method (in case a survey is planned, description on how you are planning to guarantee access to representative sample is also required).
- Initial reference list (references used for compiling the thesis proposal)
- Gantt chart (project plan) time- and contentwise

While compiling the thesis outline, EBS manual of Writing Style must be followed.

NB! Please do not contact a potential supervisor if you do not have a specific topic and a thesis outline which follows the requirements described above.

When you start writing the thesis, please keep in mind the following:

1. The thesis must clearly state a specific research objective and research questions. The latter, if answered, aim at achieving the main objective and demonstrate that you have understood the problem at hand. **In order to solve the problem, you must know where the problem lies.**
2. The wording of the research objective must be short, laconic and content-wise as accurate as possible. Research questions are those which need to be answered in order to solve the research problem. In other words, the answering of the research questions help to achieve the research objective.

An example of a good research objective:

„... to identify customer satisfaction with the services offered by South-Estonian Blind Association among members of the Association with the aim of improving the effectiveness of different aspects of the service”.

→ The objective is short and achievable because the author of the thesis has access to all members of South-Estonian Blind Association.

An example of a bad research objective:

„This thesis concentrates on looking into the methods of customer involvement in the financial sector.”

→ The objective is unclear; the student has no possibility to look into the financial sector as such in a high-quality way; the student has no access to the required data. The objective of the thesis cannot be just to “look into” something.

3. A good introduction definitely covers the following points: novelty of the research topic; the main problem; the state of researching the main problem i.e. who has researched what, from which angle both in Estonia and elsewhere; a specific objective of the thesis based, among other things, on existing research (the problem which needs to be solved because existing research does not answer the question); the objective of the thesis (the thesis has one main objective and several subobjectives or research question); subobjectives or research questions (this will serve the basis for the structure); methods which the author intends to use; novelty of the thesis; practical value.
4. A literature review must analyse other authors’ research and theoretical standpoints. The literature review must show:
 - how up-to-date you are with everything concerning the selected topic;
 - how deeply you have managed to probe into the problem;
 - your readiness to research the topic /Denis Rerdon (2006)/
5. A literature review IS NOT a retelling of existing research; it is a part of the thesis where you present in a concise and logical manner existing research concerning your topic and where you compare, systematize, analyse and evaluate.
6. **Master’s thesis:** use 30-40 references. It is recommended that 10 of those are peer-reviewed scientific publications on the topic that you are writing on.

Bachelor thesis: 20-30 references which address the topic ; demonstrate your basic knowledge on the matter at hand, your ability to use theoretical concepts while critically analyzing real-life processes and finding solutions to problems. Of the 20-30 references, 10 should be peer-reviewed scientific publications on the topic that you are writing on.

7. Depending on the research problem, select and implement the best research method. While choosing the method, keep in mind that the questions asked provide answers to your research problem and that the method is applicable, i.e. you have access to respondents and respondents are motivated to participate.
8. The reliability, objectivity and honesty of the results are the most important aspects.
9. Analyse and interpret the results of the research
10. The conclusions you make must be directly based on the results of the research and analysis
11. The thesis must contain the author's viewpoints on the results obtained; the thesis should not just describe the existing situation; instead, it must be **analytical**.
12. The volume of a **Master's thesis** is 40-60 pages without appendices. A **Bachelor thesis** will be between 30-40 pages without appendices.
13. Every numbered part in the thesis should have sufficient volume and value why it "deserves" a separate heading.
14. Avoid a fragmented structure which is difficult to read, contains too many headings and not enough value under each heading.
15. Ideally, all parts of the thesis must be balanced, thus receiving equal amount of attention and number of pages.
16. In your thesis, say everything 3 times:

In the thesis as a whole: what the thesis will be about (introduction) → details of the thesis (chapters) → what the thesis was about → (summary)

In every chapter/subdivision: what the chapter will be about (introducing) → details (content) → what the chapter was about (summary)

In every paragraph: the first sentence introduces the idea and connects it with the previous paragraph → every paragraph addresses one idea → the last sentence summarizes the idea and connects it to the next idea.

NB! The originality of the final thesis is expressed in the selection of the topic, analysis, discussion, creative implementation of knowledge, conclusions. You should give up long quotes: the thesis must be written by the author, using his/her own words.

While communicating with your supervisor, please consider the following:

1. Please agree beforehand with your supervisor when you would like him/her to read the parts of your thesis, inform of the volume and the time by which you would like to receive the supervisor's comments. It is advisable to send whole chapters at a time, not single paragraphs.
2. Your supervisor is able to read your draft just a couple of times (normally twice). Please also consider the fact that he/she must read the thesis also before it is submitted to pre-defence.

3. You should take into consideration that in addition to you, he/she has also other students to supervise, goes on business trips and is therefore away, delivers lectures, conducts exams and preliminaries, etc.

Evaluation criteria of final theses:

- Objective of the thesis (title, problem, research tasks)
- Research questions
- Theoretical background/literature review
- Level of thesis
- Suitability of the selected research method
- Suitability and usage of data collection and methods of data analysis
- Presentation and analysis of results
- Conclusions and suggestions
- Formatting (layout, referencing)
- Use of language
- Defence of the thesis

Final thesis check-list:

- The sub-objectives or research tasks have been outlined as concrete activities that are based on field studies and analysis, and very well support the achievement of the overall objective of the thesis.
- The research question(s) has (have) been worded in a concrete/realistic manner, and equips the thesis with a clear focus that very well supports the achievement of the set objectives.
- The Bachelor's theses shall include over 20 references, of which at least 5 are preferably peer-reviewed whereas the Master's theses shall comprise over 40 references, of which at least 10 are peer-reviewed research publications.
- All the principles used in the thesis have been thoroughly disputed and defined. The author has attempted to prevent a probable misinterpretation of definitions.
- Theoretical analysis supplies a very good overview of the authors' (schools' or periods') positions thus creating a uniform picture of scientific statements, research results and applied research methods concerning the topic of the thesis.
- The thesis is based on contemporary theories and/or the key authors and sources of the field. The opinions of opponents and critics have been also supplied.
- The theoretical part of the thesis is characteristic of a systematic, analytical, critical and generalising approach and it has been formed into a uniform scientific text with a concrete methodology.
- In consideration of the specific nature of the thesis, the scope and analysis of the problem (scientifically or developmentally) very well correspond to the level set for a Bachelor's or Master's thesis.

- The selected research-or problem-solving methods (methodology) are very well suitable for the achievement of the objective of the thesis – the selection has been made critically and in compliance with the objective of the thesis.
- The selection of research- and problem-solving methods (methodology) has been reasoned and the process has been analytically and critically described.
- The thesis makes a skilful use of the most suitable data collection methods and their use is well-grounded.
- The sample of the survey is representative and the thesis presents the principles for the formation of the sample
- The findings have been presented and interpreted very clearly and skilfully.
- Theory and the empirical part are very closely related
- The analysis of results supplies very thorough and logical answers to the research problem and questions, verifies or refutes the hypothesis.
- The analysis is very thorough, with a logical structure and takes into account the specific nature of the thesis.
- The analysis is very well related to the objective of the research.
- All the outlined conclusions and recommendations are based on the analysis, related to conclusions and/or revealed weaknesses which are directly related to the topic of the thesis.
- Practical recommendations concerning the application of conclusions and probable further directions for research are directly related to the findings of research. The conclusion is very comprehensive.
- The thesis fully corresponds to the EBS requirements for formatting.
- The structure of the thesis fully corresponds to the type of research. The subdivisions of the thesis form an integrated and well balanced whole.
- All the used sources have been referred to. The referencing technique is excellent.
- There are no errors and mistakes in the formal language used.
- The text of the thesis has been written in a good academic style.
- The argumentation is clear and thorough.
- The defence presentation has been logically structured and illustrated with a very well followed graphical material.
- The defence presentation is fluently addressed and very convincing.
- The student is able to answer the questions very well.
- The student orientates in the field of research very well.

The following full-time lecturers supervise theses at the Department of Marketing and Communication:

Katri Kerem

Head of department, Ph.D.

E-mail: katri.kerem@ebs.ee

Working languages: Estonian and English. Mostly supervising master students.

Main area of interest:

- Consumer behaviour, consumption sociology, consumer culture

I can also supervise theses on:

- Digital marketing (a very difficult topic because of lack of academic theoretical foundations)
- Innovation diffusion, spreading and adaption of technologies;
- Tourism marketing and destination marketing;
- Marketing of education
- Advertising and marketing communication

Riina Koris

Professor at the Department of Marketing, PhD

E-mail: riina.koris@ebs.ee

Working languages: Estonian and English

Preferred research topics:

- Customer orientation (as a competitive advantage) and its possible dangers (while building a (university) brand);
- Marketing communication of an Institution of Higher Education (and other topics related to higher education)

I have also supervised and ready to supervise theses in the following areas:

- Integrated marketing communication
- Consumers' decision making process and its impact on company's marketing communication
- Customer satisfaction; employee satisfaction

Jukka Mäkinen

Professor in Business Ethics at the Department of Marketing and Communication, PhD

E-mail: jukka.makinen@ebs.ee

Working languages: Finnish and English

Preferred research topics:

- Business Ethics
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Business and Society
- Sustainability in Business

Mari Kooskora

Associate Professor at the Department of Marketing and Communication, EBS

E-mail: mari.kooskora@ebs.ee

Working languages: Estonian and English

- The role of ethics in society and organizations
- Business ethics
- Ethics and responsibility in business, in organizations and leadership
- CSR
- Leadership
- Corruption
- Teamwork
- Conflict management
- Women leadership
- Sustainability

Specific topics

- Ethics and responsibility in organisations and leadership, studies conducted in NGO, private, public, governmental organisations and in start-ups.
- Corporate Responsibility, its different dimensions and activity fields
- Integrity and Governance - related to ethics and responsibility in public sector and governmental organisations - local governments, state offices, ministries, etc...
- Responsibility and public interest in different types of organisations

Pablo Veyrat

pablo.veyrat@ebs.ee

Lecturer of sociology and social psychology

Supervision languages: English, communicates also in Spanish

Supervises a limited number of students in the fields of:

- Consumer behaviour
- Content marketing
- Media relations
- Workplace environment
- Social research

Scott Abel

E-mail: scott.abel@ebs.ee

Working languages: English

Doctoral student, lecturer of PR and communication

Supervises a limited number of students in the following fields:

- Public relations
- Journalism and Communication
- Media and media management
- Technological innovation
- Internet platforms and communities

Part time lecturers at the Department of Marketing and Communication who occasionally supervise final theses:

Anu Lehing

E-mail: Anu.Lehing@ebs.ee

Working languages: Estonian and English

Supervises bachelor theses in the following fields:

- internal marketing
- service marketing
- advertising language/symbolic

Triinu Ojala

E-mail: triinu.ojala@emor.ee

Working languages: Estonian and English

Accepts a few very good level students to supervise mainly in the areas of:

- consumer research
- consumer satisfaction
- consumer behaviour in the automotive industry