UNIVERSITY OF MANNHEIM
Business School

CHAIR OF SERVICE
OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT
Prof. Dr. Cornelia Schön

Master Thesis – Guide for an Exposé

The purpose of an Exposé is twofold.

First, it shall clarify the scope and plan of the student's work. In particular, it shall help the student to get a first impression on the research topic and its relevance and to develop a preliminary structure for the thesis.

Second, it shall provide an opportunity for a first, non-binding feedback for the student by the supervisor(s). In this context, please remember that the Exposé is written in a scientific writing style. In particular, please include citations and references in a proper manner, pay attention to formalities (such as spelling) and avoid informal expressions.

An Exposé should ideally include the following:

MOTIVATION

- Why is this topic relevant?
- For whom is this topic relevant?
- How does the proposed Thesis relate to already existing academic literature (incl. short literature review)?
- What is the main research question (e.g., what has not been addressed yet)?

EXPECTED RESEARCH OUTCOMES (DELIVERABLES & APPROACH)

- For the mentioned research question:
  o Which analyses/results are expected from / aimed at in the Thesis?
  o Which methodology is expected to be employed to derive these results? (e.g., empirical research, optimization, simulation)
  o If applicable: Concrete description of methodology (e.g., main topics for a structured interview, type of optimization problem and solution methodology)
  o Why is this methodology appropriate (e.g., reference of other researchers employing similar method in a different context)?
  o Which sources provide a foundation for the selected research methodology (e.g. is the research project an extension of an already existing contribution)?
  o What is the own contribution and how does it add value to the findings of the main sources?
- For future:
  o Which role will these results play for future research development?

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DATA SUPPLY & SOURCES:

- Which data will be required?
- How will the data be collected?
- For in-company work: Who is responsible for supplying data?
- For in-company work: Is there a need for a data confidentiality agreement?
- What happens if the student does not receive the data (plan B)?
- Will a specific software be needed for the Thesis? Is a (free) license available?

PRELIMINARY STRUCTURE & TIMELINE

- How could the structure of the Thesis look like?
- How could the timeline of the Thesis look like?

ORGANIZATIONAL SETUP (FOR IN-COMPANY WORK):

- Which department(s) will be involved?
- Who will be the main in-company mentor of the student?
- Is a contract between the student and the company needed?
- Will the Intellectual Property of the student be treated in an appropriate way? (e.g., author must be named if the results of the Thesis are used)
- Will the student have appropriate amount of time during the (work-) week to work on the Thesis?

GENERAL

- What will be the language of the Thesis?