

Guidelines for Oral Examinations in Business Administration

1st examiner: Prof. Dr. Erik Strauß (erik.strauss@uni-wh.de)

2nd examiner: Your **obligation** to find the 2nd examiner

1. Administrative Aspects

The oral examination is an important step in achieving the bachelor degree at the Witten/Herdecke University. Therefore, we would like to advise you to read this document thoroughly and adhere to the guidelines we provide while preparing for the oral exam. You should contact me as soon as possible to set the date for the exam and talk about the topics you want to present.

You have to send us your **final three topics at least one week before the examination** (latest). The earlier you contact us, the better. Aside from this process, you have to **register your oral exam** at the examination office (pruefung.wiwi@uni-wh.de) **one week before** the exam latest. Remember that you have to get the right standard form from the examination office, then bring it to me and to the 2nd examiner so that we can sign it, and then bring it back to the examination office. If you cannot meet the mentioned deadlines, I unfortunately won't be able to conduct the examination.

2. Structure of the examination

Below you find some points that need to be addressed. The aim of these guidelines is to help you focus on the core elements of your topic. Students should present **three assumptions**, each **structured by following these guidelines** (you should have one page for each – 10-point Calibri font, single spaced):

Topic

[Please indicate the main area of your research topic (e.g. accounting, finance, entrepreneurship, etc.)]

Title

[Please provide a short title]

The overall debate

[Please synthesize in 10 lines the overall debate on your topic. The aim of this short section is to address the current issues (by providing also some citations) in your target research field. Furthermore, highlight the main gaps and flaws in the existing debate and explain the main aim of your research actions in that area]

Assumption

[Please link your assumption to the above-described debate. Your assumption should logically derive from your previous argumentations. Please, try to address issues that are relevant for theory and practice]

Short Discussion

[Please briefly discuss (in 10 lines) your assumption by clearly highlighting your supporting arguments. In order to discuss your assumption you may use arguments both from theory and from practice]

Main references

[Please provide your main references. At least one main book and three academic articles (please indicate author(s), year, publisher (or journal title), issue)]

Every topic you will talk about can be viewed as an academic discourse. Therefore, you should **avoid** too subjective opinions in your argumentation and rather focus on a scientific argumentation, not an emotional one. The approach to your oral examination and the attitude should be the same as the approach and attitude that is appropriate for writing a **scientific** paper or thesis. You are free in the choice of topics, but they have to come from the field of Business Administration (e.g. Controlling, Accounting, Finance, Governance, Entrepreneurship, Strategic Management, etc.). Ideally you should, of course, choose challenging and new issues in Business Administration that are related to my area of expertise.

We will talk about **every of the three** provided **topics** for round about **20 minutes**, so overall the **examination** will last for **60 minutes**. Within these 20 minutes, you should firstly present the topic in a **succinct** manner so I capture your viewpoint fully, after that I will ask critical questions and discuss the issue at hand. It is important for your preparation **to think about questions** I could ask and possible flaws of your assumptions, in order for you to be able to respond to my questions properly. **The discussion is the central part of the examination and, accordingly, it is not enough** to just simply present your topic. Please anticipate the importance of the discussion while you preparing your oral examination. **It is not allowed to use any kind of literature or self-made sheets as a backup for your argument, all your answers have to come from your memory.** If you like to draw something on a sheet, like a graph or a model, we of course encourage you to do so. Graphs, models or general illustrations can be a useful help in your argumentation, so if applicable, you should be able to draw them in the examination.

After the examination, the final grade of your performance will be determined immediately and communicated to you, so you will get instant feedback. Of course you can ask questions as well in the feedback process.

3. Concluding remarks

As mentioned before, it is crucial that you contact us as early as possible to talk about the topics you want to discuss with us. Furthermore it is of course mandatory to process the relevant paperwork to comply to the administrative rules of the university and faculty. In case of doubt don't hesitate to ask me concerning the topics you want to discuss or Mrs. Zedlitz (or Mrs. Ottowell-Joest) if you have questions concerning the administrative issues!

4. Short Check-List

These questions should help you to check the mandatory aspects of the oral examination:

- Do I have a 2nd examiner?
- Did I contact 1st examiner early enough?
- Did I register the oral examination at the examination office?
- Did I provide three assumptions/topics early enough?
- Is the structure of my assumption conform to the guidelines?