



Guidelines for Oral Examinations in Business Administration

Examiner: Prof. Andrea Calabrò, Ph.D.
Email: Andrea.Calabro@uni-wh.de
Room: 1.202

Second Examiner: Giovanna Campopiano, Ph.D.
Email: Giovanna.Campopiano@uni-wh.de
Room: 1.197

Chair for Business Administration and Family Entrepreneurship
Witten Institute for Family Business
Alfred-Herrhausen-Straße 50
58448 Witten – Germany

06.01.2015

I. Introduction / Administrative Aspects

The oral examination is an important step in achieving the bachelor or master degree at the University of Witten/Herdecke. 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 us (Andrea Calabrò, Giovanna Campopiano) 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 *not later than one week before the examination*. The earlier you contact us, the better.

Aside from this process, you have to register your oral exam at the examinations office (Ms. Zedlitz, pruefung.wiwi@uni-wh.de) *one week before the exam at the latest*. Please note, you have to get the right standard form from the examinations office, and bring it to us so that we both can sign it, and then bring it back to the examinations office. If you cannot meet the mentioned deadlines, we unfortunately will not be able to conduct the examination. Please consult the examinations office if you have questions related to this process.

II. 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 according to 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. marketing, 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, if available, 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 and attitude to your oral examination 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. Accounting, Finance, Governance, Family Business, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Human Resources, Strategic Management, Controlling etc.). Ideally you should, of course, choose challenging and new issues in Business Administration.

We will talk about each of the three provided topics for round about 20 minutes, so overall the examination will last 60 minutes. Within these 20 minutes, you should firstly present the topic in a succinct manner so we capture your viewpoint fully, after that we will ask critical questions and discuss the issue at hand. It is important for your preparation to think about questions we could ask and possible flaws of your assumptions so that you are able to respond to our questions properly. It is not enough to just simply present your topic, the discussion is the central part of the examination, so you should also anticipate this in your preparation. You should consider that we will bring up a wide range of questions to oppose your assumptions. You should be able to defend your propositions but at the same time maybe incorporate new information you will receive from us and be able to redraft your assumptions accordingly.

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 very useful help in your argumentation, so, if applicable, you should be able to draw them during the examination. There will also be a flip chart available in case you want to graphically extend your arguments. We strongly recommend the use of graphical representations on a sheet or flip chart, as from our experience these are very helpful in creating a common base for the discussion.

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, too, can ask questions in the feedback process.

III. 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 with the administrative rules of the university and faculty. Please keep in mind that you are responsible for the paperwork manage-

ment between Frau Zedlitz and us. The only step that we take care of is the submission of the final grade to Frau Zedlitz. In case of doubt or if you have questions concerning your examination topics or the administrative process, please don't hesitate to ask us.