Dissertation Seminar – EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN FINANCE

**Academic Year:** 2015/2016  
**Instructor:** José Faias

**February – May 2016**  
**Max. number of students:** 9

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**Seminar Description**

A master thesis is a chance to investigate a topic chosen by the student in more detail and it can be an invaluable learning experience. Writing a master thesis is an important part of the program. It requires the application of theory to practice, or the testing of a specific theory. This workshop offers participants an opportunity to develop leading edge research on Empirical Finance. It comprises a mix of group and individual mandatory sessions. Throughout the sessions, students will be asked to present their current work and to comment the work of others.

Only students that were approved at the Empirical Finance or Methods in Finance courses are allowed to attend this workshop. This is a full time workshop and no long-distance students are allowed. This entire workshop is held in English. As so the thesis can only be written in English. Individual support is available by appointment. A maximum of 3 hours total per individual is allowed. Please budget your efforts accordingly.

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**Seminar Content**

Students will develop their skills around a particular topic and are expected to develop an innovative idea around the topic. Some of the skills are concerned with acquiring the knowledge of the specific area of interest through a state-of-the-art literature review, understanding the available tools, dealing with data and its associated limitations, performing statistic and economic analysis, relating conclusions to previous literature, and making policy recommendations.

The topics for this year are:

**Topic 1** – Sell-side analysts’ recommendation investment strategies  
**Topic 2** – Variance, liquidity or (tail) risk investment strategies  
**Topic 3** – Persistence and momentum investment strategies  
**Topic 4** – Understanding the financial risk of financial players over time  
**Topic 5** – Sell-side analysts’ career prospects and past characteristics  
**Topic 6** – Hedge funds default and risk relationship  
**Topic 7** – M&As and top tier advisors  
**Topic 8** – Cat bonds cross-section studies  
**Topic 9** – Cross-section predictability from industry shocks  
**Topic 10** – Predictability of stock market risk premia by combination of predictors

You should send asap an email to jfaias@ucp.pt with subject “2016 Thesis Dissertation”. In this email you should state by order of preference the three topics above in which you would like to develop your thesis and a small justification. Of course, you will only carry out one. The professor will reply to your email confirming its reception. The acceptance in the workshop depends on student academic performance (predominantly in Empirical Finance or Methods in Finance) and topic chosen. More than one student can be allocated to the same topic although doing research in different ideas.
Seminar Objectives

Writing a thesis proposal according to these standards will require a serious effort on your behalf, and may take hard work to complete.

On successful completion of this subject, students should have improved the following generic skills:
- Oral communication including presentation skills
- Written communication
- Problem solving
- Statistical reasoning
- Application of theory to practice
- Interpretation and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Synthesis of data and other information
- Evaluation of data and other information
- Using computer software
- Accessing data and other information from a range of sources

This workshop is structured to help students to write their Master thesis in applied scientific projects in themes related to Empirical Finance.

Bibliography / Recommended Textbook(s) / Additional Readings


Contact(s) and Office Hours

Email: jfaias@ucp.pt.

Office: 5305-A.

Individual support is available by appointment. A maximum of 3 hours total per individual is allowed. Please budget your efforts accordingly.
Grading will be based on the quality of the written thesis document and presentation of the final dissertation thesis and also on session active participation. **Students need to be present in EVERY session.**

**At this workshop, students are expected to deliver the thesis in June 6, 2016.** Illness or related motives are the only reasons to deliver in the late submission deadline. For this to happen, you need to deliver the **first draft of the thesis until May 6, 2016.** The final draft needs to be delivered until May 20, 2016 to be allowed to deliver in June 6, 2016.

Due dates are non-negotiable. In signing up for this seminar, each participant commits to meet the proposed deadlines. There are no exceptions.

Each session, all students will present their findings using PowerPoint slides. Students are also expected to attend some (at least two) of the cutting edge Lisbon Finance Seminars held on Fridays at 11am/2pm. These are a good source of cutting edge research. There may be additional sessions booked ad hoc.

**Session 1: Research Group Progress Meeting**
February 10 (Wednesday) 2.00-4.50pm Room TBA

*Start writing the individual research proposal*

**Session 2 Research Group Results Presentation**
March 2 (Wednesday) 2.00-4.50pm Room TBA

*Start writing the final draft*

**Session 3 Research Group Results Presentation**
April 13 2.00-4.50pm Room TBA

*Thesis draft delivered*

**Session 4 Comments on draft**
May 11 2.00-4.50pm Room TBA

*Final Thesis delivered*

**Deadlines**

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<tr>
<td>Recommended Delivery Date to Student Affairs</td>
<td>30/5/2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL Deadline for Delivery to Student Affairs</td>
<td>6/6/2016</td>
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<td>Deadline to complete Study Plan (to defend in July)</td>
<td>10/6/2016</td>
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<td>Dissertation Defense Period</td>
<td>18/7/2016 to 29/7/2016</td>
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<td>Late Submission Deadline</td>
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<td>Deadline to complete Study Plan (to defend in October)</td>
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<td>Dissertation Defense Period</td>
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