

## **MSc Research Seminar**

### **Research Seminar for the first-year MSc students**

The purpose of the research seminar is to make our first-year MSc students understand how professional/academic economists do research, so that the students are better prepared to begin their own research while working on the master's thesis.

The annual seminar programme will consist of several blocks, each run by one of the full-time ICEF faculty members. The faculty member chooses a broad topic for his block, which can be related to his own research agenda. He uses first the first seminar meeting to introduce the topic to the students, i.e. explain what problems are being investigated, what tools are used, what results are achieved, and what the unresolved issues are. Then, he gives students several recently published research papers to read. Each of the following seminar meetings consists of a presentation of one paper by a student, which is followed by a discussion. The presenter should not just reproduce the contents of the paper, but also make a critical evaluation of it. Needless to say, a good presentation implies the familiarity with other papers in the area as well. The discussion is started by a discussant (selected at the same time as the presenter), who gives his view of the paper and of the evaluation by the presenter. The presenter has to send his presentation slides to everybody at least two days before the presentation. Then there are questions from the floor and the general discussion. The faculty member is expected to serve as a moderator of the discussion, but not impose his opinion before the end of the discussion.

Every student will have to serve as a presenter once during the academic year, and serve as a discussant also once. In the first semester half of the class serve as presenters and the other half serve as discussants. In the second semester they switch. A student gets a passing mark (zacet) for the research seminar if (s)he performs satisfactorily in both roles and has a satisfactory attendance record in both the MSc research seminar and the ICEF research seminar.

### **Research Seminar for the second-year MSc students**

The purpose of the second-year research seminar is to facilitate students' work on their master's thesis.

The first seminar meeting is devoted to the presentation by the academic director of the MSc programme, who explains the MSc thesis requirements (both substantive and formal) to the students, the supervisor selection and appointment procedure, the steps and pitfalls of the thesis research. Then he conducts an open-format discussion with the students about their research plans and ideas.

The second module of the seminar (3-4 meetings) consists of presentations of the ICEF full-time faculty members who present potential research topics (broadly defined) that they are willing to supervise. Each presentation lasts for 25-40 minutes. In these presentations prospective supervisors pay special attention to the research methodology.

The third module (5-6 meetings) is devoted to the presentation of the students' proposals. These proposals should include the motivation, the brief literature review, the research methods, discussion of data availability (for empirical projects) and expected results.

For the fourth module the class is split into small groups. In each group students work on similar topics (or their projects have certain

similarities). Each group meets separately and discusses recent papers in their area under the direction of one of the ICEF full-time academic. The format of the discussions in this module can be similar to the format of the first-year seminar meetings, but can also be more informal.

The fifth module (6-8 meetings) is devoted to students' presentations of their research progress. By that time (March-May) students are expected to have some preliminary results.