



Applied Empirical Research Seminar in Finance

Topic: “Executive Compensation”

Seminar Overview

This seminar is designed to provide **practical and hands-on experience in empirical research in finance**. Students will have the opportunity to perform their own empirical analyses. In **small groups**, students will analyze real-world datasets to investigate the determinants and effects of **CEO and other senior executives’ compensation**. Using widely recognized databases such as ExecuComp and Compustat, students will gain in-depth insights into the structure of executive pay packages (e.g., salary, bonus, stock options, equity-based compensation) and examine its implications on firm outcomes. The acquired skills in this seminar will not only boost students’ opportunities in both industry and academia but also lay a strong foundation for an empirical Bachelor’s thesis in finance.

Students are expected to have a strong interest in data analysis and quantitative methods. However, prior **practical experience in empirical research is not required**. Participants will be introduced to the use of statistical software (STATA) for empirical research. Additionally, access to widely-used international company and executive databases will be provided through the [Datenlabor Hohenheim \(DALAHO\)](#).

Organizational Matters

The seminar is intended for **all** students in the Bachelor’s program, particularly in the following profile areas:

- **Finance:** Profilsseminar “Finance” (5105-311)
- **Rechnungswesen und Steuern:** Freier Wahlbereich
- **Empirische Wirtschaftsforschung:** Freier Wahlbereich

In small groups of **2 students**, seminar participants will collaborate to investigate a set of research questions (see page 2) and replicate analyses from previous empirical studies.

Each group will explore a panel dataset of top executives (CEOs and other C-level executives) and undertake the following tasks:

- Develop a **well-documented STATA code** for their empirical analysis
- Write a **group seminar thesis** (12-15 pages of text; in addition, empirical analyses)
- Deliver a **group presentation** during a two-day block seminar.

The seminar language is German. However, seminar thesis and presentation may be conducted in **German** or **English**. The seminar will take place in-person and via Microsoft Teams (details below and to be announced).

Additional information concerning seminar objectives, team formation, and the specifics of the Compensation analyses will be provided in the **Kick-Off Meeting**. Furthermore, all seminar participants will attend a **Scientific Writing Class** and an **Introduction to Empirical Research in Corporate Finance** class as outlined in the schedule on page 3.

The seminar is held by Prof. Dr. Daniel Hoang. If you have any organizational questions, please contact Dr. Andreas Benz (andreas.benz@uni-hohenheim.de).

Research Questions

Among the potential research questions that groups will analyze **for CEOs and other senior executives** and **time periods** are, e.g.,

- **The Determinants of Executive Compensation**
 - What factors (e.g., firm characteristics, managerial attributes) affect executive compensation?
 - How does the level and structure of compensation differ across various contexts (e.g., across time, countries, industries, firms, and executive positions)?
 - ...
- **The Effects of Executive Compensation**
 - How does compensation affect firm performance?
 - How do compensation structures affect executives' strategic decision-making (e.g., risk-taking, investment choices, or innovation strategies)?
 - ...

Introductory Literature

- Edmans, A., X. Gabaix, D. Jenter (2017): Executive Compensation: A Survey of Theory and Evidence, in Handbook of the Economics of Corporate Governance, ed. by Hermalin, B., Weisbach, M.: Elsevier, 383–539.
- Beck, D., Friedl, G., Schäfer, P., 2020. Executive Compensation in Germany. *Journal of Business Economics* 90, 787–824.
- Graham, J.R., Li, S., Qiu, J., 2012. Managerial Attributes and Executive Compensation. *Review of Financial Studies* 25, 144–186.
- Sanders, W.G., Hambrick, D.C., 2007. Swinging for the Fences: The Effects of CEO Stock Options on Company Risk Taking and Performance. *The Academy of Management Journal* 50, 1055–1078.

Preliminary Schedule

The schedule provided below is tentative and subject to change based on room availability. The final schedule will be announced in the Kick-Off Meeting.

Date	Description
Apr 02, 2025 Wednesday 16:00 – 20:00 Location: tba	Kick-Off Meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the literature and Seminar organization• Assignment of seminar participants to groups• Assignment of research questions and countries• Aims & objectives of seminar thesis and presentation• Access to seminar materials: Seminar participants are required to install STATA and access databases from DALAHO, all of which are available free of charge.
Apr 03, 2025 Thursday 16:00 – 20:00 Location: tba	Scientific Writing Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to research and scientific writing• Aims & objectives of seminar thesis and presentation• Practical guidance and recommendations
Apr 09, 2025 Wednesday 16:00 – 20:00 Location: tba	Introduction to Empirical Research in Corporate Finance: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction on how to organize, clean, and prepare data for empirical analysis• Overview of the key STATA commands• Practical tips, suggestions, and recommendations
Apr 25, 2025 Friday 08:00 – 18:00 Location: tba	Q&A and Progress Discussion Session 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated and interactive feedback sessions for students• Aim: Clarify seminar topics; address questions and concerns; share progress, ideas, and challenges
May 30, 2025 Friday 08:00 – 18:00 Location: tba	Q&A and Progress Discussion Session 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated and interactive feedback sessions for students• Aim: Clarify seminar topics; address questions and concerns; share progress, ideas, and challenges
Jun 30, 2025 Monday 08:00 – 18:00 Location: tba	Q&A and Progress Discussion Session 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dedicated and interactive feedback sessions for students• Aim: Clarify seminar topics; address questions and concerns; share progress, ideas, and challenges
Jul 04, 2025 Friday 08:00 – 18:00 Location: tba	Block Seminar (1 day): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submission of group thesis, presentation slides, and the group's (documented) STATA code• Group presentation• Discussion

Grading

The final grade will be a weighted average of

- Group thesis (40%)
- Documented STATA code (20%)
- Group presentation (30%)
- Active participation (10%)

Application Process

To submit your application for the seminar, please complete the application form under the following [link](#).

Note: In the summer term 2025, the Chair of Corporate Finance is offering two Bachelor seminars. It is not recommended that you attend the two seminars simultaneously. To secure a seminar spot in either of the two seminars, the application form provides an option to mark your preferences. Please indicate your interest accordingly.

As part of your application, please merge the following documents into a single PDF file:

- (1) Up-to-date CV,**
- (2) Current bachelor's degree transcript of grades**

Only complete and timely applications can be considered.

Application schedule:

- The application deadline is **March 16, 2025 (Sunday)**.
- Applicants will be notified of their acceptance or rejection by the seminar provider no later than **March 21, 2025 (Friday)**.

Application form options:

- **Topic preference:**
 - (1) The Determinants of Executive Compensation
 - (2) The Effects of Executive Compensation
- **Up to two fellow students** you would prefer to work with in a group.
- The assignment of seminar topics will be announced during the kick-off.
- Please keep in mind that not all individual preferences can be guaranteed.

If you have questions about the application process, please contact Dr. Andreas Benz (andreas.benz@uni-hohenheim.de).