



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2022

7,382: Consultancy Project: Sustainability Consulting in an Evolving ESG Landscape

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (20%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (30%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - examination paper written at home (in groups - all given the same grades) (30%)

Examination time: term time

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (20%)

Examination time: term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[7.382.1.00 Consultancy Project: Sustainability Consulting in an Evolving ESG Landscape](#) -- Englisch -- [Thaler Philipp](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

This course is open to all students with an interest in sustainability, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and ESG (environment, social and governance) issues. Students should also enjoy problem-solving, thinking outside the box, and have an eye for the detail. An academic background and/or practical experience in consultancy and/or sustainability is an advantage.

Furthermore, it is recommended that students complete the MIA Morning course prior to taking this consultancy project course. The knowledge and skillsets acquired in the MIA Morning workshops will be relevant and applicable in obtaining a successful outcome in this course.

A condition for taking part in this consultancy project is that students sign a confidentiality agreement with the client. A very good level of English is expected. Other language skills, notably German, are an advantage.

Learning objectives

During this consultancy project, students

- demonstrate their ability to evaluate a challenge, develop feasible solutions, and present them in a coherent manner;
- acquire and foster skills in the application of theoretical concepts to real-life situations;
- assess the regulatory, economic, and political landscape to develop business opportunities in the consultancy sector;
- gain experience with actual issues in the sustainability consultancy world that arise in the course of this project;
- foster their creativity and various skills, including teamwork, project management, communication, research, writing, and presentation.

Students who participate in this course will, afterwards, be able to:

- recognize and assess key developments in the global, European, and Swiss ESG landscape;
- understand origins, purpose, and opportunities of sustainability consultancy;
- be well-prepared for starting a career in sustainability consultancy or related fields.



Course content

Since a few years, the sustainability field is undergoing profound changes. While many companies had long been hesitant to take meaningful, structured sustainability action and only few businesses pioneered in the field, more recently various interrelated developments have heralded a new era. First, society is becoming increasingly aware of sustainability issues. Whether companies want to attract talents, gain customers, or improve their operations - sustainability has become widely accepted as a key factor for success. Secondly, a growing number of investors considers ESG (environment, social, and governance) criteria when making investment decisions. To qualify and compete for sustainable finance, firms must adapt accordingly. Thirdly, ESG regulations are being developed across the world. Companies need to comply with increasingly stringent non-financial reporting obligations, facilitating transparency on sustainability issues.

These developments raise many questions. What does it take for a company to become compliant with sustainability criteria? Which legal obligations is it subjected to? Where can the relevant data be sourced? And what are the peers and competitors doing?

In this consultancy project, HSG students will work together with **PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Switzerland** - one of the Big Four accounting firms - to develop innovative answers to these and related questions. The project will be led by PwC Switzerland's Zurich-based **Sustainability & Climate Change (S&CC) team**. Interdisciplinary teams of students from the MIA and other programs will support S&CC team in analysing key ESG trends (e.g., ESG reporting requirements, supply chain due diligence, circular economy, taxonomy) and contribute to the development of sustainability consultancy offerings. The project starts with an introduction to sustainability consultancy and the role of PwC Switzerland therein. Supervised by the course coordinator Philipp Thaler and three of PwC Switzerland's Sustainability & Climate Change consultants, students will then conduct research on pressing ESG questions, develop workable solutions, review these solutions in exchange with potential stakeholders, and use the findings to devise innovative sustainability consultancy offerings. Research tasks will be adapted to student skills and the composition of the consultancy teams. Project results will be discussed in a mid-term meeting and presented to the company during a final conference with PwC Switzerland employees and partners followed by an Apéro (all personal meetings/events are subject to Corona regulations). Each student team will also summarize its findings in a group report and each student will individually report on her/his learning experience in a short reflection paper.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

This consultancy project runs over a condensed period of 2 months (including the semester break). It starts with a kick-off session held in St.Gallen in the second part of October during which students will be assigned to their respective groups and receive an introduction to sustainability consulting as well as their research task/consultancy case. It follows a guided group-work session (in St.Gallen or online) and the mid-term presentation at the PwC Switzerland office in Zurich where student teams will present their high-level approach to solving their specific case question. Supervised by the course coordinator and three PwC Switzerland consultants, student teams will then conduct independent research on relevant ESG trends. Research tasks will be adapted to student skills and the composition of the consultancy teams. Progress and preliminary results will be regularly discussed. Project results including practical recommendations will be presented to PwC Switzerland Partners and staff during a final conference at the PwC Switzerland office in Zurich and submitted in a written report. Student have to write a short reflection paper in the end of the project to reflect on their learnings.

Course literature

The course coordinator will provide recommended literature (including academic articles, policy reports, etc.) on relevant topics in the course syllabus and throughout the duration of this course. Further, student teams receive specific information and data from the client (note that a confidentiality agreement needs to be signed to participate in this project). Throughout the project, student teams are expected to independently collect and analyze additional data and literature.

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/4)



Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (20%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

Presentation of progress and preliminary results

Examination-aid rule

Presentations

In presentations, aids for visual presentation can be used. These aids can be specified or restricted by the lecturers.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

2. Examination sub part (2/4)

Examination time and form

Decentral - Presentation (in groups - all given the same grades) (30%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

Presentation of results at final conference

Examination-aid rule

Presentations

In presentations, aids for visual presentation can be used. These aids can be specified or restricted by the lecturers.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

3. Examination sub part (3/4)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (in groups - all given the same grades) (30%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

Final report

Examination-aid rule

Term papers

Written work must be written without outside help according to the known citation standards, and a declaration of authorship must be attached, which is available as a template on the StudentWeb.

Documentation (quotations, bibliography, etc.) must be carried out universally and consistently according to the requirements of the chosen/specified citation standard such as e.g. APA or MLA.

The legal standard is recommended for legal work (cf. by way of example: FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R., SCHINDLER B., Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (the latest edition in each case), or according to the recommendations of the Law School).



The reference sources of information (paraphrases, quotations, etc.) that has been taken over literally or in the sense of the original text must be integrated into the text in accordance with the requirements of the citation standard used. Informative and bibliographical notes must be included as footnotes (recommendations and standards e.g. in METZGER, C., Lern- und Arbeitsstrategien (latest edition)).

For all written work at the University of St.Gallen, the indication of page numbers is mandatory, regardless of the standard chosen. Where page numbers are missing in sources, the precise designation must be made differently: chapter or section title, section number, article, etc.

Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

4. Examination sub part (4/4)

Examination time and form

Decentral - examination paper written at home (individual) (20%)

Examination time: term time

Remark

Individual reflection paper

Examination-aid rule

Term papers

Written work must be written without outside help according to the known citation standards, and a declaration of authorship must be attached, which is available as a template on the StudentWeb.

Documentation (quotations, bibliography, etc.) must be carried out universally and consistently according to the requirements of the chosen/specified citation standard such as e.g. APA or MLA.

The legal standard is recommended for legal work (cf. by way of example: FORSTMOSER, P., OGOREK R., SCHINDLER B., Juristisches Arbeiten: Eine Anleitung für Studierende (the latest edition in each case), or according to the recommendations of the Law School).

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Supplementary aids

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Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

Students are expected to participate fully in all aspects of the course including group work and presentations.

Midterm Presentation (20%, 15min.): Student groups present their approach in solving the consultancy case, brief on their progress, including any roadblocks or difficulties that may have been encountered. All group members will be given the same



grade.

Final Presentation (30%, 20 min.): Student groups present an in-depth analysis of the consultancy case and their recommendations to the client at the final conference. All group members will be given the same grade.

Final Report (30%, max. 5'000 words, +/- 10%, excluding references): The report provides a summary of relevant research, lays down possible business options, and proposes particular courses of action. Next to an explanation of the case challenge and the results of the research undertaken, it outlines the methods used and the theories applied to analyze the challenge and solve any related problems. The brief might include graphs, charts, or other visual aids that make it easier to digest the most important information. All group members will be given the same grade.

Reflection Paper (20%, max. 1'000 words, +/- 10%, excluding references): Targeted at Dr. Philipp Thaler, this paper invites students to reflect on their groups' individual journey, from defining the problem to coming up with a solution. It allows them to consider the challenge to apply what they have learned in a classroom setting to contemporary challenges in a real-world setting. The reflection paper should be submitted individually and will be graded on an individual basis.

Examination relevant literature

A reading list with recommended readings will be distributed at the kick-off session. Groups will identify additional literature relevant to the class, receive further input and data from the client and the course coordinator throughout the course, identify own data sources and collect relevant data (e.g., from expert interviews and publicly available databases).

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW51) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 42 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 34 (Thursday, 25 August 2022);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 17 October 2022);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 17 October 2022);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before the end of the registration period in CW 45 (Monday, 7 November 2022).