STOCKHOLM SCHOOL
OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Syllabus

Growth – Managing your Firm

KTH: ME2817, SSE: 8064, KI: 2XX051, KFK: SSES23, SU: FE6603

Autumn 2026

Version: 2026-10-13

Course Practicalities

Location:

The course takes place **face to face** at the Stockholm School of Economics from **17:15 to 20:00**, in rooms Ragnar and A350 (see the Course Schedule). Session 10 (Wednesday 9 December) is held **online**; the link will be posted on Canvas.

Small changes in the schedule may occur to accommodate the availability of the guest speakers.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. You may miss up to two of the 11 sessions without a grade penalty. **However, you cannot miss the following sessions:**

- **Monday 16 November** – Session 4: guest speaker
- **Monday 23 November** – Session 5: Quiz 1
- **Wednesday 2 December** – Session 8: case discussion (individual case assignment) and guest speaker
- **Monday 7 December** – Session 9: Quiz 2 and guest speakers
- **Monday 14 December** – Session 11: final presentations (micro-conference)

There are no retake possibilities for the quizzes, the individual case assignment or the final presentation. Students who miss more than two sessions get a 5/100-point deduction for each additional session they miss. This means that if you miss four sessions, your maximum possible grade is 90 points instead of 100.

Preparation before each class:

The course builds on research articles from leading journals in entrepreneurship and management, complemented by a few practitioner articles. Each session has two or three core readings and some optional readings (see Course Literature). Sessions are interactive: the slides highlight key insights rather than summarize the readings, and much of the time is spent on discussions and exercises. **We expect you to read the core readings before class!**

The course includes guest speakers – entrepreneurs and industry experts. **To learn as much as possible from their experience, check their profiles and companies online and think ahead about questions you want to ask them.**

During class:

To foster an **inclusive** environment, we expect you to interact with other students, staff and guests in a **respectful** and **compassionate** manner. You should not feel discouraged from sharing your opinions and reflections, but you are expected to do so politely.

We expect a **high** level of **involvement** from students during class. Students are expected to frequently share their opinions and reflections on the course materials and related topics. This helps you develop your public speaking skills and makes class discussions richer for everyone.

Use of generative AI:

- **Quizzes:** no AI tools or electronic devices; the only aid allowed is one A4 sheet (both sides) of your own notes.
- **Individual case assignment and group report:** you may use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot or similar tools), provided that you disclose it. Add a short statement at the end of your submission saying which tools you used and for what. In addition, **export the full conversation(s) – your prompts and the tool's responses – as HTML or PDF and submit them together with your assignment.** This applies to every use, including language editing only. If you used no AI tools, write "No AI tools were used."
- The AI statement and the exported conversations do not count toward the word limit.
- You remain fully responsible for everything you submit, including the accuracy of facts and references. All empirical material in the field project (interviews, observations, data) must come from your own fieldwork.
- Undisclosed use of AI tools is treated as a breach of academic integrity and handled according to the rules of your home institution.

Assignment deadlines:

All **deadlines are at midnight**: a deadline of 1 December means you have to submit by 23:59 on 1 December. All assignments are submitted via "**Assignments**" on Canvas.

Course Overview

The objective of this course is to provide students with insights into the opportunities and challenges involved in managing growth in entrepreneurial ventures. The course combines theoretical foundations from leading research in entrepreneurship and management with practical applications: class exercises and discussions, guest speakers, a case discussion and a field project with a growing firm.

The course has two parts. The first part (Sessions 1–4) covers the foundations of firm **growth**: what growth is and how it is measured, why some firms grow and others do not, the processes, modes and strategies through which firms grow, how fast firms should grow and how growth is financed, and the role of entrepreneurial teams. The second part (Sessions 5–7) focuses on **scaling**: how scaling differs from growth, when and how ventures scale, and what scaling means for employees, organizations and society. The remaining sessions apply these insights in a case discussion, sessions with guest speakers, and the group field project.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

The intended learning outcomes for the course are for the student to be able to:

1. Explain how firm growth can be defined and measured, and analyze why some firms grow while others do not.

2. Critically assess models of the growth process, and evaluate when different growth modes and strategies, including international growth and pivots, are appropriate.
3. Explain how resources, from founding teams to capital, enable or constrain growth, and assess the pace and financing of growth at different stages, including venture capital, valuation and exit options.
4. Distinguish scaling from growth, explain how scalability can create competitive advantage, and assess when and how ventures should scale.
5. Analyze the consequences of scaling for employees, organizations and society, and how firms can remain entrepreneurial as they grow.
6. Make well-founded growth and scaling recommendations for a venture that account for the founders' ambitions and the venture's resources, stage and context.

Course Schedule

Date	Session	Preparation and deadlines
Mon 2 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 1:** Introduction – What is growth, and how do we measure it?	Readings for Session 1
Wed 4 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 A350	**Session 2:** How do firms grow? Processes, modes and strategies	Readings for Session 2 Team composition due (Fri 6 Nov)
Mon 9 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 3:** How fast should a firm grow, and how is growth financed?	Readings for Session 3 Status check due (Fri 13 Nov)
Mon 16 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 A350	**Session 4: Guest speaker 1/3** & Who grows the firm? Entrepreneurial teams	Readings for Session 4
Mon 23 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 5: Quiz 1/2** & Scaling I – What is scaling?	Quiz 1 (Sessions 1–4) Readings for Session 5
Wed 25 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 6:** Scaling II – When and how should ventures scale?	Readings for Session 6
Mon 30 Nov 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 7:** Scaling III – What are the consequences of scaling?	Readings for Session 7
Wed 2 Dec 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 8: Guest speaker 2/3 & Case discussion**	Individual case assignment due (Tue 1 Dec)
Mon 7 Dec 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 9: Guest speaker 3/3 & Quiz 2/2**	Quiz 2 (Sessions 5–7)
Wed 9 Dec 17:15 – 20:00 Online	**Session 10:** Group project clinic Q&A (*online*)	Book a 15-minute slot for your team Group report due (Thu 10 Dec)

Date	Session	Preparation and deadlines
Mon 14 Dec 17:15 – 20:00 Ragnar	**Session 11: Micro-conference – final presentations and wrap-up**	Upload your slides at least 2 hours before the session
Compulsory attendance for Sessions 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11.		

Course Literature

The course builds on research articles from leading journals in entrepreneurship and management (mainly from the Financial Times' FT50 list), complemented by a few practitioner articles. Each session has two or three **core readings**, which you are expected to read before class and which are examined in the quizzes. **Optional readings** are for those who want to go deeper and can be useful for the group project. All readings are available on Canvas under the module for each session.

Course book (optional): Merson, R. (2016). *Growing a business: Strategies for leaders and entrepreneurs*. New York: The Economist in association with PublicAffairs. The book is not required. Relevant chapters are listed under each session as background reading; the book is available as an e-book and in many university libraries.

Session 1 (Monday 2 November): Introduction – What is growth, why do some firms grow, and how do we measure it?

Core readings

1. Delmar, F., Davidsson, P., & Gartner, W. B. (2003). Arriving at the high-growth firm. *Journal of Business Venturing, 18*(2), 189–216.
2. Wiklund, J., Davidsson, P., & Delmar, F. (2003). What do they think and feel about growth? An expectancy–value approach to small business managers' attitudes toward growth. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 27*(3), 247–270.

Optional readings

- Wiklund, J., & Shepherd, D. (2003). Aspiring for, and achieving growth: The moderating role of resources and opportunities. *Journal of Management Studies, 40*(8), 1919–1941.
- Merson (2016): Chapter 1 (The trouble with growth), Chapter 3 (Growth enablers and drivers) and Chapter 5 (Measuring and describing growth).

Session 2 (Wednesday 4 November): How do firms grow? Processes, modes and strategies

Core readings

1. Levie, J., & Lichtenstein, B. B. (2010). A terminal assessment of stages theory: Introducing a dynamic states approach to entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 34*(2), 317–350.
2. McKelvie, A., & Wiklund, J. (2010). Advancing firm growth research: A focus on growth mode instead of growth rate. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 34*(2), 261–288.

Optional readings

- Chirio, G. (2018). The 6 ways to grow a company. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2018/06/the-6-ways-to-grow-a-company
- Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2019). Nondisruptive creation: Rethinking innovation and growth. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 60*(3), 46–55.

- Merson (2016): Chapter 2 (Stages of growth) and Chapter 8 (Different types of growth).
- Kirtley, J., & O'Mahony, S. (2023). What is a pivot? Explaining when and how entrepreneurial firms decide to make strategic change and pivot. *Strategic Management Journal, 44*(1), 197–230.

Session 3 (Monday 9 November): How fast should a firm grow, and how is growth financed?

Core readings

1. Davidsson, P., Steffens, P., & Fitzsimmons, J. (2009). Growing profitable or growing from profits: Putting the horse in front of the cart? *Journal of Business Venturing, 24*(4), 388–406.
2. Murray, A., & Fisher, G. (2023). When more is less: Explaining the curse of too much capital for early-stage ventures. *Organization Science, 34*(1), 246–282.

Optional readings

- Raisch, S., & von Krogh, G. (2007). Navigating a path to smart growth. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 48*(3), 65–72. (The growth corridor, used in class.)
- Gompers, P. A., Gornall, W., Kaplan, S. N., & Strebulaev, I. A. (2020). How do venture capitalists make decisions? *Journal of Financial Economics, 135*(1), 169–190. (The full study behind the HBR article.)
- Drover, W., Busenitz, L., Matusik, S., Townsend, D., Anglin, A., & Dushnitsky, G. (2017). A review and road map of entrepreneurial equity financing research: Venture capital, corporate venture capital, angel investment, crowdfunding, and accelerators. *Journal of Management, 43*(6), 1820–1853.
- Merson (2016): Chapter 6 (Financing growth). Primers on Canvas: "How to prepare a balance sheet" and "How to prepare a profit and loss statement".
- Gompers, P., Gornall, W., Kaplan, S. N., & Strebulaev, I. A. (2021). How venture capitalists make decisions. *Harvard Business Review*. https://hbr.org/2021/03/how-venture-capitalists-make-decisions

Session 4 (Monday 16 November): Who grows the firm? Entrepreneurial teams

Guest speaker: Hugo Mårdh, My Airspot

Core readings

1. Hashai, N., & Zahra, S. A. (2022). Founder team prior work experience: An asset or a liability for startup growth? *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 16*(1), 155–184.

Optional readings

- Preller, R., Breugst, N., Patzelt, H., & Dibbern, R. (2023). Team resilience building in response to co-founder exits. *Journal of Business Venturing, 38*(6), 106328.
- Breugst, N., Patzelt, H., & Rathgeber, P. (2015). How should we divide the pie? Equity distribution and its impact on entrepreneurial teams. *Journal of Business Venturing, 30*(1), 66–94.

- Patzelt, H., Preller, R., & Breugst, N. (2021). Understanding the life cycles of entrepreneurial teams and their ventures: An agenda for future research. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 45*(5), 1119–1153. **Only the first 5 pages.**

Session 5 (Monday 23 November): Scaling I – What is scaling, and how does it differ from growth?

Quiz 1 (Sessions 1–4) takes place at the start of the session.

Core readings

1. Jansen, J. J. P., Heavey, C., Mom, T. J. M., Simsek, Z., & Zahra, S. A. (2023). Scaling-up: Building, leading and sustaining rapid growth over time. *Journal of Management Studies, 60*(3), 581–604.
2. Coviello, N., Autio, E., Nambisan, S., Patzelt, H., & Thomas, L. D. W. (2024). Organizational scaling, scalability, and scale-up: Definitional harmonization and a research agenda. *Journal of Business Venturing, 39*(5), 106419.

Optional readings

- Giustiziero, G., Kretschmer, T., Somaya, D., & Wu, B. (2023). Hyperspecialization and hyperscaling: A resource-based theory of the digital firm. *Strategic Management Journal, 44*(6), 1391–1424.
- Somaya, D., & You, J. (2024). Scalability, venture capital availability, and unicorns: Evidence from the valuation and timing of IPOs. *Journal of Business Venturing, 39*(1), 106345.
- Belitski, M., Stettler, T., Wales, W., & Martin, J. (2023). Speed and scaling: An investigation of accelerated firm growth. *Journal of Management Studies, 60*(3), 639–687.
- Jansen, J. J. P., & Tippmann, E. (2026). Scalability and scaling in management research: Toward a process model integrating fragmented literatures. *Academy of Management Annals*.
- Bohan, S., Tippmann, E., Levie, J., Igoe, J., & Bowers, B. (2024). What is scaling? *Journal of Business Venturing, 39*(1), 106355.

Session 6 (Wednesday 25 November): Scaling II – When and how should ventures scale?

Core readings

1. Van Lancker, E., Knockaert, M., Collewaert, V., & Breugst, N. (2023). Preparing for scaling: A study on founder role evolution. *Journal of Business Venturing, 38*, 106315.
2. Lee, S., & Kim, J. D. (2024). When do startups scale? Large-scale evidence from job postings. *Strategic Management Journal, 45*(9), 1633–1669.

Optional readings

- Varga, S., Cholakova, M., Jansen, J. J. P., Mom, T. J. M., & Kok, G. J. M. (2023). From platform growth to platform scaling: The role of decision rules and network effects over time. *Journal of Business Venturing, 38*(6), 106346.

- Reuber, A. R., Tippmann, E., & Monaghan, S. (2021). Global scaling as a logic of multinationalization. *Journal of International Business Studies, 52*(6), 1031–1046.
- DeSantola, A., & Gulati, R. (2017). Scaling: Organizing and growth in entrepreneurial ventures. *Academy of Management Annals, 11*(2), 640–668.
- Tidhar, R., Hallen, B. L., & Eisenhardt, K. M. (2025). Measure twice, cut once: Unit profitability, scalability, and the exceptional growth of new firms. *Organization Science, 36*(1), 88–120.

Session 7 (Monday 30 November): Scaling III – What are the consequences of scaling for people, firms and society?

Core readings

1. Genedy, M., Hellerstedt, K., Naldi, L., & Wiklund, J. (2024). Growing pains in scale-ups: How scaling affects new venture employee burnout and job satisfaction. *Journal of Business Venturing, 39*(2), 106367.
2. Genedy, M., Naldi, L., Hellerstedt, K., & Wiklund, J. (2026). Scaling with bias? The role of founders' HR knowledge and experience in hiring and managerial appointments. *Human Resource Management, 65*(3), 893–923.

Optional readings

- Gulati, R. (2019). The soul of a start-up: Companies can sustain their entrepreneurial energy even as they grow. *Harvard Business Review, 97*(4), 84–92. (Used in class.)
- Huang, L., Joshi, P., Wakslak, C., & Wu, A. (2021). Sizing up entrepreneurial potential: Gender differences in communication and investor perceptions of long-term growth and scalability. *Academy of Management Journal, 64*(3), 716–740.
- Schou, P. K. (2023). Coming apart while scaling up: Adoption of logics and the fragmentation of organizational identity in science-based ventures. *Journal of Management Studies, 60*(3), 688–721.

Session 8 (Wednesday 2 December): Case discussion

Guest speaker: Anas Mussa, consultant in the medical devices industry

- **Case:** ***Case title to be announced*** (Harvard Business School case).
- Submit the individual case assignment by **Tuesday 1 December, 23:59** (see "2. Individual Case Assignment").

Session 9 (Monday 7 December): Quiz 2 and guest speakers

Quiz 2 (Sessions 5–7).

Guest speakers: Måns Brengesjö and Gustav Thörn Palmér, co-founders of Wirke and Papaj (tech companies for Web and App development in the region of Jönköping)

- No new readings. Think ahead about questions for the founders.

Session 10 (Wednesday 9 December, online): Group project clinic (Q&A)

- Book a 15-minute slot for your team (link on Canvas). Bring your most pressing questions about the report and the presentation.

Session 11 (Monday 14 December): Micro-conference – final presentations and wrap-up

- Submit the group report by **Thursday 10 December, 23:59**, and send it to your discussant team the same day.
- Prepare your presentation and your discussant feedback. See “3. Group Assignment”.

Course Assignments

Your grade is based on three components: (1) two in-class quizzes on the course "core" literature (see above), (2) an individual case assignment, and (3) a group field project with a presentation.

Component	Points	Date
Quiz 1 (Sessions 1–4), in class	20	Mon. 23 Nov
Quiz 2 (Sessions 5–7), in class	20	Mon. 7 Dec
Individual case assignment (one page max. 400 words)	10	Due Tues. 1 Dec
Group field project: report	50	Status check Fri. 13 Nov Report Thurs. 10 Dec
Group field project: presentation	Pass/Fail	Mon 14 Dec
Total	**100**	

Please note that your grades will be transferred in line with regulations at your home institution.

1. Quizzes (2 × 20 points)

1.1 Description

Two in-class quizzes test your understanding of the core readings and the material discussed in class (slides and exercises):

- **Quiz 1** at the start of Session 5 (**Monday 23 November**) covers Sessions 1–4.
- **Quiz 2** at the start of Session 9 (**Monday 7 December**) covers Sessions 5–7.

Each quiz consists of **multiple-choice questions worth** 20 points per quiz, and you have **35 minutes**. Wrong answers are not penalized. The quizzes are **closed-book and pencil-and-paper, but you can bring 1-page handwritten A4 paper (front and back) of your own notes**: no electronic devices or AI tools are allowed. Please bring a pencil and arrive on time.

Questions focus on your understanding of the frameworks and concepts introduced and discussed in the course from the "core" readings; some might include very short hypothetical scenarios. Optional readings are *not examined*. If you have a documented need for special arrangements (e.g., extra time), contact the course assistant at the start of the course.

To illustrate the nature of the questions, here is an example:

Which statement best describes how Bohan et al. (2024) distinguish scaling from growth?

a) Scaling is any increase in sales or employees over a three-year period.

b) **Scaling is a time-limited process of exponential growth that requires internal transformation of the firm. (correct answer)**
c) Scaling only occurs in digital firms that benefit from network effects.
d) Scaling is defined by meeting the OECD threshold of 20% average annual growth.

1.2 What to bring?

1. Pencil (or pen)
2. One-page handwritten A4 paper (front and back) of your own notes (not printed or digitized notes).

2. Individual Case Assignment (10 points)

2.1 Description

You will reflect on one case (i.e., analyzing and sharing your opinion), which we discuss in Session 8 (**Wednesday 2 December**). The case and the assignment question(s) will be posted on Canvas under Assignments at least one week before the deadline.

- **Format:** one page, **maximum 400 words, single-spaced**. The reference list, the AI statement and the exported AI conversations do not count toward the word limit.
- **Deadline: Tuesday 1 December, 23:59**, via Canvas. Late submissions are not accepted because the case is discussed in class the next day.
- **Structure:** (1) your recommendation; (2) the key arguments supporting it, possibly grounded in course concepts and based on evidence from the case; (3) the main risk, or critical information that is missing. If the assignment has several questions, number your answers.
- **Grading:** the quality and justification of your arguments (not the length), the relevant use of course concepts, the use of evidence from the case, and the feasibility of your recommendation. There is no single right solution: very different recommendations can get a high grade, as long as they are feasible, pertinent and well justified.
- **References:** you do not need to reference the lecture slides or the case itself. Cite academic articles and any other sources (e.g., an industry report) in a short reference list on a second page after the 1-pager write-up.
- **Tip:** reading about the industry is fine, but avoid reading about what the company actually did after the case. It narrows your thinking about alternative strategies.

2.2 What to submit?

1. Your recommendations in Word document format (no more than 400 words and in 1-page).

2. AI prompts and conversation in case used for any purpose, including proofreading and language editing.

All submissions are done through Canvas, and AI material (#2 above) should be compressed into a zip file given its size.

3. Group Assignment

3.1 Rationale

To create a live, practice-based learning situation, this assignment enables you to engage in a field-based project. The field project aims to deepen your knowledge about growth, scaling and entrepreneurship by giving you the chance to encounter the challenges that growing firms face on a day-to-day basis.

The group assignment and your presentation of the group assignment should demonstrate a) your understanding of the key frameworks, perspectives, concepts, ideas and tools introduced in the course, b) your ability to relate these frameworks, perspectives, concepts, ideas and tools to one another, and c) your ability to creatively apply these frameworks, perspectives, concepts, ideas and tools in differing contexts.

The aim of the assignment is to enable you to gain the abilities stated in the intended learning outcomes above, specifically to:

- Understand the assumptions underlying, and the implications of, different definitions of growth and scaling for what "appropriate" growth/scaling practices and strategies are.
- Identify, selectively apply, and critically challenge models of the growth and scaling process.
- Make well-founded decisions and recommendations for ventures, given the entrepreneur's or entrepreneurs' personal ambitions, and the specific stages and contexts of growth the venture is situated in.

3.2 Team Composition and Communication

You are allowed to form your own team of 5–6 students, following a **2-2-2 rule**. This means every team needs to include more than one gender (no all-female or all-male teams), at least 2 nationalities, and at least 2 universities.

Please submit your team composition on Canvas by **Friday 6 November**, including student names, nationality, gender, university (e.g., SSE, KTH) and team name. **Students who do not submit a team composition by 6 November will be allocated to teams by the course director.**

We strongly encourage you to communicate clearly, respectfully and in a timely fashion with one another. Be mindful that fellow team members may have different communication styles,

work practices and personalities, and adapt to ensure you have a rewarding and productive teamwork experience.

3.3 The Group Assignment

The field project consists of two parts. The first part is a status check. The second part is the actual group assignment based on a growth- and/or scaling-related topic identified as crucial for the organization you investigate.

The first part, the status check, should be **less than 250 words** (half-pager) and needs to be uploaded under "Assignments" on Canvas by **Friday 13 November**. **You need to gain access independently to a growing/scaling firm with at least 2 employees that agrees to serve as the object of your group's field project.** We encourage you to reach out to companies as soon as possible. The status check should briefly describe:

1. the firm (e.g., its industry, team, size and many characteristics)
2. the topic you intend to address (i.e., the research question you plan to investigate)
3. and briefly, in 1-2 sentences within the 250 words, motivate why this topic is relevant.

Please note that the course director might reach out to your team to discuss the feasibility of the research question.

The second part consists of writing a full group assignment that focuses on the question of your choice, as identified in the first part. This group assignment should include a **maximum of 4000 words**, equivalent to approximately 10 pages (*excluding figures, tables, references and appendices*). It should be based on the course literature and your empirical observations (i.e., data you collect and/or gain access to), resulting in an analysis that is valuable for the firm. This implies producing analyses and recommendations that are concrete, feasible and useful to the firm. You need to clearly state and motivate the key internal and external issues you identified and propose constructive solutions with implementation strategies. **The analysis and conclusions should be clearly anchored in theory (e.g., core and optional readings, and other academic articles), yet easy to communicate in practice. Keep in mind that to deliver a high-quality team project, you may have to read additional materials beyond the readings of the course.** For instance, if your research question is "How can start-up X improve organizational culture?", you may want to read additional research on human resources (e.g., employee motivation, collaboration) and/or psychology.

The group assignment is to be submitted on Canvas under "Assignments" and sent to your discussant team (allocations will be announced on Canvas) by **Thursday 10 December, 23:59**. You will then present your group assignment at the micro-conference on **Monday 14 December**. In addition, you will act as a *peer reviewer* and *discussant* of another group's assignment.

Present your group's assignment using slides with the following sections. The presentation can take **8 minutes** at most, so keep slides simple and focus on the most central aspects:

- Brief overview of the firm and industry (~ 2 minutes)
- Research question (~ 1-2 minutes)

- Method: what data you are using and how (e.g., interviews/surveys/experiments with co-founders/employees/potential or existing customers/other relevant stakeholders, industry reports, etc.) (~ 2-3 minutes)
- Main findings and recommendations (~ 2 minutes)

Each presentation is followed by about 4 minutes of discussion with the discussant team and 4 minutes of questions from the audience and the course director. Upload your slides on Canvas (Assignments → Project Presentation) at least 2 hours before the session.

In addition, prepare a brief summary of your peer review of the group assignment you were allocated to (no slides or hand-in needed). Provide 2–3 discussion points for the authors and the rest of the class. It is vital that your feedback is constructive and respectful. Consider the following questions when preparing your peer review:

- Do you see insights from other theories that could add to the analysis?
- Do you see any challenges in practically implementing the recommendations?
- Do you have ideas about how the recommendations could be complemented or challenged?
- Are there aspects that were not entirely clear in the report?
- Can you think of aspects that are beyond the scope of the report but could be interesting to discuss?

3.4 What to submit?

3. Status check in Word document format (no more than 250 words, about ½ page).

4. Report in Word document format (no more than 4000 words excluding tables, figures, references, and possible appendices).

5. AI prompts and conversation in case used for any purpose, including proofreading and language editing.

6. Raw material collected (e.g., surveys, interview transcripts, secondary data, etc.).

All submissions are done through Canvas, and AI material (#3 above) and raw material (#4 above) should be compressed into a zip file given their size.

3.5 Extended Group Assignment Guidelines

3.5.1 Choosing which firm to study

You are free to choose what firm to study, and what question to focus on. Generally, the course director will only push you to rethink your research question if it is too broad or not related to a growth or scaling challenge. This allows you to link the field-based learning to your career planning and job search. Field-based learning is a remarkable opportunity to personalize your education and prepare for the future as you make connections and gain experience in your chosen field. In previous classes, some field projects have materialized into viable solutions for existing firms or constituted the very beginning of an exciting new venture. Topics may involve a product launch, new business development (with the objective to create growth), or

research aimed at solving another real-world problem in the area of business growth and scaling.

You are to gather information from the firm through primary sources of data (surveys, interviews, participant observations at group meetings) and secondary sources (firm-internal documentation, presentations, public information, and press about the firm and its sector). For the experience to be as rewarding as possible, your group should collaborate with the chosen firm from the start of the course so that the firm can see a clear contribution from your involvement. Therefore, it can make sense to focus on entrepreneurial firms that are new and small or medium-sized, rather than large and well-established in their market (however, this is just a recommendation since well-established firms also grow and scale). Such entrepreneurial firms tend to be innovative and are often more open to student collaborations.

Regardless of which topic or firm you choose, the extent to which your report demonstrates an understanding of the frameworks and perspectives on growth and scaling discussed in the course is more important than the factual completeness of your research. You may have to make certain assumptions if you lack data about specific aspects. Please keep in mind, however, that these assumptions and the underlying reasoning must always be acknowledged and made transparent.

3.5.2 Report format

The submitted group assignment should be structured as follows:

- Title page (with all student author names and email addresses listed)
- Introduction
- Theory
- Method and data
- Analyses
- Conclusion and recommendations
- Discussion, limitations and critical reflections
- AI statement and exported AI conversations (see "Use of generative AI" under Course Practicalities)

Reports should include **no more than 4000 words** (excluding figures, tables, references and appendices).

> ***Method and data.*** Your analysis should be based on primary data gathered from primary sources like surveys and interviews, as well as available and credible secondary sources. The specific information collected by each group will naturally differ, and the grading will not be based on the sheer number of interviews or documents collected, but rather on the quality and relevance of your data and the consequent analysis. As a guiding principle, around five interviews are appropriate, depending on the research question and the availability of other information. Briefly explain which data you collected and how, present your assumptions and the reasoning behind your empirical approach, and discuss limitations tied to your approach. More detailed information about data sources can be provided in an appendix.

Theory. The core of the field project is to analyze the data using the concepts and frameworks in the course literature, which includes all core and optional readings tied to the sessions. If you choose a topic that is only briefly discussed in the course literature, you may also want to complement it with 3–4 additional scientific articles that go deeper into your specific topic. We recommend journals on the Financial Times' FT50 list (https://www.ft.com/ft50-journals), primarily those in management, strategy and entrepreneurship. Use the theory section to introduce the literature and the concepts or frameworks you will use in your analysis, briefly motivating your choices. However, do not spend too much space describing the content of the concepts and frameworks; you can assume the reader is generally familiar with the literature.

Analyses. The structure of your analysis will depend on your research question and methodology. However, your report will generally need to include an initial description of the specific nature and situation of the firm, but also go beyond pure description by providing an analysis that answers your research question. This may include an analysis of the firm's strategy and a discussion of the challenges it faces and how they are dealt with, along with a critical evaluation of this strategy (see the following section).

Conclusion and recommendations. This section should articulate what your analyses found in terms of the firm's strategy and competitive situation, along with key strengths, weaknesses, and possible opportunities or room for improvement. This should be followed by concrete and actionable recommendations, along with suggestions for their implementation and possible caveats or limitations. Always clarify why you are recommending a certain course of action.

Please take care not to jump to conclusions too quickly. A thorough analysis of the current situation, a transparent discussion of assumptions, and consideration of alternative explanations for your findings are crucial parts of a convincing research project.

Discussion, limitations and critical reflections. A critical reflection implies explicitly addressing the assumptions that underlie your conclusions and recommendations. Here you may want to discuss the models you have applied critically, such as their boundary conditions and the extent to which they apply in this case or are contradicted by your findings.

3.6 Group Assignment Grading

Report structure

An important part of any piece of writing is that it is effectively structured, so that it is logically consistent and sells its recommendations. To encourage you to enhance the readability of your report, the evaluation will also depend on:

- Clarity of writing
- Paragraph and sentence structure
- References and footnotes (the reference style is up to you, as long as you are consistent)
- Continuity of flow and absence of redundancy

Report content

Your report will be primarily evaluated based on its content. The following are examples of criteria applied in the evaluation. They are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to give you an intuition for the grading process. The exact weighting and type of questions will depend on the topic you have chosen.

Introduction and aim

- Does the report situate the studied firm and question in a broader context?
- Does the introduction make the reader understand why this is an interesting, timely and relevant case study?
- Is there a clearly defined and delimited research question?

Theory

- Do the authors select relevant concepts and frameworks to use in their analysis?
- Do the authors motivate their choices of concepts and frameworks?

Analyses

- Does the report contain analyses of the major issues?
- Are the analyses substantiated by empirical data?
- Are the analyses complete and comprehensive?
- Does the analysis incorporate concepts from the class discussions and relevant literatures?
- Does the analysis show the relationships among important empirical factors in the situation?
- Does the analysis demonstrate an ability to understand relationships between different theoretical concepts and frameworks?
- Are assumptions made in the analysis stated explicitly?
- Does the analysis isolate the fundamental causes of problems?

Recommendations

- Are the criteria for selecting recommendations stated?
- Are recommendations logically connected to the analysis?
- Are the limitations of the recommendations acknowledged?

Critical reflection

- Does the report demonstrate an ability to reframe and discuss alternative ways of viewing the firm and its problems?
- Does the report demonstrate an understanding of the implications of using different definitions and models of growth and scaling?

Exhibits

- Are analyses in the exhibits conducted appropriately?
- Do the key exhibits support and add to the text on key points or issues?

Course Staff

The following persons will be involved in delivering the course:

Name	E-mail	Main responsibilities
Mohamed Genedy	mohamed.genedy@hhs.se	Course director
Riti Chatterjee	riti.chatterjee@sses.se	Course assistant

Please email Mohamed for content-related questions, and Riti for administrative questions (e.g., registration, Canvas, course credits). For anything urgent, please email both to increase the likelihood of a timely response.