



B470 Corporate Strategy: M&A and Divestitures

Syllabus (Winter Semester 2026/2027)

Instructor: Prof. Dr. Timo Sohl

Content

This module discusses corporate strategy of modern multi-business firms and presents empirical studies on how corporate scope decisions might create or destroy value. It develops an understanding of how corporate transactions are used to restructure business portfolios, with a particular focus on understanding the role of mergers & acquisitions (M&As) and divestitures within a firm's corporate strategy.

Learning target

In this module, students learn to evaluate strategic choices around a firm's set of businesses and formulate corporate strategy in dynamic market environments. Students develop the ability to analyze how a firm's market environment and logic for value creation influence its scope decisions. They develop an understanding of how M&As and divestitures are used as strategic tools to restructure business portfolios.

Topics

1. The vertical boundaries of the firm
 - a. Transaction costs and the firm-market boundary
 - b. Contractual relationships
 - c. Specific assets, hold-up problem, and vertical integration
2. The horizontal boundaries of the firm
 - a. Quantifying diversification
 - b. Diversification strategy
 - c. Sources of diversification benefits and costs
 - d. Organizational design
3. Corporate transactions and restructuring
 - a. Basic facts about Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A)
 - b. M&A strategy
 - c. Types of divestitures, divestiture motives

Structure

Lectures

- Tuesdays, 10:00 – 12:00 c.t.
- No registration required



Tutorials

- Tuesdays, 12:00 – 14:00 c.t.
- No registration is required
- Discussion of problem sets (open questions, single-choice questions, and mini case studies). It is important to prepare for the tutorials in advance!

Enrollment information

No registration required.

Coursework

- 9 ECTS-Credits (lecture + practice course).
- Written exam (60 minutes), registration is required.

Teaching methods

Independent study, oral participation

Course language

English

Literature

Textbooks

- Dranove, D., Besanko, D., Shanley, M., & Schaefer, S. (2017). *Economics of Strategy*. 7th Ed. John Wiley & Sons.
- Gaughan, P. A. (2018). *Mergers, Acquisitions, & Corporate Restructurings*. 7th Ed. John Wiley & Sons.

Core articles

- Cunningham, C., Ederer, F., & Ma, S. (2021). Killer acquisitions. *Journal of Political Economy*, 129(3), 649-702.
- Feldman, E. R., & Hernandez, E. (2022). Synergy in mergers and acquisitions: Typology, life cycles, and value. *Academy of Management Review*, 47(4), 549-578.
- Lieberman, M. B., Lee, G. K., & Folta, T. B. (2017). Entry, exit, and the potential for resource redeployment. *Strategic Management Journal*, 38(3), 526-544.

Professor

Timo Sohl is a Professor of Strategy at the University of Tübingen. He holds a Ph.D. in Management from the University of St. Gallen and a Diploma (MSc equivalent) in Economics from the University of Heidelberg. His research is published in leading management journals such as *Management Science*, *Organization Science*, and the *Strategic Management Journal*. He currently serves as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Organization Design*.



Prior to his academic career, he gained some practical experience at multinationals such as SAP and BOSCH in Germany and China.