

Media release

Zurich, 12 November 2015

Swiss Life Asset Managers awards prizes to best finance theses

In partnership with the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and the business paper *Finanz und Wirtschaft*, Swiss Life Asset Managers has for the second time bestowed the Swiss Life Thesis Award for the best Master's and Bachelor's theses in finance. With a value of CHF 20 000, the prize promotes practical research at Swiss universities of applied sciences. The winners were announced yesterday evening in Zurich.

Twenty-two Bachelor's and Master's theses on a wide range of topics were submitted from universities across Switzerland, all of them with one thing in common: A focus on the world of finance. At the awards ceremony in Zurich, Stefan Mächler, Chief Investment Officer of the Swiss Life Group, praised the practical nature of the theses: "The students have taken on current issues and have not shied away from areas in which the experts are still searching for answers. We are pleased to reward their courage, since it pays off in professional life as well: If you are always thinking critically and one step ahead, you are at a decisive advantage." Professor Christoph Lengwiler, Head of the Institute of Financial Services Zug (IFZ), part of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, and a member of the jury, noted the importance of a platform for Swiss institutes of higher education to address financial subjects: "The Swiss Life Thesis Award motivates students and their supervisors to pursue innovative, forward-thinking research. There is an enormous variety of topics in the field of finance and there are still many issues involving financial markets, financial instruments, regulation and investment instruments worth investigating. That's where we aim to make a contribution in future."

Review of the award winners

Thomas Seiler, who lives in Bad Ragaz and is a graduate of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, focused on emotionality in digital interaction with banking clients. His thesis develops a framework to ensure an empathic and consistent client experience over all channels. He received the **Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Master's category** endowed with CHF 5000. The jury

had this to say about his work: "As he investigates the emotional profile, Thomas Seiler is able to keep the client relationship holistically in view at all times despite his focus on digital interaction. His recommendations are original, detailed and skilfully embedded in the complex world of marketing."

Michèle Luyet, from St. Léonard in the canton of Valais and a student at the School of Management Fribourg, explored the techniques and organisational cultures that best foster creativity and innovation at Swiss retail banks. The jury praised her systematic approach, her informative case studies and the highly applicable creativity model she generated from them by awarding her the **Honourable Mention in the Master's category** worth CHF 2500.

Helen Jane Butcher, who lives in Zurich and is a graduate of the ZHAW School of Management and Law, studied whether sentiment indicators are apt to predict the behaviour of stock indices; focusing on the Purchasing Managers Index (PMI). The jury explained its bestowal on her of the **Swiss Life Thesis Award in the Bachelor's category**, worth CHF 5000, thus: "The thesis is very well crafted and easy to follow, and affords valuable insight into a field as yet under researched."

Jules Gisclon, from Blonay and a student at the School of Business and Engineering Vaud, looked at the measurement of hedge fund performance for which he won an **Honourable Mention in the Bachelor's category** worth CHF 2500. The jury praised the relevance of a topic that is also increasingly preoccupying institutional investors. The author skilfully addresses the calls for adequate measurement tools by studying two approaches to the establishment of benchmarks, and thus provides a behind-the-scenes look at hedge fund strategies.

The prizewinners' institutions receive CHF 1500 in both categories for the bestowal of the Swiss Life Thesis Award, as well as CHF 1000 for the Honourable Mention.

About the Swiss Life Thesis Award

The Swiss Life Thesis Award, presented in cooperation with the Institute of Financial Services Zug (IFZ), part of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, and the business paper *Finanz und Wirtschaft*, provides a platform for innovative and practice-oriented research work at Swiss institutes of higher education. The best theses in the fields of financial investments, financial markets, financial services companies, financial instruments and corporate finance are singled out for award each year.

Swiss Life Thesis Award jury members

Philippe Béguelin, Head of Markets Department, *Finanz und Wirtschaft*

Peter Kuster, Head of Editing and Proofreading, Swiss National Bank

Professor Christoph Lengwiler, Head of the Institute of Financial Services Zug (IFZ), part of the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts

Dr Annelis Lüscher Hämmerli, Head of Investment Risk, Swiss Life Asset Managers

Dr Hansruedi Scherer, Partner and Member of the Executive Committee, PPCmetrics, Zurich

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Swiss Life Asset Managers

Swiss Life Asset Managers has more than 150 years of experience in managing the assets of the Swiss Life Group. This insurance background has exerted a key influence on the investment philosophy of Swiss Life Asset Managers, which is governed by such principles as value preservation, the generation of consistent and sustainable performance and a responsible approach to risks. Swiss Life Asset Managers offers this proven approach to external clients in Switzerland, France, Germany and Luxembourg.

As at 30 June 2015 assets under management for external clients amount to CHF 34.9 billion. Together with insurance mandates for the Swiss Life Group, total assets under management at Swiss Life Asset Managers stood at CHF 178.7 billion.

Furthermore, Swiss Life Asset Manager is the leading institutional real estate investor in Europe.¹ Of the CHF 178.7 billion, CHF 33.4 billion is invested in real estate. In addition, Swiss Life Asset Managers has real estate under administration of CHF 28.1 billion through its subsidiaries Livit and Corpus Sireo. Total real estate under management and administration at the end of June 2015 thus came to CHF 61.5 billion.

Swiss Life Asset Managers employs about 1400 people in Europe.

¹ PropertyEU, 100 Top Investors, October 2015