

Assignment II — Referee Report

Research in Finance

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Overview

Due: 3 February 2026 via email. **Submission format:** one PDF, 2.5–3 pages, 11 pt Times New Roman, 1.5 spaced. **Group size:** up to 5 students. **Weight:** 50% of the final grade.

Attend the mandatory **Brown Bag Seminar on 20 January 2026 (13:30–16:00)** and select **one doctoral presentation** to critique, applying the writing, publishing, and refereeing tips from Lecture 4 to practice thesis-level analysis.

Submission rules

You must submit **only one file**:

- One **2.5–3 page report** in academic referee style, focusing on the presentation’s contribution to the literature and your judgment of its empirical strategy.
- Include your name(s) and the **title of the chosen presentation** in the document.

Email the report as PDF to oliver.padmaperuma@uni-ulm.de, with andre.guettler@uni-ulm.de in CC. Subject / file pattern: **RiF2025_RefereeReport_surname1_surname2_...**

You will receive the PDF of each presentation and the corresponding working paper (when available). Sometimes there is **no working paper**; in that case base your report **solely on the presentation**.

Required content (the three-part referee structure)

1. Summary

A short summary of the paper / presentation in **your own words**, addressing:

- What is the question asked by the author?
- What is the identification strategy?
- What data is used?
- How is the hypothesis formulated and tested?
- What are the results?

The purpose of this section is to summarise the work for the editor in a way that lets her understand the essence and contribution **without having to read the paper**.

2. Major issues — 3 or 4 points

For each major positive or negative point, dig into one of the following dimensions:

- The **question** — clearly explained and motivated? Original? Reasonable scope?
- The **identification strategy** — source of variation, endogeneity, robustness, causal interpretation.
- The **data** — fit for purpose, replicable, measurement-error issues, summary statistics.
- The **econometric analysis** — appropriate techniques, estimator properties, alternative specifications, robustness.
- The **results & conclusion** — clearly stated, related back to the question, caveats, well-supported claims.

For a **positive point**: argue why the question / approach / techniques / identification / data is particularly important, novel, innovative, or unusual.

For a **negative point**: look for **lack of correspondence** between the idea and the model, the model and the empiricism, the empirical strategy and the conclusion. Another rejection-worthy argument: the paper has nothing wrong but is **boring and not new** — refer to other works to show why this is well known or already done.

3. Minor issues — optional

If you have major criticisms that lead you to recommend rejection, you don't need a section on minor issues. Otherwise, include a few useful suggestions to improve the paper (clarity, structure, additional robustness checks, presentation).

Tasks summary

1. **Summarise** the presentation's main ideas.
 2. **Evaluate** novelty compared to existing literature.
 3. **Assess** the empirical methods (identification, robustness).
 4. **Discuss** implications, strengths, weaknesses, limitations, and suggestions for improvement.
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Grading rubric

Criterion	Weight
Depth of analysis (contribution and empirical aspects)	40%
Writing quality (concise, organised, skim-friendly)	30%
Originality of insights	20%
Adherence to format (2.5–3 pages, 11 pt TNR, 1.5 spaced, structure)	10%

Honor code

By submitting this referee report, you confirm that the work is your group's own and that any AI assistance has been disclosed.