



CALL: European Accounting Association 2020 SHARK TANK PITCH Event



General Background¹

At its 2020 Conference in Bucharest (Romania), EAA is holding a shark tank pitch event inviting research teams to propose a brand new research idea, seeking it to be “sponsored” by a journal editor. The shark tank event has 2 (initial) stages: (I) **written 2-page pitch** (based on [Faff's \(2019, SSRN\)](#) “pitching research” framework for pitches that are predominantly quantitative, or Lodhia’s (2019) adapted framework for pitches that are predominantly qualitative – see **pages 2 & 3** of this call); (II) **oral pitch presentation** (based on the written pitch) to an Editors Panel of Sharks in a dedicated session of EAA 2020.² Selected teams (based on editors’ votes) will be invited to pitch their research idea to the “sharks”. After each pitch, shark editors will give a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down”.³ In those cases where more than one shark editor is interested, a “competitive process” will ensue to achieve the ideal match of pitch to journal.⁴ Ultimately, subject to an **agreed** offer by one of the shark editors, pitches presented at the EAA 2020 SHARK TANK PITCH event, will be invited to execute the research project and publish the resultant completed paper in a future issue of the “winning” shark’s journal.⁵

Important Dates

- **Stage ONE (Written Pitch):** **Submission Deadline:** December 1, 2019.
Decision Notification: February 10, 2020.
- **Stage TWO (Shark Tank Oral Pitch):** **EAA 2020 Program** (dedicated session): 27-29 May, 2020.

Some Guidelines on Pitching Task

The shark editors have agreed on the following set of default guidelines for this Shark Tank event:

- Each team must be led by a **senior/experienced researcher mentoring novice researcher(s)**.
- Proposals involving a CEE setting/context, are particularly encouraged, though no boundaries will be absolutely placed on topics, as long as they have a sufficient accounting flavour.
- All methods of inquiry and research paradigms are welcome.
- Subject to numbers and written pitch quality, two concurrent Shark Tanks (90 minute duration) will be scheduled, each linked to resultant themes that best suit a sensible assignment of the participating shark editors.
- **Written pitch:** maximum 1,000 words; technical content as needed; address viability & research timeline.
- **Oral pitch:** one team member to deliver a short “lightening” pitch (5 minute PPT presentation) in an open forum to the Shark Tank panel, emphasising the most salient elements of the research proposal. Sharks and teams will openly engage through a limited period of Q&A, led by the most interested shark(s).
- All submissions must be made via the dedicated section on the web portal:⁶ [PitchMyResearch.com](#)
- Beyond the common elements listed above, each participating Editor will have their own specific expectations and requirements regarding what is ultimately needed to warrant publication in their journal. If deemed necessary, please approach the Editor directly via email.⁷

Further Enquiries

For any clarifications/queries regarding this event, please email: r.faff@business.uq.edu.au

¹ A research team will be working on a research project broadly assessing the effectiveness of the Shark Tank event. By submitting a pitch, participants agree to be subjects of an observational analysis - and open to interviews & surveys as part of a multi-method research design.

² Confirmed journals: *Accounting & Finance*; *Accounting Forum*; *Accounting in Europe*; *Contemporary Accounting Research*; *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*; *Journal of Contemporary Accounting & Economics*; *Pacific-Basin Finance Journal*.

³ Sharks are not obligated to like any pitches. Nevertheless, it is the genuine intention that every team making it to the oral stage of the Shark Tank, will have a realistic chance of a positive outcome. Moreover, some teams failing to make the Stage II event, might still ultimately be able to successfully engage shark editors offline with their proposed study.

⁴ Due to time constraints, this process will likely be completed “offline”.

⁵ Following a review process defined and fully controlled by the Editor in question.

⁶ The first step is to register as a user, then click on the button “pitching competitions” and follow the instructions. The [web portal](#) will open for **EAA 2020 SHARK TANK PITCH** submissions in late July 2019.

⁷ In the first instance, email the Shark Tank convenor, Professor Robert Faff: r.faff@business.uq.edu.au for updated information regarding editor/journal involvement in the event.

Appendix: Shark Tank Pitch – Quantitative Master Pitch Template with Cues (1,000 word target)

Pitcher's Name	Team member names here	FoR category	Field of Research	Date Completed	Insert date here
(A) Working Title	Succinct/informative title here				
(B) Basic Research Question	IN one sentence, define the key features of the research question.				
(C) Key paper(s)	Identify the key paper(s) which most critically underpin the topic (just standard reference details). Ideally one paper, but at most 3 papers. Ideally, by “gurus” in the field, either recently published in Tier 1 journal(s) or recent working paper e.g. on SSRN.				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle	IN one short paragraph (say a max of 100 words) capture the core academic motivation – which may include identifying a “puzzle” that you hope to resolve.				
THREE	Three core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “ IDioTs ” guide				
(E) Idea?	Identify the “core” idea that drives the intellectual content of this research topic. If possible, articulate the central hypothesis(es). Identify the key dependent (“explained”) variable and the key test/independent (“explanatory”) variable(s). Is there any serious threat from endogeneity here? If so, what is the identification strategy? Is there a natural experiment or exogenous shock that can be exploited? Is there any theoretical “tension” that can be exploited?				
(F) Data?	<p>(1) What data do you propose to use? e.g. country/setting; Why? Unit of analysis? Individuals, firms, portfolios, industries, countries ...? sample period; sampling interval? Daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual, ... Type of data: firm specific vs. industry vs. macro vs. ...?</p> <p>(2) What sample size do you expect? Cross-sectionally? In Time-series/longitudinal?</p> <p>(3) Is it a panel dataset?</p> <p>(4) Data Sources? Are the data commercially available? Any hand-collecting required? Are the data to be created based on your own survey instrument? Or by interviews? Timeframe? Research assistance needed? Funding/grants? Are they novel new data?</p> <p>(5) Will there be any problem with missing data/observations? Database merge issues? Data manipulation/“cleansing” issues?</p> <p>(6) Will your “test” variables exhibit adequate (“meaningful”) variation to give good power? Quality/reliability of data?</p> <p>(7) Other data obstacles? E.g. external validity? construct validity?</p>				
(G) Tools?	Basic empirical framework and research design? Is it a regression model approach? Survey instrument issues/design? Interview design? Econometric software needed/appropriate for job? Accessible through normal channels? Knowledge of implementation of appropriate or best statistical/econometric tests? Compatibility of data with planned empirical framework? Is statistical validity an issue?				
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?	Is the novelty in the idea/data/tools? Which is the “driver”, and are the “passengers” likely to pull their weight? Is this “Mickey Mouse” [i.e. can you draw a simple Venn diagram to depict the novelty in your proposal?]				
(I) So What?	Why is it important to know the answer? How will major decisions/behaviour/activity etc be influenced by the outcome of this research?				
ONE	One bottom line				
(J) Contribution?	What is the primary source of the contribution to the relevant research literature?				
(K) Other Considerations	<p>Is Collaboration needed/desirable? – idea/data/tools? (either internal or external to your institution)</p> <p>Target Journal(s)? Realistic? Sufficiently ambitious?</p> <p>“Risk” assessment [“low” vs. “moderate” vs. “high”: “no result” risk; “competitor” risk (ie being beaten by a competitor); risk of “obsolescence”; other risks?</p> <p>Are there any serious challenge(s) that you face in executing this plan? What are they? Are they related to the Idea? The Data? The Tools? Are there ethical considerations? Ethics clearance?</p> <p>Is the scope appropriate? Not too narrow, not too broad.</p>				

Cued replication template from:

Faff, R.W., (2015), A Simple Template for Pitching Research, Accounting & Finance 55, 311-336.

Faff, R.W., (2019), Pitching Research, Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2462059>

Appendix: Shark Tank Pitch – Qualitative Master Pitch Template with Cues (1,000 word target)

Pitcher's Name	Team member names here	FoR category	Field of Research	Date Completed	Insert date here
(A) Working Title	Your title here				
(B) Basic Research Question	One sentence will determine the method to be employed.				
(C) Key paper(s)	Up to three quality papers, not necessarily in highly ranked journals.				
(D) Motivation/Puzzle/Justification	100 words, motivate and justify the research to be undertaken.				
THREE (TCM)					
(E) Theory?	Identify and Justify theory Discuss approach to theorising – metaphor, differentiation, conceptualisation, context-Dependent theorising, grand theorising				
(F) Context?	Identify the research context/field, actors (research participants) Discuss research accessibility				
(G) Methodology?	Specify methodology, data collection methods and data analysis approaches Qualitative sampling details – purposive, theoretical Discuss research credibility and trustworthiness Thick description approach				
TWO	Two key questions				
(H) What's New?	What is new and innovative about this research? What does it tell us that we don't already know?				
(I) So What?	Theoretical generalisation Naturalistic generalisation				
ONE	One bottom line				
(J) Contribution?	Academic Practice Policy				
(K) Other Considerations	Academic Practice Policy				

From: Lodhia, S., (2019), What about your qualitative cousins? Adapting the pitching template to qualitative research, Accounting & Finance 59, 309-329.