

The KALEPA Award: Guidelines

Every academic year, we look for the best master thesis written on CX and/or Customer Service at a Belgian university. With the KALEPA Award, we want to make that newsworthy thesis accessible to a wider audience. Because strong research deserves attention!

Why participate?

- We promote your thesis to our network of professionals, you get a platform to present your thesis and we promote your thesis.
- You have a chance of winning a nice cash prize of €500!

How to participate?

- **Step 1:** Complete your final test. Permission from the promoter is not an explicit requirement for participation, but strongly recommended.
- **Step 2:** Upload your thesis through our website according to the right structure.
- **Step 3:** Answer the additional questions concerning your thesis. See also 'Participation and procedure'.
- **Step 4:** Subscribe to our newsletter or follow our socials for updates around the competition.

Who can participate?

Every student enrolled at a Belgian university can register until 1 October of the academic year in which the thesis was completed.

Participants competing for the award ceremony must therefore graduate during this academic year and have passed all course units and the thesis.

The thesis may be on any topic as long as it scientifically touches on the core of Customer Experience and/or Customer Service topics.

In short

- The thesis was completed in the past academic year.
- The thesis is written in Dutch, English or French.
- The thesis may be on any topic, as long as it touches on the core of the subject matter of Customer Experience and/or Customer Service.
- Confidential theses are no problem, but please let us know so that we can make proper arrangements.

Participation and procedure

The submission consists of a digital version of the written thesis in Dutch, English or French.

We also ask for a brief explanation based on the following three questions:

- Describe your thesis in a maximum of 500 words.
- What are the interfaces with Customer Experience and/or Customer Service?
- Clarify to what extent the work is relevant for the further development of this domain (CX and/or Customer Service).

The jury consists of:

- Annelies Costers - with a PhD from KU Leuven under her belt, Annelies brings a wealth of academic knowledge to The KALEPA Group. A visiting professor at KUL, VUB and IESEG, among others, she shares her expertise in Customer Experience Management and Service Marketing.
- Yves Van Vaerenbergh - Yves holds a PhD in Applied Economics. Yves' work has already been published in leading journals and he has received several awards for it, including the 2022 Emerging Service Scholar Award from the American Marketing Association. He has also developed one of Europe's first master's degree programmes in Customer Experience Management, helping to shape the next generation of leaders in this field.
- Christel Pletinckx - Christel is among the top experts worldwide in Customer Service. Christel has an impressive CV: from overseeing major mergers to developing powerful change strategies. She works effortlessly with both multinationals and SMEs, always looking for sustainable solutions.
- Dirk Frans - For 40 years, he has been inspiring and helping organisations, from start-ups to multinationals, to design, implement and secure their service and experience management strategy to drive growth. He is a strategic thinker always looking for innovative solutions.

These judges will first make a pre-selection based on the online entry form, the abstract and related questions. Contest participants will receive confirmation of the receipt of their submission. On October 29th, they will be notified whether they are shortlisted.

In case of insufficient level of entries, the jury has the right not to award the thesis prize.

Accepted entries will be judged on three criteria:

- Scientific quality
- Innovative concept related to Customer Experience and/or Customer Service
- Style, readability and use of language

Conduct of the competition

You have time to register until 1 October.

On October 29th, you will find out whether you are one of the 5 nominees for the KALEPA Award or not.

When the official awards ceremony will take place is still to be announced.

The KALEPA Award: Competition rules

Participants and participation

Article 1

1.1 The KALEPA group organises a thesis competition for graduate theses related to Customer Experience and/or Customer Service. The aim of the competition is to stimulate and valorise relevant research within this domain.

1.2 For the current edition, only students who will submit their thesis in this academic year can participate. From now on, 'participants' or 'participating students' will refer to this group by default.

Article 2

2.1 Only graduate theses will be considered. Participants can only submit one entry and must also do so in person.

2.2 Master's theses written in duo are also eligible for the prize but will be considered as one submission. Both students must endorse the submission. If a duo thesis is chosen as laureate, the cash prize will be divided equally between both students (i.e., each student will receive €250).

Article 3

3.1 Students may submit their candidacy for participation in the competition (registration) from the announcement of their final result until after the proclamation of the second session in September (no later than 1 October 2025). No distinction is made between applications submitted in the first and second session.

Preselection

Article 4

4.1 The application contains the complete master's thesis (in Dutch, French or English) and a completed information sheet (same language as the master's thesis), comprising:

(a) personal information:

- (1) surname, first name, date of birth
- (2) university, subject and title master's thesis
- (3) final result of the master's thesis (copy of score sheet)

(b) a short summary of the master's thesis (max. 500 words)

(c) What are the interfaces with Customer Experience and/or Customer Service?

(d) Clarify to what extent the work is relevant to the further development of this domain (CX and/or CS).

The entire package should be delivered electronically to The KALEPA Group. An electronic receipt follows.

4.2 A shortlist will be made based on online entry form, the abstract and related questions. A maximum of 5 submissions will be retained. The organising body retains the right to disqualify entries at pre-selection if they submit late or if they do not meet the criteria in Article 1 and Article 2 and Article 4, 4.1.

4.3 Submitted theses that have a connection to one of the jurors will not be judged by that juror. The juror in question will have no voting rights in connection with these thesis(s).

Final Selection

Article 5

5.1 The jury consists of both academics and professionals from the Customer Experience and Customer Service field.

5.2 The jury operates autonomously and anonymously. All decisions are made by the jury by consensus.

5.3 The jury is entitled to seek the advice of external experts when assessing the theses.

Article 6

6.1 Contest entries will be judged by the jury on the basis of the following criteria:

- Relevance of the topic
- Scientific quality
- Comprehensibility (style, readability)

Prices

Article 7

7.1 The jury will determine 1 thesis to receive the prize money of €500.

Article 8

8.1 The winner will receive visibility on The KALEPA Group's website and social media (LinkedIn, Instagram and newsletter) in the form of a news release

Article 9

9.1 The jury has the right not to award the prize if the level of entries is insufficient.

Rights

Article 10

10.1 The submission of a thesis does not constitute a transfer of copyright or any copyright-related power.

10.2 The organising body is not liable for the content of the thesis. The author himself bears responsibility for the content of both his thesis and other material published by him.

Article 11

11.1 Participants agree that their data as part of their thesis will be held by The KALEPA Group to compile a knowledge database of relevant academic research, which may be made available for consultation by The KALEPA Group staff. The data is neither maintained nor processed for commercial purposes

11.2 The organising body reserves the right to use submitted theses and articles for its own research and, if necessary, to quote from them, always indicating the source.

11.3 The entrant shall indemnify the organising body against all third-party claims for copyright infringement.

Final Provision

Article 12

12.1 In all cases not covered by these regulations, the organising body will decide after internal consultation.

Article 13

13.1 Participants are deemed to be aware of these rules and agree to their content.