

MSc International Business and Management

2015/16

Dissertations guidelines

Contents

1	Dissertation module	3
2	Schedule for students enrolled in 2015	6
3	What kind of dissertation can I write?	7
4	Dissertation Proposal	8
5	The Dissertation research paper	9
6	Guidelines on writing your dissertation	9
6.1	Title	10
6.2	Signed approval	12
6.3	Executive Summary	13
6.4	Curriculum Vitae	14
6.5	Acknowledgements	14
6.6	Table of Contents	15
6.7	Lists of Tables and Figures	15
6.8	Introduction	16
6.9	Literature Review	16
6.10	Research Methodology and methods	16
6.11	Research Results and Analysis of Findings	16
6.12	Conclusions, Recommendations, Action Plans	17
6.13	References	17
6.14	Appendices	17
7	Plagiarism	18
8	The final dissertation distribution	19

1 Dissertation module

Dissertation (DIS) - Research Methods 8 ECTS + - Practical work 4 ECTS + - Research paper 18 ECTS	30 ECTS	Compulsory
---	----------------	-------------------

Dissertation – 3rd semester - ASSESSMENT			
DIS	Individual work	<p>Dissertation Proposal - written paper proposing the research topic, justifying its relevance, with research aims and objectives, research methodology, methods and techniques, literature, developing working hypotheses, indicating expected results - assessed by assessment grade (5-10).</p> <p>Practical work - written practical work report is assessed on pass/fail basis only.</p>	<p>The Dissertation research paper assessment is performed on the basis of written dissertation research paper (approx. 15000 words) and oral presentation and defence in public – assessed by the final assessment grade (5-10) for the research paper, which is the final grade for the Dissertation module.</p>

Students are required to pass all the taught modules before they can progress to their dissertation. In addition to the lectures for the six taught modules, **students are required to attend lectures and computer labs for the dissertation module in the third semester.** Students are required to submit a detailed **2000 word research proposal** in the third semester. The dissertation/research paper (**approximately 15,000 words**) is expected to be completed by the end of the third semester.

Aims

This module aims to prepare students to undertake dissertation. Students will be given an overview of different business research techniques and how to plan, execute and present a project or dissertation. They will have the opportunity to develop and refine their ideas and objectives and this will provide a basis for more detailed discussion with supervisors.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge

On successful completion of this module, the student will be able to:

1. select an appropriate project/dissertation topic and develop realistic aims and objectives;
2. develop a sound research methodology to meet the project/dissertation aims;
3. demonstrate how different types and sources of data contribute to research process;
4. relate how qualitative and quantitative research techniques meet research aims through an appropriate methodology;
5. undertake the research project with explicit presentation of results achieved;

Skills

On successful completion of this module, the student will be able to:

1. Conduct sound and well developed research into business and management issues to a high standard
2. Communicate the results of their research in a written report and oral presentation, to the standard expected of a high level professional manager

Syllabus

- Dissertation/project aims and objectives: the need to focus;
- Project planning and time management: the research proposal;
- Research methodology: primary and secondary data;
- Survey techniques, questionnaire design and interviewing skills;
- Qualitative research: depth interviews, focus groups and data recording;
- Data analysis: drawing conclusions and making recommendations;
- Reviewing the literature, use of academic theory and referencing;
- Developing working hypotheses;
- Report writing.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

Students have to pass all the taught modules before they can progress to their dissertation. The assessment of the dissertation module is focused at individual research project realization by the students within an area of interest that they choose and decide upon together with the mentor. The research project is defined with a research topic within the disciplines and modules taught within the Master program and it is suggested by the students expressing their field of special interest, relating to their present employment and problems, etc. The mentor can be any module leader and professor engaged within the study program. There is a precise procedure at the Faculty defining the steps to apply for the dissertation topic and for the mentor to be defined. Later in the process, a commission of three professors in the field of the dissertation research study is defined and this commission is reviewing the dissertation and it is defended in front of this commission and public.

Assessment Scheme

Assessment is accomplished as a three-step procedure:

1. The Research Methods sub-module assessed by **Dissertation Proposal**, written paper proposing the research topic, justifying its relevance, with research aims and objectives, research methodology, methods and techniques, literature, developing working hypotheses, indicating expected results. Dissertation proposal shows candidates' capacity to prepare the dissertation as a research project, with clear understanding of the problems and issues raised, also showing the candidates' capability to approach the research in a systematic way. Dissertation Proposal is assessed by assessment grade (5-10) and brings 8 ECTS (Research Methods).
2. Practical work sub-module is assessed by written **practical work report**. The report is signed both by company representative and dissertation mentor, confirming successful completion of practical assignment. It is assessed on pass/fail basis and brings 4 ECTS (Practical work).

3. After having successfully passed the research methods and practical work sub-modules, student progress to dissertation research paper. The Dissertation research paper assessment is performed on the basis of written dissertation research paper (approx. 15000 words) and oral presentation and defence in public. The academic commission consisting of minimum three professors in the field, among which one is a mentor, assesses the submitted dissertation/research paper and after oral presentation and defence provides the final assessment grade (5-10) for the research paper, which is the final grade for the Dissertation module. Successful completion of this stage brings 18 ECTS (Research paper).

Dissertation module is complete when all three stages have been successfully accomplished bringing sum of 30 ECTS.

Learning Materials

1. Ghauri, P, Gronhaug, K: Research Methods in Business Studies, Prentice Hall, 2010.
2. Krishnaswamy K.N, Sivakumar A.I, Mathirsijn M: Management research methodology: integration of principles, methods and techniques, Pearson Education: Dorling Kindersley, 2006.
3. Brannick, M.T, Levine E.L, Morgeson F.P: Job and work analysis : methods, research, and applications for human resource management, 2nd ed, SAGE Publications, 2007
4. Bui, I.N, How to Write a Master's Thesis, SAGE Publications, 2009
5. Patton, M.I Q., Qualitative evaluation and research methods. 3rd ed, SAGE Publications, 2002

2 Schedule for students enrolled in 2015

Individual work – Mentoring (Research Methods, Practical Work, Research Paper)

Preliminary schedule – 12 weeks

Date	Activity	By whom?
18 November 2016 at 17.30 Classroom B003	Meeting with students	Programme Leader Link Tutors Master Service officer
26 November – 31 December 2016 (5 weeks)	Consultations	Mentors
	Consultations Application of dissertation topic Research proposal	Mentors Master Service officer
	Work in classrooms when needed	Mentors
	Research methods – classes	Lecturers from FOS
	Searching for the literature, work in PC classroom and other support activities	Module assistants
16 January – 12 February 2017	Consultations	Mentors
17 February 2017	Completion of the module and start of thesis defence	Mentors and programme professors as members of the commissions Master Service officer
15 May 2017	Last term for thesis defence in order to complete the studies on time and to validate all grades on the Assessment Board meeting in May/June 2017	Mentors and programme professors as members of the commissions Master Service officer

- Students are required to attend all workshops and any other forms of tuition agreed with mentor.

3 What kind of dissertation can I write?

There are a number of different types of dissertation. Some examples of the main types are given below:

1. A Dissertation on a Critical Examination of an Organisation Procedure	
Title:	The Introduction of a web-based sales system
Objective:	To evaluate the potential and limitations of such systems, if introduced by a selected company.
Approach/Method:	A review of existing procedures and an assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the introduction of a new system
Findings:	A recommendation on whether to introduce such a system, together with advice on which system to develop.
2. A Dissertation centred on a Research Investigation	
Title:	The Market for a New Range of Menswear Clothing.
Objective:	To help the firm make a decision on whether to introduce a new range.
Approach/Method:	Interviews with a sample of customers in the target group.
Findings:	Evidence on whether or not to introduce the range, and recommendations on how it should be done.
3. A Dissertation centred on a Literature Search	
Title:	The Role of "Image" in Large Scale Retailing
Objective:	To show how major findings can be applied to "multiples" and department stores.
Approach/Method:	Review of the literature on "image"
Findings:	Recommendations on improving "promotional of image" among customers and the role of the staff to achieve this.
4. A Dissertation centred on Action	
Title:	Improving Marketing Planning in a Catering Services Company: an Organisational Change Programme
Objective:	To introduce changes in the range and quality of planning offered in the light of customer views on present services.
Approach/Method:	Results of a survey on the present state/status of marketing planning within the company: strengths and weaknesses.
Findings:	Effectiveness of the planning process and its impact on marketing performance.

You should note that only 2 out of the 4 examples given above involve survey research. You do not have to conduct a market research survey as part of your dissertation unless it helps meet your stated objective. You should also note that the best dissertations are often those which are based on an area in which you have worked or which are written to investigate a marketing related issue at a company or business with which you are connected. However, such a connection is not necessary for the completion of a successful dissertation project.

Recommended reading <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0166497214001035>

4 Dissertation Proposal

The first assessed stage of your dissertation work is the submission of a written proposal. Your proposal must be submitted on the Dissertation Proposal Form available in electronic format on the Master Service website (UB FOS) <http://master.fon.bg.ac.rs/masterrad.html> . It must include the following:

- The working title of your dissertation (subject to change)
 - A brief overview of the company or market you are considering studying, the research problem identified, and your reasons for choosing this area for your investigation.
 - Your research question/research objectives
 - The research method you intend to use (both secondary and primary research)
 - The methods you plan to use to analyse the data you have gathered
 - Literature review details: main authors and themes to be considered
 - Practical and ethical issues to be considered
 - A plan or timetable
 - A complete list of all the references used in writing your proposal
- a) The supervisor assesses the proposal by assessment grade (5-10). Students are required to pass their research proposal before they can work on the final dissertation. After assessment the proposal has to be sent to Master service office zavrsnirad@fon.rs and Natasa Kuzman Marussig natasha@fon.rs and to link tutor Jelena Andjelkovic Labrovic jeca@fon.rs

The dissertation proposal (to be included in your portfolio)

Your proposal will be assessed using the following criteria:

(a) Suitability and relevance of topic chosen

Is the topic interesting?

Is sufficient data available to make the project feasible?

Is the topic MARKETING related, rather than being a general management study?

(b) Suitability of objectives

Have they been clearly defined?

Are they achievable?

Do they relate to the research problem identified?

(c) Suitability of research methods

Have you described them in enough detail?

Have you described them fully and correctly?

Are they appropriate for the area/subject/target group you are investigating?

Are they feasible (do you have the resources to do this)?

(d) Suitability of literature review

Have you considered a wide enough range of relevant sources?

Have you attributed your work (referenced it) correctly?

5 The Dissertation research paper

Your final dissertation should be around 15000 words long.

Assessment of the dissertation

Your work will be assessed by three examiners, including your mentor. The final dissertation is assessed following the criteria given below. The final grade is then allocated in accordance with the University's 20-point grading scale when the markers have considered the overall merits of the dissertation.

The assessment criteria for the Dissertation embrace six areas of the work which are differently weighted as follows:

Area 1: Research Objectives (10% of Total Marks)

Area 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework (25% of Total Marks)

Area 3: Methodology (20% of Total Marks)

Area 4: Findings and Analysis (20% of Total Marks)

Area 5: Conclusions and Recommendations (15% of Total Marks)

Area 6: Language and Presentation (10% of Total Marks)

The minimum requirement to pass the dissertation is to achieve a pass in all six areas.

6 Guidelines on writing your dissertation

Your dissertation should be presented in the following sequence:

Title page

Executive Summary

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

List of tables

List of figures

Introduction and objectives

Literature Review

Research Methodology and methods

Research results and analysis of findings

Conclusions and recommendations (and action plan for an action project)

References

Appendices

6.1 Title

The title should describe the content of the report accurately and concisely. The reader's first impression of your document is based on the title, so be clear and imaginative. In addition to the title itself, the title page should also provide the following information:

- The name of the institution to which the project is submitted
- Title of the dissertation
- Supervisor's full name (including title where held)
- Your full name and student number
- The year of submission.

An example of a title page is shown below:

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE FACULTY OF ORGANIZATIONAL SCIENCES MIDDLESEX UNIVERSITY LONDON	
MASTER DISSERTATION Title of the dissertation	
Supervisor: Name	Student: Name
February 2017	

Examples of some completed dissertation titles are given below:

- Introducing information technology into British Telecom PLC: A Case Study
- Marketing Mortgages in Europe: An Intermediary's approach to Spain
- How to succeed with database marketing
- A survey analysis of the customer profile of Rank Amusements and resulting implications for the corporate branding, marketing, investment and operational strategy
- An examination of the use of information technology for marketing promotions in the personal computer division of NEC (UK) Ltd
- Performance analysis of Bank Marketing
- Market entry strategy of Italian fashion company on Serbian market
- Marketing strategies of companies for Chinese market entry - The case of food and beverage sector
- Contemporary technology transfer models: Public sector case studies
- The Strategy of Corporate Social Responsibility in international context: The case of steel industry
- Information and communication technologies (ICT) Project management in field of time attendance
- Evaluation of open innovation determinants in banking
- Corporate social responsibility and sustainable development in Serbia
- Motivation and perception of personal development as predictors of employees' adaptation on cultural differences

6.2 Signed approval

The second page will be copy of the approval signed by three professors. Original should be delivered to Master Service office.

Board of Professors who reviewed and approved the master dissertation under the title *Title of the dissertation* written by candidate Petar (Milos) Petrovic:

Mentor: Marko Markovic, PhD, Associate Professor at Faculty of organizational sciences University of Belgrade, Department of Marketing Management and Public Relations

Member: Marko Markovic, PhD, Full Professor at Faculty of organizational sciences University of Belgrade, Department of Marketing Management and Public Relations

Member: Marko Markovic, PhD, Assistant Professor at Faculty of organizational sciences University of Belgrade, Department of Marketing Management and Public Relations

Departments of mentors and commission members at IB&M programme:

- Department of Management and Specialized Management Disciplines
- Department of Economics, Business Planning and International Management
- Department of Technology, Innovation and Development Management
- Department of Financial Management and Accounting
- Department of Human Resources Management
- Department of Marketing Management and Public Relations
- Department of Business Systems Organization
- Department of Operations Research and Statistics

6.3 Executive Summary

This should summarise (in approximately 300-500 words) the subject under investigation, the aims of the dissertation, and the methods used for conducting research and analysis. The main conclusions and recommendations should be outlined here. An example of an Executive Summary is shown below.

Example of an Executive Summary

This report describes a project that was undertaken for/within Acorn Computers Ltd. This company, the leading manufacturer of mainframe computers, was considering entering the microcomputer market. A major programme of market research was carried out to assess the opportunities that existed for Acorn within the microcomputer market. This project formed part of the overall programme of market research. Specifically, the aim of the project was to assess the needs of "small business" organisations in the UK in terms of micro-computing facilities, and to determine the extent to which existing suppliers of microcomputers were currently satisfying these needs.

In order to achieve this objective, Acorn commissioned the Premier Research Agency to conduct 350 personal interviews with a representative sample of organisations employing less than 50 employees in the United Kingdom, drawn across the various Standard Industrial Classifications. In addition to helping design, administer and analyse the results of the above survey, the work on the project also involved a detailed analysis of existing microcomputer equipment, in terms of their product features, price and various other characteristics.

The research revealed a major gap in the microcomputer market for a powerful high quality, reliable microcomputer capable of undertaking a range of analysis, work processing, graphic design and other applications. The research identified considerable concern among small business operators about the compatibility of existing equipment, worries about the long-term viability of some of the organisations offering current equipment and limitations as regards the memory capacity and other technical features of existing microcomputers.

The research confirmed that Acorn Ltd was seen as an organisation capable of reassuring potential microcomputer customers in terms of the continuity of its service, technical expertise and compatibility across a range of computer equipment. The research indicated that a microcomputer of the, 1,000 price range would make an immediate impact with a large number of small business operators.

6.4 Curriculum Vitae

CV should be one page long.

Curriculum Vitae
Personal information ----- E mail:
Education ----- -----
Work experience ----- -----
Other qualifications ----- -----

6.5 Acknowledgements

This item gives you the opportunity to express your gratitude to those who have assisted or given advice for your dissertation. An example of an acknowledgement is shown below. You should **not** include people who have not directly contributed to the dissertation in the acknowledgement, such as parents, friends, spouses, or children. These can be included in a separate section that could be called "dedication". An example of acknowledgement is shown below

Example of an Acknowledgement

<p style="text-align: center;">ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</p> <p>My thanks are due to my supervisor, (Name of the supervisor), for the encouragement and advice she has provided throughout this research study. My thanks are also due to the staff at the Abbey National who co-operated in this study. Particular thanks must go to the individuals who willingly participated in the research interviews.</p>
--

6.6 Table of Contents

The table of contents follows the title page. It should list in sequence, with page numbers, all relevant subdivisions of the report including the titles of chapters, sections and sub-sections as appropriate.

6.7 Lists of Tables and Figures

Each should appear on a separate page. Examples (part only) of each are shown below.

Example of List of Tables

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. Evolution of Marketing in banks	5
2. Transaction v relationship banking	9
3. Breakdown of Respondents by age	11

Example of List of Figures

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. Importance place on Dimensions of Qualities in Healthcare	44
2. Value of Audit as a tool for increasing Quality in Healthcare	109

6.8 Introduction

Typically, the Introduction includes the following

- (a) Background - which briefly explains and introduces the subject of your investigation.
- (b) Study aim and objectives or research questions - clear and precise statement of the aims of your project as well as the objectives. Objectives can be stated in the form of research questions. Note that research questions are equivalent to objectives. You cannot, therefore, state both objectives and research questions. Make sure that the objectives or the research questions contribute directly to achieving the study aim.
- (c) An introduction to the way your report is structured.

6.9 Literature Review

According to Colin Fisher (2004) (Researching and Writing a Dissertation for Business Students, FT Prentice Hall) the literature review should:

- Identify the appropriate academic and/or professional fields of literature
- Describe the main themes in the literature that are important and useful to your study.
- Identify the connections or discontinuities between the themes in the literature

In this very important section of your dissertation you should critically evaluate the literature (arguments and reliability of different sources) and create a coherent sequence of arguments from the themes drawn from the literature.

6.10 Research Methodology and methods

In this section, according to Fisher (2004) you should:

- Discuss the nature of the questions you are asking and choose an appropriate methodological stance for answering them
- Describe, explain and justify the research methods you are using,
- Describe the practical and technical aspects of conducting the research
- Discuss any ethical issues connected with the project

6.11 Research Results and Analysis of Findings

Fisher (2004) writes that you should:

- Describe what you found out and what it means
- Refer back to the literature review and your conceptual framework. Use the literature to interrogate and evaluate your research material and vice versa.
- Figures and tables should be used to summarise the results, where appropriate. Results and findings should be compared with the hypotheses or expectations held before the study.

6.12 Conclusions, Recommendations, Action Plans

Finally, Fisher (2004) advises that you:

- Summarise the main argument of your dissertation
- Either discuss the validity and reliability of the findings and arguments or reflectively critique the account provided in your dissertation.
- Frame the conclusions and recommendations if appropriate.
- Discuss any issues concerning the implementation of the conclusions or recommendations.

It is important that all conclusions are clearly linked to the objectives or research questions and ultimately the study aim. It is a good practice to present conclusions under the subheadings of the objectives or research questions and the aim to make sure that all the relevant research issues are covered. Conclusions to your investigation will normally be supported by recommendations on ways of improving or enhancing the function or procedure under investigation. Conclusions should always be related to content presented in the main body of the text (plus appendices), so you should not introduce new material. It is good practice to identify in the conclusions the location of the evidence to which you are referring, by including a reference to the appropriate page or appendix.

6.13 References

Whenever you use the words, concepts or ideas of another person, you must give full credit to them, by means of a formal reference. This needs to be done within the text of your dissertation and in a list of references/bibliography at the end. We expect a completed dissertation to be full of references to the works of others, and to contain both quotations and paraphrases from relevant sources. The use of many references is a positive feature of a good dissertation, and marks are given for correct citation and referencing.

The University and UB FOS will take serious action against any student who plagiarises whether through negligence, foolishness or deliberate intent. Make sure written material, ideas, theories, formulae, etc are acknowledged through the use of quotation marks, references and bibliographies. Information on the correct way of acknowledging work from other sources is available from <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

It is essential that students retain all paperwork associated with their research, including copies of secondary data sources, evidence of primary data collection (original questionnaires) and evidence of data analysis.

6.14 Appendices

Appendices are not counted as being within the word limitation of the dissertation (15000 words) but must not exceed 25 percent of the text. Material for appendices, e.g. organisation charts, copies of questionnaires, sales turnover for particular products for particular time periods should be letter referenced in the text, e.g. see Appendix A, see Appendix B, etc.

It is also helpful if the appendices section is preceded by a separate contents page e.g. Appendix A: The Survey Questionnaire, Appendix B: Regional Sales Turnover, etc. (Sometimes you may wish to supplement the arguments advanced in the main body of the text by using

footnotes, rather than via appendices. Various methods can be used. One common practice is to number each point in the text, referring the reader to the footnote at the bottom of the page.

7 Plagiarism

The following section has been extracted from the Middlesex University's 24-7 website <http://www.mdx.ac.uk/24-7/announce/plagiarism.htm>

"Plagiarism means using another's work without giving credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s) and must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words."

Every semester MUSU has to defend dozens of students who have been accused of plagiarism, collusion or other examples of what the University calls 'academic misconduct'.

Sometimes students have been caught just plain cheating. Often it is an innocent mistake - a misunderstanding about what constitutes plagiarism; perhaps a student has written their references incorrectly.

THE PENALTY IS THE SAME whether you cheated, or whether you have been negligent in failing to use quotation marks and properly cite the work of others. You might have to repeat the module with a maximum grade of 16 - or you might be thrown off the course. AVOID CATCHING PLAGIARISM!

The work presented for assessment must be entirely your own. It must also NOT include any material which is identical or substantially similar to your own material which you have already submitted for any other assessment within the University or elsewhere (this constitutes self-plagiarism). Please refer to the University Guide and Regulations section F on Infringement of assessment regulations – Academic Misconduct for more detailed information.

Please note that UB FOS uses its own regulations for handling academic misconduct and therefore this section of the Middlesex University Regulations (section F) does not apply to you. UB FOS has been approved by Middlesex University to use its academic misconduct regulations.

Rules and procedures on student disciplinary responsibility of the University of Belgrade can be found at: <http://www.bg.ac.rs/sr/univerzitet/univ-propisi.php> - "Pravilnik o disciplinskoj odgovornosti studenata"

Code of professional ethics of the University of Belgrade can be found at: <http://www.bg.ac.rs/sr/univerzitet/univ-propisi.php> - "Kodeks Profesionalne Etike".

To avoid inadvertent plagiarism, the following steps are recommended:

- (a) Ensure that your work is properly referenced
- (b) Discuss how to reference correctly with your supervisor

8 The final dissertation distribution

The final dissertation has to be delivered to Master Service office.

- 4 printed copies
- 2 CDs
- Signed approval (6.2)
- Student index
- Electronic copy of the dissertation (pdf) should be sent to Master service zavrsnirad@fon.rs and Natasa Kuzman Marussig natasha@fon.rs and to link tutor Jelena Andjelkovic Labrovic jeca@fon.rs