

**A GUIDE  
TO  
WRITING  
YOUR  
MASTERS DISSERTATION**

**School of Management & Languages**

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# **1. Introduction**

The dissertation is the final stage of the Masters degree and provides you with the opportunity to show that you have gained the necessary skills and knowledge in order to organise and conduct a research project. It should demonstrate that you are skilled in identifying an area, or areas, suitable for research: setting research objectives; locating, organising and critically analysing the relevant secondary data and authoritative literature; devising an appropriate research methodology; analysing the primary data selected and drawing on the literature in the field; drawing conclusions; and if appropriate making relevant recommendations and indications of areas for further research.

A dissertation is a 'formal' document and there are 'rules' that govern the way in which it is presented. It must have chapters that provide an introduction, a literature review, a justification of the data selected for analysis and research methodology, analysis of the data and, finally, conclusions and recommendations. Where the subject is based around a business or an applied situation recommendations for action may also be required. Advice on the range of suitable topics which relate to the subject area of your Masters degree will be approved by your Programme Director or course dissertation co-ordinator.

The Masters level dissertation is distinguished from other forms of writing by its attempt to analyse situations in terms of the 'bigger picture'. It seeks answers, explanations, makes comparisons and arrives at generalisations which can be used to extend theory. As well as explaining **what can be done**, it addresses the underlying **why**. The most successful dissertations are those which are specific and narrowly focused.

This document is intended to guide you through the dissertation process. It can only offer suggestions; there is nothing that can be said which will guarantee the production of a fine piece of work, but these are suggestions which, through time, have been found to be both practical and effective.

You should read this guide before starting your dissertation and consult it as necessary throughout the process. This will help you to make a start to your dissertation and make more effective use of your meeting sessions with your supervisor. Other useful references specific to your programme can also be found for your programme on Vision.

**N.B. These notes have been produced for general guidance only and you are required to read the recommended texts and journal papers on research techniques appropriate to the research methods of your subject discipline. You are not to use these notes as justification or reference for any methodological approaches or techniques in your dissertation.**

## **2. The Dissertation in Outline.**

### **2.1. Aims of the Dissertation**

The aims of the dissertation are to:

- put into practice theories and concepts learned on the programme;
- provide an opportunity to study a particular topic in depth;
- show evidence of independent investigation;
- combine relevant theories and suggest alternatives;
- enable interaction with practitioners (where appropriate to the chosen topic);
- show evidence of ability to plan and manage a project within deadlines

After completion of the dissertation students should be able to:

- define, design and deliver an academically rigorous piece of research;
- understand the relationships between the theoretical concepts taught in class and their application in specific situations;
- show evidence of a critical and holistic knowledge and have a deeper understanding of their chosen subject area;
- appreciate practical implications and constraints of the specialist subject;
- Understand the process and decisions to be made in managing a project within strict deadlines

### **2.2. Dissertation Styles**

Dissertations need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding beyond undergraduate level and should also reach a level of scope and depth beyond that taught in class. All dissertations must be presented in an appropriate academic style and format to ensure that the precise aims of the dissertation are met. It is important that the aims and objectives of the dissertation are clearly expressed and are achievable within the scope of the dissertation framework. Academic style does not just refer to the clarity of expression, grammar, use of citation and referencing but relates to a clearly structured approach to the justification and validation of facts, theories and opinions presented to form a precise argument. With the range of subjects taught across the School the type of research dissertation will vary. Your Programme Director will give you specific guidance as will Appendix 1 which deals with your programme.

You will not normally be required to undertake a viva voce examination of your dissertation. The dissertation is assessed on the basis of the content of your submitted document alone.

### **2.3. Key Milestones**

Outline of main stages in the dissertation proposal

- Semesters 1 and 2: courses in Translation and Interpreting Studies and the International Context and Translation and Interpreting Studies: Intercultural

Communication and the International Context provide the theoretical foundations for a dissertation proposal

- Semester 2, preparation of a draft project proposal
- Examination Progression Board mid-May confirms permission to undertake dissertation
- Dissertation Presentation Day (some programmes only: see Appendix 1 for further details)
- Dissertation Proposal Hand-in and final approval by academic supervisor. See Appendix 1 for dates which apply to your programme.
- Dissertation hand-in, 4pm School Office MB. 1.62. See Appendix 1 for dates which apply to your programme.

#### **2.4. Supporting Documents:**

The following documents can be downloaded from the School web site at <http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm>

- Dissertation proposal form
- Dissertation Submission Form
- Dissertation Supervision Form
- Acknowledgements page template
- Dissertation Front page template

### **3. Dissertation Supervision**

#### **3.1. Supervision**

You will be supported through the dissertation by an academic supervisor. You will be advised by your Programme Director or dissertation co-ordinator of the process by which your programme either allocates academic supervisors or students seek a preferred academic supervisor. The academic supervisor will ideally have background expertise in your area of study. However, this may not always be possible and you may be allocated a supervisor with more general subject knowledge. Regardless of the subject background of the supervisor, the academic supervisor will understand the research process. Where a 'non-expert' academic supervisor is appointed you will still, under the guidance of your academic supervisor, be able to consult with a subject expert. The extent of that subject expert's input will usually be limited to advice about the literature review.

#### **3.2. Role of Academic Supervisor**

The academic supervisor performs many functions and is there to facilitate and not to lead, hence the responsibility for the quality and content of a dissertation is entirely that of yourself, the student. The supervisor role includes the following:

1. To advise the student whether or not the project appears to be feasible and the possible risks that may be involved, for example problems in trying to access information, potential poor response rates to surveys concerning commercially sensitive issues.
2. To assist the student in tailoring the proposal to the time and other resource constraints.
3. To assist the student at the outset in finding useful and relevant reading material and appropriate academic framework within which to place the topic.
4. To advise on the choice of suitable methodological approach(es).
5. To monitor progress and to advise on what is required to achieve a satisfactory dissertation.
6. Where relevant, to liaise periodically with the company supervisor and resolve any problems the student may have in obtaining access to company information or personnel (not relevant to LINCS students).
7. To first-mark the dissertation, and to submit a marker's report;

It should be emphasised that the dissertation is entirely your own work. However, you may ask your supervisor to read in detail a draft of a portion of your dissertation normally up to a maximum of two chapters, in order to give feedback on presentation, content and style. Academic supervisors may of course pass comment on chapter outlines and may scan quickly through other chapters at their discretion.

The academic supervisor will not read the finished work prior to submission and will not make any comment at any stage as to the expected grade or mark.

The academic supervisor will not check or correct grammar and expression.

### **3.3. Responsibilities of the Student.**

1. To maintain regular contact with the academic supervisor. It is the student's responsibility to inform their supervisor of progress and to lead the development of the dissertation. Difficulties must be communicated at the time they are encountered. Retrospective information is not acceptable.
2. To write the dissertation in a good standard of clear English using appropriate academic terms and citation and referencing conventions. It is not the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that this condition is met.
3. To write the dissertation with guidance from the supervisor. The dissertation and research work must be your own. The dissertation is to reflect your subject understanding and research abilities, not that of your supervisor.
4. Where a company project is undertaken, to attend on a regular basis as required, and to maintain regular contact with the company sponsor and to undertake a final presentation to the company management team (not relevant to LINCS students).
5. To inform the Programme Director and academic supervisor of any absence (sickness, personal, family visits, holidays, work experience) during the time nominated for working on the dissertation.

If during the preparation of the dissertation, the focus and direction of the dissertation changes substantially from that outlined in your Dissertation Proposal Form then you should immediately discuss this with your academic supervisor.



### **3.4. Dissertation Supervisor Meeting Schedule**

Students are allocated up to a maximum of five formal meetings with their academic supervisor across the duration of the dissertation. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss progress and resolve any difficulties. You will be expected to take a proactive approach to these meetings and bring material or options to be discussed rather than expect your supervisor to say what should be done next.

Initial meetings to discuss topics and planning will usually be scheduled by the academic supervisor. Responsibility for scheduling the remaining three meetings will be with you. Your academic supervisor will endeavour to meet you as soon as possible, but you must remember your academic supervisor has other work commitments, conferences to attend, research to undertake and will also take a vacation some time through the summer period. If you are based abroad then progress meetings can take place using e-mail.

A record will be kept of each of these meetings detailing the dates of meetings, what was discussed and any action points. This may be written by the academic supervisor or the student. A guide template for student – advisor meetings is given at: <http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm> for convenience, although an email record is also satisfactory.

## **4. The Dissertation.**

- You will be advised of the deadline for submitting a dissertation proposal by your Programme Director (see Appendix 1)
- For some programmes in the School where research methods is a taught course, then the research proposal may be separately assessed. This will be made clear in Appendix 1 which is specific to your programme. Regardless if this is the case or not, you must receive confirmation from your academic supervisor that your research proposal is approved before you continue with your dissertation.
- The research proposal document can be downloaded from the School web site at <http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.html>.

### **4.1. The Research Proposal**

The research proposal is an important working document and which over the next few months becomes transformed into the dissertation. You will see that the main sections replicate the structure of the dissertation. A copy of the Research proposal used by your programme can be downloaded from

<http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm>

Used correctly, the proposal will become your road map through the dissertation process. Because of a wide variety of circumstances the focus of your research may change. If this happens then you should change your proposal document and also agree with your academic supervisor that such a change is appropriate.

The research proposal shows that you have thought through what the main research objectives are to be, that you have identified the main sources of primary and secondary data and that you have given thought as to the research methodology. The Proposal should provide your academic supervisor with a 'detailed skeleton' of the whole dissertation; the fine details are added when the literature review is completed and the primary research has been undertaken.

The research proposal should include:

**(a) A working title**

Your title can and probably will change but using precise wording even at this early stage will help to keep your dissertation properly focussed.

**b) An Introduction to the Topic**

This will include a brief description of the topic, the aim, research objectives and research questions to be addressed

You will find that moving from research aim to research objectives, to research questions is quite a difficult task. This, however, will provide a clear focus to your research and help you structure both this research proposal and the final dissertation.

The *aim* of the research provides a description of what you want to achieve from carrying out this research.

The *objectives* of the research outline the particular issues that you need to address in order to achieve the aim above. They are more specific than the aim, in that they outline the particular dimensions of your research topic, which are relevant to the overall aim of your research.

The *research questions* are more specific than your research objectives and specify the various insights/information that need to be collected in order to achieve the objectives. Keep in mind that the research question often starts with a Why, How, or What.

**(c) A Preliminary Literature Review** which indicates: (i) that you have studied the work of the major authors in your research field (ii) that you are familiar with the major themes relevant to that subject area (iii) what further investigations you intend to pursue as part of this dissertation. You should bear in mind that you are reviewing the literature in order to develop sharper, more insightful and focused research questions about your topic. Therefore, your literature review should lead to and justify your research objectives and questions.

**(d) The Detailed Research Methodology** which you intend to employ. The methodology section should discuss what methods you are going to use in order to address the research objectives of your dissertation. You need to justify why the chosen methods were selected as the most appropriate for your research, amongst the many alternative ones, given its specific objectives, and constraints you may face in terms of access, time and so on. Reference to general advantages and disadvantages of various methods and techniques without specifying their relevance to your choice decision is unacceptable. Remember to relate the methods back to the needs of your research question.

**(e) Timetable** detailing how you anticipate completing the dissertation by the submission date and, if a company-based project, the means of liaising with the company to ensure the specific objectives are achieved.

## 4.2. Writing the Dissertation

- **Deadlines:** There is no single start date for you to begin your dissertation as you will be preparing the early ideas and initial reviews in the course of Semester 2. You will be given a formal notification to proceed following the Progression Board in mid-May. You will be given a specific date to submit which cannot be changed. To accommodate the number of dissertations being submitted each programme will be given a date during August. The Programme Director will provide you with the deadline date allocated to your programme and this will be shown in Appendix 1. Dissertations are to be handed into the School Office in the Mary Burton Building MB 1.62.
- **Word count:** If you are writing a dissertation by research, 12,000 to 15,000 words (not including appendices and references); if you are writing a dissertation by translation/commentary your translation should be based on a Source Text of 6,000 words (+/- 10%) and your commentary should be 6,000 to 7,000 words.

### 4.2.1. Title Page:

The title page should adopt the format shown in the template that can be downloaded from the school website:

<http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm> or Vision.

### 4.2.2. Abstract

The dissertation should contain an abstract of up to 350 words. A good abstract is difficult to write and can only be completed after the full dissertation has been written. It represents a brief summary of the results of the dissertation research. By summarising the results of the research, it allows other people to get an idea of what was accomplished without having to read through the whole dissertation. Other scholars can read an abstract to decide if looking at the full work will be worthwhile. The abstract should provide sufficient information about the results of the research that reading the full dissertation is not necessary, although your markers will read the full dissertation. If writing a dissertation by translation/commentary, your abstract should contextualise the source text, summarise the translation brief, the theoretical framework and the overall results of your translation strategy.

- *Hints as to what to include in your abstract:*
  - **Aim and objectives:** What are the main themes, ideas or areas of theory being investigated?
  - **Boundaries:** What is the context and background to this dissertation? In what areas of theory or business practice should the reader concentrate their attention?
  - **Methodology:** What was/were the main method(s) employed to generate the results?
  - **Results:** What were your main findings?
  - **Conclusions:** What are the main conclusions that you arrive at when viewing the entire dissertation?
  - **Recommendations:** (if appropriate) What solutions do you offer in answer to the problems posed in the research objectives?

### 4.2.3. Acknowledgements

A brief statement, signed by the student, should be provided which:

1. Acknowledges all help received in writing the dissertation. Try to keep more personal comments about family and friends to a minimum and concentrate on those who have given direct assistance.
2. Gives an assurance that the dissertation is your own work.  
You may need to supply evidence of how you arrived at your findings. You should retain copies of all their fieldwork and analysis in a separate folder (including interviews and transcriptions), should they need to be consulted by internal examiners. The folder should not be submitted with the dissertation and will only be required on demand.
3. A declaration that the work is your own and complies with University regulations on plagiarism.
4. A statement of the word count

Your dissertation should be passed through TURNITIN and a copy of the report appended in Loss-leaf format to the dissertation copy.

A template of the acknowledgements page can be downloaded from the School web site at:

<http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm>

### 4.2.4. Contents Page:

The contents page should list the chapter headings, appendices, references and the pages on which they can be found. Separate listing should be given for lists of figures, tables and abbreviations. You will find this easier to create these if you know how to generate these lists using the indexing and style functions within Microsoft Word.

### 4.2.5. Introduction.

The dissertation should be divided into chapters and sections appropriate to the topic and type of dissertation chosen. If writing a dissertation by translation/commentary, refer to Appendix 1 for appropriate order of parts. The following elements are *typical* of the traditional dissertation. You should discuss the overall structure of your dissertation with your academic supervisor.

The Introduction to the dissertation should set out the background to the research study and address the following areas:

#### ***The context in which the research took place***

- What is the background, the context, in which the research took place?
- Why is this subject or issue important
- Who are the key participants and/or ‘actors’ in the area under investigation?
- Are there important trends or pivotal variables of which the reader needs to be made aware?
- A clear and succinct statement of the aims and objectives that the dissertation is going to address.

- Have you presented a clear and unambiguous exposition of your research aim, the objectives you will address to meet this aim and your research questions?

***The reasons why this study was carried out***

- Was this study undertaken for example in order to test some aspect of professional or business practice or theory or framework of analysis?
- Was the research carried out to fulfil the demands of a business organisation?

***The way the Dissertation is to be organised***

You should write your dissertation with the idea in mind that the intended reader and reviewer has some shared understanding of the area being investigated, however, underpinning concepts and arguments still need to be included as otherwise the depth of research will be compromised. In this way, you will not be tempted to make too many implicit assumptions, i.e. by making the erroneous assumptions that the reader has your degree of knowledge about the matters in question or can follow, exactly, your thought processes without your spelling them out. It should be a document which is 'self-contained' and does not need any additional explanation, or interpretation, or reference to other documents in order that it may be fully understood.

This short final section of the Introduction should tell the reader what topics are going to be discussed in each of the chapters and how the chapters are related to each other. In this way, you are, in effect, providing the reader with a 'road map' of the work ahead. Thus, at a glance, they can see (1) where they are starting from, (2) the context in which the journey is taking place, (3) where they are going to end up, and (4) the route which they will take to reach their final destination. Such a 'map' will enable the reader to navigate their way through your work much more easily and appreciate to the maximum what you have done.

This chapter may be between 500 to 750 words although in some subjects or topics the justification of the subject and scope may change the length of this chapter.

**4.2.6. Literature Review:**

The main reasons for the inclusion, in a Masters dissertation, of a literature review section are:

- To present and to analyse, in a critical manner, that part of the published literature which is relevant to your research topic and which acts as the basis for a fuller understanding of the context in which you are conducting your research; thus helping the reader to a more rounded appreciation of what you have completed. Remember critical does not mean looking at the negatives but forming an evaluation.
- To act as a backdrop against which what you have done in the remainder of the dissertation may be analysed and critically evaluated so as to give the reader the opportunity to assess the worth of your writing, analytical and research skills.
- To show that not only have you discovered and reported what you have found to be relevant in the literature search, but that you have understood it and that you are able to analyse it in a critical manner.

- To show that your knowledge of the area of interest is detailed enough that you are able to identify gaps in the coverage of the topic; thus justifying the reason(s) for your research.
- To show that you know what the key variables, trends and ‘actors’ are in the environment of your study, i.e. you show that you know what the important issues are that need to be investigated.
- To enable readers to be able to measure the validity of your choice(s) of research methodology, the appropriateness of the process by which you analyse your results, and whether or not your findings are congruent with the accepted research which has gone before.

The literature review is presented in the form of a précis, a classification, a comparison and a critical analysis of that material which is germane to a full understanding of your research study. Such published material may be drawn from all, or a combination of, textbooks, journal articles, conference papers, reports, case studies, the Internet, magazine features or newspaper articles. It should be remembered, however, **that the most important source of academic literature are journal articles** and you should ensure that you are familiar with the most recent publications in journals relevant to your subject area.

**Remember that your literature review should lead and justify the research objectives and questions of your dissertation. Your literature review should not just be a catalogue of authors, frameworks and ideas but should attempt to introduce a critical evaluation of those authors work.**

The literature review will be around 3,000 to 4,000 words. Hints on how to go about the literature review are contained in the Appendix .

#### **4.2.7. Research Methodology.**

You should begin the Research Methodology chapter by stating, again, the research objectives of the project. This will enable the reader to make an assessment as to the validity of your chosen research methodology.

This chapter is that part of the dissertation where you have the opportunity to justify to the reader the process by which the research questions, which were derived by an analysis of the relevant literature, were answered. It is not sufficient to say, for example, “suitable respondents were sampled using a quota sampling technique and then surveyed using a postal questionnaire” and then leave it at that. It might well be the case that, given the problem(s) to be investigated, such a choice of research methods is entirely appropriate. However, if you have not taken the opportunity to justify your research choices to a reader they could be correct in assuming that you have, by chance, merely guessed at what would work and, more by luck than judgement, arrived at the ‘correct’ solution to the problem.

The term ‘methodology’, particularly when employed in the social sciences, does not just mean method, but also the governing philosophy behind the methods employed

The chapter on research methodology must, painstakingly argue for, and justify each, decision that is taken when arriving at the way in which the research is to be organised. Every time that you, the researcher, have to make a choice from a number of options, you must state what each of these are, why you made the choice you did, and why you rejected those not used.

Further information and hints on the research methods chapter are shown in the Appendix.

The conclusion of this chapter should provide a summary of the main points that have been covered. The conclusion should also direct the reader as to how the contents of this chapter link in with the contents of the next chapter, your findings. This chapter will be usually be between 1,000 and 2,000 words.

#### **4.2.8. Findings / Results / Data Analysis.**

This chapter presents the evidence and/or results of primary research which you have undertaken. Depending upon your subject area this can be in the form of detailed quantitative models, hypothesis testing to some basic analysis using basic descriptive statistics or qualitative techniques dealing with structured content analysis, textual analysis, to case study descriptions.

The main part of the chapter is the presentation of the data that you obtained. Even projects of relatively moderate dimensions will generate a large amount of data which has to be considered. **This data must be organised in a logical and coherently ordered whole** so that your thought processes and interpretation are clear to the reader.

Whatever form of data analysis has been undertaken, it must be accomplished with care and attention to detail, as should the way in which the results are presented. Nothing is guaranteed to frustrate a reader more than to have to plough their way through an arid mass of tables, figures and statistics. Better by far to describe in an accessible manner (which does not mean that you should talk down to the reader) what the research has uncovered and to include only the most pertinent figures as evidence of your findings. Dissertations which included detailed modelling or quantitative analysis will clearly need to show all relevant assumptions, relationships and methods. Your academic supervisor will be able to advise on the level of detail required in the main body as opposed to that included in the Appendix.

Graphs, diagrams, pie-charts etc. are all useful ways of presenting research results; they are an imaginative way of 'breaking up' solid blocks of text – they let a little 'light' into the body of the text as long as they are relevant and illustrate your points. Keep your review to those items which are relevant to your research question and not just everything I found out.

There will be problems in the execution of any research project and their occurrence should be brought to the attention of the reader. Without stating them, one of the essential elements of the context in which the research took place will be missing.

Not all dissertations contain quantitative data. In many situations, students will have made extensive use of qualitative research techniques such as focus groups and/or in-depth unstructured interviews. While quantitative data lends itself to graphs, tables and so on, qualitative data, and the way it is presented,

pose particular challenges for students. As ever, your objective should be based on the belief that the data must be presented in such a manner as to make it easy for the reader to follow the logic of the analysis.

The analysis of qualitative data should be based on the research questions and issues that you explored during your fieldwork. For instance, you may have addressed six or seven critical questions in a series of interviews. Each of these questions should be examined separately, rather than describing each focus group in turn. This provides a degree of logical flow and development to the analysis. In addition, it is advisable to focus on the points of agreement and disagreement that emerged during the interviews. This should be supported with relevant quotations from the transcripts of the interviews. You should avoid lengthy quotations, unless they are of critical importance. However, short excerpts enrich the reader's understanding of the issues and provide you with the opportunity to shed a clearer insight on the topic.

Many students make the mistake of providing a very superficial, descriptive analysis of qualitative data. This does not allow you to demonstrate that the research you undertook was of a substantive nature. Tables can also be included that reflect the respondent's overall attitudes, perceptions and views about the themes.

You are not required to include all the transcripts of interviews, surveys or data sheets. Only include the summarised data in the main body of the dissertation. Appendixes should be restricted to no more than 25 pages. You can keep additional information in a folder for use by the markers if requested.

In the case of company projects you may need to include some brief outline about the company and its activities. Again keep these comments focused on the topic area and not just a broad and general description of everything you know about the organisation.

#### **4.2.9. Discussion.**

In the introduction to the dissertation you described the context of the research. In the literature survey you analysed the work of previously published authors and derived a set of questions that needed to be answered to fulfil the objectives of this study. In the research methodology section you showed the reader what techniques were available, what their advantages and disadvantages were, and what guided you to make the choice you did. In the results section, you present to the reader the outcome of the research exercise.

The introduction of this chapter reminds the reader what, exactly, were the research objectives. Your review of the literature and your evaluation of the various themes, issues and frameworks helped you to develop a more specific set of research questions. In essence, your analysis of the data that you have collected from your fieldwork should provide answers to these questions. You should, as a matter of priority, focus attention on data that is directly relevant to the research questions. You should avoid the mistake of including analysis that might be interesting in a general way, but is not linked to the original direction of the dissertation. Peripheral data can be included as an appendix, however you are reminded that there is a **limit of twenty-five pages for appendixes**. The introduction should also explain how the results are to be presented.



**This is the heart of the dissertation and must be more than descriptive.** This chapter develops analytic and critical thinking on primary results and analysis with reference to theoretical arguments grounded in the literature review. You should try to highlight where there are major differences and similarities from the literature or between different groups. Where a model or framework of analysis has been used or is being developed you should highlight the main relationships as well as explaining the reason and significance behind features or decisions being discussed.

#### **4.2.10. Conclusions.**

Here you will bring together the work of the dissertation by showing how the initial research plan has been addressed in such a way that conclusions may be formed from the evidence of the dissertation. No new material or references should be placed here. The conclusions should make a statement on the extent to which each of the aims and objectives has been met. You should bring back your research questions and state clearly your understanding of those questions. Be careful not to make claims that are not substantiated from the evidence you have presented in earlier chapters.

If you are undertaking a company project based around a business issue do not confuse recommendations for the company with conclusions. If you want to include a list of recommendations then do so in a separate short chapter. **The conclusions address the wider understanding of the issue you have been studying.**

You should include a short sub section on any suggestions for further research for colleagues who might wish to undertake research in this area in the future. There should also be a short statement of the limitations of the research. Often as a single case study or limited range of companies you can not really claim that your research holds for all companies. However, by adopting a rigorous approach to your literature review and methods which have validity and can be repeated you can make a reasonable but limited claim that your conclusions should be taken seriously.

#### **4.2.11. References:**

All references used in writing the dissertation (whether direct quotations or paraphrasing) should be included in a reference list/bibliography, compiled in alphabetical order by author. The Harvard system for listing references should be used.

#### **4.2.12. Appendices:**

Appendices may be used to provide relevant supporting evidence for reference but should only be used if necessary. Students may wish to include in appendices, evidence which confirms the originality of their work or illustrates points of principle set out in the main text, questionnaires, and interview guidelines. Only subsidiary material should be included in appendices. Students should not assume that Appendices will be read by Examiners in detail.

## 5. Layout, Style and Writing Suggestions

### 5.1. Dissertation Formatting.

Aspect	'Word' Command Line	Recommended Setting
<i>Word count</i>		12,000 to 15,000 words maximum. Excludes abstract, references i.e. main text only. If you are writing a dissertation by translation/commentary the source text for your translation should be 6,000 words (+/- 10%) and your commentary should be 6,000 to 7,000 words (excludes abstract, references and appendices).
<i>Paper Size</i>	File, Page setup – Paper.	A4
<i>Margin Settings</i>	File, Page setup, margins	Top 2.54cm Bottom 2.54cm Left 3.17cm Right 3.17cm Gutter 0cm Gutter Position Left
<i>Line spacing</i>	Format, Paragraph, Indents & spacing	One and a half spacing, not single or double.
<i>Page Numbering</i>	View, Header & Footer, Insert page Numbers	For sections from Acknowledgements to start of Main Text page number format is i) ii) iii) ..and so on continuously For Main Text page format is 1,2, 3 and so on continuously With position on page centred aligned
<i>Text</i>	Format, Styles & Formatting	Times New Roman
<i>Font</i>	Format, Styles & Formatting	12 point font
<i>Alignment</i>	Format, Styles & Formatting	Justified
<b>Typical Dissertation Layout</b>		
Front cover		Required, see separate example
Acknowledgements		Required, see example
Abstract		Required
Table of Contents	Insert, Reference, Index & Tables	Required
List of Figures	Insert, Reference, Index & Tables	Required (Note all figures in the main text must be numbered, titled and attributed)
List of Tables	Insert, Reference, Index & Tables	Required, (Note all tables in the main text must be numbered, titled and attributed)
Abbreviations		Optional
Main text	Format, Bullets & Numbering, Outline	Chapter title, bold, outlined numbered e.g. Chapter 1, start each chapter on new page
Chapter & Section Headings	numbered	Section title, bold, outlined numbered e.g. 1.1, Sub section title, outlined numbered e.g. 1.1.1
List of references		Harvard system preferred
Appendices		Appendix title, bold, outlined numbered e.g. Appendix 1, start each Appendix on new page
<b>Binding</b>		Spiral soft bound, (not a A4 Ring Binder)
<b>Number of copies</b>		Two hardbound copies plus an electronic version, Word or pdf format.

## **5.2. Writing Style**

As was stated at the start, a dissertation is a ‘formal’ document and, as such, its contents must be expressed in a certain style. That style is the third person singular passive i.e.

*Marketing sits within the wider knowledge base of the social sciences and, while it cannot, because of its nature, employ the techniques, formulae and laws of the pure sciences, it should aspire to a ‘scientific’ level of objectivity.*

This is an objective statement, and that is the way in which your dissertation should be expressed. If you have conducted your research properly i.e. you have designed a ‘correct’ research methodology, you have recorded the results accurately and analysed the data in an appropriate manner, then you should have arrived at a set of results that anyone else would arrive at if they had also conducted that research. Although you cannot ‘take yourself out’ of the project, you can take yourself out of the report. Thus, while not using the rules of pure science, you can suggest by the style of presentation, that you have been striving for scientific objectivity.

Ensure that you use gender-inclusive vocabulary.

## **5.3. Using Introductions and Conclusions to chapters**

Each of your chapters will require both an introduction and a conclusion. The former provides the reader with a contents ‘map’ of what is to come, and the latter provides a concise summary of what they have just read. Each introduction should look back to the conclusion of the previous chapter, and forwards to the contents of the chapter which you are introducing. The conclusion should look back into the chapter just completed, and forward to the introduction of the following chapter. These conclusions and introductions act like small links which bind the ‘chain’ of the chapters together in a more seamless whole than would have occurred if the chapters had not been introduced or concluded; they ‘smooth out’ the transition from chapter to chapter and from topic to topic.

## **5.4. Approval of Questionnaires and Surveys**

All questionnaires which are to be used in research must first be approved by the academic supervisors and in the case of the company projects the company concerned. This is to ensure that questions are grammatically and logically correct. The academic supervisor will not necessarily make the necessary corrections but highlight where improvements are required. See also chapter on ethics.

# **6. Citations and References**

The University has a policy which covers all Honours students and all Masters students in relation to a reference system. **It is important that you get your citations and references correct.** You must always cite the source of your material; **inadequate citation could leave you open to the suspicion of plagiarism**

## **6.1. Within text citation.**

This is where any formal mention that you make in your dissertation to something written by someone else. Every citation must be supported by a **reference** which

supplies the details which will enable the reader to follow up that citation. The University employs the Harvard System of referencing. If you refer to the work of an author in your text then it should be cited as, for example,

Smith (1997) states that the shoe size of an individual is a function of three criteria.

or

Shoe size has been demonstrated to be a function of three criteria (Smith 1997).

Perhaps more than one author has made a broadly similar point and you want to include them all. In such a case the citation should appear as follows:

'Logistics research is always important in new product development (Freeman 1997; Hardy 1989; Willis 1999).'

If you quote directly from an author's work you should include the page number from which the quotation is taken, e.g. (Smith 1997, p 4.)

## **6.2. End of text referencing**

The list of references is placed at the end of the dissertation (in alphabetical order of first author's surname), as follows:

*For a journal:* Smith, S. (1997) "The Effects of Shoe Size on Consumer Behaviour", Journal of International Shoe Manufacturers, Vol. 34, No. 45, pp 23-45.

*For a textbook:* Smith, S. (1997) Strategy, Marketing and Consumers, Paisley, Academic Free Press, 7th edition.

If you are only referring to a small portion of a large text, then you must specify which parts are relevant by adding either the chapters, "chapters 4 and 6", to which you are referring, or the appropriate pages (Smith 1997 pp 126-341).

## **6.3. Text notes.**

Text notes can provide additional information on points made in the text of the dissertation. They may be presented as footnotes or as endnotes, either of which should be **kept to a minimum**. Neither footnotes nor endnotes should be used, however, if the sole purpose is to give a page or reference, these should be presented as parenthetical insertions into the main text of the dissertation. Articles and books mentioned in the text, including text notes, should be identified by the author's name and the year of publication. The title of the article or book should then be listed in the dissertation's list of references.

## **7. Attribution and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when students attempt to pass off someone else's work as their own. Typically, sections of text are taken verbatim from another person's work without proper attribution being given. This is a form of cheating and the University takes a very serious view regarding any student involved in cheating (University Ordinance No. 9 <http://www.hw.ac.uk/ordinances/ordinances.pdf>). Severe penalties

will be applied. The University will use reference checking software Turnitin to ensure that dissertations are correctly and fully referenced.

See <http://www.hw.ac.uk/registry/resources/PlagiarismGuide.pdf>

When the work of others is used, a direct quotation, a figure or a general idea, it must be acknowledged in the text and list of references. Quotation marks should always be used to indicate direct quotations. If students are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism they are advised to consult their dissertation advisor or Programme Director.

You must submit your completed dissertation to TURNITIN before submission and append the report in loose-leaf format to a copy of your dissertation on submission.

## **8. Confidentiality**

If the material in a dissertation is regarded as confidential, the student should mark the text 'CONFIDENTIAL' on the front cover when it is submitted. In this event the dissertation will be seen only by members of the Board of Examiners and administrative staff and it will be kept secure, away from those available for consultation. No one outside the Board of Examiners and administrative staff will be allowed to see the dissertation unless they are given written permission by the student and Programme Director. Requests to see such dissertations are almost universally refused. Such dissertations will be kept secure for a period of 2 years only, unless the student specifically requests a security classification to be applied for a longer period.

## **9. Ethics**

Every student proceeding with a dissertation is required to fill in an ethics form in partnership with the nominated supervisor. A copy of the Applications Form for Departmental Ethics Committee Approval can be downloaded from [[www.sml.hw.ac.uk/forms/ethics/pg.html](http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/forms/ethics/pg.html)]. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that this form is completed well in advance of the fieldwork.

No dissertation will be allowed to proceed which specifically seeks to conduct primary research amongst participants under the age of 16 or over the age of 65. Furthermore, any dissertation which seeks to undertake primary research amongst 'vulnerable' participants between the ages of 16 and 65 is highly unlikely to gain ethical approval

## **10. Submission Arrangements**

Two hard copies of the dissertation, written and bound in the approved manner, a copy on a CD-Rom (using MS Word format), together with the TURNITIN report should be submitted to the School Office in room MB 1.62 by the published deadline (see Appendix 1). In the case of a company-based dissertation, a third copy will need to be provided to the organisation studied.

Where students are submitting from overseas, then they will be required to send an electronic version by email to arrive by the due date and time with hard copies being sent to arrive at the School Office a maximum of 5 days later. It is the responsibility of the student to use a reputable carrier and a guaranteed service.

A correctly completed Dissertation Submission Form (available from the School Office or School web site <http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.html>) must be attached to your submission.

Any dissertation submitted after the deadline **will not be marked** unless the student can satisfy the Board of Examiners that there are adequate reasons for the late submission.

*The dissertation deadline will be strictly observed.*

*Dissertations can be submitted earlier.*

It is vitally important that students report any problems that have affected or will affect their performance on the dissertation as soon as possible to both the Academic supervisor and the Programme Director. The Examiners can and will take extenuating circumstances into account, but only if they know about them prior to the Examination Board meeting. All issues relating to a substantive medical condition causing prolonged incapacity should be supported by a valid medical certificate.

### **10.1. Submission Deadlines**

One of the learning aims of a Masters programme is to demonstrate the ability to manage a complex and extended piece of work within the given word count and available timescales. This requires careful planning and the need to reprioritise and adjust your work as circumstances change.

The deadline for your programme will be shown in Appendix 1. A standard penalty of 30% will be applied for late submissions to dissertations. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Award Board where supported by suitable documentation. It is only under exceptional personal circumstances or extended ill health that a short extension may be permitted and authorised by the Director of Postgraduate Programmes (not academic supervisor). Any such request to the Director of Postgraduate Programmes will again need to be supported by documentation.

Last-minute delays through printer failure; corrupted files or breakdown to computers; unforeseen problems with statistical software; staff or interviewees being unavailable; just run out of time to complete writing or analysis; or even colds are not exceptional circumstances.

- Remember to keep backups of all electronic working and supporting files.
- Allow time for proof reading and printing as this always takes longer than you think. (When including colour is it really necessary as it will add to your time and cost).
- Plan you interviews in advance and check that you know when key people will be on holiday.

- Keep your academic supervisor informed of major delays and interruptions as they occur.
- Start your dissertation early and have a week by week time plan, modify it but don't lose sight of the end date or objective.
- Find time to relax and whilst short breaks away can help you to clarify your thoughts avoid extended visits to or by family and friends as the time will go very quickly.

## **11. Assessment**

All dissertations will be read by two internal examiners including the academic supervisor. For company based dissertations the company will not be involved in the assessment process. In addition, some dissertations may be read by an External Examiner to ensure a uniform standard is maintained. An agreed mark will be awarded for the dissertation. The following common standards apply.

- The dissertation must be presented using a coherent and thoughtful level of English.
- An informed description of events or data is not enough. There must exist an analysis of the information collected and this must be directed towards answering the research questions raised by the dissertation.
- The dissertation must show an awareness of the relevant literature.
- The document should be capable of showing that the author has learnt something new, either from reviewing the literature or from undertaking an empirical investigation, or both.

In addition, the assessment criteria used in the assessment will reflect the following.

- A depth of knowledge and critical understanding of an interdisciplinary or specialist area that goes beyond final year undergraduate level and builds upon the student's postgraduate studies.
- An ability to bring together in a coherent fashion the perspectives of two or more theoretical standpoints and apply the results in a practical setting.
- An ability to appreciate critically, to a higher level than that of a final year undergraduate student, major issues and problems internal to the discipline and/or with regard to the discipline's impact on the external world.

The Examination Board has the right to require a viva voce before awarding a mark. Usually this is only done in exceptional circumstances.

A summary marking sheet and assessment guide will be found in the Appendix to this guide.

## **12. Resubmission**

All marks will be agreed between two independent markers with a sample also sent to an External Examiner and finally approved by an Award Board. A mark of >50%

(Grade C) or greater is required to pass the dissertation. Where your dissertation achieves a grade A (>70%) and you have achieved an average of grade A (>70%) in the taught part of the programme, you will receive an MSc with distinction. When marks are agreed as achieving grade D (40% to 49%), this is classed as an initial fail but with the possibility of revision. The extent of improvements that will be allowed for resubmission are minor corrections to the dissertation. Where a dissertation has major deficiencies then it will receive a grade of < D (<39%) and no further revisions will be permitted and you will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma.

*Minor editorial corrections or deficiencies:* Minor corrections of English, spelling, statistical errors, incomplete list of references, poorly justified or described methodology but with adequate data; some reorganising of materials in the literature review, or results or findings but not all sections fall under this heading.

*Major deficiencies:* This may reflect a literature review limited by the extent of materials and ideas the reviewed or limited by the understanding being shown; inappropriate or inadequate research design; substantially inaccurate or inadequate data analysis; lack of conclusions and understanding. Dissertations in this category would require substantive improvements introducing a substantial amount of new materials within a number of chapters

A student whose dissertation falls into the minor revisions category should expect to re-write one chapter at the most (or equivalent of a chapter spread over several chapters), with appropriate adjustments in the introduction and in the conclusion.

Further guidance on assessment criteria are given in the Appendix.

If you are required to resubmit the markers will provide you with an agreed list of corrections to be made. You will normally be allowed only one further meeting with your academic supervisor to explain these changes. Your academic supervisor is not required to re-read the dissertation. Again, you are responsible for all activity and redrafting to achieving the required standard.



## **Appendix 1. Undertaking an MSc (Translating and Conference Interpreting/ Translation and Computer-Assisted Translation Tools) Dissertation**

### **12.1. A) Preparation and timetable 2011-2012**

In the second semester, students follow a series of preparation sessions in dissertation writing. Students will submit a draft proposal by the end of week 2.11. The Programme Director will allocate a supervisor by the end of week 2.12. When developing their proposal, students are encouraged to consider the following:

1. General topic
2. Dissertation type
3. Specific question to be addressed
4. Data/ Potential source translation
5. Method of investigation
6. What students aim to demonstrate

Once the draft proposal has been discussed with the supervisor, and by 11 May 2012 at the latest, students should submit a formal Dissertation Proposal form to the School Office in the Mary Burton building and send an electronic copy to their supervisor. The form can be found at:

<http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm>

No change will be allowed to the topic without permission from the supervisor. At the proposal stage students should also read the School's Policy on Ethical Aspects of Research for Postgraduate Dissertations and confirm that they will comply with this policy by ticking the appropriate box on the Dissertation Proposal form. The Ethics Policy can be found at ([www.sml.hw.ac.uk/forms/ethics/pg.html](http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/forms/ethics/pg.html))

### **12.2. B) Types of dissertation**

LINCS students can choose to write a dissertation by research or a dissertation by translation and commentary.

Broadly, the proposed topic should (1) be relevant to the practical pursuit of translating and/or interpreting (2) fall within the scope of Translating and Interpreting Studies. When choosing their topics, students should bear carefully in mind the availability of materials and sources, and should establish the scope of the subject in accordance with the length of the dissertation and the time available.

### **Word Count**

**Dissertation by Research:** 12,000 to 15,000 words maximum. Excludes abstract, references i.e. main text only.

**Dissertation by Translation/Commentary:** The source text for your translation should be 6,000 words (+/- 10%) and your commentary should be 6,000 to 7,000 words (excludes abstract, references i.e. main text only).

Examples of the kinds of studies which might be carried out are:

- Investigation of the relay of particular kinds of meaning in translated texts;
- Analysis of shifts in translating / interpreting data;
- Investigation of the constraints affecting particular modes of translating (e.g. stage, screen, cartoon, machine, oral);
- Investigation of documentation for translators (especially European Union), including discussion of key terms and culture-specific concepts;
- Analysis of issues of relevance to the dialogue interpreter (e.g. politeness, footing, etc.);
- Examination of strategies adopted by conference interpreters;
- Contrastive analyses of texts belonging to specific text types, genres, etc.
- Translation of a portion of a novel with a commentary demonstrating the strategy adopted using skopos theory
- Translation of a gaming book with a commentary demonstrating the strategy adopted using register theory

The following is a selection of titles of MSc dissertations which have been submitted in recent years and which might give further ideas for possible subject areas:

- *Issues of Face in Dialogue Interpreting: An Analysis of Interpreted Medical Consultations*
- *A Comparative Analysis of Sociolinguistic Variation in Tintin and the British-English Translations*
- *The Translation of Property Contracts of Sale from Spanish into English*
- *The Simultaneous Interpretation of Humour in Conference Settings*
- *Ideological overtones and shifts in the translation and interpretation of Albert Speer's cross-examination at the Nuremberg Trials*
- *A Register-Based Analysis of the German Translation of the Role-Play Game Rulebook Scion – Hero (Translation/Commentary)*
- *Film Noir: Translating Nicolas Fargues' Beau Rôle from French into English (Translation/Commentary)*
- *Genre and Styles of Persuasion: A Translation/Commentary of Al-Jazeera Online Newspaper Editorials*

### **Dissertation by Translation/Commentary**

#### **Translation**

You must translate a source text that has not been translated before into your chosen target language.

Translation brief: you must find a realistic brief for your translation. This should include a brief description of your target audience.

The 'invented' brief appears in the introduction.

### **Translation Problem/Issue**

You must contextualise your translation in terms of a translation problem which can be addressed and commented upon by applying theory.

This description of the translation issue or problem and the theoretical principles you will draw on in your translation strategy appear in the introduction.

The description of the translation issue appears in the introduction.

### **Abstract**

If writing a dissertation by translation/commentary, your abstract should contextualise the source text, summarise the translation brief, the theoretical framework and the overall results of your translation strategy.

### **Commentary**

#### *Literature Review*

This appears in the first part of the Commentary section or chapter. Here you will contextualise, **analyse and evaluate** the theoretical principles to be adopted.

#### *Translation Commentary*

By use of examples from your translation, show how you have adopted the theoretical principles in the translation choices you have made.

Select the examples which best fit your theoretical framework or model.

#### *Conclusion*

Sum up how your application of a theoretical model has informed your translation strategy.

## **Order of Parts**

### **Title Page:**

The title page should adopt the format shown in the template that can be downloaded from the school website:

<http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm>

**Abstract**

**Acknowledgement**

**Contents Page**

**Introduction**

**Commentary split into:**

Literature Review

Translation Commentary

Conclusion

**References**

**Appendix 1 Source Text (not included in the word count)**

**Appendix 2 Translated Text (6, 000 words)**

**Further Appendices deemed necessary (not included in word count, but should not be excessively long)**

### 12.3. C) Supervision

At the outset supervisors will agree a schedule of work with students and will establish how frequently meetings will be required. Normally the pattern of supervision will be as follows:

- on-campus students can normally expect a maximum of 5 meetings in total with their supervisor (2 meetings to identify an appropriate topic area and to discuss the research proposal and a maximum of 3 supervision meetings over the summer). The onus is on the student to make the necessary appointments and to prepare adequately for the meetings such that they derive maximum benefit from these sessions.
- off-campus students may submit reasonable requests for advice by email.

The supervisor or the student will keep a written record of all meetings, normally using the “Record of Supervision Meeting” form which can be found at <http://www.sml.hw.ac.uk/postgraduate/dissertations.htm> Where supervision is carried out remotely (e.g. by email), evidence of supervision will take the form of email correspondence between supervisor and supervisee.

Supervisors are asked to aim to reply to any correspondence relating to dissertations (including email correspondence) and to return comments on submitted work within a **fortnight of receipt**. Students should not expect instant responses to e-mails.

Students should note that supervision cannot be guaranteed to be available at all times during the summer vacation and students should ensure that they make adequate arrangements with their supervisor to cover this period. At all times it is the responsibility of the student to maintain adequate contact with their supervisor and to keep their supervisor informed of their progress.

You may ask your supervisor to read in detail a draft of a portion of your dissertation normally up to a maximum of two chapters, in order to give feedback on presentation, content and style. Academic supervisors may of course pass comment on chapter outlines and may scan quickly through other chapters at their discretion.

The academic supervisor will not read the finished work prior to submission and will not make any comment at any stage as to the expected grade or mark.

The academic supervisor will not check or correct grammar and expression.

**Deadline for Submission is Thursday 23 August 2012.**

## Appendix 2 Further Notes on the Literature Review

### 1 The introduction might include:

- A definition or description of topic in general terms, or of the issues you propose to investigate – this will give the reader a context in which the literature may be viewed.
- The key trends in this sector of the literature, the main theories and areas of disagreement, and possibly, gaps in the literature.
- An explanation of why you are conducting this literature review and the standpoint you will be adopting when conducting your critical analysis.
- The manner in which the review will be presented.
- An explanation as to why, if appropriate, some literature has not been included in the study.

### 2 The Main Body of the Literature Review

#### 3 This might include:

- Begin with a discussion of the main theories or models, which are appropriate to your study.
- Group together appropriate themes or trends and discuss them in detail.
- Begin in general terms and then narrow down to specific details, this applies to the entire literature review and to individual sections.
- Try to explain and, if possible, to resolve conflicts in what you report.
- Cover all the topics which are relevant to the dissertation.
- Be comprehensive enough to act as a suitably firm foundation, such that it will support the research in the remainder of the dissertation.
- Be up to date – always try to employ the most contemporary journal articles or sources.

### The Conclusion of the Literature Review

At the end of the Literature Review, in this conclusion, you should make explicit what exactly the research objectives of the research are, so that the reader is in no doubt as to what you are about to investigate.

In order to do this, you should:

- Summarise the major points that the literature review has uncovered.
- Point out the gap(s) in the literature, if there are any, and use these to emphasise the justification for carrying out the current research project.
- **Remember that your literature review should lead and justify the research objectives and questions of your dissertation.**

### 4 Hints on conducting a Literature Review

- a. The University's subject librarian will help you find relevant material.
- b. Use the Library electronic journal catalogue as a way of gaining access to relevant material. In particular, learn how to input the keywords for individual search engines – each have their own idiosyncrasies.
- c. Make a decision as to those keywords which encompass your subject within reasonably narrow confines; too 'wide' a definitional span and you will be engulfed with too much that is of only peripheral relevance; too 'narrow' a definition and you will be excluding items which are of use.
- d. Always try to gain access to full, original articles or to complete texts; using quotes or citations from third parties may carry with them a certain 'colour' which the original author did not intend and which might bias your review.

5      Questions to be asked when carrying out a Literature Review

- Are the references included relevant to the topic(s) under investigation?
- Do the references support all the topics or themes that must be discussed to aid a full understanding of the context of the research and of the research objectives?
- Has the literature review discussed, to the appropriate level of detail, each of the topics?
- Have all the key authors been cited and discussed?
- Does the space given to each section of the literature review reflect its individual importance?

Have the most current texts and journals been employed?

### **Appendix 3 Hints on Research Methods**

#### 6 Hints on the research methods chapter

##### *Introduction*

- How is the chapter to be organised?
- What are the research problems that need to be addressed (these should follow on from what was presented in the conclusion to the literature review chapter)?

##### *Primary versus Secondary Research*

The contribution of both forms to the research.

This section might seem to be somewhat retrospective in that you have already written a chapter, the Literature Review, using secondary data. This is true, but the standard convention of dissertations is such that the justification for secondary data analysis is included in the Research Methodology chapter and not in the Literature Review.

##### *Quantitative versus Qualitative Research Methods*

The reason for deciding on a particular method.

- Why did you choose the one you did?
- Why did you reject the other system?

Please remember that no ‘rule’ says that a choice must be made between two or more choices, and this is so at any point when you are faced with having to make a decision; this applies not just for the section currently under discussion. For example, there are many research projects, which employ both primary and secondary research, and/or qualitative and quantitative research methods. You make your choice, or choices, in the light of your unique research situation and context and the questions which need to be answered. But whatever choice, or choices, you make – you must justify what you have done.

##### (a) For a Choice of Qualitative Research Method(s)

Why did you choose the method(s) you did? What are the benefits of this form of research above others in this instance? If you chose a qualitative research technique or techniques, please remember that the methodology chapter must include a discussion as to the manner in which the results are to be analysed.

##### (b) For a Choice of Quantitative Research Method(s)

Why did you choose the method(s) you did? Why did you reject the others? You will need to justify the precise fieldwork method.

Questionnaire Design (if you used a questionnaire)



Considerations: question content; question phrasing; types of response format; question sequence; questionnaire layout; pre-test, revision and final version of the questionnaire, use of on-line surveys.

Interview Guide Design or semi-structured questionnaire (if you used an interview guide)

Considerations : question content; question sequence.

***Remember:*** Whether you use a structured questionnaire or an interview guide with open-ended question format, the questions should address the research objectives of your dissertation.