



School of Business and Engineering

Instructions for Dissertation Writing in the Social Sciences

Introduction

Degree dissertation project work in Business Administration is part of the degree programmes at Bachelor's, Master's (one year) and Master's (two years) levels. Degree programmes in Business Administration leading to the award of a Bachelor's degree involve the writing of a Bachelor's dissertation consisting of 15 higher education credits (ECTS system). Master's degree programmes (both one year and two years in duration) are completed with a dissertation consisting of either 15 or 30 higher education credits respectively.

Size of dissertation writing groups

Each dissertation project group should consist of two people, regardless of what level the project is being written at. Students decide themselves who should be their respective partners in the groups.

Choice of subject area

The subject area for the project is decided upon by the students from within the general subject framework for the course. The dividing line between what is regarded as being outside or within this framework is drawn by the dissertation supervisor. Dissertation writing often involves cooperation with both private sector companies and other organizations. The main rule in force is that the University's dissertation projects should be regarded documents in the public domain. The companies which students are working with should be made aware of this situation.

Knowledge attainment objectives for the dissertation

The overall aim of the dissertation writing process is to develop the student's ability to independently carry out a piece of advanced level academic writing. Scholarly demands are made on every dissertation ie the practical application of an academic approach is necessary to fulfill requirements.

Throughout the dissertation writing process the student should demonstrate the ability to apply and integrate knowledge obtained in previous courses. The dissertation project also provides the opportunity to extend and broaden knowledge within the dissertation's subject area. The student should be able to demonstrate samples clearly showing the application of methodological knowledge in carrying out an investigation.

The student should be able to:

- carry out a review of the existing literature
- define a suitable subject area
- critically review previous research and develop a theoretical frame of reference
- identify and formulate a problem
- show due awareness of ethical issues in all phases of the dissertation writing process
- apply relevant methods for data collection and data analysis
- critically analyze and interpret the empirical data collected as part of the project
- structure and present the material of the dissertation in a clear and in an easy-to-grasp manner

- orally present, discuss and provide arguments in favour of the various perspectives and positions/theses adopted in the dissertation
- critically examine and assess the dissertation projects of fellow students and other research reports

Dissertation writing process

The dissertation writing process consists of seminars, supervision together with the writing and defence of the final dissertation. These components result in an overall grade which is awarded following the defence of the completed dissertation.

Every seminar involves the presentation and discussion of dissertations. The seminars build upon the active participation of the dissertation writing groups actively working together to make progress in the writing up of the projects. Prior to the first seminar, each dissertation group will present a written planning report with regards to their dissertation project. In the following seminars, the essay writing group will present parts of their completed essay in accordance with the approval of the seminar leaders. The seminars will also involve each seminar group presenting shorter written and oral oppositions with regards to the dissertations of other groups. The final seminar will involve each dissertation group presenting their final dissertation as well as preparing an oral and written opposition of another group's dissertation.

Each dissertation writing group will be offered a number of supervisory sessions. Each group should submit a written summary prior to each supervisory session together with specific questions which the group wants to take up with the supervisor. Prior to each supervisory session it should be made clear exactly what the group wishes to discuss and receive support/ obtain help with. Each student group has the right to four supervisory sessions. It is not possible to 'save' supervisory sessions unless agreed otherwise with the supervisor.

The seminars should have the following contents:

Seminar 1	Planning seminar: definition of problem and purpose
Seminar 2	Planning seminar: theoretical frame of reference and methodology
Seminar 3	Planning seminar: results and analysis
Seminar 4	Final seminar

The dates and times of the supervisory sessions will be decided in consultation with both the dissertation writing groups and the supervisor concerned.

The dissertation writing process is planned for the Spring term. The final seminar will normally be held during one of the final weeks of the Spring term. The final version of the dissertation should be submitted to the examiner, supervisor and opponents by noon, Tuesday in week 21, as a hard copy. This date is valid for all groups, irrespective of the date of the oral final.

Supervision

The role of the supervisor is to function as a support in the dissertation writing process. Each group will provide suggestions for the design / choice of specialism to their supervisor, as well as discussing suitable subject areas, problem formulation, purpose, relevant literature, methods, empirical methods, analysis and presentation. The supervisor can for example give his / her opinion relating to the feasibility of the group's proposal within the limited timeframe available and with respect to the other restrictions in operation. The supervisor can also decide whether the proposal involves a sufficient degree of difficulty for each dissertation writing group (depending on what type / level of dissertation project the group is writing). In addition the supervisor can draw the attentions of students to possible consequences of various choices. The responsibility for the final choice is however never borne by the supervisor.

Final report and final seminar

Each dissertation will be taken up at the final seminar, which is always held on Campus Halmstad. For the purposes of the final seminar, each dissertation writing group will print out a number of hard copies of the dissertation in accordance with the instructions of the supervisor. The number will depend upon the size of the seminar group and the format of the examination.

For each dissertation roughly one hour should be allotted. The final seminar commences with the authors having the opportunity to correct possible faults which they have discovered after the initial submission. After this opening, the opposition group takes over. The opponents should plan a discussion of the essay lasting approximately one hour. A written summary of the opposition comprising a number of A4 pages should be submitted at the seminar to the seminar leader as well as to the dissertation group defending their dissertation.

During the seminar, the opponents or alternatively the authors should begin by summarizing the dissertation. The presentation should be sufficiently comprehensive so that a person who has not read the dissertation can have the opportunity of being to follow the ongoing discussion but at the same time should be very concise. It is important to be well prepared. Following the presentation, the opponents will discuss the essay with regards to the definition of the subject, problem analysis, purpose, choice of methodologies, results and conclusions etc. At the end of the discussion the opponents will put a number of questions to the authors who will then have the opportunity to argue in favour of their choices. After this overarching discussion, the opponents are free to take up specific details such as aspects of the dissertation's form and layout etc. The opponents should finally summarize their overall impressions of the dissertation and give a final judgement.

All students participating in the seminar group should have read all dissertations in the group and have actively participated in the discussion of all the dissertations presented.

Examination

At first level (Bachelor's degree programme) and at second level (one year master's and two year master's) the supervisor and examiner are two different people. The examiner at second level should be qualified with a PhD degree.

Grading

Grading criteria for the dissertation-writing process and the final product (the dissertation) are specified in the document entitled 'Assessment criteria for social science dissertations'.

The grades of Fail, Pass or Pass with Distinction will be awarded for the dissertation writing course. If a final version submitted for examination by noon on Tuesday in week 21 does not fulfill the requirements for the award of pass, the dissertation writing group will have the opportunity to hand in a new version for a new examination by noon, Monday in week 33 or alternatively at a further date by noon, Monday in week 42. If after opportunities for re-submission a dissertation still does not fulfill the requirements for pass, the grade of fail will be awarded and the students must start at new dissertation-course, at next availability.

Cheating and other forms of dishonest behaviour

Cheating is not common but it does happen, which is of course a very serious matter. Students themselves are responsible for ensuring that all quotations from sources and references are stated in the correct format. Otherwise there is a risk that the student(s) will be suspected of plagiarism. Visit the University's website (www.hh.se) for information about guidelines and regulations in force with regards to cheating, other forms of dishonest behaviour and the disciplinary measures which can be taken. Dissertations within the Business

Administration/Economics subject area will be scrutinized using the plagiarism control tool *Genuine Text*. Where cheating is suspected, the matter will be reported to the Disciplinary Committee.

Some formal requirements

The dissertation should be written in A4 format. Suitable fonts can be chosen from the standard fonts available. Times New Roman, character size 12, single row distance is the font which can be used. There should be sufficient margins for notes to be made, ie at least 25 mm from the top, bottom, left and right.

The length of the dissertation cannot be stated in terms of an exact number of pages. It is however important to remember that it serves no real purpose to write many pages or change font, increase row distances or similar in order to increase the number of pages in the dissertation. The dissertation should be characterized by concentrated content, which means that authors should keep their focus on the relevant subject in question as well as using the most effective way of expressing claims, stating hypotheses etc.

You can find cover page templates on the University's website: www.hh.se/65440368.html

At the beginning of the essay, there should be a summary on an unnumbered page. This summary should subsequently be followed by a table of contents, which takes into account the subdivision of the dissertation into headings and sub-headings in the text with page numbers.

When the dissertation has been passed, the dissertation writing group should submit a covering title page to the examiner. The group should furthermore enter the approved dissertation as a complete text into the library's DIVA database for dissertation projects. For more information about this, consult the information on the University's website (www.hh.se). Only then can the grade for the dissertation be registered.

Financing

The dissertation project should be regarded in the same way as any other course in terms of study financing. The main rule is consequently that students themselves should be responsible for ensuring the financing of the dissertation writing project, including costs for the empirical work and for the printing/distribution of the dissertation.

In certain situations, companies may be interested in contributing to the costs of the dissertation writing project and it can also be possible to apply for funding through charitable and trade organizations or similar. The interests of financiers should not however be allowed to interfere with the academic aspects of the study. Further benefits for the financing body will have to be taken up as a sideline to the main purpose of the academic study.