

Dissertation Handbook for Postgraduate Study

School of Social Sciences 2020/21 – September Intake

PART A: DISSERTATION INFORMATION

A1. Introduction	2
A2. Aims and Learning Outcomes.....	3
A3. Styles.....	4
A4. Key Contacts and Dates.....	5
A5. Supervision.....	7
A6. Ethics.....	10
A7. Proposal.....	10
A8. Approval of Data Collection Instruments.....	10
A9. Plagiarism.....	10
A10. Format of Final Submission.....	11
A11. Confidentiality.....	20
A11. Submission.....	21
A13. Marking.....	22

PART B: SPECIFIC PROGRAMME INFORMATION

B1. Edinburgh Business School.....	25
B2. LINCIS.....	28
B3. Psychology.....	30

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. General Marking Criteria (Dissertations).....	35
Appendix 2. One Drive Data Submissions Guide.....	37

PART A: Dissertation Information

It is important to read through Part A of the handbook, which provides generic information on Dissertations, before reading Part B, Programme Specific information.

1. Introduction

To obtain the MSc degree, students must complete and pass a dissertation (or Research Portfolio in the case of Psychology). You will be advised following the Semester 2 (or Semester 3, if undertaking resits) Progression Board whether you have successfully completed the PG Diploma stage of the programme and can proceed to the dissertation stage. To be able to proceed to the dissertation a student must have met the minimum standards for progression, as referenced in the Programme Information (which can be found via your Student Portal).

The dissertation is the final stage of the Masters degree and provides 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 delineating 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; drawing conclusions; and if appropriate collecting and analysing primary data; making relevant and practical recommendations.

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 research methodology, results and analysis and, finally, conclusions and recommendations. Essays and descriptive situational analysis on their own are not acceptable as Masters level dissertations; the structure and framework of the dissertation should be common regardless of type.

The Masters level dissertation is distinguished from other forms of writing by its attempt to analyse situations in terms of the 'bigger picture'. As well as detailing 'what' can be done, it explains/explores the underlying 'why'. The most successful dissertations are specific and narrowly focused, offering deeper and more reflective understanding.

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 must read this guide before starting your dissertation and consult it throughout the process. This will help you to complete your dissertation and make more effective use of your supervisory meetings.

2. Aims and Learning Outcomes

2.1 Aims

The aim of the MSc dissertation is to enable students to undertake independent research into a topic that is relevant to the practical pursuit of their subject. Students are expected to show evidence of independent enquiry and investigation.

Broadly, the aims of an MSc dissertation are to:

- design and carry out a substantial piece of independent research;
- reflect critically on the relationship between theory and practice;
- gather and sort data from a variety of written and electronic sources;
- review, organise and evaluate evidence and reflect and comment critically on it;
- engage critically with a wide range of complex literature;
- contribute in an informed way to debates and issues relating to subject area
- identify and justify potential areas for research in the discipline
- use information to support and substantiate claims;
- plan and write a substantial piece of work using academic apparatus and appropriately acknowledging the work of others;
- construct and present sophisticated, coherent and persuasive written arguments;
- show evidence of ability to plan and manage a dissertation/project and work to a series of deadlines;
- exercise substantial autonomy and initiative in a research context;
- use a range of library-based (conventional and ICT) resources to source appropriate literature on the chosen topic;
- communicate research findings in an appropriate academic form;
- develop the ability to work independently where appropriate;
- use appropriate IT and presentation skills;
- (where appropriate) enable interaction with practitioners; and
- (where appropriate) manage ethical issues within the research context.

Further aims for specific students:

- Languages and Intercultural Studies students undertaking a Translation and Commentary dissertation:
 - demonstrate a critical awareness of the relevance of Translation and Interpreting Studies theory to the practical concerns of the translator and/or interpreter;
 - show a solid understanding of specific translation- and/or interpreting-related issues or problems; and,
 - present a clear and coherent argument on a specialised translation- and/or interpreting-related topic.
- Psychology students undertaking the Research Project Portfolio:
 - Allow students an opportunity to take part in, and learn from, supervised project work in their chosen discipline.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

After completion of the dissertation/project students should be able to:

- conceptualise a discipline-specific problem or research topic suitable for research within the specified degree subject level;
- critically evaluate a body of secondary data and authoritative literature in order to show that a clear research gap exists;
- define, design and deliver an academically rigorous piece of research using appropriate research methods;
- implement an appropriate methodology to collect and analyse primary evidence;
- demonstrate the relationships between the theoretical concepts taught in class and their application in specific situations;
- evaluate how the evidence complements or contradicts existing studies;
- formulate evidence-based recommendations for practitioners and indicate where further research is needed.
- demonstrate the management skills needed to successfully complete such a piece of research/project;
- show evidence of critical and holistic knowledge and have a deeper understanding of the 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;
- set realistic research objectives and research questions that will close the research gap;
- contact, work with, and develop relationships with key research informants;
- work in a peer relationship (i.e. with dissertation supervisor) to manage and improve individual performance;
- take significant responsibility for organising a range of resources; and,
- (where appropriate) manage complex ethical issues within their research context.

3. 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 only 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 Dissertation Co-ordinator/Programme Director will give you specific guidance.

4. Key Contacts and Dates

4.1 Contacts

Dissertation Supervisor: Your dissertation will be written under the guidance of a Dissertation Supervisor who will normally be a member of the academic staff having knowledge of the subject area being researched and/or general research experience in the context of your degree discipline. Your supervisor is there to guide you through the dissertation process. They will not necessarily be experts on the specific topic you are researching but they will have an excellent understanding of the research process. They will challenge your ideas to help you refine them, warn you about common pitfalls, and listen to your plans.

Dissertation Co-ordinator: The Dissertation Co-ordinator for each area has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the courses, including administration of courses, responsibility for VISION, allocation of students to supervisors, and arranging workshop sessions as appropriate and ensuring that the regulations and procedures outlined in this booklet and in the School of Social Sciences (SoSS) Postgraduate Student Handbook are followed. You should normally only contact the Dissertation Co-Ordinator if you are unable to contact your supervisor.

Edinburgh Campus		
Accountancy and Finance	Mustafa Caglayan	M.Caglayan@hw.ac.uk
Economics	Philippe LeMay-Boucher	P.Lemay-Boucher@hw.ac.uk
Business Management		
• IBM (incl. all with pathways) • IBM with work placement	Chris Dodd Ken Brown	Chris.Dodd@hw.ac.uk Kenneth.Brown@hw.ac.uk
•		
• International Marketing • International Fashion Marketing	Kathryn Waite	K.Waite@hw.ac.uk
• Logistics and SCM (incl. all with pathways) • Strategic Project Management	Claire Lindsay Shai Davidov	Claire.Lindsay@hw.ac.uk Shai.Davidov@hw.ac.uk
• Operations Management/Lean Six Sigma • Business Analytics and Consulting	Agnessa Spanellis	A.Spanellis@hw.ac.uk
• Strategy, Leadership and Change • IMIM (Partnership)	Assylbek Nurgabdeshev	A.Nurgabdeshev@hw.ac.uk
LINCS		
• Translation & Interpreting • Professional Communication	Dr Yvonne McLaren-Hankin	Y.McLaren-Hankin@hw.ac.uk
• Cultural Studies	Prof. Ullrich Kockel	U.Kockel@hw.ac.uk
Psychology	Dr Mioara Cristea	M.Cristea@hw.ac.uk
Dubai Campus		
Accountancy and Finance		
• International Accounting and Finance	Dr Esinath Ndiweni	E.Ndiweni@hw.ac.uk
• Finance • Finance and Management • Investment Management	Dr Jelena Janjusevic	J.Janjusevic@hw.ac.uk

Business Management		
• IBM (incl. all with pathways)	Dr Ross Curran	Ross.Curran@hw.ac.uk
• International Marketing • International Marketing with Digital Marketing • International Fashion Marketing	Dr Paul Hopkinson	P.Hopkinson@hw.ac.uk
• Logistics and SCM	Dr Shereen Nasser	S.Nassar@hw.ac.uk
• Operations Management • Strategic Project Management • Business Strategy, Leadership & Change • Managing Innovation	Dr Mohamed Salama	M.A.Salama@hw.ac.uk
Psychology	Dr Lucy Bolton	L.Bolton@hw.ac.uk
Malaysia Campus		
Business Management		
• IBM (incl. all with pathways) • Strategic Project Management • Strategy, Leadership and Change	Dr Gowrie Vinayan	g.vinayan@hw.ac.uk
Psychology	Dr Mandy Wong	s.c.wong@hw.ac.uk

SoSS Research Ethics Committee: Research associated with dissertation courses must satisfy the ethical practices observed by the School's Research Ethics Committee.

4.2 Dates / Timescale

The following is based on a Full-time Masters student who begins their programme of study in Semester 1 of the academic year and for a Part-time Masters Student who is in their second year of study (note: exact dates will be notified to you via VISION):

Jan-April	Pre-requisite Research Methods course which includes developing ideas, developing objectives, completing initial review of literature, workshops and information sessions. Notes for Business Management students: • You are required to give details of topic title, explanation and comments to your Programme Directors. • You will be allocated a supervisor in Semester 2 • You will develop your research proposals during this period for submission typically in week 12 for the Research methods course
March/April/May	Submission of Dissertation Proposal
May/June	Progression Board approves progression to the dissertation. If you are required to resit any exam in the August exam diet in order to progress, you will not start your dissertation research until September.
June/July	Submission of Ethical Approval Form (in consultation with supervisor): form must be submitted prior to data collection

May 2021 Progression: post Semester 2 diet	Dissertation Deadline 2020-2021
<u>Full-Time Students:</u>	
Business Management: All Programmes	27 th August 2021
Accountancy, Economics and Finance: All Programmes	
Languages and Intercultural Studies: All Programmes	
Psychology: All Programmes	
<u>Part-Time Students:</u>	
All Programmes	19th November 2021
March 2021 Re-submissions: post October 2020 progression	
Full-Time Students	30 th April 2021
Part-Time Students	11 th June 2021
January 2021 Progression: post Semester 1 diet	
Full-Time students	7 th May 2021
Part-Time Students	30 th July 2021
September 2021 Progression: post Re-sit diet	
Full-Time Students	10 th December 2021
Part-Time Students	4 th March 2022
October 2021 Re-submissions: post May 2021 progression	
Full-Time Students	26 th November 2021
Part-Time Students	7 th January 2022

5. Supervision

You will be supported through the dissertation by a dissertation supervisor who will be qualified and approved to supervise dissertations at this level, regardless of topic. Where possible, dissertation supervisors may be allocated on the basis of subject expertise in an area similar to that being studied. This will not always be possible and you may be allocated a supervisor with more general subject knowledge. Where more specific subject guidance is deemed necessary by yourself and your supervisor, your supervisor will liaise with appropriate, available subject specialists to help to inform your supervision. The extent of that subject expert's input will be limited to advice concerning the basis of your literature review or data analysis.

Prior to being allocated a supervisor, it is recommended that students visit members of staff on an informal basis to explore their ideas. Staff members are not obliged to meet with students for this purpose but most staff members in the school are amenable to short meetings to discuss direction. It is recommended that you make use of established office hours where possible. Where you are studying courses in your preferred chosen/pathway, it may be useful to talk to the co-ordinators of

these courses for guidance and, of course, discuss your ideas with your mentor and/or programme director. The expectation is that you will go into any discussion with ideas to be challenged and not with an expectation that someone else will provide you with ideas.

5.1 Role of supervisor

The dissertation supervisor performs many functions but the responsibility for the content and, hence, quality of a dissertation is entirely that of the student.

It should be emphasised that the submitted dissertation is entirely your own work. You may ask your supervisor, however, to read in detail a draft of a portion of your dissertation normally up to a maximum of two chapters (or equivalent), in order to give feedback on presentation, content and style. Advisors may comment on chapter outlines and may scan quickly through other chapters at their discretion.

The dissertation supervisor will not read the finished complete work prior to submission and will not comment at any stage on the expected grade or mark.

The dissertation supervisor will not be expected to check or correct grammar, spelling or expression.

If, during the preparation of the dissertation, the focus and direction of the dissertation changes substantially from that outlined at the outset, then you should immediately seek approval for this change with your programme director and dissertation supervisor and provide evidence of your work.

The supervisor role includes the following:

- 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.
- To assist the student in understanding resource constraints.
- To challenge the student in determining the validity and relevance of ideas, reading materials and appropriate academic frameworks within which the candidate seeks to place the topic.
- To explore the choice of methodological approach(es).
- To monitor progress and to advise on what is required to achieve a satisfactory dissertation.
- (For approved company based dissertations only) To liaise with the company supervisors and resolve any problems the student may have in obtaining access to company information or personnel.
- To assess the dissertation (as '1st Marker') and to submit a report.

5.2 Responsibilities of student

A supervisor will expect students to do the following:

- To supply a research proposal for the intended dissertation.
- To select a topic that is appropriate for their degree programme
- To plan their research project and track their own progress. If a student is experiencing difficulties in progressing this must be communicated to the supervisor at the time they are encountered. Retrospective information is not acceptable.
- To listen to and respect the guidance offered by the supervisor.

- To maintain regular contact with the supervisor either by e-mail, by telephone or by Skype. Students are expected to take a proactive approach to maintaining contact and bring material or options to be discussed rather than expect your supervisor to say what should be done next.
- To attend supervisor meetings when they are booked. Supervisors expect students to inform them if they are unable to attend any scheduled meeting. Supervisors are under no obligation to rearrange missed appointments unless good reasons are given by the student.
- To write in 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.
- Students who are conducting a company research project are expected to maintain regular contact with the company and appropriate representatives. Students must be mindful that they are representing Heriot Watt University during this period and conduct themselves according to the highest standards of professionalism.
- To inform the supervisor of any absence (sickness, personal, family visits, holidays, work experience) during the time nominated for working for completion of the Dissertation
- To follow the focus and direction of the research project as outlined in the Research Proposal Form.
- To take and maintain reliable notes from discussions with supervisors. Psychology students you will be required to document these within your lab book.
- To write the dissertation with guidance from the supervisor. Work must be the student's own. The dissertation reflects the student's work and research abilities, not the supervisor's.

5.3 Supervisor Feedback Meetings

Students are allocated a maximum of five formal feedback meetings with their academic supervisor. The purpose of these feedback sessions is to discuss progress and resolve any difficulties. Students are expected to take a proactive approach and bring material or options to be discussed rather than expect the supervisor to say what should be done next. Students are responsible for arranging feedback sessions with supervisors.

Feedback sessions may include any of the following forms of communications:

1. Face to face meeting with your supervisor;
2. Remote meetings with your supervisor (e.g., via Skype, TEAMS);
3. Telephone conversation.

Additional email correspondence may be required to set up meetings and to confirm or clarify any advice given during a formal meeting. If for any reason all of the listed forms of communication above are not possible for a scheduled meeting, then email may be used as a last resort.

The supervisor will endeavour to discuss your research with you as soon as possible but you must remember your supervisor has other work commitments, conferences to attend and the right to have a summer holiday– please ensure you build this into your schedule.

A record is kept of each of these feedback sessions detailing the dates, discussion content and any action points. This may be written by the supervisor or the student but needs to be 'agreed'. A guide template for student–supervisor meetings will be available on the specific VISION course.

6. Ethics

Every student proceeding with a dissertation is required to fill in an ethics form. It is the student'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 without the specific support and agreement of the supervisor and ethics committee. Furthermore, any dissertation which seeks to undertake primary research amongst any potentially 'vulnerable' participants is highly unlikely to gain ethical approval without particular adherence to the university's policies on research engagement.

7. Proposal

The final dissertation proposal is prepared after discussion with your supervisor. It is an important working document that will evolve into the dissertation over the writing period.

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, you must agree with your dissertation supervisor that such a change is appropriate.

The Dissertation Proposal shows that you have thought through key issues, such as the main research aims and objectives, the main sources of primary and secondary data, the key literature of relevance, and the research methodology. The Dissertation Proposal should provide your dissertation supervisor with a 'detailed skeleton' of the whole dissertation.

8. Approval of Data Collection Instruments

All data collection instruments i.e. questionnaires, interview questions, experiment designs and focus group topic guides which are to be used in research must first be approved by your dissertation supervisor and, in the case of the company research project, with the company concerned. This is to ensure that questions meet your research aims and are appropriately framed. The dissertation supervisor will not make the necessary corrections, but highlight where improvements are required. See also Section on Ethics.

9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves the act of taking the ideas, writings or inventions of another person and using these as if they were one's own, whether intentionally or not. Plagiarism occurs where there is no acknowledgement that the writings or ideas belong to or have come from another source.

The University takes plagiarism very seriously, each year there are some students who are unable to graduate because their work is being investigated by the University Academic Standards committee.

All your work is submitted through Turnitin which will let you see the similarity index reports. In some cases Turnitin may not identify a similarity which does exist, however this is likely to be picked up by experienced academics. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to explain ideas in your own words and phrases; it may not sound as fluent, but it will demonstrate your understanding of the subject far better than using someone else's words.

Most plagiarism is unintentional or accidental. It is therefore vital that you are aware of common pitfalls which can lead to suspicions of plagiarism. The university's guide to plagiarism and how to avoid it is on VISION.

Plagiarism comes in many forms, but typical examples include:

- *Collusion* – when one student allows another student to copy their work.
- *Complete plagiarism* – where the work is copied entirely from one or more sources.
- *Partial plagiarism* – this involves inserting an unacknowledged passage of text into the coursework.
- *Word switch* – copying sentences and changing a few words without appropriate reference to the original source.
- *Concealing sources* – failure to make ongoing acknowledgements to original sources used more than once in a piece of work.
- *Self-plagiarism* – when a student uses material from a previous assignment in a current assignment.
- *Inadvertent plagiarism* – the result of poor study skills.

Use of EndNote Online (see below) can help you ensure that you cite sources correctly.

Dissertation students must be particularly careful about self-plagiarism. If a piece of work has been submitted for a course such as Research Methods, it cannot be submitted without change for the Dissertation. That piece of work has already been used to gain credits. Students can use the Research Methods work as the basis for their Dissertation, but are expected to add to the work, provide evidence of further reading, be more critical of literature and provide fuller discussion.

Format of Final Submission

The following applies to all Masters Dissertations, though students studying on a Psychology programme should refer to Part B for information on the format of your Project Portfolio.

10.1 Length

The length of your dissertation will vary depending on your programme of study:

- AEF and BM dissertations as a whole should be no more than 15,000 words.
- LINCIS should be no more than 12,000 words.
- Psychology should be 8000 words.

Word counts are including text notes but excluding cover page, personal statement, acknowledgements, abstract, table of contents, list of abbreviations, reference list, and appendices.

All dissertations must include a word count which must be shown on the title page of the dissertation. A dissertation is not validly submitted until it is accepted by the Dissertation Co-ordinator as being within the word count limit.

10.2 Writing Style

The 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. For example, consider the following statement:

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 this is the way in which your dissertation / company project should be expressed. The idea is that your work can be judged independently of you and that others could follow the same steps to arrive at commensurate results.

10.3 Formatting

The dissertation must follow the following requirements:

Aspect	'Word' Command Line	Recommended Setting
Language		English (UK)
Word count		As above in Section 10.1 Excludes abstract, references, tables and graphs i.e. main text only
Paper Size	File, Page setup – Paper.	A4
Margin Settings	File, Page setup, margins	Top 2.54cm Bottom 2.54cm Left 3.17cm Right 3.17cm Gutter 0cm Gutter Position Left
Line spacing	Format, Paragraph, Indents & spacing	One and a half spacing, not single or double.
Page Numbering	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 aligned to centre.
Text	Format, Styles & Formatting	Times New Roman
Font	Format, Styles & Formatting	12 point font
Alignment	Format, Styles & Formatting	Justified (i.e. straight edges)
Typical Dissertation Layout		
Front cover		Required
Acknowledgements		Required
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
Glossary of Terms		Optional
Main text Chapter & Section Headings	Format, Bullets & Numbering, Outline numbered	Required, Chapter title, bold, outlined numbered e.g. Chapter1 , Start each chapter on new page. Section title , bold, outlined numbered e.g. 1.1 , Sub section title, outlined numbered e.g. 1.1.1
References		Required Harvard system preferred
Appendices		Optional Appendix title, bold, outlined numbered e.g. Appendix 1, start each Appendix on new page

Format		Word or pdf
---------------	--	-------------

10.4 Structure

Edinburgh Business School LINCS

The Dissertation must be clearly divided into appropriate chapters and sections. The following elements are required, if you intend to depart from this format you should discuss the overall structure with your supervisor.

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgement
- Contents Page
- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methodology
- Chapter 4 Findings/Data Analysis
- Chapter 5 Discussion
- Chapter 6 Conclusion
- References
- Appendices

The following section provides more detail on what is expected within each section.

Chapter Content

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. 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.

Title Page

The title page must contain the student's name and enrolment number, year of graduation, supervisor's name, word count and the following wording: "Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc at Heriot-Watt University".

Abstract

No more than 350 words to be completed after the dissertation / company report has been completed. An abstract summarises the following:

- Research Aims: The main themes, ideas or areas of theory being investigated.
- Boundaries: The background and context of the research.

- Research Questions: The questions which informed data collection.
- Methodology: The main method(s) used to collect data and the sample.
- Results: A summary of the answers to the research questions.
- Conclusions: The conclusions formed from these results.
- Recommendations: Recommendations for future research and for practice.

Acknowledgement

Mandatory for all students, a brief statement, signed by the student, should be provided which:

- Gives an assurance that the submission is the student's own work (see Section 10 regarding plagiarism).
- Acknowledges that the primary data collection gained ethical approval for the study via the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.
- Gives thanks to those who have given direct assistance through the course of the project. Try to keep more personal comments about family and friends to a minimum.

Contents Page

The contents page should list the chapter headings, appendices, references and the respective page numbers. Separate listing should be given for lists of figures, tables and abbreviations. You will find this easier to create if you know how to generate these lists using the indexing and style functions within Microsoft Word. Please note that there are courses available via the Heriot Watt Library to help you in this area.

Chapter 1 Introduction (Typically, approx.. 500-1000 Words)

The introduction should clearly state the aim of the dissertation and provide a clear rationale for the choice of research topic. It should be clear why this topic is important to your programme subject area theory and/or practice. There should be a clear evidence-based account of important trends, definitions or pivotal ideas which underpin the choice of topic.

This short final section of the Introduction should indicate the content of each of the following chapters and how the chapters are related to each other. You are 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.

Chapter 2 Literature Review (Typically, approx.. 3500-4500 words).

The literature review shows your skill in locating and critically evaluating the sufficiency of secondary data in the form of published academic articles and practitioner surveys. Your critical evaluation should reveal the research gaps which motivated you to plan primary research on the topic.

At the conclusion of the literature review you should clearly state your research aim, objectives, questions and/or model for testing with indication of hypotheses.

The content of a literature review 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.

The critical evaluation should provide the foundation for your research aim, objectives and questions/hypotheses. Remember 'critical' does not mean looking at the negatives but also highlighting positives in order to form an evaluation.

To complete a literature review you must select appropriate search terms, use these in appropriate databases, read a range of materials, summarise the contents, evaluate the sufficiency of the knowledge and synthesise (combine) your evaluation in order to highlight the research gap.

It is important that you demonstrate that you have found a range of appropriate literature. The articles that you locate should be both seminal articles which detail foundational concepts and also current research which updates these concepts.

A literature review enables you to demonstrate that;

- You discovered and reported what you have found to be relevant in the literature search and that you have understood it and that you are able to analyse it in a critical manner.
- 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.
- You have identified a dependent variable (outcome/result), key independent variables (influences), key trends and 'actors' in the environment of your study.

The literature review should provide a clear justification for the research objectives and questions. It should not be a descriptive

catalogue of authors, frameworks and ideas but should attempt to introduce a critical evaluation of those authors' work.

A good literature review will mean that, later in your dissertation, you are able to draw on the literature in the methodology and analysis chapters to argue for the validity of your choice(s) of research approach, the appropriateness of the process by which you analyse your results, and again in the discussion when you identify whether or not your findings are congruent with the accepted research which has gone before.

Students are permitted to develop the same topic that they identified in the pre-requisite course however, are strongly advised to identify and analyse additional literature. The reasons for this advice are specifically because:

- To simply copy previous 'assessed' work would constitute "self-plagiarism" and is an unacceptable academic practice. You have been credited for this work already!
- The Dissertation is the culmination of your studies. As such, it is expected that it will be substantially developed from the work you completed within the pre-requisite course (where you were 'getting to know' your ideas and practices).
- There is ample time to develop a substantial literature review within the timeframes of this course.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology (Typically, approx.. 1500 to 2000 words).

The Research Methodology commences by restating research objectives and details the precise research questions of the project. Your methodology is assessed on whether or not it is a valid approach to answering these questions. Students should identify the choice of philosophy and method, the reasons why that choice was made and the pros and cons of that choice. Justification should be based on the research question and context and not primarily on concerns relating to time and cost. A good methodology will painstakingly argue for and justify each decision that is taken when arriving at the research design. Depending on the discipline area, the chapter should contain information on;

- the limitations of secondary research (the gaps identified in the literature review),
- the research philosophy
- the research strategy (qualitative or quantitative methods)
- detailed discussion of data collection instrument (interview topic guide, survey etc.)
- population and sampling approach
- research instrument administration (how you collected the data)
- data inputting
- data analysis plan
- ethical issues that were considered and how addressed

- what constitutes the sample
- the sampling criteria used and
- the response rate

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.

Chapter 4 Findings/Data Analysis (Typically, approx. 2500 to 4000 words)

The chapter should present the primary data you have gathered. This may be qualitative or quantitative data. You should describe the nature of the sample and the defining characteristics which make the participants of interest to your study. Any steps that you take to establish the validity and reliability of your data should be clearly given. Any problems in the execution of the research project and their occurrence should be discussed and explained (this does not devalue your work but shows criticality).

After describing the sample you should proceed to analyse your data so that you clearly show how it relates to your research questions/ hypotheses.

Please note that you may need to supply evidence of how you arrived at your findings. You should retain copies of all fieldwork and analysis should they need to be consulted by internal examiners.

You should clearly show the ability to reduce a large amount of data to clearly interpretable information. This data must be organised in a logical and coherently ordered whole so that your thought processes and interpretation are clear to the reader.

You need to present your results in an accessible manner to show what the research has uncovered and to include only the most pertinent statistics or interview quotes as core evidence.

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.

For qualitative data, clearly identified quotations should be included as evidence to support the conclusions from the data analysis. It is advisable to focus on the points of agreement and disagreement that emerged during 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. Tables and figures

can be used to break up text and show relationship between constructs.

For quantitative data, summary statistics should be used i.e. means, frequencies. Statistics should be presented to no more than two decimal points to aid understanding. You should convert SPSS output to excel tables and give full indication of questionnaire items and not abbreviated labels.

Choice of methodological approach may affect presentation of data. For instance, quantitative data presentations may require the use of fewer words. This may allow more words to explain the quantitative method within the methodology section. Qualitative presentations may require a particular framing of data across multiple sections (e.g. combining findings and discussion chapters). These are issues that you should discuss and clarify with your supervisor.

Chapter 5 Discussion (Typically, approx.. 1000 to 1500 Words)

In the chapter introduction restate the research aim, objectives and questions. In this chapter you relate the findings to each question and should highlight the most pertinent and important results.

The next step is to critically discuss the findings with reference to the wider research literature. What this means is looking at where your findings are consistent with theory and where they contradict theory. This means that you will draw links between your research findings and other published work – you may need to refer back to your literature review.

This is the heart of the dissertation and must be more than descriptive. This chapter develops analytical and critical thinking on results and analysis with reference to theoretical arguments grounded in the literature review.

Chapter 6 Conclusions (Typically, approx.. 1000 to 2000 Words)

This is the conclusion to the whole dissertation. In this chapter you summarise what has been learnt from the whole process, noting the specific contributions of your work to knowledge and practice (taking care to identify key audiences for your work). This will include the research gaps, the methods used for data collection and also the findings. Your summary 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 / company project. No new material or references should be placed here.

After you have summarised the nature and value of your dissertation content, you should conclude by discussing the implications for two key audiences (1) Practitioner (e.g. how will your insights affect their understanding; how might practitioners utilise this understanding based upon your evidence? (2) Academic (how will your insights affect understanding of your subject area (e.g. topic; theories; concepts; etc.) and how might academic audiences utilise this insight based on your evidence?

You should discuss the limitations of your research and make suggestions of how further research might address these limitations – be mindful that you remain consistent with your chosen research philosophy. Remember that limitations aren't always problems! Rather, they set the parameters for understanding the value of your work. Be careful not to make claims that are not substantiated from the evidence you have presented in earlier chapters. You should also consider how research in this subject area could be pursued in the future – this will demonstrate your understanding of how your study contributes to the development of the overall body of knowledge.

References:

The University has a policy which covers 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 accusations of plagiarism.

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

Where there is any formal mention that you make in your company research project or masters dissertation to something written by someone else you have to use in-text referencing. Every citation must be supported by a reference at the end of the report which supplies the details which will enable the reader to follow up that citation.

The reference section is placed at the end of the company research project or Masters 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. (note: the title of the publication (e.g. name of the book or journal) should be in *italics*).

	Text notes can provide additional information on points made in the text of the company research project or Masters 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, but these should be presented as parenthetical insertions into the main text. Appendices: Appendices may be used to provide relevant supporting evidence for reference. 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 e.g. questionnaires, and interview guides. Only subsidiary material should be included in appendices. Students should not assume that Appendices will be read by Examiners in detail. If used, a copy of one interview / focus group transcript should be included in the appendices and a copy of the questionnaire or focus group guide. External Examiners can also ask to see evidence of the research undertaken – you are asked to keep a copy of all recordings you undertook as part of your data collection (and you should include these as raw data on your memory device at submission). Many research organisations require data to be accessible for a period of up to 3 years after collection. <i>Appendices should be restricted to no more than 25 pages.</i> You can keep additional information in a folder for use by the markers if requested.
Psychology	In the case of Psychology students please refer to the guidelines provided on VISION regarding the structure for your project.

11. Confidentiality

If the material in a dissertation or company project is regarded as confidential, the student should mark the text 'CONFIDENTIAL' on the front cover when it is submitted. In this event, it 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 it unless they are given written permission by the student and Programme Director. Requests to see such company research projects or dissertations are almost universally refused. Such company research projects or 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.

12. Submission

All dissertations are to be submitted electronically via Turnitin on the relevant VISION course, by the published submission deadline. **No hardcopy submissions are required.**

EBS students please upload **ONE pdf copy** of your complete dissertation, do not submit a word.doc file. Use the following naming nomenclature:

- 'Surname_First Name_2020_Supervisor's Surname'

Psychology students please ensure you upload **TWO pdf copies** to Turnitin. Please do not submit documents as word.doc files. Use the following naming nomenclature for your two files:

- 'Surname_First Name_2020_Version A'
- 'Surname_First Name_2020_Version B'

[The Turnitin links are in the Assessment folder in the relevant semester 2 Course folder. You will also find the Thesis Submission Sheet in the Assessment folder].

Version A must include the Thesis Submission Sheet (this is the 'cover sheet'), and the first page must include the title of your thesis, your name and your supervisor's name. Version A must also include your Lab Book as an appendix. Just to be clear, this should be a single document, not separate documents.

Version B should be the same as Version A except there is no need for the Thesis Submission Sheet, your name must be removed from the first page (i.e. this version of the thesis must be anonymised) and your Lab Book should not be appended.

ALL students are required to submit any supporting **electronic data, e.g. SPSS or Excel files, sound files from interviews, transcribed interviews in word process format, re-analysed data, etc. via One Drive [see Appendix 2 for instructions]**. It is your responsibility to ensure that submitted electronic files are readable. You must keep a copy of all data, including that which cannot be submitted in an electronic format. Examiners or other School officials may request such data. Field data includes, for example, completed hand written questionnaires and interviews, diaries, non-digital audio recordings etc.

Please ensure that you submit before the deadline (do not leave it until the last minute) in case you experience any technical difficulties. Technical difficulties are not recognised as valid Mitigating Circumstances.

In line with the University's Submission of Coursework Policy:

- No individual extensions are permitted under any circumstances, unless the Dissertation Course Leader or Programme Director gives an extension to an entire class.
- A standard 30% of the mark awarded will be deducted should the work be submitted late, up to a maximum of five working days after the deadline date and time.
- In the case where a student submits work up to five working days late and they have valid mitigating circumstances, the mitigating circumstances policy will apply and appropriate mitigation will be applied.
- **Any work submitted after five working days of the set submission date shall be automatically awarded a no grade** with no formative feedback provided.

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 their supervisor. You should as a minimum, contact the School Office and submit a mitigating circumstances form. The Examiners can and will take mitigating circumstances into account, but only if they know about them prior to the Examination Board meeting. Please consult the student handbook for details of submission of evidence of Mitigating Circumstances.

12.1 Deadline

Exact dates will be confirmed via the relevant VISION course, however typically:

- Full-time students: late AUGUST
- Part-time students, and any full-time students who were required to revise and resubmit dissertations following submission in August: late NOVEMBER.
- Students who were required to resit a taught course before progressing to dissertation: early DECEMBER.

13. Marking

All dissertations will be read and assessed by two internal examiners. 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 universal 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.
- Clear analysis of the information collected should be included and this must be directed towards answering the research questions raised by the dissertation. An informed description of events or data is not enough.
- The dissertation must show an awareness of the relevant literature.
- The document should demonstrate the author's (i.e. your) own contribution to specific and wider understanding.

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 critically appreciate, 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 required in exceptional circumstances.

A mark of 50% (Grade C) or greater is required to pass the dissertation. When a mark of 40-49% (Grade D) is awarded, this is classed as an initial fail, but with the possibility of revision (i.e. the dissertation should be revised and resubmitted and the resubmission mark is capped at 55%). This applies where only minor revisions are necessary to bring the work up to the required standard and resubmission is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners. Candidates are provided with specific guidance concerning the required changes (see later section of this handbook).

- **Minor editorial corrections or deficiencies:** Minor corrections of English, spelling, statistical errors, 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

Where a dissertation has major deficiencies, it will receive a mark of **less than 40%**; in such cases resubmission is not permitted and students will be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma.

- **Major deficiencies:** This may reflect a literature review limited by the extent of materials and ideas 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.

13.1 Oral Exams

In line with University Regulation 48 relating to Higher Degrees of Masters (Taught), students may be required to present themselves for an oral examination (a 'viva voce') following submission of the MSc dissertation and as part of the assessment process. Examiners may wish to hold an oral examination for a number of reasons, including where this would help examiners arrive at a final mark for the dissertation, where there is uncertainty surrounding the contribution of the student to the project reported on in the dissertation (e.g. in the case of a company project), or where there are questions surrounding the authorship of the dissertation.

Students will be notified at least one week in advance of the requirement to attend an oral examination. While students will normally be required to attend the oral examination in person, it may be possible to conduct the examination remotely (e.g. via Skype). In all cases, all reasonable efforts will be made by the School to ensure that there is no delay to a student's graduation; however, delays may be unavoidable in some instances.

13.2 Resubmission

When the final agreed mark achieved is a grade D (40% to 49%) then this is classed as a "fail, subject to resubmission". The extent of improvements that will be allowed for resubmission are minor corrections to the company research project or Masters dissertation.

If you are required to resubmit, the markers will provide you with an agreed list of corrections to be made. You will be allowed only one further meeting with your dissertation supervisor to confirm that you understand these required changes. A form will detail the required changes. Submissions should amend this form to show how these requirements have been met by the candidate. You may be asked to highlight in colour those sections that have been modified.

The deadline for resubmission will be communicated to you following the Award Board meeting at which your dissertation (first submission) is considered. Submission arrangements for resubmission are exactly the same as for the original submission (see section 12 above).

Your dissertation supervisor is not required to re-read the dissertation or any part thereof prior to resubmission. You are responsible for all activity and re-drafting to achieve the required standard.

The changes to the resubmitted dissertation are checked by a first and second marker and are capped at a mark of 55% by the Board of Examiners. This is to dissuade students seeking to gain from multiple submissions (i.e. significantly improving their mark through a second submission).

Please note that if you submit your original version in August and are permitted to resubmit, you will not be able to attend graduation in November. This is because marks must be approved by appropriate Boards of Examiners and these do not meet in time to approve resubmitted work. Therefore, there is no gain in completing changes quickly. Ensure that you complete changes by the stated deadlines and to the best of your ability.

PART B: Programme Specific

Please follow the information for your programme. If in doubt please consult with your Programme Director or Dissertation Supervisor.

1. Edinburgh Business School

There are distinct programme subjects within the Edinburgh Business School and some of these have specific information relating to the Dissertation, please refer to the relevant area below;

1.1 International Business Management (MSc IBM)

The dissertation should be positioned within the 'Business Management' subject area. If the dissertation is part of a named pathway degree (e.g. ...with HRM), it should have a substantive aspect related to that pathway subject, though most MSc IBM degrees sit comfortably within the Business Management subject area (e.g. Marketing may be considered a 'Business Management' subject). For MSc IBM with Finance, however, this is different. Where you wish to pursue a 'pure' Finance focus, this is usually not possible. Your degree is a business management degree and your course descriptor notes that the dissertation must be in the subject of 'International Business Management with (your pathway subject)'. Your Programme Director is able to explain further (as required) and further information on this point is offered via VISION. You should also seek to demonstrate the value of your work to 'International' Business Management. The proportionality of this focus is your choice. You are free to make this central to your topic (e.g. International Market Entry) or simply to demonstrate potential insights and/or future value (e.g. Understanding consumer behaviour in the UK may demonstrate a need to understand similar behaviour internationally).

1.1.1 Company Research Projects/Dissertations

This programme does not currently support formal company dissertations, though you have some freedom to liaise with companies as required. You should be aware that if you undertake a dissertation that relies on co-operation with companies, you will be potentially addressing two audiences: the company and the School. This can create a perceived conflict for students. On the one hand, the company may help to provide the material and topic for investigation. On the other hand, the School has laid down guidelines as to what constitutes a dissertation. Do not make the mistake of trying to satisfy both parties. Your primary challenge is to submit a piece of work that meets the requirements of the course, therefore the dissertation has to be developed within the academic guidelines. When you have submitted the dissertation, you are free to provide an amended version for the company upon request. This may take the form of an abridged report that concentrates on the research objectives, analysis and recommendations, or similar. You should be aware, however, that the work remains the property of the university (i.e. not the company).

1.2 International Marketing and International Fashion Marketing

IM degree programmes with named pathway must conduct research which has a substantive aspect that relates to the named degree pathway i.e. fashion marketing, digital marketing, consumer psychology etc. In addition, the research has to have an international marketing dimension i.e. activity across national boundaries it is not usually sufficient to focus on one country. An international dimension could include one of the following:

- How consumers in one country might differ from consumers in a different country and the implications for international marketing management.
- How a company in one country will need to adapt its marketing activity if it is to be successful in a different country.
- How the companies in one country are meeting/ or failing in meeting a particular global marketing challenge.

1.2.1 Company Research Project

Specifically for those studying International Marketing there is the option of submitting a Company Research Project instead of a dissertation. This requires registration for a specific course code. Please check with the programme director if you wish to pursue this option. The company research project focuses on a “real world problem” faced by a particular company. The problem must be an international marketing problem i.e. marketing activity across national boundaries. The format is a report that follows the dissertation format and which demonstrates clear theoretical understanding but which concludes with clear practical solutions for the company that are fully supported by the empirical evidence.

Students are encouraged to contact organisations and negotiate a topic upon which to base the project. Organisations may have a number of international marketing related business problems and issues that you can use as the basis of your project. In addition the School of Social Sciences may have been contacted by companies that have student projects and this information will be posted on VISION.

The company research project gathers data in partnership with a clearly identified company and seeks to solve a real company issue. The methodology for such a project will require gathering data from within the company and/or from its customers.

You should be aware that if you undertake a company research project, you will be potentially addressing two audiences: the company and the School. This can create a perceived conflict for students. On the one hand, the company may help to provide the material and topic for investigation. On the other hand, the School has laid down guidelines as to what constitutes a Masters research project. Do not make the mistake of trying to satisfy both parties. Your primary challenge is to submit a piece of work that meets the requirements of the School, therefore the dissertation has to be developed within the academic guidelines. When you have submitted the company research project, you could provide an amended version for the company upon request. This may take the form of an abridged report that concentrates on the research objectives, analysis and recommendations, or similar.

It is important to establish clear expectations set in writing with the company before embarking on a Company Research project. Expectations may include the following:

- Student access to primary data from company staff and/or customers.
- Company recognition that the data collection instrument is to be determined by the student and not by the company.
- Company recognitions that the research project has be the student’s own work.
- Company appreciation that a report on findings very likely will not be accessible to the company until after the completion of the dissertation.
- Company expectations regarding confidentiality of findings (the dissertation will have to be seen by two markers, a moderation panel and possibly an external examiner).

In the above sections of the guide the term Dissertation should be taken to apply to the Company Research Project unless explicitly stated otherwise.

Note for IM students undertaking C11RP Company Research Project;

a. The introduction chapter should also provide organisational detail, the product, the market (competitors and customers) and the industry sector. Information should come from the organisation and also via external databases and sources. There should be a clear identification and rationale provided of the international marketing problem that the company report is addressing. You may choose to use a range of business tools and frameworks to help explain the situation such as SWOT analysis, Hofstede's dimensions etc. to help the reader frame in their mind the issue/problem.

b. The Conclusions chapter should provide detailed recommendations for the international management at the specified company. Again you may use a range of marketing frameworks to format this section i.e. the extended marketing mix, international market entry modes etc. You should discuss the pros and cons of each course based on the strength of the evidence you have provided i.e. you may conclude that the risk of a particular course of action warrants additional research. Having given the company clear guidance on what it should do, you should then try to highlight where there are major differences and similarities from the literature or between different target groups, products, markets etc. 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.

1.3 Logistics and Supply Chain Management Programmes

Logistics and Supply Chain Management dissertations should have a substantive aspect that relates to the named degree pathway in the broad domain of Logistics and Supply Chain Management. Students are strongly encouraged to find a company based project, but this is not essential and students can undertake a traditional desk based research project.

1.3.1 Company Research Project

The company research project focuses on a “real world problem” faced by a particular company. The problem must be a logistics or supply chain related problem. You should follow the dissertation format, however it may be possible to deviate from this to take into account the company perspective. You should consult with your supervisor to agree a suitable format which demonstrates clear theoretical understanding and concludes with clear practical solutions for the company that are fully supported by empirical evidence.

Students are encouraged to contact organisations and negotiate a topic upon which to base the project. Organisations may have a number of logistics or supply chain related business problems and issues that you can use as the basis of your project. In addition academics in the Operations and Logistics Group may have been contacted by companies that have student projects and this information will be posted on VISION.

The company research project gathers data in partnership with a clearly identified company and seeks to solve a real company issue. The methodology for such a project will require gathering data from within the company and/or from its customers or suppliers.

You should be aware that if you undertake a company research project, you will be potentially addressing two audiences: the company and the School. This can create a perceived conflict for

students. On the one hand, the company may help to provide the material and topic for investigation. On the other hand, the School has laid down guidelines as to what constitutes a Masters research project. Do not make the mistake of trying to satisfy both parties. Your primary challenge is to submit a piece of work that meets the requirements of the School, therefore the dissertation has to be developed within the academic guidelines. When you have submitted the company research project, you could provide an amended version for the company upon request. This may take the form of an abridged report that concentrates on the research objectives, analysis and recommendations, or similar.

It is important to establish clear expectations set in writing with the company before embarking on a Company Research project. Expectations may include the following:

- Student access to primary data from company databases, staff, customers and/or suppliers.
- Company recognition that the data collection instrument is to be determined by the student and not by the company.
- Company recognitions that the research project has be the student's own work.
- Company appreciation that a report on findings very likely will not be accessible to the company until after the completion of the dissertation.
- Company expectations regarding confidentiality of findings (the dissertation will have to be seen by two markers, a moderation panel and possibly an external examiner). Nevertheless, the University can arrange for a tripartite confidentiality agreement to be signed by the University, the Company and you, the Student.

In the above sections of the guide the term Dissertation should be taken to apply to the Company Research Project unless explicitly stated otherwise.

2. LINCS

There are three distinct programme families within LINCS;

- Cultural Heritage
- Translation & Interpreting
- Intercultural Communication

2.1 Cultural Heritage: Dissertation in Cultural Resource Management

The dissertation in cultural resource management provides an opportunity for students on the MSc Heritage Management with Tourism to research in depth a topic of particular interest to them in the field of cultural resource management, and to produce an original piece of work. Students research and prepare their dissertation independently, under supervision by a member of the academic staff.

Students are required to:

- identify an appropriate area of research and a specific issue for investigation;
- undertake an appropriate and focused critical review of the relevant literature that locates their chosen research area within the wider field of inquiry;
- explain and justify an appropriate methodological approach to the issue for investigation;
- undertake appropriate and relevant analysis;
- reach well-founded conclusions;

- provide a critical discussion of the sufficiency of the findings and conclusions; and,
- follow the conventions of presentation, structure, and writing style appropriate to academic work in this field.

Projects concentrating on applied, practical problem-solving are encouraged. Placements and internships may be available, as is fieldwork abroad, which may be supported under the Erasmus+ programme. Students wishing to pursue any of these options should discuss this with the course leader at the earliest opportunity, to ensure sufficient time for suitable arrangements to be made.

2.2 Translation & Interpreting

Students who take Translation & Interpreting Studies in the second semester (under code C41CP or C41ID) can choose to write either a dissertation by research or a dissertation by translation and commentary.

2.2.1 Dissertation by Research

In the dissertation by research students investigate an issue of relevance to translation and / or interpreting through the analysis of a body of primary data collected for the purpose, supported by relevant secondary literature, a suitable theoretical underpinning and an appropriate research methodology. This most often involves analysis of translated data (i.e. Source Text / Target Text). However, other types of study are also possible e.g. contrastive studies involving non-translated parallel texts, or studies related to the translating or interpreting professions. Approval of topics is granted by the Dissertation Co-ordinator; when identifying a suitable topic, students should be guided by the statement above (section 2.1) that topics should be (a) relevant to the practical pursuit of translating and/or interpreting and/or (b) fall within the scope of Translation and Interpreting Studies. The dissertation by research is 12,000 to 15,000 words maximum. The word count excludes the abstract, references and appendices.

2.2.2 Dissertation by Translation & Commentary

In the dissertation by translation and commentary, students are asked to select and translate a Source Text (6,000 words in length, +/- 10%) which has not been translated before, and to provide a commentary (6,000 to 7,000 words). The commentary should contextualise the Source Text and Translation, provide a realistic Brief, discuss relevant theoretical concepts and, drawing on that theoretical discussion, analyse a topic / topics of particular relevance in the data as well as the translation strategies adopted. Like the dissertation by research, the dissertation by translation and commentary should be underpinned by relevant theory and should therefore contain a theoretical discussion / literature review section. The Source Text chosen for the translation must not already exist in translated form.

2.2.3 Examples of Suitable Projects

The following are examples of the kinds of studies that might be carried out. The topics indicated are equally relevant to both types of dissertation:

- 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);
- Investigation of documentation for translators (e.g. 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 to deal with a specific, salient issue e.g. cultural references;
- Translation of a gaming book with a commentary demonstrating the strategy adopted using register theory.

A selection of good examples of previously submitted dissertations are available for consultation in the University Library.

3. Psychology

At Masters level you are expected to develop your project beyond what has been covered in the eight taught courses. There are two main objectives for your project. The first is to allow you to demonstrate your ability to carry out an independent piece of work. The second objective, which will be fulfilled in the process of carrying out the project, is to give you an opportunity to practice your personal project management skills.

During the C91MR Research Methods course, you will have designed and developed an appropriate research proposal and this should provide sufficient information and feedback for you to begin your project. Please note: in some cases, you may be advised to review your proposal in the light of feedback from the examiner. In these cases, you should contact your supervisor for an additional meeting to agree the final form of your project before submitting your final ethics application, after which you will be able to proceed with your project.

The Project Portfolio course will allow students to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed during their Programme to a research question. It is a piece of work that the student carries out independently with support from a project supervisor. Typically, students will carry out a piece of research in a given business, workplace or applied psychology topic, in either an organisational, laboratory or community setting. The student is responsible for their personal self-management and will be advised by the supervisor how to monitor their own progress.

3.1 Format of Portfolio Project

The Project Portfolio should contain the following:

- a) Title Page
- b) Project Proposal
- c) Ethics Submission
- d) Executive Summary
- e) Presentation
- f) Project Management Report
- g) Journal Manuscript

The required content of these sections is detailed below. All sections of the Portfolio must be submitted and incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

The sections should be presented in the order shown above and body text should be double-spaced in a 12point font. Page numbers should be included.

Students must keep the original sources of their data, in case these require inspection by the External Examiner. They should include paper or online questionnaires, transcribed interview data, videos or audio recordings, as appropriate.

- **The Project Proposal**

The project proposal will have been developed as the Course Assessment for C91MR - Research Methods. If the original coursework submission did not pass, progression to the Project Portfolio will be delayed until the resubmission of the Project Proposal has been completed. Only one resubmission attempt is available for the Project Proposal.

The required content for the Project Proposal has been detailed in the assessment guidelines for C91MR, however in summary, the Proposal should have contained:

- o An overview of the general area for the project
- o A justification for the project
- o A detailed explanation of the proposed methodology

- o The design and data analysis techniques to be used
- o Key references
- o A letter of authority, if appropriate, from the organization under research.

You will normally be expected to follow the project design that was approved under the Proposal submitted for C91MR, unless recommended otherwise. In exceptional circumstances, and with the written approval of the Supervisor, the project plan can be amended. The student should include a copy of the written agreement for project modification (normally in email form) supplied by the supervisor; and any associated changes to the required Ethical Approval.

- **Ethics Submission**

Your approved Ethics Submission form which was prepared as part of your coursework for C91MR Research Methods. Ethical practice is not confined to the project planning stage but should be adhered to throughout the project process. Students must read the Code of Ethics and Conduct as set out by the British Psychological Society. These documents are available in PDF form here: <http://www.bps.org.uk/what-wedo/ethics-standards/ethics-standards>. Data must NOT be collected until ethical approval has been given. If a student is found to have collected data without ethical approval, the Project Portfolio will 'fail', and no resit opportunity will be available.

- **Executive Summary**

Expertise in communication is one of the most important skills valued by employers. A professional role will require the individual to be able to prepare short summary documents which report complex ideas in a language appropriate to the audience you are writing for. The ability to succinctly present information for a non-specialist audience is a key element of the Project Portfolio and as such, the student should look on the executive summary as a means of demonstrating their ability in this area. When consultancy reports are read, managers often use the executive summary to decide whether the accompanying report is worth spending time reading it in detail. The executive summary should be a concise summary of the project that has been carried out. It should include the background to the study, the rationale, i.e., why this research was needed, the aims for the project, the method of collecting data, key findings, limitations and implications of the findings. The executive summary should have a subtitle that indicates the audience that it is intended to serve. This could be, for example, the management or executive board of an organisation or

organisations, a community group or section of the community or a potential funding organisation for further research.

Since one of the key skills to be demonstrated in this section of the project portfolio is the ability to successfully present information in a summary form, there is a strict limit to the word length for the executive summary. This section **MUST** be between 1,000 and 1,200 words in total. Submissions that are shorter or longer than this specified length will be awarded a 'fail'.

If the project has been conducted in liaison with an external organisation or community group, no feedback should be provided to the commissioning body until the submission has been marked and verified by the external examiner. If the overall Project Portfolio is graded a 'fail', the student must contact their supervisor to clarify whether the commissioning organisation can have sight of the Portfolio. If the portfolio receives a "pass" mark, the student's supervisor will advise how the information should be presented to the associated organisation.

The student must not forward any of the project outputs to an external source without the prior written permission of the supervisor.

To achieve a 'pass', the Executive Summary should have sufficient information for someone not involved with the project to understand why the project was carried out, how it was conducted, what the findings were and what these findings can be used for. The information should be presented concisely with no jargon that may not be understood by a non-specialist audience.

- **Presentation**

Contemporary business practice can require an individual to prepare an 'elevator pitch' – a short summary of an idea or plan in less than six minutes. As a further assessment of the ability to concisely present information, students are required to prepare six 'overheads' to summarise their research.

The slides should contain the following:

- The title of the project, student's name and email address and supervisor's name
- The aims and objectives of the research
- The methods
- Results of the research/project findings
- What the research adds to existing knowledge/ implications for the organization or community sector, and
- How your findings should be implemented/considerations for the organization or community sector/further research required.

The slides should be included in electronic submission.

To achieve a 'pass', the Presentation should have sufficient information for someone not involved with the project to understand why the project was carried out, how it was conducted, what the findings were and what these findings can be used for. Students should, however, avoid squeezing too much text onto each page. Relevant images, e.g., a chart, graph or image should be used if they would enhance the presentation.

- **Project Management Report**

It is not uncommon for a student to complete a project with results that were unexpected at the outset. If the research hypothesis was unsupported, the manuscript would not normally be submitted for publication. However, there may be issues experienced along the way which explain findings, or which challenge the existing method chosen. This is valuable information for the researcher and to capture this, students must submit a Project Management Report. The Project Management Report should include an account of how the project developed and how it was managed. It should include the dates and times of supervision meetings and a note of what was discussed. This is a reflective account so any issues or difficulties faced should be acknowledged. Good project management reports will include suggestions for improvement of the project process for future reference.

If any correspondence has taken place with an external organisation or community sector, copies should be included. Correspondence with supervisors should not be included.

Most students find it helpful to keep a research diary throughout their project. This helps to inform the final Project Portfolio, but should not be included in a raw form, i.e., as a basic list of times and dates of events. This section **MUST** be between 1,500 and 2,000 words in total. Submissions that are shorter or longer than this specified length will be awarded a 'fail'.

To achieve a 'pass', the Project Management Report should be a reflective account of the whole process. The examiner will expect to see critical reviews of decisions made, whether in hindsight other choices would have been more beneficial, issues which took longer to resolve than expected and so on. Project Management Reports that include only positive reflections are unlikely to pass.

- **Journal Manuscript**

This is the main section of the project portfolio and gives the student the opportunity to practice preparing research for an academic audience. For projects using qualitative methods, the guideline length is 7,000 words. For a quantitative project, the guideline length is 5,000 words. These limits include the Abstract and References in the main body of the text, but do not include the list of references or appendices. Your word count must be stated at the end of the main body of text. This section carries a 10% tolerance above or below the guideline length. Submissions that are shorter or longer than this specified length will be awarded a 'fail'.

You should select a target publication for your manuscript. This must be a high quality peer-reviewed journal such as the Journal of Business Psychology or Human Factors. Each journal has its own 'house style' that you should adopt for this section of the submission. These are included in the 'information for authors' section of the website for the chosen journal. The structure, style, content and format of the Journal Manuscript should match exactly the requirements for the journal. The marker will check these and marks will be lost for incorrect formatting.

The reference citations in the text and the reference list should follow the prescribed format of the journal. It is likely that your article will contain the following sections:

- Abstract
- Introduction/Background
- Method
- Results
- Discussion

- Limitations of the study
- Conclusion
- References

Tables and figures should follow the guidelines for the journal and should be relevant to the analysis method used. You should consult other articles that used a similar method to identify reasonable expectations for the number of tables and figures but broadly speaking, these should be kept to the minimum required for clarity of presentation. If the student uses SPSS for data analysis, it is not acceptable to simply copy and paste outputs. The relevant output should be formatted according to the requirements of the journal house style. It is anticipated that the output, if of appropriate quality, be submitted to the journal for peer review and possible publication.

A mark will be given for the Journal Manuscript, based on the guidelines shown in the relevant appendix. This will account for 100% of the mark for the Project Portfolio. All other sections will be awarded either 'pass' or 'fail', including the data submitted on the electronic version.

Successful completion of the Course requires all seven sections to achieve a "pass". It is the student's responsibility to ensure all sections are included in the final submission.

The completed Research Portfolio is likely to prove extremely useful as supporting evidence for subsequent job applications or career progression discussions. It should therefore be presented as the highest level of work the student can achieve.

3.2 Electronic Archive

Students should provide a virus-checked copy of their Project Portfolio in electronic format. This should be readable by the standard software that is supported on campus, i.e., Adobe Acrobat, Word, PowerPoint, SPSS. The electronic version should contain:

- The raw data collected for the project in SPSS form (if quantitative data collected) in English language
- Interview transcripts in English language
- Any coding schemes used to make sense of the dataset e.g. dummy variables
- Project proposal
- Ethics application
- Executive summary
- Presentation
- Project management report
- Journal paper
- Instructions for authors from the selected target journal
- Contact details of any organisation/community sector to which feedback should be sent by the supervisor, and
- Any other relevant files (consult with supervisor for clarification).

The electronic version should be labelled with your name, student ID, supervisor's name, title of the project and the appropriate course code.

Appendix 1 – General Marking Criteria (Dissertations)

These notes are intended as a general guide for students and academic staff.

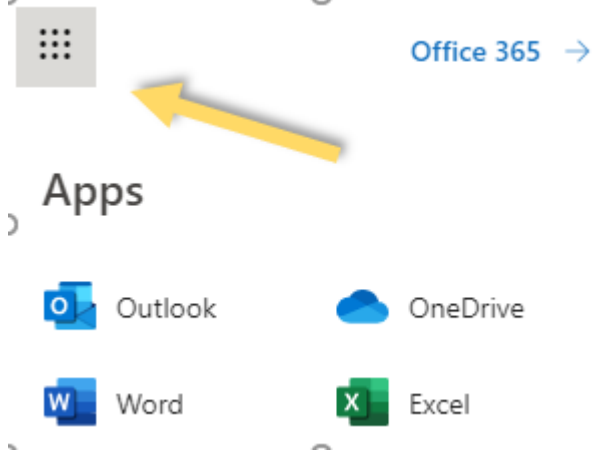
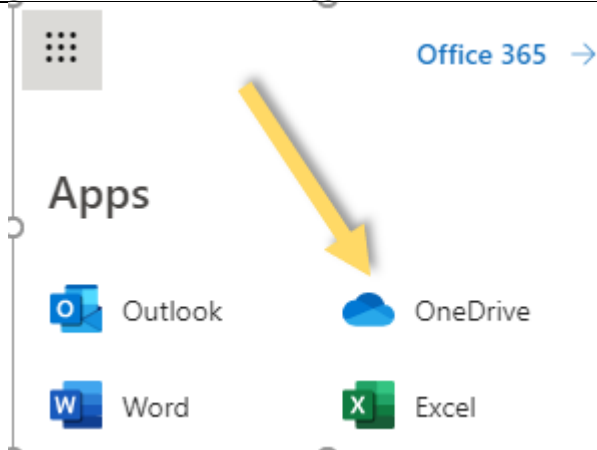
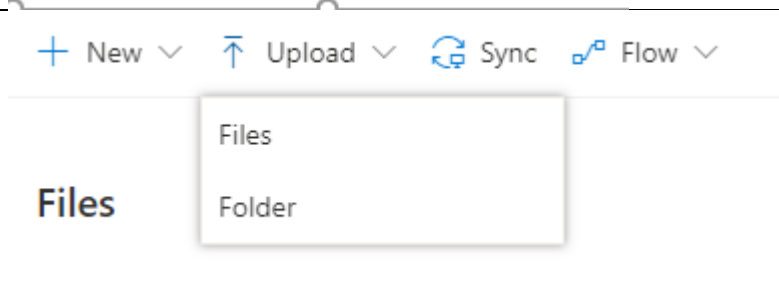
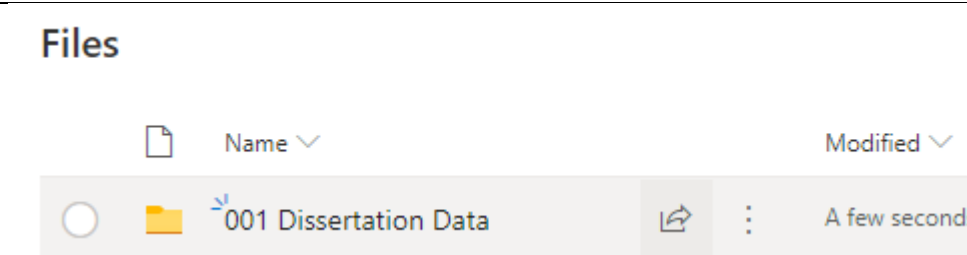
To achieve 80% the dissertation will:	• seek to achieve a clear and entirely appropriate set of aims; • show a detailed understanding of relevant theory and theoretical concepts; • demonstrate a clear ability to critically evaluate secondary sources; • be entirely well founded; • be based on a suitable set of data which is entirely consonant with the stated aims; • adopt a methodology which is entirely appropriate, well thought through and fully justified; • provide an insightful and in-depth analysis of data underpinned by relevant theory; • show clear evidence of independent thinking; • display a structure which is entirely clear and appropriate, given the stated aims; • be clearly and coherently expressed in an appropriate academic register; • adhere fully to academic conventions in terms of referencing and presentation; • be presented in an entirely appropriate manner. • be within word count
To achieve 70% the dissertation will:	• seek to achieve a clear and appropriate set of aims; • show a detailed understanding of relevant theoretical concepts; • demonstrate a clear ability to critically evaluate secondary sources; • be very well founded; • be based on a suitable set of data which is clearly consonant with the stated aims; • adopt a methodology which is appropriate, well thought through and well justified; • provide an insightful analysis of data underpinned by theory; • show clear evidence of independent thinking; • display a structure which is clear and appropriate, given the stated aims; • be clearly and coherently expressed in an appropriate academic register; • adhere fully to academic conventions in terms of referencing and presentation; • be presented in an appropriate manner.
To achieve 60% the dissertation will:	• seek to achieve an appropriate set of aims; • show a good understanding of relevant theoretical concepts; • demonstrate some ability to critically evaluate secondary sources; • be well founded; • be based on a generally suitable set of data; • adopt a methodology which is largely appropriate and justified; • provide a perceptive analysis of data underpinned by theory; • show evidence of independent thinking; • display a structure which is largely appropriate, given the stated aims; • be well expressed in an appropriate academic register; • adhere generally to academic conventions in terms of referencing and presentation; • be presented in a largely appropriate manner.

To achieve 50% the dissertation will:	• seek to achieve a set of aims which is more or less appropriate given the requirements of the task; • show a fair understanding of relevant theoretical concepts; • provide some evaluation of secondary sources; • be generally well founded; • be based on a set of data which is more or less suitable; • adopt a methodology which is more or less appropriate; • provide some analysis of data underpinned by theory; • show some evidence of independent thinking; • display a structure which is more or less appropriate; • be relatively well expressed; • adhere generally to academic conventions in terms of referencing and presentation; • be presented in a more or less appropriate manner.
To achieve 40% the dissertation will:	• have an aim / aims which are more or less appropriate; • show some understanding of relevant theoretical concepts; • provide some discussion of secondary sources; • be more or less well founded; • be based on a set of data which is more or less suitable; • provide some awareness of research methodology; • include some analysis of data; • show some evidence of independent thinking; • display a structure which is more or less appropriate, although there may be flaws (e.g. omissions, digressions); • be expressed in a generally suitable manner, notwithstanding some errors and stylistic flaws; • show an awareness of academic conventions in terms of referencing and presentation; • be presented in a more or less appropriate manner.
To achieve a mark of less than 40% the dissertation will:	• have no real aims and/or seek to achieve aims which are not appropriate given the requirements of the task; • show no real understanding of relevant theoretical concepts; • provide no discussion of secondary sources; • be significantly ill-founded; • be based on no data and/or a set of data which is unsuitable given the aims and/or the requirements of the task; • show no awareness of research methodology and/or adopt a methodology which is clearly inappropriate; • include no real analysis of data; • show no evidence of independent thinking; • be poorly structured; • be poorly expressed; • fail to adhere to academic conventions in terms of referencing and presentation; • be poorly presented.

Appendix 2 – One Drive Data Submissions Guide

If you are familiar with one-drive, please upload your data to a new folder entitled with your student ID (H000...) and share it with telt.soss@hw.ac.uk and students.soss@hw.ac.uk. We will send a brief notification to inform you that we have securely archived your data.

If you are unfamiliar with one-drive, please follow these instructions

Go to Webmail - Click the 'waffle' on the top left	
Click 'OneDrive'	
Upload all your data to a folder, or as a single zip archive file. This may take some time depending on your network speed.	
Find the folder or file you want to share	

Hover over it and click the 'Share' button 	Link settings Who would you like this link to work for? Learn more  Anyone with the link  People in Heriot-Watt University with the link  People with existing access  Specific people ✓
Share with to telt.soss@hw.ac.uk and students.soss@hw.ac.uk	Send Link  People you specify can view >  TELT SoSS ✕  SoSS, exams ✕ Add another
Press send and wait a short amount of time for the “link sent” message to appear	 Link sent