Presentation of Dissertation

1. Length of Dissertation

The undergraduate dissertation should be approximately words 12,000 +/- 10% (this word count *does not include* the title page, abstract, table of contents, footnotes/endnotes, tables/figures, the list of references, and appendices).

The most important point in the dissertation is its quality (analysis, argument etc.), rather than quantity (length). Please note that a lengthy dissertation does not necessarily have a good quality. (It is often poorly organised, wordy, contains repetitions, the focus is unclear, etc..., which would rather reveal weaknesses). So, be concise and focused. At the same time, however, a significantly short dissertation also tends to have shortcomings such as limited discussion, limited breadth and depth of analysis, inadequate data (or inadequate explanations of them). You are advised to discuss a suitable length of your dissertation with your supervisor.

2. Presentation Criteria

Layout and presentation are important in academic writing. You should use the following format:

- Use a **12-point** font (Times New Roman or Arial is recommended.)

- **Normal margins** (**2.5cm**) all round.

- Start each chapter on a new page, and use **1.5-line** or **double** spacing throughout.

- Number chapters (1, 2, 3 etc.), sub-sections (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc.), and pages (1 to n).

- **Tables and figures should be inserted in relevant places in the text.**

- All figures and tables must be numbered in a sequence as they appear in the dissertation. Each figure and table must have an informative title. Also, a source must be clearly indicated if it is adopted from another material.

- Additional/supplemental information should be put as an appendix at the end of the dissertation.

- Number every page including the list of references and appendices (but excluding a title page).

3. Contents of Dissertation

Below is the outline of dissertation structure that you can use to develop your dissertation. This is for information purpose only. Each dissertation can have a different structure. Whilst there are no hard-and-fast rules as to how a dissertation should be organised, the following conventions are normally observed.

- **Title page**

The title page must be laid out formally, detailing University of Manchester (in full), Manchester Business School (in full), the name of your degree, the full title of your dissertation, your full name, the name of your dissertation supervisor, and the date (academic year). If you are unsure , the Library offers a wealth of advice on writing, referencing and guides for your dissertation https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/learning-objects/mle/packages/dissertations/

- **Declaration of originality**

The statement of originality should be worded thus: "This dissertation is my own original work and has not been submitted for any assessment or award at University of Manchester or any other university" **and:**

EITHER: that no portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

OR: what portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

Please also note the Reference and Plagiarism section of the Online Handbook.

- **Acknowledgements (Optional)**

Here you can make specific reference to the people who, you think, have supported you during the dissertation period (such as your supervisor). You can also dedicate your dissertation to a special person if you wish (such as your family members).

- **Abstract**

The abstract is one of the most vital parts of your dissertation. It needs to provide the reader (= examiners) with the most important points of your dissertation *clearly and concisely.*

A good abstract of a dissertation can be in just two or three paragraphs; even an extensive one would rarely exceed one page. At the end of the abstract, you should outline key findings/conclusion of your dissertation – which should be drawn upon your research.

- **Table of Contents**

You should list all chapters, sub-sections, and appendices together with page numbers.

- **Chapters (Main text)**

(Please note that the structure of the main body will be different depending on the research approach and methods.)

A generic chapter format is:

1. *Introduction* to the subject, e.g. reason for and objective(s) of your study, and how you undertake the study.

2. *Literature review* of a theory/concept, which forms the basis for your study, citing key authors.

3. Profile of a case company or characteristics of an industry studied (if relevant).

4. *Methodology*. The details of data sources and how you analyse them.

5. *Results/findings* (if no fieldwork is carried out, the application or development of theoretical arguments).

6. *Discussion and analysis* of results in relation to: (i) your research objectives and/or (ii) existing studies (carried out by other scholars previously).

7. *Conclusion*, including some subjective comments (i.e. "Limitations") on what you have learned from the study, and recommendations for future research.

4. References in the Text

Here are examples of the normal style of in-text citations;

"…as reported by Scott (1997)."; "as discussed by several authors (Scott, 1997; Berridge, 1996; Lewis, 1995)" this approach tends to be…"; "Mayer (1987) argues that…", etc.

Please note that you must cite every source, even if you have paraphrased its argument.

If you are direct-quoting verbatim from an existing source, you must put the sentence(s) in quotation marks, and provide the page number, for example, (Scott, 1997, p. 12).

Also, all tables and figures, if they are not of your own construction but cited from other sources, need to be acknowledged (e.g. "Source: Adapted from Scott (1997), p. 23, Figure A)".

NB. You should avoid endnotes and footnotes wherever possible. Please consult your supervisor.

- **List of References/Bibliography**

You must provide the full details of all sources that you used at the end of your dissertation. They should be presented **in alphabetical order**.

You should use one established referencing style in a consistent manner, such as the Harvard referencing style. (The American Psychological Association (APA) style is acceptable, but do NOT mix different referencing styles.) Manchester Business School suggests using **the Harvard referencing style**.

For more details of the Harvard referencing style, please see the links provided in the Blackboard space of the dissertation course.

If you use a material that has no individual author (such as a company report) as a reference, quote the issuing body (i.e., organisation's name, or government department, or newspaper, etc.) as the author.

Before you submit your dissertation, please make sure that you have double-checked your references in two ways: (i) every reference cited in the text is given in full in the list of references, and (ii) vice versa, i.e., all references in the list should appear in the text. If you benefit from other sources to develop your idea or your background knowledge, which you eventually did not directly use (hence you did not cite in the text), you should put a new section entitled either "Bibliography" or "Other Sources Consulted". This should appear after the list of references (or a part of it).

- **Appendices**

Appendices should report additional information, which is related to your research but too detailed (or too general) to be included in the main text (e.g., detailed information about companies or countries, copy of the questionnaire used for a survey, images/photos etc.). They should appear at the end of the dissertation.

5. Time Management

Bear in mind that the final editing, word-processing, proof-reading (and you should do these meticulously), printing and binding of your dissertation will require lots of your time, AND the time of other busy people (e.g. a dissertation binder).

Please plan your dissertation work carefully and allow plenty of time for all works and other contingencies (such as computer/printer failure, and other unexpected delays etc.)