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**LONDON SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**BA (Hons) Business Studies**

**DISSERTATION AND BUSINESS PROJECT (BDP) HANDBOOK**

**2021-2022**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

This handbook sets out the procedures for the preparation and submission of the BA Dissertation/ Business Project (BDP). It also includes a brief discussion regarding the related Business Research Methods (BRM) module, which is conducted in the fourth semester. If a successful submission is to be made within the time available, regular attendance at seminars and scheduled supervisory meetings, and a strict adherence to a clearly defined programme of work are essential. The procedures set out in this document are intended to provide maximum support to the student so as to ensure the successful submission of a Dissertation/BDP that meets the University requirements.

# 2. INTRODUCTION TO THE DISSERTATION/BUSINESS PROJECT

The Level 6 (year 4 full time) Dissertation/Business Project (BDP) is a major piece of work undertaken by the student on an individual basis. Students will need to decide which option they wish to select.

**The Dissertation** generally appeals to those students that would like to undertake a theoretically based piece of research. The academic rigour involved in undertaking such a project will help candidates to develop a grasp of the academic research related to the topic under investigation.

**The BDP** is more suitable for those students wishing to pursue a career as an entrepreneur as it gives candidates an opportunity to develop a business plan which can be used to assess the feasibility of a specific business opportunity.

Both the Dissertation/BDP give students an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the entire undergraduate programme.

The Dissertation/BDP is 40 credit module and therefore a student’s performance in this module has a substantial influence on the class of degree awarded.

Through completing this module, the student should be able to:

* Take responsibility for the management of a Dissertation/BDP throughout the various stages of development;
* Conduct an in-depth investigation of a problem area identified, and appraise critically the literature that is relevant to that area;
* Evaluate, select and apply relevant research techniques in both primary and secondary fields.
* Analyse rigorously the evidence gathered.
* Generate and justify appropriate conclusions based on the previous analyses, demonstrating awareness of the limitations of the research.
* Communicate at an appropriate level, both orally and in writing;
* Justify and defend decisions made in the development of the Dissertation/BDP.

The timetabled hours allow briefing sessions with the Dissertation/BDP Coordinator and formal tutorials with individual Dissertation/BDP Supervisors. The sessions with the Dissertation/BDP Coordinator will occur as the need arises, for example, during the topic selection phase. The meetings with Dissertation Supervisors will occur on a regular (normally weekly) basis. It is expected that students will supplement the timetable allocation with a considerable period of unsupervised work. The Dissertation/BDP is looked upon as a final large scale integrating study.

When selecting a Major Project the following factors should be considered:

* The task must be achievable within the timescale.
* The Dissertation/BDP should be in a subject area appropriate to the degree title.
* Industry-based Dissertations are encouraged.
* The resource requirements of the Dissertation/BDP should be reasonable and adequate access to these resources be available

Attendance at dissertation briefings with the Dissertation/BDP Coordinator and tutorials with individual supervisors is seen as being essential and student attendance as well as progress will be monitored carefully.

Once accepted, **Dissertation and BDP Titles cannot be changed** without the agreement of both Dissertation/BDP Co-ordinator AND Dissertation/BDP Supervisor

# 3. DISSERTATION/BDP WORKLOAD

1. The Dissertation/BDP workload can be deceptive. As the submission deadline appears far away when you start, there is a danger of wasting time in the early stages of the process. If anything, you should engage in intensive Dissertation/BDP activity early in the final year before the course work demands of other modules catch up with you. In fact the astute student gets as much as possible achieved in the first semester of the final year and many add to this with preparation over the summer vacation preceding the final year.

* Start the Dissertation/BDP as soon as possible and do as much of the writing, e.g. literature review or rationale of the business project, as you can at an early stage. There are dangers in putting off this task.
* Always allow as much time as possible for the final stages. Final amendments, organising typing/word processing and doing a thorough job on the proof reading all take longer than you imagine. Something will always go wrong to thwart your schedule!
* The completed dissertation/BDP should be a maximum of **10,000 words**.
* You are required to keep all primary data collected, e.g. completed questionnaires, transcripts of interviews, computer printouts etc., as the examiners may ask to see such evidence.
* No primary data can be collected without the university’s ethical approval.

# 4. STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION/BDP DOCUMENT

**Dissertation** suggested Chapter Word Counts

* Chapter 1 Introduction – Approx 1000 words
* Chapter 2 Literature review – Approx 3000 words
* Chapter 3 Methodology – Approx 1,500 words
* Chapter 4 Data analysis

and findings – Approx 3,000 words

* Chapter 5 Conclusion – Approx 1,500 words
* Total – Approx 10,000 words

**Business Project** Chapter Word Counts

* Chapter 1 Introduction – Approx 1,000 words
* Chapter 2 The business concept –Approx 1,000 words
* Chapter 3 Literature review – Approx 1,000 words
* Chapter 4 Methodology – Approx 2,500 words
* Chapter 5 Analysis of the business model – Approx 2,500words
* Chapter 6 Evaluation of the business plan– Approx 2,000 words
* Total – Approx10,000 words

Each Dissertation/BDP is unique and consequently the sections covered may vary somewhat from project to project. Also, some sections may be larger than others and be split into two chapters, especially if the Dissertation/BDP deals with the convergence of more than one thematic area.

The following is meant to be a **guide** to help you, not a straight-jacket. Each major section should be present in some way, although not necessarily in a chapter of its own. The chapter layout must be appropriate to each Dissertation/BDP. Important: The Dissertation Supervisor should be consulted about the best layout for your Dissertation/BDP documentation.

**What should be included in these chapters?**

**Dissertation:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Broad Sections | Main Aim of Each Chapter |
| Introduction and background information | A good introduction sets the tone and direction of the report. It informs the reader what the research is about, presents the overall research objective and specific research questions – and why these have been selected and pursued. In particular, you need to make it clear what specific business related problem or issue is being addressed.  What does your project contribute to address this particular problem or issue? What contribution do you hope to make to help business with the problem or issue you have identified and addressed?  The introduction may also present and summarise the contents of the remaining sections to the reader.  The background information puts your work into a particular context and helps to explain the research.  For example, if your Dissertation is based on a particular company, you would describe the nature of the company and its organisation and then outline the background to the issue, situation or phenomena you were investigating. |
| Literature Review | A main aim of the literature review is to inform the reader what previous research has been done on the topic and how it has guided or informed your own research. For example, you may want to test or challenge findings from previous research, or approach your study from a different perspective. Or you may want to explore how relevant today are the conclusions reached from earlier studies both generally and for your own research?  It is also important to include the theoretical framework – the theory that is related to the research in question. |
| Methodology | The methodology section informs the reader what overall research methodology you adopted – and why - and what research methods you used to gain and analyse your result. It also describes the participants involved (how many/how they were selected/their characteristics etc). It is also an opportunity for you to present an objective reflection on the limitations of the methodology and methods used. This is important, as all research has its limitations and it will be expected of you. |
| Data Analysis | This section presents a summary of the data or other information you gathered. This section presents the data information without discussion of the implications of your findings - this goes into the next ‘Discussion’ section. |
| Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations | This section presents analysis and discussions of the result, including implications, consequences and issues raised. It will also compare and contrast results with previous research findings, identified and discussed earlier in the Literature  Review. It should include recommendations.  It is the end of your report, but, hopefully, the beginning of positive contribution to knowledge as a result of your work. This need not be on a grand scale; some of the best projects focus on affecting small but important changes within the business concerned.  The conclusion to the report reminds the reader of the main aim of your research, your methodology, the findings and what this means for the business community or organisation studied.  You are also likely to point out the limitations of your research findings and how future researchers might take your work a stage further.  Finish well – leave the reader with something significant to think about. |

# Business Project:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Broad Sections | Main Aim of Each Chapter |
| Introduction and background information | A good introduction sets the tone and direction of the report. It informs the reader what the business project is about. It presents the rationale of the business opportunity which is supported by relevant market data. The research’s aim and objectives are clearly written.  The scenario chosen (a new start-up or an existing business development) should be clearly stated. |
| Business Concept | This should describe clearly the business concept including the product/service to be developed. The target market and the positioning strategy should be clearly discussed here including the value added. This discussion should be supported by relevant academic literature and sources consulted fully acknowledged. |
| Literature Review | The chapter presents a critical evaluation of the industry in relation to the business plan. This should analyse the feasibility of the business idea in relation to existing competition in the industry. Student should demonstrate the awareness and application of relevant academic models and tools in this analysis of the internal and external environment to establish any gaps in the market. |
| Methodology/Feasibility | The methodology section informs the reader what overall research design that was adopted in the analysis of the market. The methods selected should be fully supported as to why they were seen to be suitable. Data should also be presented and critically assessed in relation to the product/service; organisation and financial feasibility. |
| Analysis of the Business Model | This section presents an analysis of the business model proposed for the business project. Relevant academic literature and models should be assessed to inform the suitability of the model proposed. Evidence should be presented to justify the business model selected and sources used fully referenced. |
| Evaluation of the Business Plan | This concluding chapter presents a summary of the business project. A critical assessment as to whether the plan was found to be viable including any relevant recommendations proposed to enhance the business project. The discussion of the critical success/failure factors is also presented here. Finish well – leave the reader with something significant to think about. |

# 5. The Supervisor/Student Relationship

**SUPERVISORS:**

* The supervisor is there to guide you, not to do or write your Dissertation/BDP for you. The Dissertation/BDP is your responsibility.
* Your supervisor will be available to see you, usually every week during term-time, at a mutually agreed time.
* Your supervisor is there to guide you but can only do so if contact is regular and frequent.
* Give your supervisor material on a regular basis. It is unfair to expect detailed comments on a major part of your work at a moment's notice.
* Supervisors will keep a record of your attendance and be asked regularly for a report on your progress.
* Your supervisor has the responsibility of bringing reasonable Dissertation/BDP resourcing requests to the appropriate person/committee.

**Responsibilities of supervisors**

**1.** Help the student **refine** the Dissertation research proposal and ethics approval form produced earlier in the fourth semester. The emphasis must be on what is achievable.

**2.** On finalisation of supervisory arrangements, **advise** the student of relevant data/literature sources and **discuss** approaches to the literature review.

**3. Discuss** research design and choice of appropriate methods ensuring that

**(a)** the student has thought through the process adequately, and

**(b)** advice is given on how to refine the design/methodology process.

**4. Discuss** the plan of action.

**5. Meet** with student at agreed times, on average 20 minutes per term-time week, and keep a note of contact and advice.

**6. Monitor and discuss** student attendance and progress and advise the Dissertation Co-ordinator of any students causing concern.

**7. Discuss** research findings.

**8. Read** and **comment** on draft chapters to help students identify any weaknesses in analysis and presentation.

**9. Read** and **comment** on one complete draft of the Dissertation/BDP if submitted in sufficient time.

1. **Mark** the Dissertation/BDP.
2. **Complete** a Dissertation Supervision form after each meeting.
3. **Agree** to all changes to the Dissertation proposal in conjunction with student and Dissertation Tutor.

#### Responsibilities of the student

1. To **produce** a suitable Dissertation/BDP research proposal and Ethics Approval form by the agreed deadlines.
2. To **arrange** and **attend** meetings with Dissertation tutor and/or allocated supervisor on a regular basis, keeping notes of advice.
3. To attend group sessions with the Group Dissertation Coordinator to **refine Dissertation proposal** and **discuss** plan of action.
4. To **adhere** to the Dissertation timetable and inform supervisor of any problems.
5. To supply a complete **final draft** in sufficient time (agreed between supervisor and student) for reading and comment.
6. Although he/she will be advised of presentational problems, the student is responsible for **accurate citation, the standard of English, overall presentation and proof reading.**
7. The student is responsible for the **submission** of the Dissertation on the specified date and time.
8. As a **general** point, the Dissertation process and the production of the Dissertation are primarily the student's responsibility. The supervisor is there to help and guide but not to do the work or write it for you.
9. If the student has any complaint regarding their supervision, it is their responsibility to report the problem immediately to the Dissertation Co-ordinator.

**6. ATTENDANCE**

**Student attendance at Dissertation meetings with the Dissertation Co-ordinator and with individual Dissertation Supervisors will be monitored closely. Progress made and plan for action will be recorded in every meeting. Failure to attend Dissertation supervision meetings will be recorded and measures taken.**

**7. THE MODULE DESCRIPTORS.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MODULE TITLE:** | **Dissertation** |
| **MODULE CODE:** |  |
| **LEVEL:** | 6 |
| **CREDITS:** | 40 |
| **TOTAL STUDY HOURS:** | 400 |
| **STUDY HOURS BREAKDOWN:** | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | **STUDY HOURS** | | Lectures/ seminars | 48 | | Directed learning | 96 | | Independent learning | 256 | | **Total study hours** | **400** | |
| **PRE-REQUISITES:** | Research Methodologies |
| **EXCLUDED COMBINATIONS:** |  |
| **MODULE LEADER:** | Dr. Uma Mohan |
| **MODULE CONTRIBUTOR(S):** |  |

**RATIONALE**

The module provides students with the opportunity to undertake a piece of in-depth research on a topic chosen by them. Research for the dissertation may be on a topic in a previously or concurrently studied business module area not otherwise treated in depth in the normal course of studies.

**AIMS**

The dissertation is deemed valuable for the development of higher cognitive skills and is intended to provide students with the opportunity to work independently in an area of specific interest. Thus, students take a more active role in the learning process. It is seen as a major integrating force and an academic challenge for the student as is reflected by its prominence in the final year. The module is intended to enable the students to improve their abilities of independent working, skills of original and critical thinking and methods of research design, data collection, analysis and presentation.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

## Upon successful completion of the module the students will be able to:

LO1: Critically identify a field and subject area of appropriate research; carry out a sustained piece of research based on the careful consideration of evidence which leads to the formation of a hypothesis, the consideration, evaluation and interpretation of evidence, and the formation of rigorous conclusions based on the consideration of evidence

LO2: Demonstrate a critical understanding and comprehension of the relationship between theory and practice and of the application and synthesis of theory into practice.

LO3: Apply research skills, critical thinking skills, and critical interpretive and comprehension skills to business, management, organisational or related fields of enquiry and form conclusions and make recommendations on the basis of this activity.

LO4: Work independently in designing and executing a research project

**INDICATIVE CONTENT**

The indicative content of the module includes:-

* Research design and planning research in an ethical manner (protection of human subjects)
* Strategies to enhance the validity of qualitative and quantitative designs

## Specific research topic identified by the student and agreed with the supervisory team and the Research Methodologies tutor.

**LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS**

## A variety of teaching approaches is used, including lectures, seminars, case analysis and extensive use of electronic resources for guided research.

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

On successful completion of this module, a student will have had opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the following Employability Skills:

C1: Reading, selecting, analysing and synthesising information from a range of sources

C2: Producing different types of document

C3: Participating in discussions

C4: Making presentations

LP1: Develop a strategy for using a range of skills to improve own learning and performance

IT1: Preparing information

IT2: Processing and presenting information

IT3: Reviewing the use of information technology

LP2: Review and Critically Reflect on Progress

LP3: Evaluate overall effectiveness of strategy and present achievements

N1: Collecting and recording data

N2: Working with data

N3: Presenting your findings

PS1: Develop a strategy for using skills in problem solving, for a short-term routine problem and a longer term extended problem.

PS2: Monitor progress and adapt any problem-solving strategy as necessary to achieve the quality of outcomes required when tackling one complex problem with at least three options.

PS3: Evaluate your overall strategy considered in PS2 and consider improvements.

S1: Plan personal work schedules

S2: Monitor and manage progress on prolonged tasks

S3: Review achievement of objectives and the effectiveness of your own self-management skills

WWO1: Planning activities with others

WWO2: Working towards identified targets

**ASSESSMENT**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component number** | **Form of assessment** | **Assessment size** | **Weighting (%)** | **Learning outcomes 1assessed** | **Core or non-core** |
| 1 | Individual dissertation | 10000 words | 100 | LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4 | Core |

**INDICATIVE READING**

* Saunders, M, Thornhill, Lewis (2015) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 7th ed., Pearson Education.
* Easterby-Smith, M. Thorpe, R, Lowe, A (2018) *Management Research: An Introduction*, (6th ed.) Sage Publications Ltd.
* Gill, J and Johnson, P. (2011) *Research Methods for Managers*, (4th ed.) Sage Publications Ltd.
* Jankowicz, A. (2004) *Business Research Projects*, (4th ed.) Pearson Education.
* Monette, D.R., Sullivan, T.J. & Dejong, C.R. (2013) *Applied Social Research: Tool for the Human Services*, (9th Ed.) Cengage Learning
* Fisher, C. (2010) *Researching and Writing A Dissertation: An essential guide for business students* 3rd edn. Financial Times/Prentice Hall

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MODULE TITLE:** | **Business Project** |
| **MODULE CODE:** |  |
| **LEVEL:** | 6 |
| **CREDITS:** | 40 |
| **TOTAL STUDY HOURS:** | 400 |
| **STUDY HOURS BREAKDOWN:** | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | **STUDY HOURS** | | Lectures/ seminars | 48 | | Directed learning | 96 | | Independent learning | 256 | | **Total study hours** | **400** | |
| **PRE-REQUISITES:** | Research Methodologies |
| **EXCLUDED COMBINATIONS:** |  |
| **MODULE LEADER:** | Dr. Rajendra Kumar |

**RATIONALE**

This module prepares students to deliver an integrated business project covering areas of strategy, entrepreneurship and change.  These could be related to any industry or business area. It enables students to integrate the skills and knowledge acquired from other modules on the programme and develops specific skills in project management and business research.  Participants will have the opportunity to investigate and report on current issues facing an organisation(s) with tutorial support from a subject expert on a one-to-one basis.

**AIMS**

The module aims to introduce and develop the skills needed to conceptualise a problem, make use of available literature, design a research strategy, evaluate, organise, and integrate relevant data (both existing and new), derive useful solutions based on knowledge, and communicate those solutions to clients and colleagues.

The Business Project module enables the student to integrate the knowledge acquired in the taught modules at all levels of the programme. Students will develop the ability to apply that knowledge to the analysis and solution of the kinds of business and management problems that are encountered in the development of a viable and persuasive business proposal**.** It also developsthe skills to communicate proposed solutions and the rationale behind them to an audience of potential investors. It allows the learner to present a plan of action on the basis of the research and speak persuasively with respect to the feasibility of the action and the likelihood of it leading to business success.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

## Upon successful completion of the module the students will be able to:

LO1: Independently undertake the necessary research and identify, evaluate, design, and critically consider for implementation a viable business proposal project which is supported by a full business plan taken/developed to pre-launch stage

LO2: Undertake the necessary research and identify, evaluate, design and critically consider for implementation a viable business proposal project which is supported by a full business plan taken to pre-launch stage

LO3: Demonstrate a critical understanding and comprehension of the relationship between theory and practice and of the application and synthesis of theory into practice particularly related to the formulation of business projects and planning requirements.

LO4: Apply research skills, critical thinking skills, and critical interpretive and comprehension skills to business, management, organisational or related fields of enquiry and form conclusions and make recommendations on the basis of this activity which are particularly y related to the development of a Business Project and Business plan.

**INDICATIVE CONTENT**

The indicative content of the module includes:-

* Problem identification and research question/hypothesis generation
* Research design and planning research in an ethical manner (protection of human subjects)
* Strategies to enhance the validity of qualitative and quantitative designs
* Descriptive statistics and graphical presentations
* Measurement issues including reliability and validity
* Specific research topic identified by the student and confirmed and agreed with Supervisory staff team and with the agreement of the Research Methodologies tutor

**LEARNING AND TEACHING METHODS**

A variety of teaching approaches is used, including lectures, seminars, case analysis and extensive use of electronic resources for guided research.

**EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

On successful completion of this module, a student will have had opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the following Employability Skills:

C1: Reading, selecting, analysing and synthesising information from a range of sources

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C3: Participating in discussions

C4: Making presentations

LP1: Develop a strategy for using a range of skills to improve own learning and performance

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LP3: Evaluate overall effectiveness of strategy and present achievements

N1: Collecting and recording data

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PS1: Develop a strategy for using skills in problem solving, for a short-term routine problem and a longer term extended problem.

PS2: Monitor progress and adapt any problem-solving strategy as necessary to achieve the quality of outcomes required when tackling one complex problem with at least three options.

PS3: Evaluate your overall strategy considered in PS2 and consider improvements.

S1: Plan personal work schedules

S2: Monitor and manage progress on prolonged tasks

S3: Review achievement of objectives and the effectiveness of your own self-management skills

WWO1: Planning activities with others

WWO2: Working towards identified targets

**ASSESSMENT**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component number** | **Form of assessment** | **Assessment size** | **Weighting (%)** | **Learning outcomes 1assessed** | **Core or non-core** |
| 1 | Individual business project | 10000 words | 100 | LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4 | Core |

**INDICATIVE READING**

* Saunders, M, Thornhill, Lewis (2015) *Research Methods for Business Students*, 7th ed., Pearson Education.
* Easterby-Smith, M. Thorpe, R, Lowe, A (2018) *Management Research: An Introduction*, (6th ed.) Sage Publications Ltd.
* Gill, J and Johnson, P. (2011) *Research Methods for Managers*, (4th ed.) Sage Publications Ltd.
* Jankowicz, A. (2004) *Business Research Projects*, (4th ed.) Pearson Education.
* Huberman, AH and Miles, MB (2002). The Qualitative Researcher’s Companion: Classic and contemporary readings, Sage.
* Robson, C. and McCartan, K. (2015), *Real World Research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner- researchers* 4th edn. John Wiley and Sons
* Yin, RK (2018), *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* 6th edn. Sage Publications

1. **RESEARCH ETHICS AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

Your research must give due respect to current research ethics which must ensure the consideration of the following issues:

* Scientific objectivity
* privacy-impartial reporting
* confidentiality
* findings reported fairly and accurately

It is absolutlely necessary to ensure that you have undertaken a risk analysis prior to commencing a research project at any level.

This concerns your own safety in all respects, and full security and ethical treatment of your subjects (sources of evidence, by interview, questionnaire survey, business, government and agency concerns as well the rights and regard of individuals who may be contacted or whose data may be used during the course of the project).

The information below requires you to think, to consider how your gathering of data, approaches and any use made of sources, and yourself may be influenced in the course of the work.

This includes

- respect for sources and their owners intentions and requirements for

them, as well as

- your own personal safety and acknowledgement of the work of any contributors, and

- the respect for the anonymity of any providers of information as well as the

acknowledgement where their permission to use their evidence has been

agreed, and on what terms.

Please submit the Ethics Form as a part of your research proposal. Check each item, consider its relevance.

Please seek advice from your supervisor if there are any queries.

Eg:

* + You may be at risk in situations of meeting people.
  + Others may be at risk in situations of your approraching them for data, and in terms of restricted information that you must only use on careful
  + agreement with them.
  + You must allow informants (subjects) to withdraw from investigations if they wish
  + You must endanger neither yourself or your informants in the process of
  + The work.
  + You must not deceive any informants.

**NB:- ALL QUESTIONNAIRES THAT ARE BEING SENT EXTERNALLY SHOULD BE CHECKED AND HAVE THE PRIOR AUTHORITY OF THE DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR BEFORE BEING SENT.**

**Ethics research approval form**

Using the Ethics form, you must identify the main risk element regarding your health and safety and assess the potential risk. Risks may be categorised as tolerable,

Moderate, substantial or severe. Indicate the actions that you have taken

To reduce the risk and then indicate the residual risk.

* Tolerable risk is Acceptable.
* Moderate risk must be managed carefully.
* Substaintial or Severe risks which are serious and likely to happen are not acceptable and you should not proceed.

1. **ACADEMIC REGULATIONS**

Dissertation/BDP: Students are required to submit one soft copy on Turnitin.

**9.1 Procedure for Non-Submission**

Work cannot be accepted more than 1 week after the submission deadline and must be recorded as a non-submission. A Dissertation/BDP that is not submitted by the deadline date and time will be considered a fail by non-submission. Late submission penalties must be applied to work that is not submitted by the published deadline. Work that is submitted up to 1 week late will be capped at the bare minimum pass mark (40% for Level 6). Students who do not submit due to exceptional circumstances may request that those circumstances are recognised by the University. Claims for Extenuating Circumstances are judged on clear and transparent criteria as set out in the regulations.

**9.2 Extensions**

Members of staff of the University  may not grant extensions. A student seeking an extension may apply with Extenuating Circumstances to UoS. Exceptional circumstances usually relate to illness or personal tragedy and all extension applications must be supported by documentation.

**9.3 Suspected Unfair Practice Prior To Submission**

If a supervisor suspects that a student’s work has been plagiarised prior to formal submission they should report this to the Programme Leader or Course Administrator immediately. A meeting will then be arranged with the supervisor and student where they will be informed of these suspicions and asked to justify their work. The procedures for suspected unfair practice after submission will be explained to the student so that they are given the opportunity to revise their work or make a decision about submission. The academic and cost implications for non-submission will also be explained so that the student can make an informed decision about how they wish to proceed.

**In all cases where there is an issue of non-submission, this decision must be taken by the student only.**

**9.4 Unfair Practice and Plagiarism**

The University defines unfair practice as ‘any act, intentional or otherwise, whereby a person may obtain for himself/herself or for another, an unpermitted advantage…’.

Committing unfair practice in assessment is one of the most serious offences in academic life, and its consequences can be severe. It undermines the integrity of scholarship, research, and of the examination and assessment process.

Plagiarism is one type of unfair practice. Plagiarism is passing off, or attempting to pass off, another’s work as your own. It includes copying the words, ideas, images or research results of another without acknowledgement, whether those words etc. are published or unpublished. It is plagiarism, for example, to copy the work of another student, of a member of staff or a published article without crediting the author. Persons who allow their work to be plagiarised are also guilty. Plagiarism is also submitting work for an assignment that has been submitted for another assignment before without acknowledging that this is the case – this is self-plagiarism.

The guidance that follows explains what is meant by plagiarism, describes the University’s regulations for dealing with it, and provides help in avoiding it. All students are asked to submit an electronic copy of their work. This is so that the work can be checked against the database of the UK Higher Education Plagiarism Detection Service, Turnitin. Your tutors have the right to do so since, in University Regulations registering as a student at the University you have consented to the submission of your work, if necessary, to Turnitin.

Contract cheating is the practice of students engaging a third-party to complete assignments. It occurs when someone other than the student completes an assignment -- and which the student then submits for assessment/credit. This exchange can happen when a student swaps papers with another. This could be a student asking a friend or family member for a favour, with no money changing hands. Sometimes, students download a paper from a “free” essay site -- and that, too, constitutes contract cheating. Or in the most nefarious of scenarios: this exchange can happen when a student contacts an essay mill to write an essay in exchange for money.

**9.5 How can I avoid plagiarism?**

Coursework, dissertations, or creative work are meant to be your own original work. Obviously you will use the work of others. Not only is this inevitable, it is expected. All scholarship builds on the work of others. The important thing to remember is always to acknowledge your sources (see Appendix 2 for additional guidance). All Schools will provide sessions on referencing and plagiarism but as a general rule of thumb observe the following guidelines:

• Anything that is copied or quoted from another source, including electronic sources such as the internet, must be in quotation marks and attributed to the original author. This may be in the body of the text or as a footnote. Full details of a source may be contained in a bibliography. Whatever method is used, always acknowledge your source and give full details of it (i.e. title, author, and page number).

• Synthesising the work of others involves putting their ideas into your words. This is fine but you must acknowledge your source. This can be done in a number of ways depending on the context. For example: 'Hart maintains that...’ 'Hart provides evidence for..’: 'It is argued, or submitted by Hart that...’ Then give the source of the original work.

• Where you are generally indebted for your ideas to one or two main sources, this can be a bit trickier. If the ideas or the way they are presented come from one or two sources, make this clear. Do the same if they come from lectures. It is important not to claim originality where it does not exist but to indicate in general where the information comes from.

The golden rule is; 'if in doubt, provide references'. Consult your tutors if you have any problems, in particular with the method of citing books and articles, which may differ from subject to subject. There are no penalties for asking for advice and guidance; there are severe penalties for plagiarism!

**What are the penalties?**

Plagiarism by students in coursework, other forms of continuous assessment, examinations, dissertations or theses will be dealt with according to the Unfair Practice Procedure and regulations. The same regulations apply to any other form of unfair practice. These regulations can be found in <https://www.uos.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Academic-Misconduct-Policy.pdf>

The University applies a range of penalties, varying in severity, where unfair practice is confirmed. All tutors are required to be vigilant in the detection of plagiarism and are required to take action in all cases where it is suspected.

With every piece of coursework you present for assessment, you will be required to fill in a pro-forma stipulating that the work is your own original work. Your work may not be University Regulations marked if you do not include a plagiarism statement with your assessment. It is your responsibility to make sure that the appropriate form is included with your work. Copies of the form are included in this handbook (see Appendix 3).

**10.DISSERTATION/BDP ASSESSMENT**

Your dissertation will be assessed using the following marking sheet;

|  |
| --- |
| **BA Business Portfolio**  **DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT 2021 - 2022** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of Student:** |
| **Title of Dissertation:** |
| **First Marker:** |
| **Second Marker:** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Marking Scheme** | **Marks available** | **Mark Awarded** |
| Introduction | 15 |  |
| Literature Review | 20 |  |
| Research Methodology | 20 |  |
| Analysis of Results/Findings | 20 |  |
| Conclusions/Recommendations | 15 |  |
| Presentation and Structure of the Dissertation | 10 |  |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Mark %** |
| **Final Comment** |  |

Signature: ………………………………………………… Date: ………………………..

Your business project will be assessed using the following marking sheet;

|  |
| --- |
| **BA Business Portfolio**  **BUSINESS PROJECT ASSESSMENT 2018 - 2019** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of Student:** |
| **Title of BDP:** |
| **First Marker:** |
| **Second Marker:** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Marking Scheme** | **Marks available** | **Mark Awarded** |
| Introduction | 10 |  |
| The Business Project | 10 |  |
| Literature Review | 20 |  |
| Methodology/Feasibility | 15 |  |
| Analysis of the Business Model | 20 |  |
| Evaluation of the Business Plan | 15 |  |
| Presentation and Structure of the Project | 10 |  |
| **TOTAL** | **100** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Mark %** |
| **Final Comment** |  |

Signature: ………………………………………………… Date: ……………………….

**Dissertation Assessment Form**

**1. Introduction (15%)**

To include a rationale/purpose for the dissertation, underlying themes, assessment of feasibility, challenging/new/unusual topic, clear aim and objectives.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**2. Review of Literature (20%)**

To include evidence of breadth, currency & relevance of reading, theoretical & conceptual models, demonstration of knowledge & comprehension of topic, summary of principal issues.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

1. **Research Methodology (20%)**

To include the critical justification and adequate description of the application of an appropriate research methodology (e.g. the research strategy, data collection methods, research process, the sample selected for study and the methods of data analysis) and research limitations.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**4. Analysis of Results (20%)**

To include clear identification and evaluation of the relationship of the findings to the objectives & the literature, appropriate analytical methods, inferences from findings.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**5. Conclusions/Recommendations (15%)**

To include synthesis of themes, logical conclusions, critical and analytical aspects, consideration of the specified objectives, limitations of research, relevant recommendations and potential application to business environment.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**6. Presentation and Structure of the Dissertation (10%)**

To include style, fluency, clarity, organisation, word limit, grammar, spelling, adherence to academic convention, referencing (including bibliography).

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**Business Project Assessment Form**

**1.** **Introduction (10%)**

To include a rationale of the business proposal, an assessment of the market potential, the chosen scenario and clear aim and objectives of the study.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

1. **The Business Concept (10%)**

To include a clear discussion of the business concept including the product/service offering and the target market selected. In addition, coverage of the positioning strategy and the window of opportunity in relation to the business idea.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

1. **Review of Literature (20%)**

To include evidence of breadth, currency & relevance of research related to the industry. Application of theoretical& conceptual models in relation to the business project.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

1. **Methodology (15%)**

To include the critical justification and adequate description of the application of an appropriate research methodology (e.g. the research design, data collection methods, research process, the sample selected for study and the methods of data analysis) and an assessment of the product; organisation and financial feasibility related to the business project.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**5. Analysis of the business model (20%)**

To include critical analysis of the business model proposed for the implementation of the business project. Application of academic models/tools in the analysis of an appropriate business model.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**6. Evaluation of the business plan (15%)**

To include an overall assessment and presentation of the business plan including an assessment of its viability in relation to the data presented and analysed in the previous chapter.

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

**6. Presentation and Structure of the Dissertation (10%)**

To include style, fluency, clarity, organisation, word limit, grammar, spelling, adherence to academic convention, referencing (including bibliography).

|  |
| --- |
| **Comment:** |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Assessment Criteria To achieve each outcome a student must demonstrate the ability to:** |
| 1. **Appraise critically the literature pertaining to a problem domain.**  * Describe clearly the aim of the research. * State clearly and precisely the hypotheses to be tested, questions to be answered or objectives to be addressed. * Define the relationship between the current and previous research in related topic areas, stressing similarities and differences. * Demonstrate knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with the topic under investigation. * Demonstrate an ability to make critical use of published work and source materials. * Reference literature pertinent to the research * Avoid criticism of insufficiency or excessiveness with general reference to the literature. * Give due credit to previous workers for ideas and techniques used by the authors. * Display evidence of the ability to identify key items in the literature and to compare, contrast and critically review them. * Appreciate the relationship of the special theme to the wider field of knowledge. * Attempt to present previous work within an overall conceptual framework and in a systematic way. |
| 1. **Evaluate, select and apply relevant research techniques in both primary and secondary fields.**  * Demonstrate competence in independent work or experimentation. * Employ an appropriate research methodology. Justify and describe adequately its application (e.g. the research design, data collection methods, research process and the sample selected for study). * Recognise variables that might influence the study and either control them in the research design or properly measure them. * Use valid and reliable instruments to collect the data. * Demonstrate evidence of care and accuracy in recording and summarising the data. * Display evidence of knowledge of, and the ability to use, all relevant data sources. * Recognise and state the limitations inherent in the study. |
| 1. **Analyse rigorously the evidence gathered.**  * Report coherently the results of the research. * Report new material. * Relate the findings to the aims and objectives of the study * Compare the findings with the findings of similar studies and the literature * Demonstrate skills of interpretation and analysis. |
| 1. **Generate and justify appropriate conclusions based on the previous analyses, demonstrating awareness of the limitations of the research.**  * Synthesise theoretical and new material to generate critique and justify valid conclusions and recommendations. * Justify conclusions reached in the light of the data and the way they are analysed. * Consider the extent that the conclusions overturn or challenge previous beliefs. * Appreciate the realism and practicalities of the situation. * Consider the achievement of the specified objectives. * Delimit the new contribution and identify prospects for further work |
| 1. **Produce an organised and structured document that adheres to academic convention.**  * Organise the document logically. Clearly delineate sections, and ensure that they contain appropriate content. * Create an attractive layout. * Write in an appropriately academic style. * Ensure that the submission is structured not disjointed, indicating a systematic approach. * Employ accurately a suitable referencing system with bibliography. * Write a fluent, coherent submission, with correct spelling and grammar |

# WORKING GRADE CRITERIA CATEGORIES

The criteria specified below will apply to many dissertations in the specific grade category. They are for general guidance and are not intended as an exclusive checklist. Individual dissertations depending on theme and tutor guidance, may weight their emphasis on some rather than all characteristics.

**Third Class (40-49%)**

Dissertation in this category will demonstrate:

* a limited but acceptable understanding of organisations, groups, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders, their external context and how they are managed
* general understanding of relevant knowledge taking limited account of its relationship and interaction with other areas of the business or organisation
* a general awareness of current issues in management in the chosen topic area, which is also informed by leading research and practice in the field
* an general but limited understanding of appropriate research techniques to allow detailed investigation into relevant issues
* limited but acceptable ability to acquire and analyse data and its relevance and validity and to synthesise a range of information in new contexts
* limited but acceptable ability to communicate effectively using a range of media.

**Second class (50 - 69%)**

Dissertation in this category will demonstrate:

* a systematic understanding of organisations, groups, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders, their external context and how they are managed
* application of relevant knowledge taking account of its relationship and interaction with other areas of the business or organisation
* a critical awareness of current issues in management in the chosen topic area, which is also informed by leading research and practice in the field
* an understanding of appropriate techniques to allow detailed investigation into relevant issues
* an ability to acquire and analyse data and its relevance and validity and to synthesise a range of information in new contexts
* ability to communicate effectively using a range of media.

**1st Hons (70%)**

Dissertations in this category will demonstrate:

* a deep evaluation of the rigours and validity of published research in the context of the topic chosen
* an extrapolation from existing research to identify new or revised approaches to practice
* a creative adaptation of theory, research methodology or data analysis to establish some insights into the topic chosen or its application.

**Fail / Refer ( Below 40%)**

Dissertations in this category will largely fail to achieve the criteria identified for a pass grade. They may include:

* inadequate analysis of theoretical, conceptual underpinning for the topic chosen.
* unclear or unmeasured objectives, inadequately achieved
* a lack of coherence in the progression of the dissertation in the introduction of the areas for study and the conclusion of the process
* inadequate analysis and adoption of a research methodology to evaluate the topic chosen

**Good luck, work hard and we wish you all success!**

# APPENDIX 1 - DECLARATIONS

**DECLARATION**

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree

Signed……………………………………………

Date………………………………………………

**STATEMENT 1**

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA.

Signed…………………………………………….

Date………………………………………………

**STATEMENT 2**

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed……………………………………………

Date………………………………………………

**STATEMENT 3**

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………

**STATEMENT 4**

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available on the university’s IT system to those who have consent to use the system.

Signed………………………………………………

Date…………………………………………………