Topic 9: Write a Dissertation

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Contents

- Levels of Dissertations
- A Typical Order of Sections
- Preparing to Write
- Style of Writing
- Editing and Proof-Reading
- Discussion

Levels of Dissertations (1)

- ## Universities and colleges publish criteria for dissertations

Level	Criteria
First degrees and some masters' degrees which require the completion of a project	1. Well structured convincing account of a study, the resolution of a problem, or the outcome of an experiment
Master's degree by study and dissertation	1. An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts 2. Evidence of awareness of the literature

Levels of Dissertations (2)

Level	Criteria
Master's degree by research	1. Evidence of an original investigation or the testing of ideas 2. Competence in independent work or experimentation 3. An understanding of appropriate techniques 4. Ability to make critical use of published work and source materials 5. Appreciation of the relationship of the special theme to the wider field of knowledge 6. Worthy, in part, of publication
Doctoral Degree	1. 1 To 6 as for Master's degree by research 2. Originality as shown by the topic researched or the methodology employed 3. Distinct contribution to knowledge

Levels of Dissertations (3)

- It is undoubtedly important to carefully read the criteria before starting research and writing a dissertation
  - Undergraduate graduation design specification
    - Article 19: Assessment of graduation design
  - Professional master dissertation review
  - Academic master thesis review
  - Doctoral thesis review

Levels of Dissertations (4)

- Consult supervisors and relevant managerial staffs about the uncertainties in the criteria as soon as possible

A Typical Order of Sections (1)

- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Abstract
- Preface
- Contents
- List of tables

A Typical Order of Sections (2)

- List of figures
- Chapters
- Appendices
- References
- Bibliography
- Index

A Typical Order of Sections (3)

- All of these sections need not necessarily appear for different levels of dissertations
    - References will be a vital element of masters' and doctoral theses
    - Bibliography includes books and journals not have been cited in the text and will not be carried by most theses

A Typical Order of Sections (4)

- <u>Template of undergraduate graduation design</u>
- <u>Template of master and doctoral theses</u>

Preparing to Write (1)

- Writing preparation process
  - In a broad sense, the whole period spent on research before writing is preparation for this activity
  - In a narrow sense, the preparation process may be broken down into three steps
    - Order of chapters
    - Order of chapter sections
    - Level of presentation

Preparing to Write (2)

- Order of chapters
  - Purposes
    - The dissertation presents a coherent argument as a whole
    - Avoid material either being repeated or never being presented
  - Principles
    - Don't present unrelated content
    - Following the categorical or chronological order
    - Obviously related contents in the same chapter
    - A table of contents is a useful tool

Preparing to Write (3)

- Order of chapter sections
  - Purposes
    - Organize individual chapter in effective way
  - Principles
    - Don't present unrelated content
    - Following the categorical or chronological order
    - The last chapter has usually two sections
    - Obviously related contents in the same section
    - Two levels of division is usually sufficient
    - A table of contents is a useful tool

Preparing to Write (4)

- Level of presentation
  - Demonstrate not only knowledge and ability but also comprehensiveness
  - Determined by the relative importance assigned to the different topics

Preparing to Write (5)

- Present in detail
    - All evidence supporting argument
    - if the research were to be repeated, as well as the methods employed primary data should ideally also be made available
    - If there is any doubt as to whether a particular piece of data should be included, then include it; deletion is always possible at the editing stage

Preparing to Write (6)

- Present in brief
  - As well as leading to excessive length it also carries the risk of superficiality to attempt too broad a canvas
    - Becomes less ambitious
    - A page budget specifying the number of pages to be devoted to each section
    - Rely more heavily on summaries and reviews
    - Reference is made to the work published elsewhere
    - Whole sections may be omitted

Preparing to Write (7)

- Selection from the Data
  - Some material is probably superfluous
    - All completed questionnaires
    - In-depth interview tape recordings
    - Every computer-based statistical analysis output
  - Appropriate practice
    - Only one example of the questionnaire should be included
    - Include transcripts of interview tape recordings in an appendix
    - a representative example of a set of outputs

Preparing to Write (8)

- Writing without preparation will almost inevitably lead to
    - Length periods staring into space
    - Much crossing out and insertions
    - The gradual accumulation of screwed-up paper

Style of Writing (1)

- A demanding task and an important educational objectives
  - May fail because it is not easily readable
    - Long words and sentences made for 'foggy' reading
    - Paragraphs should be long enough to accommodate a particular idea and very short of one or two sentences should be avoided both for reasons of appearance and to avoid switching too rapidly from one point to another

Style of Writing (2)

- **Avoid using personal pronouns**
  - Use of the passive voice
    - 'It was found that ...' is used instead of 'I (We) found that ...'
- **Not purposely pursue analogy, metaphor and rhythm**
- **Use jargon, terms and abbreviations**
  - Management Information Systems (MIS)

Editing and Proof-Reading (1)

- Editing
  - Nouns and verbs are the core components of a sentence and express the core idea
    - Inflation occurred
  - Modifiers play a role of auxiliary expression of the core idea
    - Due to transitional wage demand rather than growth of money supply inflation occurred

Editing and Proof-Reading (2)

- Methods for editing sentences
  - Use underlines to mark the core components of sentences and ensure to have expressed the core ideas by the components
    - 陈健在谈到网络社区的盈利模式包括网络增值服务、社区电子商务以及网络广告
  - Check modifiers among core components
    - Avoid long modifiers between subjects and predicates (no more than 20 Chinese words)
      - 基于全球速卖通的中华文化商店是一家在传播中华文化背景下，代销高品质、中华老字号文化产品的基于全球速卖通平台的网上专卖店

Editing and Proof-Reading (3)

- Check the accuracy of terms
    - 管理信息系统 VS 信息管理系统
    - 基于全球速卖通的中华文化商店 VS 基于速卖通平台的中华文化商店

Editing and Proof-Reading (4)

- Proof-Reading
  - The final stage of writing
  - A proof is original text which has been typeset and output for checking
  - Proof-reading is the process in which the typeset material is checked for deviation from the original copy
  - Proof readers use various symbols to indicate the nature of an error

Editing and Proof-Reading (5)

- Two types of errors
  - Mistakes have arisen in typesetting
  - The writer wishes to change material already typeset
- No less than 95 percent of pages should be error free

Editing and Proof-Reading (6)

- Rules for proof-reading
  - Read each line in turn
  - Intense concentration is needed
  - Read aloud
  - Take a sample of those pages on which no errors have been noted and re-read them
- Particular attention should be paid to invalid format, spelling errors, faults in grammar, inconsistencies and omissions

Discussion

- According to the BJTU criteria of levels of dissertations evaluate the case dissertation