MSc Applied Data Science and Statistics

MTHM504: Guidance on writing your thesis

Overview

Submission deadline: **30th August 2023**

The written report contributes 70% towards the final mark of the module.

The written report should be between 30 and 40 pages in length (as an indication this should be between 10,000 to 15,000 words) including figures, tables, and references. We strongly recommend inserting tables and figures in the main report where you discuss them (rather than all at the end) for ease of readability. Computer code should not appear in the main body of the report.

The report should be written concisely and explain the topic and context of your project. It should provide details of the data and methodology you use and your results. You should present a discussion of the main findings, highlighting any original aspects of the work and/or new findings.

Appendix

You may put additional material in an appendix. This might include tables and graphs if there too many to fit into the main body of the report (you might want to consider limiting the number in the main body of the report to around 10), but these must be clearly signposted/referenced within the main body of the report.

You may also include detailed calculations, statistical analysis and computer code (all significant code written as part of the project should be included within the appendix with detailed comments so that examiners can easily follow the structure).

Feedback

If students require the supervisor to read a draft of the project (for purposes of feedback), then they should allow at least two weeks before submission deadline.

Structure

The following is a suggested structure for the written report together with indicative percentages of the number of pages to give an indication of possible lengths for the difference sections. You may use alternative structures, but please remember that the structure you choose will have to allow you to cover the points in the Overview given above.

- **Presentation, formatting and logical flow (10%).** Your report should be presented in a clear and logical manner, with a clear narrative throughout. You should ensure that figure and table captions are clear and explanatory and that the content within figures is large enough to read.

- **Introduction, Aims, Background to the subject (10%).** What are the main aims and objectives of the project? Is it to prove a result, test a hypothesis, or develop techniques to solve a particular problem? If developing a model, what are the key assumptions/limitations?

- **Detailed review of literature on which project is based, Description of methodology, underlying theory, etc. (35%).** Provide details of previous attempts to look at this question - who has previously written about this subject, what data and methods did they use, what were their conclusions? This should include a discussion of how do the assumptions/methods used in article X compare to those used in article Y?

- **Description of data, analyses and results (35%).** Where does you data come from? To include initial summaries and initial data analyses. Application of your chosen methodology to your chosen data. Presentation and description of results. How sensitive are your results to the method used/ assumptions made? How do your results relate to those in the literature, which may use different methods? How would you extend your project given more time?

- **Summary and discussion (10%).** A summary of what you have done and a discussion of the results you have found, putting them into the wider context of the aims of the project. What further research do you think is needed? e.g. additional data, methodological developments.

Marking process

After submission, supervisors and a second marker mark the project reports (and the associated presentations) independently. They will then agree a final mark. In case of large difference between the two marks and/or no final agreement, the *internal moderator* assesses the project and helps in reconciling the marks. The moderator also reviews all projects, and their marks, to ensure consistency across projects. An academic from a different university, the *external examiner*, also reviews the project marks and will view a sample of the projects to assure quality.

Academic honesty

Academic honesty means always giving full credit for any other people's contributions to our own achievements (i.e. by full and correct referencing) and never falsifying the results of any research.

All written work, and research carried out must be your own (taking into account assistance from the project supervisor). All literature and sources used must be cited appropriately. This includes any code /packages developed by others that you have used.

For guidelines: see http://www.exeter.ac.uk/students/administration/rulesandregulations/ug-pgt/academicmisconduct/

You should discuss any queries (e. g. how often and at what level of detail to cite particular papers and books) with your supervisor.

When submitting your final report, you are declaring that the work is your own. All project reports will be put through the plagiarism detection software. The University takes plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct very seriously.