Roehampton Business School
Faculty of Business and Law

Assessment brief

Postgraduate Dissertation

Contents

ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Components of module

This module is assessed by one summative submission, that is, the Dissertation Thesis.

All other submissions will not be marked. The requested not to be marked submissions are the Conceptual draft (formative) and the ethics form.

A PG dissertation should report an investigation of a business or management related research question which…

- reflects the strategic management or international focus of the programme;
- is based on current research literature and current concerns; and
- contributes to developing business practice and new knowledge.

You should make good use of the learning and development opportunities provide by the Business Research Methods module and the research design skills you gained from that module. Reflect whether you can, should and want to follow up the research question chosen in the Business Research Methods module or not.

This guide is for the Dissertation only

The modules "Business Research Methods" and "Consultancy Project" have their own Moodle site and separate assessment briefs. This document here presented is for the Dissertation module only.

Re-sit and deferral

The same assessment guide, tasks and marking rubric apply to all sits – main sit, re-sit and deferral.

Re-take

Should you be asked to retake the module, then a new supervisor might also be assigned, depending on available appropriate resources and subject expertise. A new Moodle site and new assessment brief may apply.

Deadlines

The submission deadlines are published onto Moodle. They are always due by 2pm at the given date.

Submission deadlines are cohort specific. They depend on when you started your studies, unless it is a re-sit or deferral.

Word counts

Summative submission / thesis (max. 18,000 words):

It is advisable to have at least written 15,000 words.

This is a substantial piece of written work which must provide a clear link to important and interesting business, strategic, managerial, and economic applications. Usually, data is to be collected and analysed, may it be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method. The research question chosen should be justified against a thorough and wide reading of academic literature.

Conceptual draft (max. 1,500 words):

This piece is formative and will not be marked. It is aimed to provide the key information for supervisors to judge on the extent to which you have a well-developed plan for the research project you aim to carry out for your dissertation and whether you address a feasible and rigour project.

Note that submission is digital

The Business School requires a digital version of all assignment submissions. These must be submitted via TurnItIn on the module's Moodle site. They must be submitted as a Word file (not as a pdf) and must not include scanned in text or text boxes. They must be submitted by 2pm on the given date.

Supervision

Your will be assigned an individual supervisor and be communicated the purposes of four milestone meetings via email.

You will receive written feedback on the formative submission, the Conceptual Draft, as long as you adhere to the submission deadline.

CONCEPTUAL DRAFT (FORMATIVE)

Please note that you must not copy and paste contents from the Business Research Methods module for the Dissertation thesis or Conceptual draft.

Please remember that the formative is meant to provide you with detailed feedback from your supervisor and to make sure your project is not any mislead in direction, method or approached taken. Thus, this is a draft that feeds into the writing of your final theses, once you have reviewed the feedback. It does not represent the chapter structure of your final submission. See "Structure and content of thesis" only for the structure we expect your final submission to have.

Research Question and context (c. 400 words)

State your research question; explain why and how answering it will add new aspect or knowledge to the discipline; briefly describe context and list journal discussions that the question and theme relates to. Provide a brief discussion of the specific research objectives to be investigated. You may have relevant materials from the Business Research Methods module that you could work on for this section.

Literature mind map (c. 400 words)

Enclose a visual mind map and explain this mind map. Demonstrate how your project addresses new aspects as compared to prior literature. You may have relevant materials from the Business Research Methods module that you could work on for this section.

The map itself (graphical illustration) is not included in the word count.

Investigative approach (c. 700 words)

This should cover the following areas, as appropriate:

- what is your purpose of theory building: develop new theory, reconfirm/test theory, reconsider dated theories, action-based not theory agenda? Why is that research needed?
- what data (evidence/information) you aim to obtain in relation to your research question and what are the sources for such data/evidence/information?
- your approach to sampling: whom, how and when will you approach?

It is advisable to write this section from scratch and not start off from your Business Research Methods (BRM) module, as that module has taught you better practices and techniques and by the learning gain from that module, students are usually equipped with the skills to conduct a much more systematic approach in their dissertation. The request to compare two different methods in the BRM module is different from the request from this module.

Bibliography (not included in word count)

A single list should be given, obeying the standard rules Harvard referencing style for bibliographical details, including web sites, blogs or other digital materials. Refer to the library resources for more information.

THESIS (SUMMATIVE)

General remarks

Please note that you must not copy and paste contents from the Business Research Methods (BRM) module for the Dissertation thesis or Conceptual draft.

In case the formative submission of this module, Conceptual Draft, has developed text that is already fully suitable for the final thesis submission, that text can be incorporated as is. Still it must be different from text that was submitted in the BRM module and from text submitted for any other module in the past.

Each of the assessment categories is elaborated below in the form of a checklist of questions. Please study the checklist of questions as you prepare relevant sections of your dissertation, and especially when you are editing the penultimate and final drafts of your dissertation.

Contents as per marking category

The percentage values given brackets are the marking weights given to each of these categories in the assessment marking rubric.

It is advisable to take the marking weight for an indication how much word count should be dedicated to each category.

Introduction, context and research problem (10%)

- Is the research question clearly stated and shown to be worth investigating?
- Has appropriate background information been provided with special terms and concepts defined?
- Are the research objectives (sub-questions or hypotheses) clear, relevant, coherent and achievable?
- Do objectives etc. go beyond mere description, i.e. do they involve explanation, comparison, criticism or evaluation?

Literature review (25%)

- Has a comprehensive range of relevant literature been used to discuss relevant concepts, models and theories?
- Are the sources used up to date, and of sufficient academic weight?
- Does the dissertation give evidence of a critical attitude towards source material?
- Are the key themes and issues surrounding the research questions clearly drawn from the literature?
- Have sources been acknowledged and cited?

Research design and methodology (15%)

- Has the project successfully sought ethical approval and in good time before any data collection was started?
- Is there a clear rationale for the research design and methodology adopted?
- Are the research methods fully described and the advantages and disadvantages of chosen methods discussed?
- Are any constraints or limitations identified?
- Are the relevant research instruments (e.g. blank questionnaire, interview questions etc) included in the appendices? Are the research instruments well designed with all questions etc. relevant to research objectives?
- Are sampling methods described in detail? I.e. who the respondents are, how many there are and how they were selected?

- Are data analysis methods discussed?
- Is there evidence of care and accuracy in the data collection process? Are reliability and validity issues addressed?
- Has the methodology been critically evaluated in retrospect?

Results, analysis and evaluation of findings (30%)

- Is all data presented relevant to aims and objectives?
- Is the analysis thorough and appropriate to the data collected?
  - For questionnaires: Do the appendices contain a data matrix, and details of statistical analysis undertaken? Is statistical analysis correctly performed and interpreted?
  - For interviews, focus groups, etc.: Do the appendices contain data collected and analysed such as interview transcripts? Has qualitative data been systematically analysed?
  - For document, archive and other public data: Has the validity and reliability of the sources been addressed? Has quantitative or qualitative data been systematically analysed?
- Are the findings presented clearly and interestingly for the reader, with useful tables and charts embedded in the text and with the appendices being used appropriately for bulky and/or less interesting/essential data?
- Have the findings been discussed and evaluated?
- Have the findings of the primary research been compared with findings, theories, models and concepts derived from the literature review?

Conclusions and recommendations (10%)

- Have the research objectives (research questions) been reviewed and addressed?
- Do the conclusions and recommendations follow on from the findings? Are they well-grounded in the evidence and arguments presented?
- Has the relevance of the conclusions for management been discussed?
- Are the conclusions and recommendations discussed in context and are they more widely applicable?

Presentation, structure and writing (10%)

- Is the overall style and presentation of the dissertation in accordance with that specified in the assessment brief, i.e. cover pages, title page, word count, spacing, chapter and section headings, pagination, appropriate font, font size and font style.
- Has the field work been documented appropriately in the appendix?
- Have sources been cited properly, in accordance with the Harvard format? Is the references list at the end of the dissertation complete and formatted in the Harvard format?
- Is the writing clear and in an appropriate academic style?
- Is the title concise and appropriate?

- Has the dissertation been spelling and grammar checked?
- Is the contents page clear, concise and logically numbered?
- Are appendices, tables and figures numbered and listed in the contents page?
- Are all appendices referred to in the text?

STRUCTURE AND FORMATTING OF THESIS (SUMMATIVE)

An abstract is not required. Acknowledgements are not required.

A list page for tables or for figures is not required.

The ethics form is to be sent separately on Moodle via TurnItIn, do not enclose it.

The full structure of the thesis is as follows:

- Title page
- Declaration form (see below what to include, do paste exactly that text and do not change it, only replace "A N Other" with your name)
- Contents page
- Ch.1: Introduction and research problem
- Ch.2: Literature review
- Ch.3: Methodology
- Ch.4: Findings
- Ch.5: Discussion of... (optional chapter)
- Ch.6: Conclusions (which includes recommendations)
- Bibliography
- Appendices

Declaration form

The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that any and all the material in this Dissertation, that is not my own work, has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Signed   Date

A N Other

Font and formatting

A single font style and size should be used for main text throughout. The font size may be increased (slightly) for headings. The preferred font is one of, Calibri 11 point; Arial 11 point or Times New Roman 12 point. Line spacing should be 1.5. All pages should be numbered consecutively.

Each chapter must be started on a new page.

SEE MARKING RUBRIC UPLOADED ONTO MOODLE

The marking rubric adheres to the marking criteria and weights published in previous section.

You find it uploaded as separate document onto Moodle.

IMPORTANT TEMPLATES TO REVIEW, SEE MOODLE SITE

Document	Purpose of document
Ethics form	Ethics must have been approved by your supervisor before starting data collection. The ethics form needs to be uploaded onto a dedicated, separate TurnItIn link, to allow the supervisor a review, feedback and approval. There is a separate short form if you would rather work with secondary data only.
Letter of access	This letter is optional and depends on the methodology of your thesis. A sample letter is provided on Moodle that relates to interview methodology. Students are required to discuss their letter of access with their supervisor
Research participant agreement form	Reference made in the Ethics form, example on Moodle site.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

The University Mitigating Circumstances Policy can be found on the University website.

You can apply for Mitigating Circumstances, in order to ask for more time to submit:

https://portal.roehampton.ac.uk/information/examinations/Pages/Mitigatingcircumstances.aspx

You could apply for shorter Extension or for Deferral. Deferral is to ask for a longer extension. Depending on the reasons stated / the details of your case, your request will be approved or declined.

You can't request this via email.

If you apply for Mitigating Circumstances late in the term and do not hear back from academic services before the deadline expires, you must assume your application may be declined and must submit due the regular deadline.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

Between you handing in your work and then receiving your feedback and marks, there are a number of quality assurance processes that we go through to ensure that students receive marks which reflects their work. A brief summary is provided below.

- Step One – The module standards, expectations and how feedback will be provided. See this assessment brief.
- Step Two – A subject expert will mark your thesis using the criteria provided in the assessment brief.
- Step Three – A second marker reviews your thesis and a moderation meeting takes where first marker (normally the supervisor) and the second maker agree marks and feedback.
- Step Four – Work then goes to an external examiner who will review a sample of work to confirm that the marking between different staff is consistent and fair.
- Step Five – Marks will be processed by the Exam Board and then be published in your student records. Usually only these records can be used for any purposes of visa applications etc. and not any provisional marks that may have been published on Moodle before.