

# **Guidelines for Compiling a Mini Dissertation**



**Contact details:**

Regenesys Business School

Tel: +27 (11) 669-5000

Fax: +27 (11) 669-5001

Email: [info@regenesys.co.za](mailto:info@regenesys.co.za)

[www.regenesys.co.za](http://www.regenesys.co.za)

Version Control

Date of Publication:

Publisher:

Place of Publication:

8

July, 2022

Regenesys Management (Pty) Ltd

Sandton, South Africa

This guide highlights key focus areas for the compilation of a mini dissertation.

Copyright © Regenesys, 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without written permission of the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable for criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

# CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. SUPERVISION APPROACH AND PROCESS .....	1
3. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL .....	2
3.1 TITLE PAGE.....	3
3.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM .....	3
3.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, THE RESEARCH AIM AND ITS OBJECTIVES.....	3
3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION(S) / HYPOTHESIS OR HYPOTHESES .....	3
3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	4
3.5.1 A GENERAL FORMAT .....	4
3.6 SIGNIFICANCE / RATIONALE OF THE STUDY.....	5
3.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
3.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	6
3.9 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION .....	6
3.10 REFERENCES.....	6
3.11 RESEARCH SCHEDULE / WORK PLAN / TIMEFRAME.....	7
4. FORMAT OF THE MINI DISSERTATION.....	7
4.1 TITLE PAGE.....	8
4.2 ABSTRACT .....	8
4.3 DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK .....	9
4.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	9
4.5 TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	9
4.5.1 LIST OF TABLES.....	9
4.5.2 LIST OF FIGURES .....	10
4.6 THE TEXT .....	10
4.6.1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	10
4.6.2 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
4.6.3 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	10
4.6.4 CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS/FINDINGS.....	11
4.6.5 CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS .....	11
4.6.6 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	11
4.7 REFERENCE LIST.....	12
4.8 APPENDICES .....	12
5. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS .....	12
5.1 THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL .....	12
5.2 THE MINI DISSERTATION .....	12
5.2.1 SECTION NUMBERING .....	13
5.2.2 REFERENCING .....	14
5.2.3 WRITING STYLE .....	14
5.2.4 LANGUAGE .....	15
5.2.5 FIGURES AND TABLES.....	16
6. PROCESS.....	17
6.1.1 EXTERNAL EXAMINATION .....	18
7. MINI DISSERTATION EVALUATION SCHEDULE.....	18
7.1.1 CONCLUSION .....	19

8. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY .....	20
9. ANNEXURE A: EXAMPLE OF TITLE PAGE OF THE MINI DISSERTATION .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
10. ANNEXURE B: FINAL SUBMISSION OF MINI DISSERTATION.....	21
10.1 GUIDE TO BINDING YOUR MINI DISSERTATION .....	22
10.2 FRONT COVER .....	22
10.3 SPINE.....	22
11. ANNEXURE C: GUIDE TO REFERENCING .....	24
11.1 INTRODUCTION.....	24
11.2 AN EXPLANATION OF CITATION AND REFERENCING .....	24
11.3 PLAGIARISM .....	25
11.4 REFERENCING SYSTEMS.....	25
11.4.1 HARVARD REFERENCING SYSTEM .....	25
11.4.2 APA REFERENCING STYLE .....	25
12. REFERENCES .....	26

# 1. INTRODUCTION

---

Regenesys Management offers both a Master of Public Management (MPM) and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. Providing guidance to- and supervising- Masters candidates forms part of the responsibilities of qualified academics within the organisation.

The purpose of this document is to provide Master's students with a comprehensive guide on how to successfully complete the mini dissertation, which is an essential part of the qualification.

The topic for the mini-dissertation may be chosen from any of the modules in the relevant programme, and should, ideally, but not necessarily, be linked to the candidate's work environment. In order to successfully complete the mini-dissertation, each Master's candidate is required to submit a well-developed research proposal. After examination of the proposal, permission to continue with the mini-dissertation will be granted once the examiners are satisfied with the research proposal and convinced of the merits of the research.

## 2. SUPERVISION APPROACH AND PROCESS

---

Research supervision is by way of a blended approach. The benefits of the blended approach are that:

- Candidates are enabled to not only access a greater pool of expertise and knowledge across various management disciplines and industries, but are also supported at each stage of their dissertation;
- Personal relationship challenges between candidates and supervisor are minimised, as there is not 'total' dependency on one person, but rather an interdependent team of experts to guide the candidate's progress;
- Candidates are protected from the adverse impact of a supervisor being on extended leave or resigning; and
- The assessment process is accelerated (chapter-wise), and the quality of support and feedback to candidates is therefore improved.

In line with international best practice, the following research process is followed:

- **Phase one:** Development of the research proposal. This could be the same as that developed for the Research Methodology assignment, or a new/revised proposal.
- **Phase two:** Submission of the mini-dissertation research proposal to the allocated supervisor.
- **Phase three:** Following feedback on the research proposal from the supervisor, with comments for improvement if necessary, the candidate submits each chapter, receiving chapter-by-chapter guidance from the supervisor, until completion of the final draft.

- **Phase four:** The draft mini-dissertation is submitted to the supervisor for internal assessment and final comments.
- **Phase five:** After making necessary corrections and improvements, the candidate's final submission will be sent for external examination. The external examiner's comments will be provided to the candidate, who is expected to make any further corrections and/or improvements as indicated, before proceeding to the final phase. The final result obtained for the mini-dissertation will be the average of the internal and external examiners' results.
- **Phase six:** The final version of the mini-dissertation is printed and bound, and submitted to the Registrar.



All candidate correspondence and submissions must be emailed to: [research@regenesys.co.za](mailto:research@regenesys.co.za).

### 3. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

---

The final research proposal (RP), which is prepared upon completion of all the coursework modules, will have to be formally approved by the Academic Committee before commencement of the mini-dissertation. Please note that no formal approval will be given for continuing with the mini-dissertation unless and until the Academic Committee is satisfied with the research proposal.

Once the research proposal has been accepted, the Academic Committee will supervise and support all candidates, using the blended approach outlined previously.

Since the research proposal technically becomes Chapter One of the dissertation, with minor modifications, it must be sufficiently comprehensive in order to allow the supervisor to evaluate:

- Your interests, background and experience in the proposed subject;
- Your ability to undertake scientific research and to record it in an academically acceptable way;
- The viability of the proposed research;
- Whether the problem is researchable, including the availability of relevant literature;
- The stated objectives of the research;
- The proposed research methodology and the applicability thereof to address the chosen problem;
- The measure in which the research can be verified empirically, or what information may be collected empirically;  
The limitations of the proposed research and the measure to which this influences the reliability and validity of the research;
- The proposed structure of the study in order to achieve the objectives; and
- Your command of language and writing ability.

The Research Proposal must comply with the technical requirements discussed below and consist of the following:

### 3.1 TITLE PAGE

Include the title of the research project, your full name and surname, your student number and contact details (e-mail, telephone number, cell number and postal address) on the cover page.

- The title should generally be no more than eight to ten words long (*spend time on making it meaningful and succinct*);
- Provide a subtitle (e.g. case study) only where *strictly* necessary;
- Avoid academic clichés: “analysis of/ study of/ investigation into, etc.”; **and**
- Remember that the title must direct the potential researcher towards the selected topic.

### 3.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Describe the environment within which the research will be undertaken.

- Describe the value of the proposed research.
- Provide a more detailed explanation of the research problem indicated in (1).
- Briefly establish the context of the research.
- Pose the research question/ problem/ hypothesis (state what the dissertation will deal with). Amplify and refine the research problem.

### 3.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM, THE RESEARCH AIM AND ITS OBJECTIVES

The problem statement flows from the background description and must essentially state **WHAT** the problem is that you intend to research. The aim/purpose of the research flows from the problem statement. The objective of the research in addressing the research problem must be clearly stated in one sentence.

### 3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION(S) / HYPOTHESIS OR HYPOTHESES

These are the questions essential for consideration of the main topic.

- They should display, in logical order, all the sub-parts of the research topic.
- Clarity is all-important –the entire scope of research must be reduced into a series of specific questions.
- Questions should be formulated in terms of the research, design and analysis of data to be employed.
- Avoid a ‘fishing’ approach to research (collecting material and applying a number of statistical techniques ‘to see what will come out’).
- When the existing knowledge and theory permits the formulation of reasonable predictions about the relationship among the variables, employ the hypothesis form of study.

- Key questions determine and anticipate the theoretical framework.

## 3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is determined by the theoretical framework and research design. You should:

- Sketch the research approach as clearly as possible;
- Provide a specific and detailed account of how you will test his/her hypotheses and answer their research questions;
- Identify the appropriate population/material that you will sample;
- Describe the procedures that will be used to collect the data;
- Identify the techniques, methods, and instruments to be used for data collection;
- Specify which tests/scales/questionnaires/interviews will be used and which procedures, and explain why they are appropriate for your research;
- Discuss the reliability and validity or trustworthiness of specific instruments and procedures, and your data;
- Explain how data will be analysed (thematic/ API etc for qualitative), and indicate what statistical methods will be used, in the case of quantitative research.
- Ensure that the sample is sufficiently large to enable detection of differences (if applicable);
- Apply *known* techniques that are accepted as valid, before embarking on untried methods of analysis - since there are generally accepted methods in different fields of study; and
- Outline plans for contingencies, if any.

### 3.5.1 A general format

#### Introduction

You should:

- Consider why this particular method has been chosen (e.g. quantitative or qualitative) Identify and use supporting literature for the chosen method
- Provide a clear link between the chosen method and the stated objective/s; and
- Decide if the proposed method is feasible

#### What does the chosen method entail?

Specifically the following must be clearly stated:

- The study population
- The sample
- Method of data gathering (e.g. questionnaire, focus groups, interviews etc.)
- Method of data analysis; and
- Ethical considerations taken in the research



### 3.6 SIGNIFICANCE / RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

You should:

- Be explicit about the limitations/scope of the research project, for example: “This research will not.....”
- Explain why the proposed research is worthwhile and necessary.

### 3.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

Any research project must show its linkage from a background of existing knowledge and previous investigations to contemporary practice. The theoretical framework is the guide to writing the entire research plan and will determine the literature review, the selection of samples, the methodology employed, and the techniques for data analysis.

Take note of the following requirements to establish the framework:

- Clearly outline the theory/model/perspective/conceptual framework(s) within which you will investigate the problem/test the hypotheses.
- If the theory is new, clearly explain it in detail, defining relevant terms and providing examples.
- If the theory is established, explain why and how its application to this research problem is appropriate and useful for providing answers.
- Identify (significant) prior research. Explain whether these questions have been asked before, whether related questions have been asked, and what answers have been obtained - i.e. outline, evaluate and synthesise the current state of critical/ theoretical debate;
- Identify the limitations of past/current research, and explain their point of entry into the debate. In addition, identify gaps/misinterpretation/errors/contradictions or particular critical or theoretical problems.
- Explain how they will build on past strengths while overcoming past limitations.

□

- Identify the potential outcomes of their research and the importance of each.
- Spell out the key assumptions of the research project.

### 3.8 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Outline the scope/framework of the proposed research and the envisaged limitations, and explain why this is so.

### 3.9 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

You must:

- List the expected chapters;
- Give chapter headings and a short paragraph briefly describing what will be covered in each chapter;
- Be as specific as possible: highlight the structure, but do not give too much detail;
- Make use of the following general format:
  - **Introduction:** outlines the general problem area; defines the research question; explains why the topic is important; outlines the research approach of the dissertation, its limitations and key assumptions, and the contribution to be made by research;
  - **Literature Review:** is a comprehensive survey of prior research (could be combined with the Introduction); provides background/context to the research; documents the value of the research;
  - **Research Methodology**
  - **Research Results:** results are reported; data is presented; the conceptual framework is described; the historical analysis is defined, or comparative studies are explained;
  - **Analysis of Results:** (could be included with previous chapters) this is a key section explaining the conclusions drawn from data and the implications of a theory; and
  - **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations:** the dissertation is summarised, with emphasis on the results obtained; the contribution made by the results; recommendations; and suggestions for further research.

### 3.10 REFERENCES

This is a select, not a full, bibliography. You must:

- List similar or parallel work done in the candidate's discipline, both in South Africa and abroad;
- Demonstrate that you have completed the necessary literature search for the research topic; Exclude dictionaries, encyclopaedia, textbooks, general disciplinary works, standard reference works, and background reading; and
- Include directly relevant theoretical works, pertinent journal articles (local and international), and other relevant reports, published papers, and monographs.

### 3.11 RESEARCH SCHEDULE / WORK PLAN / TIMEFRAME

This schedule forms the basis of the working contract between the candidate and the supervisor/s.

Month	Description	Outcomes
-------	-------------	----------

The following needs to be completed by you and your supervisor:

- Construct a timetable or schedule for research (e.g. month by month)
- Outline how long the entire project will take to complete – be realistic
- Describe major research activities required to complete various stages, together with time estimates for each
- Identify targeted outcomes (completion of sections)
- Build in some 'slack' at the beginning to permit time to set up the project, acquire additional literature, etc.
- Consider contingency plans: identify what is likely to go wrong, and what will be done if this happens
- Allow enough time for final revision, editing, proofreading, copying and binding of dissertation; and
- Aim to complete by the submission deadline

## 4. FORMAT OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

---

Although a mini-dissertation must include a literature review followed by empirical research (qualitative or quantitative), a mini-dissertation may also take the format of a literature review only, in which you demonstrate a thorough critical analysis and an understanding and synthesis of the latest literature on a particular topic.

But you must be able to conceptualise the content, show critical thinking and be able to reach appropriate conclusions. You must consult the most recent information sources, including journal articles, E-books, databases and various online sources.

Textbook sources, especially ones five years or older, are considered too old. The aim of a literature review is either to identify the gaps in the literature of a particular field that requires future research, or to compare and contrast available literature with a view to providing theoretical guidance on a particular issue.

The completed mini dissertation must contain the information set out and discussed below:

- Title page (see Annexure A)
- Abstract
- Declaration of original work
- Dedication (optional)

- Table of Contents;
- Acknowledgements
- List of Tables
- List of Figures
- List of Appendices; and
- Glossary of terms (optional)

## 4.1 TITLE PAGE

The title page should contain the following essential information:

- Full title of the mini-dissertation (as officially approved by the faculty)
- Your full names and surname (as registered at the School *as per Identity Document*)
- The qualification for which you are registered: Master of Public Management or Master of Business Administration
- Initials and surname of the Supervisor; and
- Year of submission

Annexure A provides a detailed layout of the title page. Please note that you must follow the guidelines given in Annexure A exactly. The title page must not be decorated in any way. Information has to be presented horizontally centred across the page. The title must be the **exact one that is registered** by the Academic Manager. Candidates should verify the title before submitting the final document.

The title of the study should indicate the contents and scope of the mini-dissertation in as few words as possible (generally **no more than eight to ten words**). The title should be accurate and descriptive. Avoid titles that use a colon to separate primary and secondary phrases. Superfluous phrases such as “A report into ...” must be avoided.

## 4.2 ABSTRACT

This section contains a brief summary of the study. It must **not exceed 500 words**, and must include information on the following:

- A brief introduction to the study
- The research problem
- The research methodology
- A few of the most important findings; and
- The main conclusion/s

## 4.3 DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This statement must appear after the abstract and must be signed and dated. The aim of this declaration is to confirm that no plagiarism occurred during the writing of the mini-dissertation. It further indicates that all sources consulted have been referred to and included in the bibliography at the end of the mini-dissertation.

The declaration should include either of the following statements verbatim, as applicable:

I, (NAME) declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Public Management degree at Regenesys School of Public Management, Sandton, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university or educational institution.

or

I, (NAME) declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Business Administration degree at Regenesys Business School, Sandton, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university or educational institution.

---

NAME

*(Insert as day, month, year, eg. 21 April 2014)*

DATE

---

## 4.4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In this section you express your gratitude toward individuals or companies that contributed to the study. It is kept as short and as specific as possible.

## 4.5 TABLE OF CONTENTS

- The Table of Contents consists of a presentation of all the headings (and their respective numbers) as they appear in the text, as well as the corresponding page numbers.
- All subheadings feature in the Table of Contents.

### 4.5.1 List of Tables

Following the Table of Contents is a list of tables. This list must contain all table numbers and headings as well as the corresponding page numbers. The list of tables pages are numbered at the bottom in Roman figures, consecutively after the numbering of the Table of Contents i.e. (iii), (iv) etc.

## 4.5.2 List of Figures

Following the List of Tables is a List of Figures. This list must contain complete figure numbers and headings, as well as the corresponding page numbers. The list of figures pages are numbered at the bottom in Roman figures consecutively after the numbering of the List of Tables i.e. (v), (vi) etc.

## 4.6 THE TEXT

The text forms the body of the study. It includes the introductory chapter, the theoretical chapter as well as the empirical and concluding chapters.

Chapter 1 starts at page 1. Ideally, every chapter must have an Introduction introducing the main points to be covered in the chapter, and a Conclusion/Summary, containing the main points covered in that chapter.

The text is typically laid out as follows:

### 4.6.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

- Background of the study
- Problem statement
- Purpose of the research or rationale
- Research question and sub-questions (if applicable) and research objectives
- Research design (brief)
- Delimitations of the study
- Outline of the mini-dissertation
- Conclusion

### 4.6.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

- Introduction
- A critical review of related literature, showing the link between the title of the study statement with the hypotheses/propositions/research questions that emanate from the literature review; and
- Conclusion

### 4.6.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

- Introduction
- Research Design
  - Research approach and methodology
- Research Population

- Sample
  - Sampling methodology
  - Sample size
- Research Instruments
- Data Collection (state sources of information and sampling methods, strengths and weaknesses of these methods)
- Data Analysis (explain how the information collected will be organised and analysed) □  
Validity and reliability; trustworthiness of data
- Ethical considerations (ethical clearance form must be included)
- Limitations of the study (limitations in overall research design and how the candidate attempted to overcome this); and
- Conclusion

#### 4.6.4 Chapter 4: Presentation of Results/Findings

- Introduction
- Presentation-report finding in paragraph form, including graphics/tables/figures (included only where necessary)
- Analysis of the results in terms of the answering of the research questions/ the support or lack thereof of the propositions or the testing of the hypotheses; and Conclusion

#### 4.6.5 Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion of the Results

- Introduction
- Issues identified (triangulation of the literature reviewed, results and current reality)
- Findings linked only to literature cited in literature review (**Note: No new literature must be introduced at this point**); and
- Conclusion

#### 4.6.6 Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

- Introduction
- Brief summary of the research objectives and major findings
- Drawing logical conclusions from the data that was interpreted
- Recommendations which should be realistic and achievable, and not generalising
- Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research; and Conclusion

## 4.7 REFERENCE LIST

All sources consulted during the research should be listed alphabetically. Candidates should consistently follow the APA (American Psychological Association) System. (Refer to the Academic Writing and Referencing Skills Manual).

## 4.8 APPENDICES

An appendix usually consists of contents or results, which would have interrupted the flow and readability of the text should it have been included therein. The appendices **must follow in numerical order**, e.g. permission letters, questionnaires, interview schedules, etc. Any appendix referred to in the text must be included in the back of the minidissertation and numbered accordingly.

## 5. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

---

### 5.1 THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal **must** comply with the following requirements:

- The content of the proposal must be approximately 12-15 typed A4 pages
- Your name, surname, student number and telephone number (office and/or cellular) must appear on the cover page
- All pages must be numbered
- It must be neatly bound, edited for language and thoroughly proofread for errors
- Proof of editing must be submitted

### 5.2 THE MINI-DISSERTATION

The mini-dissertation **must** comply with the following minimum technical requirements:

#### Number of pages/words

The **mini-dissertation** must comprise approximately 80 - 120 typed pages in total (*minimum* 20,000 words).

#### Page layout

Top margin: 2 cm  
Bottom margin: 2 cm



<b>Line spacing:</b>	1.5 spacing, <i>except</i> bibliography where single spacing is required.
<b>Font type:</b>	Arial throughout
<b>Font size:</b>	A size 12 font is required throughout, <i>except</i> Chapter headings that must have a size 16 font.
<b>Indents:</b>	No indenting is allowed, except where bullets are used (minimally) in a section.
<b>Justification:</b>	The main text must be fully justified. Text within tables must be left justified.
<b>Headers/Footers:</b>	Page numbers should be inserted in centre of the footer.
<b>Borders:</b>	No borders should be inserted around pages of text, only around Tables and Figures as required.
<b>Editing:</b>	The final document must be edited for language and thoroughly proofread for errors before being submitted for the final phase. Proof of editing must be submitted.
<b>Word Processing:</b>	Printing must be done on A4 size pages. The final printing should be done on a high quality laser printer on one side of the page only. Where graphs, charts and/or tables are included, colour printing is required.
<b>Additional:</b>	Your supervisor <i>may</i> require additional technical requirements, which must then be adhered to.

## 5.2.1 Section numbering

Sections are numbered numerically, as per the following example. Note the specific use of CAPITALS and small letters:

### CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

(Text starts here)

#### 2.2 MARKET SEGMENTATION

(Text starts here)

##### 2.2.1 Prerequisites for market segmentation

(Text starts here)

##### 2.2.1.1 Measurable

(Text starts here)

The above numbering format is used for up to four levels, e.g. 2.2.3.2. Thereafter, Roman letters are used, e.g. i, ii, iii, and so forth. Section headings **must not** be underlined.

When a list of subjects, arguments, characteristics, hints and so forth appear in the text, bullets can be used to indicate these. Bullets used throughout the mini-dissertation must be standardised and used as the main bullet as in the style reflected above.

## 5.2.2 Referencing

All sources consulted during the research must be listed alphabetically at the end of the mini-dissertation. The sources must be complete and correctly cited. The objective of referencing is to credit the author and to enable another reader to find the material.

Books, journals, newspapers, electronic information, and so forth are all cited differently. Please note where commas, full stops, brackets, etc., are placed and follow these examples as meticulously as possible. Supervisors should be consulted if there is any uncertainty regarding the referencing required for particular sources.

## 5.2.3 Writing style

A scientific style of writing is required in the mini-dissertation. This style is characterised by objectivity, brevity and systematic presentation.

### Objectivity

It is imperative for the student's mini-dissertation to be objective. The contents should not contain any contentious or inaccurate statements or allegations; sweeping statements; or generalisations. The following example is not acceptable:

“It is common knowledge that...”

The contents of the mini-dissertation should also not contain statements derived from a source that is doubtful or unknown. For this reason, articles appearing on the web, unless part of academic search engines, are **usually unreliable as sources in an academic study and are to be avoided**.

### Brevity

Present the contents of the mini dissertation directly, practically and concisely. Each argument, sentence, word, etc. should be evaluated to determine if it is necessary or not, and if it states exactly what is intended. This requires good preparation and insight into the subject.

No elaborated explanations should be included. Facts should be stated as simplistically and directly as possible. Refrain from using too many adjectives.

## **Systematic presentation**

Information must be presented in a logical format. Arrange sections, sub-sections and paragraphs logically within a chronological flow – one idea should flow naturally from that which precedes it, while transitions between sections are critical. This is called the golden thread of reasoning and it is imperative for ensuring the flow of information within a mini dissertation.

It is usually obtained by ensuring that the sentence of a previous section or paragraph introduces or relates to the next section of paragraph. In this way, a candidate can ensure that interrelated information is always presented together.

## **Structure and style**

The following guidelines will assist candidates in ensuring good structure and style within their mini-dissertations:

- Text should be written as clearly as possible.
- The formality and style should be suited to the audience. The writing style should be matched with that encountered in readings for the literature review in order to make it suitable to an academic audience.
- Keep sentences short – a maximum of 20 words.
- Start a new paragraph for each new idea.

### **5.2.4 Language**

Language quality determines the readability and technical quality of the mini-dissertation and whether it is easy to understand or not.

You should follow the hints below in order to ensure accuracy in this regard:

- The style, spelling and sentence construction should be acceptable. Candidates should use professional, academic language and not make use of slang or other inappropriate language.
- UK spell check should be used. American spelling should not be used.
- The third person should be used if reference is made to the researcher. For example: The researcher noted during the...". First person; i.e. "I" or "me" should never be used in the mini-dissertation.
- Thoughts have to be clear, unambiguous and simple to read. Simplicity will help to guide the reader in understanding the content and framework of the research being conducted.
- A pompous use of language or language that cannot transmit scientific thought due to its colloquial nature must be avoided.
- The candidate must express themselves concisely and succinctly.
- Direct translations should be avoided. At no stage are candidates allowed to copy directly from any source without citing that source. Avoid using too many direct English or Afrikaans quotations. Candidates should only use direct quotations when the source describes an issue in a particularly succinct way.

- Words and concepts must be used within their appropriate context and technical terms must be clearly elucidated.
- The mini-dissertation must read fluently and easily. There must be a 'golden thread' that runs through the mini dissertation. This 'thread' must manifest itself in the title, the objectives, the literature study, the research and the conclusions and recommendations

A proper heading and numbering system must be used. Sections must be divided into meaningful paragraphs. Normally a page should not contain more than 4-5 separate paragraphs.

A very useful rule to follow, states that the candidate; in any section, must announce what he/she wants to say, then say (state) it, and then conclude by saying (summarising) what he/she has said.

If the supervisor recommends a language editor to improve the readability of the mini-dissertation, this must be adhered to. This is a very expensive service, and candidates must budget sufficiently for this.

## 5.2.5 Figures and Tables

Figures and Tables are numbered separately and follow the Chapter number. The first figure in Chapter 2 would thus be numbered Figure 2.1.

Each Figure and Table must be supplied with a short descriptive heading, and the full bibliographic reference (with a page number) should be included, as the following examples illustrate:

### For Figures

(Figure is placed here)

#### Figure 2.1: Infection rate (1992-1996)

**Source:** Adapted from (Full bibliographic reference plus page number).  
(Note that **Source** is in a bold font)

### For Tables

#### Table 2.1: Infection rates (1992-2007)

(Table is placed here)

**Source:** Adapted from...(Full bibliographic reference plus page number)

Every Figure or Table is introduced (mentioned) in the text before it is inserted in the text. The Figure or Table appears immediately after the introduction thereof, or as close as possible after its announcement.

The Figure or Table is always discussed (sometimes briefly or sometimes very elaborately) to clarify its contents or to explain its significance. Figures or Tables cannot be left to 'speak for themselves'.

**NOTE:**

Once each chapter has been completed, candidates need to read through it paragraph by paragraph, and ask the following questions: "Why did I write this?" If there is no satisfactory explanation, this is a clear sign that the candidate must reconsider the inclusion of the paragraph. This process must also be followed with the mini-dissertation as a whole, once the final draft is complete.

## 6. PROCESS

---

The following process should be followed when writing the mini-dissertation:

- You must consult a minimum of 30 primary sources of information (journal articles, Internet sources, etc.) and a minimum of 20 secondary sources of information (textbooks, annual reports, company files, etc.) for the mini-dissertation.
- Before final submission, the mini-dissertation must be edited for language and grammar, and all statistics should be double-checked as complete and correct.
- After approval from your supervisor, the final version of the mini dissertation should be emailed to [research@regenesys.co.za](mailto:research@regenesys.co.za) in MW-Word or compatible format. The Research Manager will use this version for internal and external examination.
- You will also be required to sign a clause that gives the institution copyright to the mini-dissertation.
- The internal examiner will assess the mini-dissertation using the marking framework. Once assessed, the mini-dissertation will be handed to the external examiner.
- If either examiner requires any amendments, then candidates are required to make the amendments and submit the revised final version to the Research Manager at [research@regenesys.co.za](mailto:research@regenesys.co.za).
- The mark obtained for the mini dissertation will be the average of the internal and external examiners' marks, and will constitute the final mark.
- After you have revised your final version, you are required to submit a printed and bound hard copy, which shall be retained in the library, before you may graduate.
- Final results will only be released after review and approval by the Higher Degrees and Research Committee, and after the Research Manager has received both the revised final version of the electronic copy (in MS-Word or compatible format) and the printed and bound copy.
- You will receive an official letter indicating the mark obtained.

### 6.1.1 External examination

External examiners, who are academics from other universities, will examine all mini-dissertations.

When examining a mini-dissertation, examiners will consider the following:

- The topic, problem statement, goal and objectives of the study
- The research methodology
- Sources
- The content
- The summary, conclusions and recommendations; and
- Technical quality

The following matrix is used during the examination process:

CHAPTER/SECTION	DESCRIPTION	% OF REPORT
Introduction	A precise explanation of what research is about and why it is important and interesting, the research questions or hypothesis should also be stated.	10
Literature review	A critical analysis of what other researchers have said on the subject and where the candidate's project fits in.	20
Methodology	An explanation of why the candidate collected certain data, what data was collected, from where it was collected, when it was collected, how it was collected and how it was analysed.	20
Results	A presentation of the candidate's research results.	15
Analysis and discussion	An analysis of the results showing the contribution to knowledge and pointing out any weaknesses/limitations.	20
Conclusions	A description of the main lessons to be learnt from the candidate's study and what future research should be conducted.	10
References	A detailed, alphabetical list of the sources from which information has been obtained, and which have been cited in the text.	5
Appendices	Detailed data referred to, but not shown elsewhere.	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

## 7. MINI-DISSERTATION EVALUATION SCHEDULE

---



Regenesys Management has adopted the following marking schedule for the purposes of examining the mini-dissertation:

<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b> Only relevant criteria are used for your report	<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b> Only relevant criteria are used for your report
<b>OVERALL IMPRESSION OF REPORT</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>
Overall quality of research report	Overall quality of this chapter
Research report was well structured	Analysed findings appropriately
Coherency of chapters	Identified appropriate patterns and themes
Understood research tools and concepts	Findings are coherent and flow logically
Applied research tools and concepts well	Data displayed appropriately
Related theory to discussions well	Research questions addressed
Provided relevant information	
Demonstrated critical analysis	<b>DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS</b>
Arguments flowed logically and coherently	Overall quality of this chapter
	Chapter 3 used to interpret findings
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	Interpretation of findings are analytical
Overall quality of this chapter	Logical and coherent argument
Problem statement is clear and concise	Logical connection between analysis and interpretation of findings
Background to the problem is relevant and places the problem in context	Used literature review to interpret findings effectively
Importance of the study clear and explains who will benefit and how	
Research questions are clear and relevant	<b>CONCLUSIONS &amp; RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
Research objectives are clear and feasible	Overall quality of this chapter
Delineation of the study is clearly outlined	Drew logical deductions based on the Interpretation of Findings
	Conclusions are relevant
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL &amp; CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</b>	Direct relationship between the analysis, interpretation of findings & recommendations
Overall quality of this chapter	Recommendations are relevant and feasible
Introduced this chapter effectively	
Reviewed relevant literature	<b>APPENDIX</b>
Developed a coherent argument	Relevant information included
Theoretical and conceptual framework is clear and relevant to the topic	Clearly headed
Used appropriate sources for this chapter	
Read extensively for this chapter	<b>REFERENCING</b>
Information included relates to the topic	Referenced appropriately
Concluded the chapter appropriately	Did not plagiarise
	Reference page
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	
Overall quality of this chapter	<b>STRUCTURE OF REPORT</b>
Used the appropriate research methodology i.e. qualitative, quantitative, triangulation	Cover page contains relevant information
Provided characteristics of methodology	Abstract/Executive Summary contains relevant information
Explained relevance of methodology	Contains declaration of a learner
Selected appropriate research method(s) for study e.g. case study, interpretative study	Contents page has corresponding page numbers
Provided characteristics of research method(s) selected	Abbreviated all relevant terms
Explained relevance of research method(s)	Defined all relevant terms
Appropriateness of data collecting method(s)	Pages are numbered
Explained the data collecting method(s)	Pages ordered correctly
Used the appropriate sampling techniques	Correct spelling
Sampled appropriately	Correct grammar
Used appropriate methods to analyse data	Overall appearance of research report
Findings trustworthy/valid/reliable	
Provided relevant limitations to the study	
Considered ethical considerations	
Quality of attached data collecting tool i.e. questionnaire, interview schedule	

## 7.1.1 Conclusion

The compilation of the mini-dissertation allows candidates to think and work independently, and as such it can be a very gratifying experience. One's worst enemies in this regard are **time** and **procrastination**. We urge candidates to **plan their research carefully** and to **start immediately**.

Candidates should not hesitate to contact their supervisors if they need any assistance. Regenesys is interested in student research, and if at all possible, the organisation will endeavour to publish such research findings in peer-reviewed journals, with the candidate as the primary author and the supervisor/s as the co-author/s.

## 8. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

---

### *As per Regenesys' Research and Publications Policy*

- 8.1 Regenesys shall retain ownership of research outputs generated from activities and initiatives that are funded and/or supported by the institution. This includes mini-dissertations, Research Reports, books, articles, papers and other forms of scholarly work produced by its staff.
- 8.2 Where research carried out by staff or students of Regenesys leads to patents, Regenesys shall be entitled to a proportion of the royalties. The proportion will be determined from time-to-time by Regenesys Management.
- 8.3 Regenesys shall retain ownership of material contained in mini-dissertations, Research Reports, projects and portfolios of evidence produced by students as part of their studies at Regenesys. On submission of these to the institution, students shall be required to sign a form surrendering ownership to Regenesys.
- 8.4 Where students want to publish articles from the materials arising out of their research, they shall indicate that they are affiliated to Regenesys. All staff and students of Regenesys engaged in research shall have to sign a Regenesys Copyright Agreement.

**Regenesys wishes all its Master's candidates success with the  
compilation of their mini-dissertations.**



The Regenesys logo and following details should appear on your cover page:



## **TITLE OF RESEARCH**

by

Full Name of Student

Student Number

Supervisor's(s') Name (s)

This mini-dissertation is submitted to Regenesys Business School in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Public Administration/Master of

## 10. ANNEXURE B: FINAL SUBMISSION OF MINI-DISSERTATION

---

### 10.1 GUIDE TO BINDING YOUR MINI-DISSERTATION

- One copy must be leather-bound\* between hard covers with a glued spine, for submission to Regenesys.
- \*Only BLACK or BLUE leather.
- Font: 24pt gold Arial for the cover and spine.
- The full title of the Mini-Dissertation and the name of the student must appear on the cover as well as on the spine of the bound copy.
- The size of the spine will depend on the thickness of the mini-dissertation.

Please refer to the editing and printing guidelines issued by the Research Manager from time to time for names and contact details of Editors and Bookbinders in Gauteng.

### 10.2 FRONT COVER

**THE APPLICABILITY OF MODELS IN TEACHING NEGOTIATION SKILLS**

**Lionel Peter Smith**

**MASTER OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT**

**2022**

## 10.3 SPINE

### Example of Spine

The applicability of models in teaching negotiation skills  
LP Smith 2013

## 11. ANNEXURE C: GUIDE TO REFERENCING

---

### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

It is essential, when submitting written work, that the writer accurately references all of the sources that they used to compose the work. The main reason for this is to prevent plagiarism.

The Victoria University of Wellington 2007, defines the term “plagiarism” as:



*“Presenting someone else’s work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. Someone else’s work means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programs and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organisation or structuring of any such material.”*

All academic work, whether written or otherwise, submitted by a learner, is expected to be the result of their own skill and labour. To prevent the act of plagiarism, writers should cite all sources consulted in the text and include a list of all sources used in a list of references or bibliography. A consistent style is essential to ensure that sources consulted during the preparation of activities are correctly referenced and easy for the reader to locate. Refer to the Academic Writing and Referencing Skills Manual for more information on correctly referencing information sources.

### 11.2 AN EXPLANATION OF CITATION AND REFERENCING

During the course of writing an assignment or mini-dissertation, authors commonly refer to other published works in support of their arguments. These references may be obtained from information presented in journal or newspaper articles, government reports, books or specific chapters of books, research dissertations or theses, the Internet, and many other locations.

When a reader encounters a citation in a piece of written work, they are being shown that the words/ideas being referred to do not belong to the author of the work they are reading, but to another author/s. Failing to cite the work of another author constitutes theft of intellectual property and is known as plagiarism. Citation is practised, furthermore, both as evidence of background reading and to support the content used and conclusions drawn by the immediate author. This adds credibility to any writer’s argument.

In summary, accurate citation and referencing should be practised so as to provide credit to the concepts and ideas of other authors; provide the reader (often the marker/ examiner of an assessment) with evidence of the breadth and depth of the reading conducted by the writer; and to enable those who read the assessment to locate the cited references easily.

## 11.3 PLAGIARISM

As already indicated, the term 'plagiarism' refers to candidates presenting the work of others as their own. This constitutes academic theft and is a serious matter, which is penalised in assignment marking. Regenesys, as a reputable academic institution, takes plagiarism very seriously. In instances of repeated plagiarism, or those in which a candidate has committed a severe type of plagiarism (e.g. copying an entire article and submitting it as their own work), the candidate may be suspended or expelled, and any academic qualifications or awards may be revoked.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- The verbatim copying of another person's work without acknowledgement;
- The close paraphrasing of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without acknowledgement; and
- The unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work and/ or the presentation of another person's idea(s) as one's own.

Copying or close paraphrasing with occasional acknowledgement of the source may also be deemed to be plagiarism if the absence of quotation marks implies that the phraseology is the candidate's own.

Students are advised to run a plagiarism check, for which some links are provided below:

<http://www.grammarly.com/?q=plagiarism&gclid=CMf9u8W1mrYCFZDKtAodCIQAcw>

[http://www.turnitoutsafely.com/my\\_applications.html](http://www.turnitoutsafely.com/my_applications.html)

<http://smallseotools.com/plagiarism-checker/>

## 11.4 REFERENCING SYSTEMS

There are many systems for the citation of references. Regenesys uses the APA method. Importantly, whichever method is chosen, must be used consistently throughout.

### 11.4.1 APA Referencing Style

APA stands for American Psychological Association. This style of referencing is widely accepted in the fields of education and business. This method must be used consistently throughout.

## 12. REFERENCES

---

Anglia Ruskin University. 2007, Harvard System of Referencing Guide, [http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm?harvard\\_id=54#54](http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm?harvard_id=54#54) (accessed 17 September 2007).

Curtin University of Technology Library and Information Services. 2007, Harvard Referencing 2007, <http://library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/harvard.pdf> (accessed 10 August 2007).

Emerald Group Publication Ltd. 2013a, 'What is the Harvard Referencing System?', <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/authors/guides/write/harvard.htm?part=1> (accessed 25 May 2013).

Emerald Group Publication Ltd. 2013b, 'Elements of a Harvard style reference', <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/authors/guides/write/harvard.htm?part=2> (accessed 25 May 2013).

Emerald Group Publication Ltd. 2013c, 'How to use the Harvard Referencing system', <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/authors/guides/write/harvard.htm?part=4> (accessed 25 May 2013).

Encarta. 2007, Harvard Referencing, [http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\\_1861691563/Harvard\\_System.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861691563/Harvard_System.html) (accessed 25 September 2007).

Monash University Library. 2006, Harvard Author-Date Style: Citing and Referencing Tutorial, <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/tutorials/citing/harvard-books.html> (accessed 10 August 2007).

Sieberhagen, A. & Bijl, J. 2004, Citation and bibliographic Reference Guide. Pretoria: Library and Information Services, TUT.

Technikon SA. 2002, TSA Reference Method. 6<sup>th</sup> edition. Florida: Technikon SA.

Victoria University of Wellington. 2002, Harvard Referencing System 2007, <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/glossary/> (accessed 25 September 2007).

