

School of Engineering & Design

Electronic and Computer Engineering (ECE)

MSc DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

MSc Programme

2009-2010

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Guide

The Student Handbook issued when you started the course contains the essential information relevant to the Dissertation Stage. The 'MSc Interim Report Guidelines' provided further information and the purpose of this guide is to gather that information together and to supplement it with additional advice appropriate to this stage of your studies.

1.2 Aims and Learning Outcomes of the Dissertation:

Aims of the Dissertation:

- to provide experience in defining and organising a substantial individual investigation;
- to provide experience in assembling and analysing background material relevant to the topic selected;
- to give deeper insight into some aspect of your MSc studies;
- to integrate aspects of earlier studies;
- to demonstrate capabilities justifying the award of a Master's degree;
- to develop effective working relationships with those who contribute to the progress of the project;
- to produce the dissertation within the specified time limit.

The last of these aims is far from trivial. As with any engineering endeavour, your project work is much more likely to satisfy the customers if it appears at the right time. In this case, 'the customers' are you and the University.

Learning Outcomes:

- Use relevant disciplines and techniques in an integrated manner to achieve project objectives;
- Apply sound project management and quality improvement techniques;
- Critically reflect on your learning and development during the project;
- Critically evaluate the methods, processes and techniques used;
- Communicate professional competence, independence, initiative and creativity;
- Communicate your work to a professional standard;

Do not make readers of your dissertation hunt for the attributes that are to be demonstrated - make sure that they are there and that they stand out clearly.

1.3 The Roles of the Project Supervisor

Your project supervisor (see the document "MSc INTERIM PROJECT GUIDELINES") will provide assistance at each stage of your work: in defining the topic of your project; in monitoring your progress through it; in deciding when to wrap the work up; in preparing the dissertation; and in deciding when it is ready for submission.

Your project supervisor will be able to offer advice on technical matters particular to your project. In addition, your supervisor will guide you in the strategy and tactics of the project work and the preparation of your dissertation on it. Very often, however, a project topic is so specialised that you develop a far better understanding of it than your project supervisor.

Together with a second internal assessor, the project supervisor marks the dissertation, although the supervisor will always have a greater understanding of its background through contact with you. The External Examiner for the course moderates the marking of each dissertation.

1.4 Your Role

Even with strong support from your project supervisor, the major responsibility rests with you. It is your job to find a topic suited to your interests and abilities and to the available resources. It is for you to push the project forward and to maintain contact with those assigned to support you. Finally, it is your task to generate - on time - the dissertation crucial to the award of the Master's degree. Do not be put off. Students almost invariably find that this is the most interesting, as well as the most challenging, part of the course.

2 Running Your Project

2.1 Data Acquisition and Analysis

These aspects of the work are considered together, since in practice they are usually interwoven. The 'data' referred to are those that you generate, as distinct from those emerging from the literature. The two kinds of information are sometimes described as *primary data* (those you produce or obtain directly from primary sources) and *secondary data* (those from secondary or tertiary sources).

In some projects the two bodies of information cannot be sharply distinguished. For example, in a design-oriented project, you would be expected to undertake a substantial amount of design synthesis, normally followed by critical analysis of the outcome. Alternatively, the objective of a project might be the compilation and critical assessment of existing data. In such a case there will be an overlap between the stages of literature survey, data acquisition and analysis.

2.1.1 Obtaining Primary Data

The following Tables indicate ways in which primary data can be acquired or generated, along with some major characteristics of these approaches. Since projects vary widely in their fundamental nature, a wide range of methods is surveyed; some generate design data, generally numerical; others establish feasibility, again usually through numeric results; while others generate textual information that is less easily quantified. In each case a question is posed to indicate an important limitation of the particular technique. In selecting methods, and in analysing results, you must identify questions such as these, and try to answer them as clearly as possible.

Sources of Primary Data	
Mathematical analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • precise definition • reproducible • accurate results • applications highly restricted • is the model over-simplified?
Computer modelling and Computer Aided Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can cope with more complex situations • inexpensive • time-consuming • comprehensive information • prone to user errors • how does the model relate to reality?
Laboratory measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good definition of situation • control over variables • should be repeatable • sensible error estimation • are results relevant?

If the objective of your project is the compilation and critical assessment of existing data then there will be an overlap between the stages of literature survey, data acquisition and analysis. The document "MSc INTERIM PROJECT GUIDELINES" has already dealt with conducting a survey. We would note that the survey undertaken during the interim reporting phase is likely to be superficial at best, and the survey process will continue into the project phase. However, discipline must be exercised to ensure that the survey is 'wrapped-up' in a timely fashion.

Projects which are more oriented towards critical survey and review may also look to other primary sources, such as:

Other Sources of Primary Data	
Archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeatable • usually inexpensive • circumstances may not be clearly defined • are results exactly what you need?
Questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • careful design required • care required in introducing them • completion rates often low • is the sample of returns meaningful? • are the results objective?
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anecdotal: good and bad points • time-consuming for both parties • sample size often small • how can the information be structured? • are the results objective?
Direct observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time-consuming • usually requires prior negotiation • behaviour may be altered by observation • are the results objective?

2.2 Analysis: Theory and Practice

In connection with a scholarly investigation, it is possible to distinguish at least three meanings of the word 'analysis':

- 1) It can be the 'analysis' undertaken in formulating the topic of investigation. We will refer to this process as 'requirements definition'.
- 2) The word can be applied to the construction of models representing situations of interest; as in 'computer aided design and simulation', 'mathematical analysis' and 'dimensional analysis'.
- 3) As used in the present context, the processes of analysis are applied to existing data, as in 'statistical analysis' or 'textual analysis'.

Every dissertation is expected to provide evidence of analysis in senses (1) and (3); some will demonstrate analysis in sense (2) as well.

Some often-used methods of analysis, perhaps already known to you, are indicated below. It is your responsibility, with the support of your supervisor, to select those appropriate to your particular investigation.

- classifying and tabulating data
- preparation of histograms and pie-charts
- plotting graphs to determine trends
- selecting of co-ordinate axes to reveal trends or to simplify presentation
- determining statistical values such as mean and variance
- error estimation
- finding best-fit curves
- correlating data series

In addition to these routine processes, you will wish to 'explain' or 'interpret' your presentation of the information that you acquire, or at least to justify the manner in which you present it. In doing this you will need to apply a number of logical criteria to your postulates; some of the more important are identified below. While some of these processes will be part of your everyday thinking, a conscious attempt to meet these criteria should sharpen your analysis of data.

- seek the simplest postulate that matches the facts
- try to disprove your theory, by testing it against further information or fundamental concepts
- try to think of alternatives and to show that yours is most likely
- distinguish between descriptive models (representing the data to hand) and predictive models (purporting to represent a wider range of circumstances)
- recognise that, almost inevitably, your conclusions are approximations (and make an estimate of the likely error)

3 Preparing the Dissertation

We turn now to the preparation of the dissertation; you should keep in mind the information and advice given in the Student Handbook and Guidelines for the Interim Report.

3.1 Synthesis: from Introduction to Conclusions

Your dissertation should present a continuous thread from aims and objectives (stated in the Introduction) to outcomes (stated in the Conclusions). The reader should be able to make a direct comparison between your starting point and the end point; if the objectives and conclusions are placed side-by-side, the relationship between them should be immediately apparent. What is more, at intermediate points (say, in the design or the data-collection process or in the analysis) the steps taken should be clearly related to the objectives, and hence to the end point.

3.2 Shaping your Dissertation

In the preparation of the dissertation, the key to success is control of length. Control of the length of the components is the means of controlling the length of the completed dissertation. **It is recommended that you prepare drafts of parts of the dissertation as you move through the project.**

It may be that the Introduction and Background sections from your Interim Report can be carried over into the dissertation with little alteration. Similarly, the initial survey work may be developed and carried forward. This is an instance of a habit you should seek to develop: building up the final report (in this case, the dissertation) as you proceed.

The recommended process for the control of length, which leads to more efficient writing and more effective work on the project itself, comprises:

Step 1. Accept that 80 pages of text (including diagrams) is a realistic length for an MSc dissertation. Good PhD theses are generally only two or three times that length, and they usually represent three or more years of full-time work. The longer the dissertation, the more chance for errors to creep in, and the harder it is to eliminate them. Remember also that compact reports are required in engineering practice, and examiners will not wish to encourage bad engineering.

Step 2. Once your topic is known, list the headings of the major components of your dissertation, and assign a target number of pages to each component, to make the total come to 80 pages of text (including diagrams). The example below illustrates the process with rather arbitrary numbers inserted for illustration. You may wish to include a few more components. Appendices have been omitted because examiners are not usually interested in material that you define as peripheral. **Use appendices only if they are really necessary, and keep them short.**

Step 3. As your work develops, you may not be able to follow the initial scheme exactly. However, it does provide a target for the amount that should appear under each heading, and is hence a way of controlling the overall length as you write. If one component expands beyond your initial expectations, you should reduce the length of others to keep the length within bounds.

Step 4. You should produce a draft of each component of the dissertation as the relevant work is carried out, subject to revision as new information and new ideas come along. Thus by the time you finish the project work, you will have a draft dissertation of about the right size and shape. You will probably find that the Conclusions are particularly hard to write.

Dissertation Structure	
Components	Guided Pages
House-keeping items, typically: title page, acknowledgements , contents, notation/glossary, lists of figures/tables	6*
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Literature Review	15
Chapter 3: Design and Implement	15
Chapter 4: Experimental Results and Analysis	10
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Further Work	5
References and Bibliography	4
Tables, Charts and Figures	20
TOTAL	80

*may be excluded from page count.

Since the Introduction and Conclusions prove to be especially difficult to write, some further comment is offered here.

3.2.1 The Introduction

This section has the heavy burden of setting the scene for the entire dissertation, but you must arrange that the reader does not find it heavy going. It must tell the reader:

- what the subject is;
- why you are investigating it;
- which aspects you will consider, and why;
- which aspects you will not consider, and why;
- what you hope to find out;
- what your starting point(s) will be
- what assumptions you are making
- how you will present the subject.
- the aims and objectives of the work presented in the report
- the initial time plan for the project work

Restrict the number of Objectives and keep them realistic. You will want to create conclusions that match them point-by-point.

3.2.2 Conclusions and Further Work

- **Conclusions**
Conclusions should be based on an in depth critical analysis of the information presented in the dissertation and should be related to the objectives stated in the introduction.
- **Further Work**
Identify specific additional investigation that is required to be carried out.

It is important to remember that conclusions should only be drawn on the basis of the information presented in the dissertation. Generalised conclusions without supporting evidence are to be discouraged.

3.3 Dissertation Contents

A typical dissertation might comprise the following sections:

Components of the Dissertation		
Component	Contents	
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes the contents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> need not include main results
Acknowledgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> supervisor sponsor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> family others
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lists the starting page and titles of Chapters and sub-sections, Appendices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enables reader to quickly go to a particular section of the dissertation
Glossary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helpful for all readers defining symbols and acronyms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> useful for the examiners
Chapter on Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> context of project aims and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organisation of project
Chapter on literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> literature survey 	
Chapter(s) on Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> approach adopted design methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> data-acquisition systems range of cases examined
Chapter on Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tables and plots methods of presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> description of information
Chapter on Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> methods adopted interpretation of results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> specific interpretations enveloping interpretations

Table continues overleaf.

Components of the Dissertation (continued)		
Typical Component	Contents	
Conclusions and Further Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not simply summarise the dissertation do not recapitulate the analysis or discussion do not introduce new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify specific points that have been clarified or discovered, and specific actions to be taken identify specific additional investigation that is required (and why)
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> only those mentioned (referenced) in the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fully detailed in standard form so reader could obtain a copy
Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any relevant sources not directly mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> also fully detailed in standard form
*Management of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparison of Interim Report with actuality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> final Gantt chart Interim Report to be bound at back
Tables, Charts and Figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> may be incorporated in the text or collated at the back as appendices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> do you need to provide data in both tabular and plotted form?

*Your comments on the time management of the project should discuss how the timing of the actual project work compared with that in the initial plan. You should explain the reasons for any deviations from the initial time plan. This critical reflection on the progress of the project will help you develop your project management skills.

4 Writing the Dissertation

It is to be hoped that you have taken advantage of all advice in preparing the draft dissertation - and, indeed, when producing the interim report earlier in the course. However, it is especially important to take note of all advice as you prepare the final version of your dissertation.

Some matters which merit your special attention at this time are dealt with below.

4.1 Plagiarism and Lack of Attribution

The improper use of the words (or other attributable material e.g. artwork) of other authors is unacceptable on academic grounds and, in some cases, illegal as well. Moreover, some instances of unattributed use of the ideas of others are also academically unacceptable. In view of the importance of these matters, some further comment will be made here.

The unattributed use of someone else's words, or a close approximation to them, is plagiarism. It is quite proper for your dissertation to include directly quoted material, provided that it is clearly identified. One way of identifying quoted material is illustrated by:

"... it is not just the dividend, but some measure of the increment in the value of the company that determines the total return to the shareholder and the total cost to the company." [A J Reynolds (1992), 'The Finances of Engineering Companies', Edward Arnold, London, p. 111]

However, if your work is too frequently punctuated with such quotations, it is likely to be hard to read, and the examiners may feel that your personal contribution is insufficient. **It should be noted that it is illegal to quote extensive passages of copyright material without seeking permission from the holders of the copyright.**

The identification of the ownership of ideas is more subtle. Obviously one need not give credit to Isaac Newton whenever 'momentum' is mentioned. However, it is necessary to give careful consideration when using ideas or methods that have apparently been developed more recently, or which are crucial to the development of your dissertation. For example, if you analyse data that you have collected using a statistical computer package, that fact should be stated in your dissertation. This can be done using words such as:

The statistical properties of these variables were determined using the well-known 'Ramjam' suite of programmes, which generated also the histograms that follow...

Again, if you apply to your data an unusual statistical analysis that has been suggested by an earlier worker, you should make this clear in your dissertation, using words such as:

Following the procedure suggested by Wethered[1], the data have been...

References:

[1] Wethered, A, 'A new statistical method', Journal of Statistics, Vol.12, p.p.34-36, 1997

Such attributes are appropriate, not just as a matter of academic honesty, but because the information may be of use to readers.

4.2 Referencing

A single method should be adopted throughout the dissertation. Word processors often include automatic reference list generation tools, using bracketed or superscripted numbers to relate to numbered references (as in the Wethered example above). If these are used, you should ensure that they update correctly when text alterations are made in subsequent drafts.

A method of referencing that is widely used is the Harvard convention whose structure is illustrated below. This system is convenient in that the references are not numbered, so that the introduction of additional references requires minimal alteration to the text. References in the text are in the form

As Reynolds (1992) has pointed out . . .

If an author, or combination of authors, has in a single year generated more than one work to which you refer, they are identified in the fashion (1980a), (1980b), etc. The convention for reference entries for books and journal articles are shown below. There are special rules for the referencing of articles in conference proceedings, chapters of edited works, and so forth - your supervisor will be able to advise you.

The Harvard Referencing Convention	
Books	
Reynolds, A J (1992), <u>The Finances of Engineering Companies</u> , 1st Edition, London, Edward Arnold, ISBN 0 340 56828 3	
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An International Standard Book Number is assigned to every book as a unique identifier. It can be found on the back of the title page and is sometimes associated with the bar code used for stock control.• Here the book title has been distinguished by underlining; other means are sometimes adopted.
Journal Articles	
Jones, Y Z (1967), "Synthesis of Ladder Networks", <u>IEE Trans. on Circuit Theory</u> , <u>CT-3</u> , No 6, pp 113-119	
Notes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Here both journal title and the volume number (<u>25</u>) have been underlined; other conventions may be encountered.• The titles of journals are usually abbreviated in a standardised fashion. If you do not know the appropriate abbreviation, use the full name.

4.3 Contributions in an Industrial Project

If your project is carried out in industry, it is very important that you clearly identify, in your dissertation:

- the context in which your project was carried out, e.g., as part of a larger group project in the company;
- the contribution of others in the company to the work reported in your dissertation;
- the extent of your own personal contribution.

In every case of an industrial project, the industrial mentor will be required to complete the form given in Appendix II, to certify that your dissertation truly reflects the respective contributions of yourself and others to the work reported.

5 Submission and Assessment of the Dissertation

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT, before the final submission of your dissertation, you obtain your supervisor's comments on a draft version and that you act on them. You should aim to provide a draft to your supervisor in good time to enable him/her to provide any comments and for you to take these into account in the final dissertation. If you do not provide a draft for comments it is very possible that the submitted dissertation will be rejected and a re-submission required. In most cases of re-submission of dissertations, the maximum allowable grade will be C. **It is vital, therefore, that you obtain and act upon your supervisor's comments on a draft version of your dissertation which is provided to your supervisor in good time.**

Specific requirements on the nature of the material that you submit are:

- 1) Two hard copies of the dissertation are required.
- 2) They are to be securely bound and presented.
- 3) The front cover and inside front cover should follow the example format given in Appendix I of this guide.
- 4) About 80 pages of text including diagrams.
- 5) The Interim Report should be bound in at the back.
- 6) The text must be printed on A4-size paper.
- 7) The text should be double-spaced, with a 40 mm margin on the left-hand side of the pages and 20 mm top and bottom margins.
- 8) There is no restriction on font. Times Roman is acceptable; type must not be less than 12 point.

Although the overall structure and content of the dissertation are not prescribed by regulation, Section 3 of this Guide has indicated what is expected.

5.1 Assessment of the Dissertation

Taught Masters Dissertations Assessment Form

Student ID no.		
Student Name		
Supervisor Name		
Second Reader Name		
Programme		
Module code		
Project title		
Date Submitted		

Please make reference to the Grade descriptors for each criteria when completing this form. The location of the evidence of the criteria must be identified. Primary evidence should be obtained from the Dissertation but other supporting evidence may be considered e.g. interim report or poster presentations assessments/Oral assessment. Markers should indicate where evidence has been identified when completing comments below.

Assessment Criteria	Grade Indicator
Project organisation, Planning and articulation of the project aim. (Evidence should be evident in dissertation and interim report) <input type="checkbox"/> (E/F) Most of the dissertation and other evidence poorly supports the project aim and fails to demonstrate satisfactory project design and management. <input type="checkbox"/> (D) Provides some critical understanding of the project aim and demonstrates some ability in project design and management. <input type="checkbox"/> (C) Demonstrates a substantial understanding of the topic aim, and a significant competence in project design and management. <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Clearly demonstrates a well-developed, critical and comprehensive understanding of the project aim and a high degree of competence in project design and management <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Clearly demonstrates a sophisticated, critical and thorough understanding of the project aim and excellence in project design and management. Comments:	
Technical and theoretical understanding of referenced material. (Evidence should be obtained primarily from the dissertation and interim report) <input type="checkbox"/> (E/F) No evidence of any critical evaluation of relevant reading. <input type="checkbox"/> (D) Evidence of understanding and identification of relevant reading with some critical understanding demonstrated. <input type="checkbox"/> (C) Evidence of significant degree of competence in interpreting and communicating relevant complex reading material. <input type="checkbox"/> (B) Evidence of high degree of competence in interpreting, evaluating and communicating relevant complex reading material. <input type="checkbox"/> (A) Demonstrates excellence in the interpretation, advanced evaluation and communication of complex reading material. Comments:	

<p>Engineering analysis, synthesis & Technical achievement. (Evidence should be obtained primarily from the dissertation)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (E/F) Unsatisfactory theoretical work, with very little evidence to demonstrate engineering analysis or application.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (D) Demonstrates a degree of competence in the use of theory, methodologies and tools to analyse and synthesis solutions to complex problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (C) Demonstrates a significant degree of competence in the use of theory, methodologies and tools to analyse and synthesis solutions to complex problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (B) Demonstrates a high degree of competence in the use of theory, methodologies and advanced tools to analyse and synthesis solutions to complex problems</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (A) Demonstrates excellence and authoritative grasp of relevant theory, methodologies and advanced tools to analyse and synthesis solutions to complex problems</p> <p>Comments:</p>	
<p>Discussion of Results and Conclusions (Evidence should be obtained primarily from the dissertation)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (E/F) Unsatisfactory. Very little or no attempt to directly address project objectives.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (D) Demonstrates relevant and well argued evaluation and conclusions but with limited critical evaluation supported by evidence.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (C) Coherent critical evaluation and conclusions supported by evidence demonstrating a substantial understanding of the topic.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (B) High level of focus in communicating critical evaluation and conclusions, well supported with evidence and demonstrates high level of insight into future developments.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (A) Authoritative evaluation and conclusions, demonstrating exceptional clarity in relying in-depth evaluation of all dissertation outcomes and future developments.</p> <p>Comments:</p>	
<p>Overall Project Grade. Overall grade is based on the markers review of the portfolio of evidence and must match the University grade descriptors. The overall ability of the student to communicate complex technical information and complex arguments clearly, succinctly and logically thought-out the portfolio of evidence should be considered.</p> <p>General Comments:</p>	

Grade Descriptors

Grade

A

Clearly demonstrates a sophisticated, critical and thorough understanding of the topic. Provides evidence of originality of thought and clearly demonstrates the ability to develop a highly systematic and logical or insightful argument. Demonstrates excellence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, tools, etc., to analyse and synthesise at an advanced level. Shows exceptional clarity, focus and cogency in communication.

Grade

B

Clearly demonstrates a well-developed, critical and comprehensive understanding of the topic. Clearly demonstrates the ability to develop a systematic and logical or insightful argument. Demonstrates a high degree of competence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, tools, etc., to analyse and synthesise at an advanced level. Shows a high level of clarity, focus and cogency in communication.

Grade

C

Demonstrates a critical and substantial understanding of the topic. Demonstrates the ability to develop a systematic and logical or insightful argument. Demonstrates a significant degree of competence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, tools, etc., to analyse and synthesise at an advanced level. Provides evidence of clarity, focus and cogency in communication.

Grade

D

Provides evidence of some critical understanding of the topic. Demonstrates some ability to develop a structured argument. Demonstrates a degree of competence in the appropriate use of the relevant literature, theory, methodologies, practices, tools, etc., to analyse and synthesise, but not at Masters level. Provides evidence of effective communication.

Grade

F

Work that does not demonstrate achievement of some learning outcomes defined for a Graduate Level Pass, but which provides strong evidence that Grade D is within the reach of the student.

5.1.2 Final Awards

The Board of examiners meets to determine the final award classification to be recommended to Senate. Final assessment will be on the basis of grades as shown below:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Master degree with distinction (180 credits): | AAAABBCC, and dissertation is A |
| 2. Master degree with merit (180 credits): | BBBBCCCC, and dissertation is B |
| 3. Master degree (180 credits): | CCCCDDDD, and dissertation is C |
| 4. Postgraduate diploma (120 credits): | CCCCDDDD, no dissertation |
| 5. Postgraduate certificate (60 credits): | CCDD, no dissertation |
| 6. Graduate diploma (120 credits): | DDDEEEE, no dissertation |
| 7. Graduate certificate (60 credits): | DDEE, no dissertation |

Qualifying students may, at the discretion of the Board of Examiners, be required to revise the dissertation and present it on one further occasion if it is judged to be of an insufficiently high standard.

5.2 Submission Timing

The normal deadline for submission of dissertation is 31st March 2011. Dissertations will be discussed at the June 2011 Exam Board Meeting. You will be informed of the result of your dissertation and award recommendation after this meeting.

If you cannot manage to submit your dissertation by 31st March 2011, you are entitled to have another 4 months extension until 31st July 2011. You will need to pay a continuation fee for the extension. Should you have not submitted your dissertation after 31st July 2011, then you will be asked to fill in a mitigating circumstances form to give the reasons together with any evidence to support your case.

Please note to you that work related commitments cannot be taken for mitigating circumstances. If you foresee that you would not be able to complete your dissertation by the final deadline which is 31st July 2011 due to full time employment, you can ask for abeyance.

5.3 Abeyance

What happens if I need to take time out from my course?

It is possible to go into Abeyance, which means you would suspend your studies for a specified period of time

If you need to take some time out due to some reason, you might be able to take a period of 'abeyance' and then come back to your course.

Students wishing to enter a period of abeyance must apply to the authorised member of staff for approval using a Student Record Amendment Form (SRAF) available from the taught programmes office. Having been advised by the authorised member of staff regarding the next or most appropriate point for return to the programme following abeyance, the student will confirm to them the date of return from abeyance. The following senate regulation applies:

Students may be permitted, at the discretion of the authorised member of staff, to suspend their studies for normally not more than a total of one academic year (full-time students) or two academic years (part-time students).

5.4 Dissertation Submission

Please post two hard-copies of your dissertation to:

Mrs Harjit Nijjer
School of Engineering & Design
Postgraduate Office
Michael Sterling Building Room ML056
Brunel University
Uxbridge, Middlesex
UB8 3PH,
UK
Email: Harjit.Nijjer@brunel.ac.uk
Tel: +44 1895 267076

6 Appendix 1

Example layout of

Front cover followed by statement on plagiarism

School of Engineering & Design
Electronic & Computer Engineering



MSc Distributed Computing Systems
Engineering

Brunel University

The Title of the Dissertation

Your Name

Your Supervisor's Name

Month/Year

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science

School of Engineering & Design
Electronic & Computer Engineering



MSc Distributed Computing Systems
Engineering

Brunel University

The Title of the Dissertation

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