



ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Guidelines for the Master's Dissertation

MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA)



**Decision of the coordinating committee of the postgraduate program of studies
number 12/12-1-2024**

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Introduction

The preparation of a dissertation is mandatory for the completion of postgraduate studies. According to the regulation of this Master's programme, any student who successfully completes the requirements of the previous two semesters is entitled to register and start the process of writing a dissertation. The postgraduate dissertation is completed within the third semester of study and may be continued up to the maximum permissible limit of study provided for by the regulations, i.e. a maximum of two semesters, renewed every semester with a declaration by the student following a progress report by the supervisor and approval by the General Assembly. The length of the dissertation should be between 15,000 and 20,000 words. This number of words does not include the cover page, abstract, contents, bibliography, and appendices.

The Dissertation in the Postgraduate Studies Programme

1 Writing a dissertation is compulsory. The topics of the dissertations fall within the subjects of the MSc. 2 The dissertation is equivalent to 30 ECTS and is completed in the 3rd semester of study. Special attention is given to the preparation of quality dissertations that can provide students with important skills and that can inspire innovative solutions while recognizing the potential and dynamics of postgraduate students.

Professors' Responsibilities and Duties

1 The supervision of the dissertation is an obligation of the faculty members of the school participating in the MSc. The dissertation is carried out under the guidance of a supervisor.

2 Topics are proposed by the professors of the MSc programme and are posted on the programme's website at the end of the spring semester. These topics must include a title and a brief description of the topic and possibly relevant prerequisite modules and/or required skills as well as an indicative bibliography.

3 The Master's dissertation is a product of cooperation between the student and the supervisor. Copyright is defined in Law 2121/1993, GG vol. A25 and subsequent provisions. The regulation is posted online (<https://www.opi.gr/vivliothiki/2121-1993>) and is, as stated, updated up to the law. 4996/2022 (GG vol. A 218/24.11.2022)”.

4 Faculty members announce and supervise enough topics to cover all students applying for a dissertation. The time required to complete the dissertation has been estimated at one semester of intensive work.

Postgraduate Dissertation Allocation Procedure

1 After the topics are made public, students are informed by email sent by the MSc Administration Office. Interested students can browse the offered dissertation topics. Also, the MSc professors may make individual and/or group presentations of the posted dissertation topics upon announcement on the platform.

2 Postgraduate students submit an application to the Coordinating Committee (CC) indicating the proposed title of the Master's Dissertation and the proposed supervisor. The CC appoints the supervisor of the MSc Dissertation and establishes a Three-member Examination Committee for the approval of the dissertation, one member of which is the supervisor. The members of the Three-member Examination Committee must have the same or related scientific specialization as the subjects of the MSc.

Postgraduate Dissertation Preparation - Regulatory provisions

1 During the preparation of their dissertation, students must comply with the rules (e.g. frequency and mode of collaboration and presentation, timing, and type of deliverables, etc.) set by the MSc professors who supervise them at the beginning of the dissertation.

2 Interruption of the dissertation is allowed only for very serious reasons, which are documented in the student's application and subject to the agreement of the supervisor. The supervisor may also interrupt the writing of the dissertation if they find

the student's performance to be inadequate. The supervisor shall notify the CC in writing of the interruption, stating the relevant reasons.

3 In exceptional cases, if there is an objective impediment or an important reason, the supervisor or a member of the Examination Committee may be replaced after a decision of the Assembly of the School. Replacement is provided for in cases of educational leave, retirement, resignation or other personal reasons. The Coordinating Committee recommends to the Assembly of the School of Economics the replacement of the supervisor or member. The final decision is taken by the Assembly of the School of Economics.

4 In special cases (health issues, students with disabilities, etc.), the allocation and preparation of the dissertation is carried out in accordance with the legislation concerning the respective case.

Writing - Examination of Dissertation

1 The word count must be 15,000 to 20,000 words. The total word count does not include the cover page, abstract, contents, bibliography, and appendices. The preferred font is Times New Roman (font size 12). Spacing must be 1.5 and spacing before and after each paragraph should be 6. Finally, text should be justified. On the website of the Postgraduate Studies Programme there is a posted template which must be followed, so that there is uniformity in the submitted dissertations. Dissertations must be written in English. The supervisor of the dissertation is responsible for proofreading and for checking the implementation of the corrections by the postgraduate student. The timeline for corrections may not exceed one (1) calendar month. Three copies of the revised dissertation shall be submitted to the Three-Member Examination Committee.

2 A prerequisite for the support of the dissertation is the successful completion of ten (10) modules of the Master's degree programme.

3 Dissertations are examined in February for the autumn semester and June or September for the spring semester according to deadlines set by the CC. In case of failure to complete the dissertation by February, and provided that they have successfully completed ten modules, students shall renew their registration in the fourth

semester with the corresponding payment of tuition fees for "continuation of the Master's Dissertation" by submitting a progress report signed by their supervisors.

4 Students shall submit the full text of their dissertations to the members of the Three-Member Examination Committee at least 15 days before the examination date.

5 Students must respond to any suggestions from the members of the Three-Member Examination Committee.

6 The Master's dissertations is defended before the Three-Member Examination Committee at a date and place determined by the CC. Each student has 15 minutes for the presentation of the dissertation, to briefly present their work and more specifically the main points of each section. The Three-member Examination Committee approves and grades the dissertation. The dissertation will be graded with a grade of ten (10) only in the case that a published work has been produced or an original work has been submitted for publication in reputable journals or conferences. After its approval by the Committee, the Master's Dissertation is submitted in electronic format (pdf file) to the library of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and is posted on the website of the relevant School. If the assessment of the dissertation is poor, the postgraduate student may submit the dissertation incorporating the remarks for its improvement within a period of time determined by the Three-Member Examination Committee. If the second assessment is again poor, the postgraduate student loses the right to be awarded the Diploma of Postgraduate Studies (Master's Degree).

Intellectual Property - Plagiarism

1. Plagiarism is "the use of the idea and text of another scientist/author without clear identification of the source of the information¹.

2. Plagiarism and the appropriation of foreign achievements are prohibited, and we must act in a manner that complies with the requirements of the applicable

¹ <https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/plagiarism.html>

<https://www.lib.auth.gr/el/%CF%80%CE%BD%CE%B5%CF%85%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AC-%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%B9%CF%8E%CE%BC%CE%B1%CF%84%CE%B1-%CE%BB%CE%BF%CE%B3%CE%BF%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%AE>

legislation on the protection of intellectual property and patented inventions (Art. 1733/1987, 1883/1990, 2029/1992, 2128/1993, Decree 77/1988, 16/1991, 321/2001, Law 8121/1993).

3. Plagiarism in the writing of any scientific work and of course in the writing of a dissertation is an academically, ethically, and legally reprehensible practice.

4. Therefore, any use of an original or directly translated text should be marked by the author of the dissertation in an appropriate way (e.g. "quotation marks and italics"), should only involve a small number of words within the permissible limits of the law and should be accompanied by a bibliographical reference to the source.

5. Each dissertation should explicitly state on the second page that: "In full awareness of the consequences of copyright law, I expressly declare that this Master's dissertation, as well as the electronic files and source codes developed or modified in the context of this dissertation, is exclusively the product of my personal work, does not infringe any form of intellectual property rights, personality rights and personal data of third parties, does not contain works/contributions of third parties for which permission of the authors/owners is required and is not the product of partial or total copying of the work/contributions of third parties. The places where I have used ideas, text, files and/or sources of other authors are clearly indicated in the text with appropriate citation and the relevant reference is included in the bibliographical references section with full description. I fully assume, individually and personally, all legal and administrative consequences that may arise if it is proven, over time, that this work or part of it does not belong to me because it is the product of plagiarism."

6. In recognition of the importance of the integrity of the dissertation, the final text of the dissertation is checked by the supervisor for signs of plagiarism using to this end the electronic system available at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Turnitin). Any paper showing duplication with other sources will be revised on the supervisor's recommendation.

7. The student's citation of sources is not in itself a sufficient condition for the acceptance of the work, as the latter cannot be a general compilation of acknowledged references, even within the permitted word limits of the law, but the product of personal understanding, interpretation, analysis and collection of data and ideas.

Structure of the dissertation

The structure of a dissertation should take the following form:

Front page

The front page should include the title of the postgraduate programme, the title of the dissertation, and the student's name,

Acknowledgments (if any)

If the student wishes to thank certain people who have contributed in any way to the preparation of the dissertation, this should be done on a separate page after the cover page.

Abstract - key words (English and Greek)

The abstract includes the purpose of the dissertation, the research methodology and the findings of the dissertation. This section should be given special attention by students as sometimes they mistakenly treat it as being similar to the introduction section, stating only the purpose of the paper. The length of the abstract should not exceed 250-300 words.

Contents

The table of contents includes the list of chapters and subchapters, the bibliography and possible appendices. It is preferable for students to do this automatically – following Word guidelines - as it is the most appropriate, presentable, and accurate way of presenting the contents.

List of Tables (if available)

If there are several tables within the text, the student may make a list on a separate page with specific references to the page on which the tables are found.

List of Figures (if any)

Similarly to the previous section, the student may make a list of figures and their corresponding pages on a separate page.

Introduction
This section is very important as the student should describe the topic in a clear and comprehensible way, summarize the subject and highlight the purpose, importance, and significance of the topic under investigation. In general, the introduction constitutes 10-15% of the total length of the paper.

Literature Review

In this section, the student should conduct a thorough review of the literature on the topic, including previous research, any reviews that have been conducted, and/or the research hypotheses in the case of empirical research. This section is usually the most extensive section of the dissertation in terms of word count.

Methodology

In the methodology section, the student should describe how the topic was investigated. Specifically, they should indicate how the research was conducted on the population or sample and how the data was collected, as well as the research tools used. If a literature review rather than an empirical study was conducted, then there should be an extensive description of the methodology and the sources used to search and find the relevant literature.

Results

In this section, the findings of the empirical research (or literature review) should be presented through statistical or other analysis. Typically, in this section students should present the results using appropriate tables, charts or graphs. However, these should not be used indiscriminately especially if they are not relevant to the substance of the topic-research hypotheses.

Discussion and Conclusions

The discussion section includes a description of the findings of the dissertation and their connection to previous research or work. In this context, students are asked to comment on whether their findings are consistent or inconsistent with those of other research and, by extension, how their own research furthers the available literature. In addition, students should discuss possible practical applications and recommendations to organizations/businesses and managers arising from the specific findings of the dissertation. Finally, the discussion section usually includes the limitations of the research and suggestions for future research. Regarding the first, both methodological limitations and other more general limitations of the research should be highlighted. Finally, suggestions for future research refer to possible proposals that the author of the dissertation will make to the subsequent scholars-researchers of the topic under examination to contribute in turn to covering an existing niche in the literature.

End note (optional)

Finally, the epilogue section should provide a brief and clear summary of the purpose, methodology and findings of the dissertation. In some cases, the dissertation does not include an epilogue and concludes with a discussion and conclusions section.

References

Bibliographical references contribute significantly to the scientific and quality of the dissertation. The recording of bibliographic references and citations (which will be discussed below) should follow the Harvard bibliographic citation system.

Appendices

In case the student wishes to cite material that is considered useful for the reader but is not appropriate to include in the main body of the text because it would interrupt the flow of the text, they can do so in the last section of the dissertation entitled Appendices. Such examples may be a questionnaire, an interview, etc.

General instructions Text Formatting

Preferred font is Times New Roman (font size 12). Spacing must be 1.5 and spacing before and after each paragraph should be 6. Finally, text should be justified.

List of bibliographical references and citations (footnote)

Bibliographical references (citations) are found within the body of the paper and refer to the source from which the author has drawn the information provided in the text. References are placed at the end of the text (as mentioned above) and refer to the full citation of the bibliography. Bibliographic references (and correspondingly, bibliographic citations) are of great importance for the preparation of a dissertation as it enables the reader to find the sources, to confirm them and to further study the topic under investigation. Primarily, however, the citation of bibliographical references is related to the quality of the student's bibliographical review and the avoidance of the phenomenon of plagiarism, i.e. the copying of someone else's work, as well as the use of someone else's work - published or not - without the relevant reference. The citation of any supporting material, even from the candidate's own studies, without the reference, may constitute grounds for a decision by the relevant departmental assembly to remove the candidate from the programme.

At this point it should be made clear to the student that to avoid this phenomenon they should refer to any information, knowledge, or thought that is not the product of their own intellectual effort. Finally, quotations should be used sparingly, even if - as should be the case - bibliographical references are included. In fact, when quoting verbatim, the quotation should be in quotation marks and the reference should also include the specific page.

In view of the above, it is suggested that students should resort to paraphrasing what they read when they want to use it in their text while, of course, retaining the meaning or central idea.

As mentioned above, the suggested bibliographic citation system is Harvard. Below are some examples of bibliographic citations and references in Harvard style.

References are in brackets and in alphabetical order.

- When there is one author:
 - o According to Johnson (2017)... or According to the findings of an earlier study (Johnson, 2017)
- When there are two authors:
 - o According to Johnson and Jackson (2017) ... or According to certain authors. (Johnson & Jackson, 2017)
- When there are three or more authors:
 - o According to Johnson et al. Johnson and Johnson (2017) ... or According to certain authors. (Johnson et al., 2017)
- When there are two or more citations in the same sentence:
 - o According to certain authors. (Bakker & Avolio, 2018; Johnson et al., 2017)
- When it is a transfer of an original quote:
 - o Job satisfaction is defined as " " (Spector, 1985, p. 695)

Bibliographic references are placed at the end of the text, on a separate page and in alphabetical order by suffix. •Bibliographic reference to a scientific journal:

- o Meyer, J.P., Morrin, A.J. and Wasti, S.A. (2018), "Employee commitment before and after an economic crisis: A stringent test of profile similarity", Human Relations, Vol. 71 No. 9, pp. 1203-1233.

- Bibliographic reference to a book:

- o Harrow, R. (2005), *No Place to Hide*, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY.
- Bibliographic reference to conference proceedings:
 - o Jakkilinki, R., Georgievski, M. and Sharda, N. (2007), "Connecting destinations with an ontology-based e- tourism planner", in *Information and communication technologies in tourism 2007 proceedings of the international conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2007*, Springer-Verlag, Vienna, pp. 12-32.
- Bibliographic reference to an electronic source:
 - o Castle, B. (2005), "Introduction to web services for remote portlets", available at: <http://www-128.ibm.com/developerworks/library/ws-wsrp/> (accessed 12 November 2007).
- Bibliographic reference to a newspaper:
 - o Smith, A. (2008), "Money for old rope", *Daily News*, 21 January, pp. 3-4.

Useful tips

In conjunction with the above, the following useful tips aim to help students improve the writing and general presentation of their dissertations. First, the text should be well written and legible with good structure and clear writing. To avoid grammatical and spelling mistakes as much as possible, the corresponding spellcheck should be made at the end of the writing process using the Microsoft Word processor (F7). In addition, paragraphs should be neither too short nor too long. Finally, each chapter of the paper should preferably start on a separate page and not as a continuation of the previous chapter on the same page.