**MSc Research Dissertation Kedge BS**

1. Why do a research dissertation?
2. Scheduling
3. Support system
   1. Technological resources
   2. Tutor
   3. Methodology seminar and associated supports
4. Practical advice and assessment scales
5. Defence
6. Appendices
7. **Why do a research dissertation?**

- The research dissertation is a key part of the validation for an MSc (Conférence des Grandes Ecoles regulation)

'*The research dissertation is a special way to acquire knowledge and training through research. The chosen topic must correspond to a real concern of researchers in the domain but should not be completely disconnected from the needs of companies.*'

- A triple opportunity

- apply what you have learned

- develop an expertise

- acquire a basic culture and thoroughness in your working methods

1. **Scheduling**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tasks/Months**  **MSc and MS** | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | June | July | Aug | Sept N+1 | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan |
| Lessons |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Thesis and dissertation methodology lessons |  |  |  |  | Early  Jan |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Choice of tutor |  |  |  |  | mid-Jan |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Approval of core issue |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Approval of review plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Monitoring of work |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Defence organisation and defence |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Delivery of written work |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Report from experience at company |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Accreditation committee |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pass 1st semester |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pass 2nd semester |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Support system**
   1. Technological resources: There will be a presentation at the start of the year about technological resources available to students which will be useful for the dissertation (mainly academic and professional databases).
   2. The tutor. The student is monitored by a tutor for the duration of their research project. The practical terms are communicated by each campus.
   3. Methodology seminar and associated supports. At the start of the first semester students attend a methodology seminar led by an academically qualified tutor.

1. **Practical advice for formatting**

**Citations**

At times the student must explicitly quote a passage of text. Quoting in full, without rephrasing, avoids suspicion from the reader (quotes and abbreviations in Latin are always in italics). It is important to remember that claiming credit for somebody else's work is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a fraudulent act liable to sanctions which may even go so far as exclusion. Furthermore, any reproduction in full or in part (whether it be a few words, three lines or more than a page) of somebody else's text and any citing of ideas must be accompanied by the exact reference of their source, whether the original text comes from a printed or electronic document. You cannot use a reference cited by another reference.

An argument supported by a citation can have several benefits:

- Gives authority

Referring to a scientifically recognised authority helps the reader to subscribe to the idea and therefore reduces the number of possible objections they may have.

- Saves time by sparing your effort

In some cases quoting can allow you to use somebody else's astute wording. This is a clever way to combine authority with saving time.

- Establishes a discussion base

When they are concise, citations can be used to open debate for example. The writer, not being the author of this text, appears more objective and gives the impression of starting from the existing statement and not their own.

- Guarantees reliability

The citations should come from several sources. This plurality gives an impression of openness and reliability of the view held. Abbreviated quotations should be avoided as, out of their context, they distort the initial message. The quotation must be accurate. The only permitted modification is the omission of some words or phrases, generally replaced by a suspension point between square brackets [...].

For long quotations (several lines), it is advisable to indent the text from the left and right margins. The end punctuation is placed inside the quotation marks when it belongs to the quotation and outside when the quotation is incorporated within the writer's sentence.

It is basically therefore advisable to quote the reference text correctly, meaning exactly, using the full sentences. These quotations will systematically direct the reader to a footnote.

**Titles, headings and numbering**

• Role of headings and titles

The headings must be the same in the summary as in the body of the file.

Deciding on titles engages the writer and expresses both the maturity of their thinking and their approach towards the reader. All headings (titles of sections and sub-sections) therefore require consideration throughout the writing process. However it is not until the end, once the whole text has been written, that they must be definitively adopted.

Due to literary tradition which does not allow the use of titles, the French do not generally know how to best use them. Academic conventions favour sections linked by transition phrases. However, these titles help to guide the reader, possibly subtly influencing the way they read it.

The titles need to convey a precise idea of the domain that will be addressed: they therefore need to be sufficiently succinct. Titles using imagery must only be used, if at all, for minor subdivisions.

Titles must reflect real content. It is therefore advisable to reread it and in this way avoid extrapolating or hyping.

The titles should outline the major focuses of the thinking. It is a good idea to keep to a consistent style (comparable length and form).

• Informative titles and argumentative titles

Informative title and objectivity: As the name suggests, informative titles give information. An effective informative title must therefore perfectly define the field of the message to be conveyed.

Argumentative title and involvement: This is no longer about informing but rather about convincing the reader of the importance and relevance of the analysis undertaken.

• Titles and grammatical construction

Titles of the same level have the same grammatical construction. Therefore when the first main title of a piece of written work adopts a particular grammatical construction:

- sentence beginning with an article,

- sentence beginning with a noun,

- sentence beginning with an infinitive, it is important to keep the same grammatical construction for all titles of the same level.

However, the article can sometimes make a title harder to read. If every title begins with one, it sometimes prevents the reader from quickly grasping the content. The key word is then read afterwards. It is therefore advisable to enter articles when the writer wishes to emphasise a particular theme.

The sub-sections can follow their own grammatical logic, even if the construction is different from the main titles.

Grammatically consistent titles convey a strong impression of thoroughness.

It is recommended to alternate between informative and argumentative titles. Only using argumentative titles in a project would suggest a lack of effort. The main titles can be argumentative with the others informative. This change of rhythm in the writing will help to keep the reader's attention.

The type of numbering must be suited to the target audience.

You can adopt a numerical structure. For example:

1. Financial analysis10

1.1. Financial analysis

1.1.1. Profitability

a) …

b) …

1.1.2. …

1.2. Marketing analysis

However, this type of numbering may put off readers of a more literary persuasion. You may then think about numbering such as:

I.

A.

1.

a.

It must be split into no more than four levels, as in the example above, and the last level must be at least two pages. The process can be automated in the word processor.

Tables, graphs, text boxes and illustrations should have a title (centred) and will also be numbered. If needed, the writer may provide an index of tables/graphs/text boxes/illustrations before the table of contents.

Choice of dissertation title

The choice of title for the applied research dissertation is very important. It must be:

- clear: the title must unambiguously inform the reader about the content of the document;

- precise: avoid too general wording;

- concise: the title should not be too long;

- exact: it must correspond to the content of the dissertation.

The definitive title is often decided when the writing is complete. It must not be a repetition of the core issue.

**Footnotes**

The notes make up part of the body of the dissertation. They appear at the foot of the page, in a smaller font, with a referencing system. The student may use a footnote to add a short additional piece of information. The information presented as a footnote should not be crucial for understanding the body of the text.

**Sources used**

All sources used in the course of the dissertation work are inserted in the body of the text. This means the work can be verified and allows the reader to do further research. The choice of documents cited should give the reader reference points and also justify the ideas conveyed.

A bibliography is a set of bibliographical references listed according to certain criteria for use as a reference point, identification and access. It must identify the document and its medium and say whether it refers to part of a document or a full document. It must have a standardised order and presentation.

The references are listed in alphabetical order by author.

The presentation conventions for bibliographical references are as follows:

BOOK

SURNAME First name (year), Title, Publisher, Place of publication, year of publication.

VERNETTE Eric (1998), L'essentiel du Marketing, Marketing fondamental, Editions d'Organisation, Paris.

In case of multiple authors (mention up to 3 authors):

CADIN Loïc, GUERIN Francis, (1999), La Gestion des ressources humaines, Paris, Dunod, coll."Topos".

Beyond that:

SURNAME First name, SURNAME First name (et alii) (year), Title, Publisher, Place of publication, year of publication.

Note: first names can be reduced to their initials followed by a dot.

If referring to an organisation:

WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION, Title, Publisher, Place of publication, year of publication.

Citation of a chapter from a collective work

SURNAME First name (year), "Title of text", in SURNAME First name, Title of collective work, Publisher, Place of publication, year of publication, start and end pages.

BRUNHES B. (1999), "les différentes formes de flexibilité" in CADIN Loïc, GUERIN Francis, La Gestion des ressources humaines, Paris, Dunod, coll."Topos", pp. 166-167.

JOURNAL ARTICLES

SURNAME First name, (year) "Article title", *Journal Title*, volume number, precise date, start and end pages of article.

CADIN L., TERRADE J. L. (1991), "La vie d'un système d'appréciation ou la gestion continue du changement", *Ressources Humaines*, n° 22, January, pp. 7-8.

DISSERTATION

SURNAME First name, Title, Publication, Place of publication, year of publication.

GUEVREMONT, A. (2004), L'impact des caractéristiques des politiques d´échange et de remboursement des détaillants sur les réactions des consommateurs, Master's dissertation, Montreal, HEC Montreal.

PAPER PUBLISHED IN PROCEEDINGS

SURNAME, First name of speaker (year). "Title of paper, of conference", Colloquium proceedings Name of colloquium, Town, Country (if lesser known town)

E.g.: WESEMAEL, François (2005). "1955-2005 : 50 ans de science reflétés dans le Petit Larousse illustré", Colloquium proceedings from the 2èmes journées québécoises des dictionnaires, Montreal, October.

RESEARCH PAPERS AND OTHER REPORTS

SURNAME First name, (year), Title, Type of publication, Place of publication.

|  |
| --- |
| HOULE, A. (1994), Le rôle de l’information chez les gestionnaires des P.M.E. exportatrices du Québec*,* research report, Montreal, École des hautes études commerciales. |

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS

Journal article

SURNAME First name. "Article title", Journal title, [online], date [viewed on 25th November 2008] pp. Available at http:// address

RAMONET I., "Médias en crise : de la qualité de l'information dépend le citoyen", Monde diplomatique [online] January 2005 [viewed 6th September 2009], pp. 26-27, available at

http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2005/01/11796

**Presentation conventions**

In principle the MSc Marketing applied research dissertation culminates with a document written in French. It follows the usual forms of a scientific paper. The applied research dissertation is 80 to 100 pages, not including appendices. It must be bound and respect the following instructions:

- One-sided printing on 80-gram white paper, except for the cover (card),

- thermal binding,

- justified text,

- 2 centimetre margins, except on the left where an extra 1cm is required for the binding,

- font either: TIMES NEW ROMAN, body 12 (10 for footnotes) or ARIAL, body 10 (9 for footnotes),

- spacing: 1.5 line spacing,

- page numbers at bottom right,

- text and titles in black, colour only being used for any illustrations (photos, maps, graphs, etc.).

TYPOGRAPHY RULES

Proper nouns are not to be written in capitals but in lowercase with a capital at the start of the word. Acronyms such as O.M.C. are to be written with separating dots between the letters.

There is still a question over the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation: we say Unesco but that is how it is pronounced and not like an abbreviation U.N.E.S.C.O.

Lists:

• they are introduced by a colon;

• first-level lists are introduced by a dash or bullet point and end with a semi-colon, except the last item which ends with a full stop;

• second-level lists are introduced by an inset dash (or bullet point) and end with a comma.

Spaces before and after punctuation signs

Word processors have certain typography rules in-built.

There is always a space after: a full stop, comma, colon, semi-colon, closing bracket, exclamation mark, question mark or closing quotation mark.

There is always a normal space before an opening bracket or an opening quotation mark.

There is always a space before a colon, semi-colon, exclamation mark or question mark but this space must be a hard space to avoid this punctuation appearing at the start of a line.

In Word this is done by Ctrl+Shift+Space (or via the menu by going to Insert >

Special characters).

There is never a space between an opening bracket and the following text or between this text and the closing bracket.

E.g.: ... the C.I.P. (Centre d'Ingénierie Pédagogique).

There is always a hard space inside quotation marks.

No space before or after a hyphen (it links).

Particular cases

Two punctuation signs one after another: When one sign follows another such as a closing bracket or closing quotation mark and a comma or full stop, the rule applies to the second sign. There is therefore no space between the two signs.

E.g.:

• closing bracket and comma:),

• closing bracket and full stop:).

• closing quotation mark and comma: ",

• closing quotation mark and full stop: «

Other exceptions

Do not leave a space after the full stop when it is used as a separator (telephone number for example). Do not leave a space after the comma when it is used to write a number.

Text formatting

Never use the space bar to centre or indent the start of a sentence. Use the formatting options: "Centre", "Justify", "Align left" or "Align right".

The applied research dissertation pages must all be justified and have page numbers, except for the cover, the flyleaf and the acknowledgements page.

It is possible to indent the start of a new paragraph to indicate the difference.

1. **Defence**

**You need to set a date with your supervisor to defend your work, in keeping with the schedule set out by the Programme Management. The defence is generally public unless there is an explicit requirement for confidentiality.**

The oral presentation is set at 20 minutes. The student uses a PowerPoint presentation or another visual presentation tool and presents their core issue and research question, the method used, the main results and their limitations.

There is then 20 minutes for discussion with the panel. The panel asks the student questions and can ask for clarifications. The panel has 10 minutes for deliberation then 10 minutes to give feedback to the candidates.

The panel includes at least one academically qualified person.

For info: <http://www.afm-marketing.org/1-afm-association-francaise-du-marketing/125-ressources/383-ma-communication-en-20-minutes.aspx>

The applied research dissertation is assessed out of 100 points and is broken down as follows:

- Dissertation: 60% of the final score

- Defence: 40% of the final score

1. **Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Dissertation structure**

The dissertation is structured as follows:

Front cover

The presentation must be simple, aesthetically appealing and balanced. All the information must be centred in such a way that it is not then partially covered by the binding. You are not permitted to use the school logo. The front cover will be printed on card and will take the following form:

Kedge Business School

Bordeaux site

MSc Marketing

Academic "year"

Applied Research Dissertation

"Dissertation title"

First and last name (of student)

Defended on "day month year"

Under the supervision of Mr/Ms First name SURNAME (of dissertation supervisor)

Flyleaf

The elements from the front cover are repeated and on the reverse side is the following phrase: "The opinions expressed in this dissertation are those of the author. BEM, the Grande Ecole Programme and the dissertation supervisor are in no way liable for its content". The flyleaf does not have a page number.

Acknowledgements: optional and page not numbered.

Summary with automated page numbers

At the start of the work only the main sections are mentioned with page numbers indicated. It gives an overall vision of the author's train of thought and chosen plan. It is presented on a well-spaced page. The summary is therefore an abridged contents page: it appears at the start of the document whereas the table of contents appears at the end of a work.

Table of acronyms and abbreviations: optional. This table is recommended if the use of acronyms and abbreviations is important in the dissertation.

Introduction (see below)

First section (see below)

Second section (see below)

General conclusion (see below)

Standardised bibliography (see below)

Appendices (see below)

Table of contents with page numbers

This appears at the end of the work and has the title 'Table of contents'; the author mentions all the chapter titles and paragraphs/sections/sub-sections with the corresponding page numbers. (N.B. word processors can automatically produce the table of contents with all levels of titles used).

Back cover

The back cover presents a 300-word summary of the dissertation and a list of key words, in French and English. It is printed on card.

The structure for the introduction, sections 1 and 2, conclusion, bibliography and appendices is presented below:

Introduction

The introduction is structured as follows:

Current status of the subject and managerial challenges: importance of the subject

Contextual information and putting into perspective

Presentation of the main concepts used

Core issue and research question

Statement of the plan and presentation of the logic of structuring the sections

The introduction is generally written at the end of the dissertation work.

First section

The first section of the applied research dissertation is structured as follows:

Definition of concepts

Summary of current situation / literature review

The summary of the current situation is about scientific assets in the domain studied, meaning an organised summary of the different assets the student can use to support their thinking. It corresponds with a literature review (for which the references are specified in the bibliography) which is a summarised account of works which have already been undertaken in the field of investigation. The purpose of this part is to justify your core issue and to build a framework of analysis for your field.

Conclusion of first section and transition towards second section

Second section

Methodology and protocol for gathering information

Presentation of the field of observation and, if necessary, presentation of literature related to the empirical analysis. Possible reminder of the role and missions carried out in the field of investigation (particularly when the subject is directly linked with the mission of the host company)

Presentation of data collected and analysis of data

Results and discussion

The results themselves are not sufficient, although they are interesting. The results must be analysed (i) in relation to the literature review and the theories raised (wrapping up of theory), (ii) in relation to the research question and more generally to the core issue (iii) in relation to the context of the study.

Managerial recommendations. The recommendations you need to make must be linked to the results that you have obtained.

General conclusion

The general conclusion is organised as follows:

Reminder of the core issue, research question and initial objectives

Summary of main results and response to the research question

Presentation of the limitations of the work undertaken

Possible extensions to the study

The conclusion is generally written at the end, at the same time as the introduction.

Standardised bibliography

The bibliography is organised according to the types of sources used:

The references are sorted in alphabetical order by the first author.

Appendices

The appendices are organised as follows:

Contents of appendices with page numbers

Compulsory appendices in case of qualitative analysis: full transcription of interviews.

Compulsory appendices in case of quantitative analysis: listing of results.

Other appendices: tables, graphs or any other document deemed necessary to clarify the subject. The documents presented as appendices must not be essential for understanding the body of the text. They are complementary to it and only make sense when linked with it.

Appendix 2: Assessment scales

Dissertation weighting (60%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria / suggestions** | **Poor** | **Average** | **Good** | **Very good** | **Excellent** | |
| **Substantive criteria** |  |  |  |  |  | |
| I - Research plan  Importance of subject  Definition of subject  Core issue  Theoretical framework  Methodological framework |  |  |  |  |  | |
| II - Literature review |  |  |  |  |  | |
| III - Empirical analysis  Data generation  Data analysis  Presentation of results |  |  |  |  |  | |
| IV – Conclusion, managerial implications, limitations |  |  |  |  |  | |
| V - Quality of plan proposed (including introduction and conclusion) |  |  |  |  |  | |
| **Format criteria** |  |  |  |  |  | |
| Presentation / clarity |  |  |  |  |  | |
| Spelling / grammar / language register |  |  |  |  |  | |
| Observance of presentation conventions |  |  |  |  |  | |
| Traceability of sources |  |  |  |  |  | |
| **Comments and areas for improvement** |  |  | | |  |
| **Overall assessment:**  **Score (out of 60):** |  |  | | |  | |

Defence weighting (40%)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria / suggestions** | **Excellent** | **Very good** | **Good** | **Average** | **Poor** |
| **Substantive criteria** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Presentation of dissertation  I – Research plan  II – Literature review  III – Empirical analysis  IV – Conclusion, managerial implications, limitations |  |  |  |  |  |
| Quality of discussion with panel |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Format criteria** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Quality of presentation tool (slide show or other) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Confidence, presence, conduct |  |  |  |  |  |
| Professional presentation |  |  |  |  |  |
| Persuasiveness |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comments and areas for improvement:** |  | |  |  |  |
| **Overall assessment:**  **Score (out of 40)** |  | |  |  |  |

**OVERALL SCORE (out of 100):**

**OVERALL SCORE (out of 20):**