

DISSERTATION REPORT

General guidelines for 7th semester dissertation report

The dissertation report

A dissertation report is a clear, well-organized and consistent communication of data and information within a well-defined topic examined through in-depth studies. The report draws conclusions that relate to the issues addressed and the material under investigation

The report does not need to contain empirical studies (e.g. data from field work, interviews or case studies).

The length of the report is 30 standard pages (exclusive reference/bibliography and appendices). A standard page is defined as approx. 2.400 characters incl. characters and spaces.

The dissertation report shall be handed in at a fixed date.

The topic

The report must contain an independent investigation of an issue relevant to the construction industry – preferably within the chosen elective. The report can e.g. be written in collaboration with the host company of the internship. The topic of the specialization report can also profitably be related to the Bachelor project.

Research

Initially it is important to find out whether the necessary information is available and can be used. Once the topic has been identified and examined critically, detailed research can begin. Start with researching the most recent and easily accessible sources to get an overview and work back.

Keep track of all your sources by making a list of exact page references (title, author, publication date, publisher, page references. You will need the list for the bibliography (list of references) – see below.

Literature searching

Limit the search in terms of time available and the scope of the topic. Evaluate all the material you come across to assess its utility and validity, - type of book/internet source, the author, bias and point of view. Look especially at the title and the table of contents to give an indication of scope and depth.

Management

Start with making a good report proposal that contains a formulation of the issues or questions to be investigated. The proposal should be kept under constant review as more material is examined. Set a time plan working back from the submission date. Insert deadlines in your work plan and stick to them. You will most likely need to revise your work plan from time to time.

Always back up. Back-up suggestions: USB or internet (e-mail with attachment, "cloud" solution, etc.).

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Writing the report

Analyze the communication situation before starting to write the report – a) who is the intended reader b) consider what information the reader needs to be able to fully understand your findings and your message.

An early start is important. It is a good idea to break the task of writing the report into smaller sections. Start by tackling the areas with which you feel most confident e.g. the presentation of background information, chapter drafts.

Use support mechanisms – graphs, pictures, diagrams to make communication more effective. Remember to number your figures and to add explanatory text (captions).

Report structure

Your dissertation report should contain the following main elements:

Title page indicating your full name, class name, name of the school and date of submission.

Abstract

Brief (max ½ page) summary of your report. The abstract sum up motivation, problem statement, approach, results and conclusion.

Table of contents – list of headings and subheadings in a logical order - including references to pages in the report.

Introduction – the issue under investigation is presented and motivated. The aims of the report are clearly stated. Brief summary of process and conclusions.

Report body (approx. 2/3 of the full scope of the report) – containing different chapters for:

- Background for report – e.g. your method and theory used (motivated), historical or other context for topic if relevant, etc.
- Presentation of data and information (e.g. own empirical data, researched data, interviews, observations etc.)
- Analysis: independent, in-depth treatment of data (analysis/discussion – what do *you* think and why?).

The material should be ordered logically from an analytical perspective (- first facts, then your own analysis and conclusions).

Conclusion – Draws the main points together (from the analysis) and underline the significance of your work, plus some thoughts on the limitations of your work.

List of references - According to the standards stated below.

Appendices - if any.

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Pages should be numbered consecutively.

References and footnotes

Direct and indirect quotations, other people's material, ideas and so on used in your report are somebody's mental property and you must indicate the source in a systematic way.

Written references should contain surname, year and if relevant pages. The list of references should follow the referencing style chosen.

Footnote such as useful but not for the understanding necessary additional information must be numbered and inserted at the bottom of the page.

List of references

A full list of your references is inserted after the conclusion. The list must contain author's name (in alphabetical order), title of the work, publication date, publisher, place of publication and if relevant page number. British Harvard Style referencing is recommended.

Make separate reference lists for other sources (like internet links) etc. advised in class.

Word processor settings

There is no need to change the standard settings of the word processor (margin, spacing etc.).

Sources: Watson G (1987) Writing a Thesis: A Guide to Long Essays and Dissertations London, Longmans.

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