

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Department of Civil Engineering

GUIDELINES FOR MSC(ENG) PROJECT DISSERTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of the dissertation is to give you an opportunity to handle a practical engineering problem or research question and to present your findings in a precise and concise dissertation. An important part of the project lies in the way in which you plan and carry out the task, and apply your knowledge sensibly and diligently to solve the problem. The way in which you present your findings is equally important.

2. FORMAT OF THE DISSERTATION

Very often, the quality of your work involved in a project is judged more on the basis of what is presented rather than on what has actually been carried out. The objective should be to produce a dissertation that is precise and concise. A longer dissertation is not necessarily a better one.

The dissertation should be written in good English, and not less than 100 pages in length, (excluding any essential Appendices). It should be prepared using a suitable word processing package (e.g. Microsoft Word) and printed on both sides of A4 size sheets with size 12 "Times New Roman" fonts and 1.5 line spacing. In general, SI units should be used. A left hand margin of 25 mm should be provided.

The dissertation should include the following:

	<u>Page</u>
(1) Title of the dissertation, author's name and date of submission	1
(2) Abstract (not exceeding one page)	2
(3) Acknowledgements	3
(3) Table of contents	4
(4) List of figures	subsequent
(5) List of tables	pages
(6) Main body of the dissertation that may include some or all of the following :	
- Introduction (including background, research questions/gaps, and objectives)	
- Literature review and/or theory	
- Data (if relevant)	
- Methodology	
- Results	
- Discussion	
- Conclusion	
- References	
(7) Appendices (Computer program listings, detailed results, etc.)	

TWO copies of the project dissertation should be submitted to the Department. Two months before submission, you will be asked to give a 50-minute oral examination (35 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes for discussion). You are also required to submit an inception report, a report on the preliminary findings, a draft dissertation (two months before your oral examination). Late submission will be penalised as follows:

Period overdue	Percentage of marks of the component to be deducted
≤ 3 days	10%
4 - 5 days	50%
> 5 days	100%

Please note that no late submission of the final report of project dissertation is allowed.

3. SOME NOTES ON QUOTATIONS AND REFERENCES

3.1 Quotations

The correct use of references and quotations is essential to the completion of a well-written project dissertation. A clear distinction **must** be made between your own words and those of the authors of books and articles that you have read. You should clearly indicate the quoted material by use of quotation marks (inverted commas).

Quotations of only a few words or a phrase should be indicated as shown below:

In research aimed at investigating construction firms' marketing methods Baker and Orsaah (1985) investigated "*how customers choose their contractor*" and found that low price, company financial standing and company reputation were the major factors.

Quotations of more than one sentence should be indented, single-spaced and written in italics as shown below:

Bromilow (1974) succinctly states that in his opinion:

"the most significant overall objectives in building operations are to define the design and specifications, price and timing of the proposed building, and, once they have been agreed by the client, to meet them."

3.2 References

Full details of all published and unpublished books, articles, dissertations and journal papers used or referred to in your project should be included in the bibliography at the end of the main body of your dissertation and either be arranged alphabetically by author and then by date of publication (if the author has more than one publication). When referring to publications in the text of your dissertation you may cite the author's name and date of publication (as above) or, if the references are numbered sequentially, you may cite just the reference number, shown in brackets, e.g. (1).

The following examples of how to present your bibliographic references are based on BS1629:1950:

1 Books

Author's name & initials, *Title of Book*, name of publishers: place published, date published. For example:

Yue Q.Z.Q., Dynamics of large and rapid landslides with long travel distances under dense gas expanding power, *Landslide Science for a Safer Geoenvironment*, Springer: Switzerland, 2014.

The title may be underlined rather than written in italics if preferred. If the author has two or more works published in the same year these may be distinguished by (a), (b), (c), etc. For example:

Yue Q.Z.Q. , (d),

2 Articles

Author's name and initials, "Title of Article", *Name of Journal (or conference and location)*, Volume Number, issue date and/or number, year, page numbers. For example:

Xu X., Shao J. and Wong S.C., "Injury severity analysis in right-turn lanes at signalised intersections", *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers: Transport*, Thomas Telford, 2017, 170(1), 26-37.

Pan W., Briefing: Delivering buildings and infrastructure towards zero carbon, *Infrastructure Asset Management*, 2014, 1:60-65.

3 Theses

Author's name and initials, *Title of thesis*, Degree awarded, University, Date of acceptance. For example:

Ma Liping, *Antibiotic resistance genes carried by microbial communities in drinking water systems*, Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Hong Kong, 2016.

4. PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of taking and using another person's writings, designs or inventions as your own work without proper acknowledgement.

Students should bear in mind that it is important for them to do reports and assignments independently by themselves. The University considers that plagiarism is a serious offence. If your work contains part of another person's book, journal paper, article or even another student's work or report, including data, graph or computer programme,

WITHOUT quoting the source, you have committed PLAGIARISM. Plagiarism is the worst of intellectual dishonesty and is a disciplinary offence. Marks will be deducted from a work based on plagiarism. Worst still, such work may not be given a pass and the student will be required to re-submit the reports/assignments. Further information is available at <http://www.rss.hku.hk/plagiarism>.

5. SUBMISSION OF FINAL DISSERTATION FOR PLAGIARISM CHECK

For the Final Report of the Dissertation (CIVL7009), all students are required to submit:

- (a) Two hardcopies to the Department; and
- (b) An electronic file to the 'Turnitin' software online through Moodle.

The 'Turnitin' software is a text matching software for performing plagiarism check. The dissertation will only be assessed after complete submission of BOTH hard and soft copies as stipulated. Should there be any problems detected in a student's submission, the teaching staff would perform further investigation.

After a student submitted a soft copy of his/her final report of the dissertation to moodle, a "Turnitin Similarity Report" will be generated. The student will be allowed to re-submit his/her final report of the dissertation (no limit on re-submission) before the deadline of submission.

In addition, all MSc students when submitting your final dissertation report to our Department, must include a declaration stating that the dissertation report is your own work. You are requested to complete, sign the "Form P8" and include it in your final dissertation report (i.e. bind the declaration within the report) for submission to the Department. Your co-operation on this matter is much appreciated.



Dr. T.F.M. Chui
TPG Programme Director

MC/mw

26 August 2021