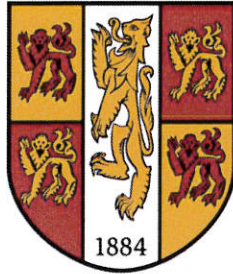


School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography



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MSc Gazette – Dissertation Handbook 2013/14

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Whilst every effort is made to run courses as presented, the School reserves the right to modify the programme, assessment and examination procedures of any course.

INTRODUCTION

This student handbook is designed to help you with the planning and presentation of your MSc dissertation. It should be used in conjunction with any supplementary information provided by the Course Director and/or your dissertation supervisor.

The dissertation gives students further opportunity for specialisation in their chosen field. Dissertations must show evidence of wide reading and understanding as well as critical analysis and/or appropriate use of advanced techniques.

Your dissertation is the final challenge of your MSc course. It is very important not to underestimate the time required to complete your dissertation, especially the time needed for final corrections, printing and binding.

CHOOSING A TOPIC FOR THE DISSERTATION

Selecting a topic area for an MSc dissertation is critically important. A dissertation based on data collection and analysis is generally easier to carry-out and write-up with firm conclusions than a poorly defined survey or case study. The alternatives, which may include a literature review or survey, can also be interesting and rewarding but their objectives and scope have to be defined clearly. Try to aim for a dissertation where you can exercise your strengths and/or one in which you feel you can learn new or improve existing skills.

Staff can suggest possible subject areas but there will be some flexibility for students to agree topics with individual supervisors. Ideas for dissertations can come from your own observations and ideas, journal articles, conferences, events, workshops, projects, previous coursework as well as BSc and MSc dissertations. Every effort is made to allocate you to your first choice supervisor but this is not always possible. The topic of your thesis should be relevant to your MSc programme.

TYPES OF DISSERTATION

There are many types of dissertation that can be grouped under three general types:

- the acquisition and interpretation of new knowledge
(through, for example, formal experimental or survey exercises)
- the re-organization or re-evaluation of old knowledge in a relevant context
(including, for example, a re-analysis of archived data using more up to date methods)
- the development, testing and refinement of methodology
(studies which focus on new working or analytical procedures)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT & THE SUPERVISOR

1) Responsibilities of the Student

The dissertation supervisor can provide guidance and advice but the student is responsible for:

- The detailed planning, practical work, data collection, data analysis, literature review, writing up, completion and presentation of the dissertation.
- Taking the initiative in discussing problems or difficulties with their supervisor, however elementary they may seem.
- Being open and explicit with their supervisor about their needs and difficulties.
- Being considerate and respectful of their supervisors time and other commitments.
- Alerting the course director of inadequate progress (e.g. due to ill health, necessity of changing topic).
- Ensuring that the dissertation is submitted on time. Delays due, for example, to computing problems ***are not*** considered as acceptable reasons for late submission.
- Ensuring that the dissertation conforms to the approved formatting and style: 12 size font, 1.5 line spacing. This includes text, figures, tables and list of references.
- Checking carefully the final draft before submission. Examiners will deduct marks for poor presentation, excessive spelling mistakes, poor grammar and sentence structure, references quoted in the text but not listed in the reference list, incorrect / poorly cited references.
- Ensuring that the work is the student's own and that all contributions from other sources are noted in the dissertation. The University has clear procedures in cases of Unfair Practice – the University's Unfair Practice Procedures can be found here:
(<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/regulations/home.htm#proc05>).

2) Responsibilities of the Dissertation Supervisor

The student is responsible for the completion and presentation of the MSc dissertation but should expect reasonable support from the dissertation supervisor.

The dissertation supervisor will provide support in response to direct requests from the student. Students should therefore take the initiative and be willing to contact their supervisor when they require support. Dissertation supervisors are not expected to directly monitor progress or to initiate contact with students regarding the dissertation. In some circumstances, for example, if the student is conducting work in an experiment managed by the supervisor, the supervisor may contact the student with regard to progress.

The supervisor is expected to provide a reasonable level of support but is not expected to address all minor problems associated with the dissertation, particularly given the clear practical and logistical constraints of conducting a dissertation. Other members of staff in the department and in allied and external organisations may be approached for advice after this has been discussed with the dissertation supervisor.

The support that can be expected from the supervisor in response to a specific query from a student is described below.

2.1) Choosing a topic

The supervisor will:

- Confirm that the chosen topic is appropriate.
- Check informally that the study proposed is appropriate and realistic, given the challenges that students may face during their dissertation regarding access to available resources, facilities, equipment and materials.

2.2) Planning the experimental/survey work

The supervisor will:

- Suggest additional and important reading material that will provide background information for the chosen topic (if this has not already been identified by the student in their literature review).
- Provide more information about dissertations including the expectations with regard to experimental work / data collection and data analysis.
- If necessary, suggest how the practical/survey work should be conducted including timing of events and experimental design.
- Suggest any resources required and how these might be obtained.
- Outline the records that should be collected.
- Suggest methods for statistical analysis of the data. Where the dissertation has specific requirements the supervisor will discuss these with the student. Your supervisor may refer you elsewhere for further guidance, subject to resources.
- Ensure that the planned work is appropriate for an MSc dissertation.

2.3) Conducting the experimental/survey work

The supervisor will:

- Comment on how experimental / survey work is planned to be conducted (including timing).
- Give suggestions about how to implement the experimental design in practice.
- Provide advice on how to deal with problems encountered when conducting the experimental/survey work.
- Suggest how data / records should be collected.

2.4) Analysing the results

The supervisor will:

- Provide advice on transferring the data into an appropriate software package for analysis. The supervisor may suggest an alternative contact for this if required.
- Provide guidance on how to implement the methods of analysis that were agreed at the planning stage.

- Suggest alternative methods of analysis if required.
- Provide guidance on the interpretation of results of statistical analyses.
- Suggest appropriate ways to present the data using combinations of tables, graphs or charts.

2.5) Completing the dissertation

The supervisor will:

- Be able to suggest additional references that can be used as part of the literature review and discussion, if required.
- Check that the structure of the dissertation follows the defined protocol.
- Provide guidance on what should be included in each section.
- Comment on the results obtained and suggest possibilities for the discussion section.
- Read through and comment on one complete draft of the dissertation. Students should allow four weeks for supervisors to read and return their comments. It is advisable to check when the supervisor is available and the time that he/she will require to read the draft dissertation.

The supervisor ***is not*** responsible for correcting grammatical, typographical or numerical errors but will always be happy to advise where there are any uncertainties.

Students who have difficulty obtaining support from their supervisor should contact either Course Director or the Head of School.

Finally, note that your dissertation will be marked by two independent internal examiners (plus an external examiner if the two internal examiners do not agree). Your supervisor does NOT mark the dissertation overall, but does contribute an assessment (worth 16% of the final mark) of the student's *originality of thought* and *use of time and resources* (see marking criteria Appendix C).

PLANNING YOUR DISSERTATION

Unlike previous modules, where module organisers have provided you with a detailed timetable, you are expected to manage your own time during your dissertation. Good planning is therefore of key importance. You therefore need to prepare a timetable detailing what you will do and when and agree this with your dissertation supervisor. During this process it is also very good practice to identify key milestones – those activities that can only be started once other activities are complete (for example, data collection can only commence once the methods have been discussed and approved).

A timetable for dissertation stages is given below; full details will be given in the DXX4520 Research Planning module.

Dissertation stage	Date guide (DXX4520 module outline will give final details) This may vary according to your programme
List of possible dissertation topics made available to students	Week 7
Two or three dissertation titles and paragraphs (ranked in order of preference) to be submitted.	Week 11
Draft Project Plan to Supervisor	By week 22
Submit Project Plan	Week 25
Experimental work, survey and laboratory analyses should be completed	Early August
Submit dissertation	5th September 2014

It is important not to underestimate the time required to complete the dissertation, especially the time needed for final corrections, printing and binding. You are recommended to find a 'partner' on your course so that you can exchange drafts for initial checking. Supervisors can be asked to examine one draft of the dissertation and you should allow two weeks for them to check it. You should check your dissertation carefully before printing the final version. Examiners will deduct marks for poor presentation, excessive spelling mistakes; references quoted in the text but not the bibliography and incorrect/poorly cited references.

THE RESEARCH PLAN

You will have already completed a Draft Research Proposal and Literature Review as part of module DXX4520. The research plan should incorporate the following content. More advice will be given on structuring the content in the DXX4520 Research Planning module.

Title. Your name and the draft title of the project

Introduction. A brief introduction to the background to and purpose (objectives) of the research.

Hypotheses. A clear statement of the hypotheses to be tested or questions to be answered.

Literature Review. A short review of relevant literature (up to 2,000 words)

Methods. What facts or data do you hope to collect, how do you propose to do it, and what do you propose doing with it when you have got it? A timetable of proposed work will help you to keep on schedule. You should provide details of laboratory and analysis facilities that will be needed, with detailed costs and availability of resources. Field work requirements, and possibly the transport of materials from distant locations, should be considered carefully.

Risk Assessment. You must attach to your research plan a risk assessment *agreed and signed* both by you and your SENRGY dissertation supervisor. These can be downloaded from the Blackboard site. Where applicable, this must include a COSHH (Control Of Substances Hazardous to Health) analysis. You will not be permitted to conduct field/laboratory work for, nor will you be permitted to submit a dissertation for which there is no agreed risk assessment. Depending on the nature of your research, it may also be necessary to refer to the [ethical checklist](#) (also available on the blackboard site). If any foreign travel for study or dissertation purposes is planned, please check the FCO website (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/>). Travel advice is under <http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel>. We appreciate this is very different for students who may be based across the world, but we do need to know exactly where you are planning to conduct your research.

The FCO advice given should be interpreted and attached to the Risk Assessment.

Data Analysis. It is essential to have carefully planned and checked the experimental design of your dissertation with your supervisor to ensure that there are suitable resources, and that the data can be analysed by accepted and applicable statistical procedures. This applies equally to both survey-type and experimental dissertations.

The Research Plan must be submitted and agreed before a student is eligible to proceed with any fieldwork. Research Plans may need to be modified in the light of comments made by External Examiners and project supervisors before field work commences. The Research Dissertation form available from the department should be submitted with your plan.

THE STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION OF THE DISSERTATION

Before starting to write the dissertation you should plan each section carefully. Decide on the chapters and how each will be divided into sub-sections. You should discuss the overall structure with your supervisor before starting to write the dissertation. It is often useful to produce a draft table of contents in order to focus your mind in this respect.

University regulations prescribe a maximum word limit of 20,000 words for an MSc dissertation. A length of 12,000 to 15,000 words (excluding appendices, tables and figures) is recommended in this School. The format of the dissertation report will, to a large extent, be governed by the nature of the study and by any individual arrangements you reach with your supervisor.

A dissertation report will normally contain the following sections in the order given.

Title page. The title page must include the title of the work, the MSc for which it is presented, the candidate's full name, month and year of presentation.

(See Appendix A for a standard title page.)

Declaration. See Appendix B for a standard declaration page.

Abstract. This should come at the beginning of the dissertation and be a brief summary of the dissertation and its findings, not a condensed version of the introduction. It must be numerate and factual and will not normally exceed one A4 side of single-spaced text.

Acknowledgements. This is your opportunity to acknowledge those individuals and organisations that helped you complete your dissertation.

Contents. Make sure that the contents page is complete and accurate. Normally this will be done when the rest of the dissertation is properly and logically organised. A draft contents page can help in organising your writing-up and should be produced at an early stage. Most word-processing packages have facilities to generate lists of contents. These are generally easier to use if you set-up appropriate headings and sub-headings as you type the dissertation. The Introduction should start on page 1. Items which precede the Introduction (*e.g.* title page, declaration, table of contents, list of figures *etc.*) are conventionally given page numbers in lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii *etc.*). The position of tables or figures within the text should be indicated by a list of tables and/or a list of figures indicating appropriate page numbers. Chapter and section numbers are given in Arabic numerals. Thereafter, for example, reference to section 2 of chapter 3 may be given as Chapter 3.2. Avoid subdivision into many small sub-sections. Three levels of heading are usually sufficient. All tables and figures should be numbered and have a title; they should be comprehensible if removed from the surrounding text.

Introduction. This is normally Chapter 1. It should give the background of the topic you intend to cover, and describe briefly how you are going to do it. Make sure that your objectives and/or hypotheses are clearly stated. In some dissertations the literature review is included in the introduction; in others it is better to keep the introduction brief with the literature review as Chapter 2.

Literature Review. This should be well-structured and concise, reviewing only literature that is directly relevant to your topic. Be critical; do not merely list the contents of one paper after another, but group papers on each topic together, considering the conclusions of one author in the light of another. When discussing the work of other authors be very careful to use your own words. If you are including a background description of the country in which the dissertation has been carried out, keep it brief. It may be advantageous to finish the literature review with a short sub-section, '*Objectives and scope of the present investigations*', so that the reader has a clear picture of the aims and objectives of your work.

You are strongly advised to follow the guidelines on the correct form of citations and references in [*The style and presentation of written work*](#) (Price, 2003).

Methods. Enough detail should be given *for someone else to be able to repeat any experimental work or survey that you did*. This section describes exactly how the experiment or study was carried out. In this section it is usually assumed that the reader has some knowledge of experimental methods and techniques so that basic details are omitted. However, it is important to present sufficient information so that the reader could repeat the experiment exactly as it was done originally. The Materials and Methods section will usually be split up into various sub-sections describing the details of the various procedures used. Where standard techniques have been used (*e.g.* nitrogen determination) these need not be described in full but can be referred to in the text *e.g.* 'Chlorophyll content was determined by the method of Farrar (1999)'. Details of any statistical analyses carried out should be presented although detailed explanations of standard methods are not required. For example, it is sufficient to say that an experiment was conducted as a randomised complete block design with four replicates without describing the basic principles of the design.

Results. These must show the results of your work but lists and tables in the text should be limited to summaries. Use appendices for actual results, field data, *etc.* All tables and figures should be referred to in the text by number. Avoid presenting the same material in tables and figures. Results and statements about them should be supported by appropriate statistical parameters, for example standard errors for means, probability values at which differences between means are evaluated or measures of association between variables. Treatment means should be presented to one more decimal place than the accuracy with which the original measurements were made. Standard errors *etc.* can be presented to one further decimal place.

Discussion. The discussion should relate the results of the present experiment to the initial objectives and the results of other workers as presented in the literature review. When discussing your results you should make a clear distinction between the information which *you* have collected and what is a report of information gained from the *published work of others*. Avoid repeating material already presented in the results section.

Conclusions and recommendations. Make sure that your conclusions are supported by your results and that you make clear whether or not your dissertation objectives have been met and/or your dissertation hypotheses upheld. Recommendations can be formulated on the basis of the results of the dissertation. These can be suggestions for the development of commercial systems or for future research.

References. The sources of all information quoted in the text must be cited in full and the reference list should match your citations exactly. Do not include references you have not actually used. Do not include references if you have not seen the full original paper. The list of references should be in a standard format and include sufficient detail to enable the reader to find the literature to which you have referred. You should cite references using an accepted format and this should be used consistently throughout the list of references. [*The style and presentation of written work*](#) (Price, 2003) provides guidelines which you should follow.

Appendices. Data referred to at length in the text should be presented as summarised tables and figures in the results section. Appendices can be used for data collected during the dissertation but not referred to directly in the text and for detailed descriptions of statistical and/or computer methodology.

FORMAT OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation should be presented as follows:

- have at least a 4cm left margin and 2.5 cm top, bottom and right margins to allow for binding
- A4 size
- permanently bound (see below)
- with clear and continuous page numbering (bottom of page).

The main body of text should:

- be a minimum of 12 point font for all text including footnotes,
- be 1½ or double line-spaced
- have clear chapter/section headings.

Tables, charts and figures *must*:

- be clearly numbered, titled and referenced (where appropriate)
- have a clear and self-explanatory legend
- be included in a list of tables, charts and figures (as appropriate).

References:

- must be presented clearly and unambiguously
(consult Price (2003) and your MSc supervisor for guidance)
- should all be referred to in the text of the dissertation.

Binding:

- Two copies must be submitted, these can both be soft bound but must be 'permanently' bound. The University Bindery, Zip Print and other companies provide binding services.

Length:

- University regulations prescribe a maximum word limit of 20,000 words for MSc dissertations. However, a length of 12,000 - 15,000 words is suggested for MSc dissertations in this School.

BINDING AND SUBMISSION

- The deadline for submission of dissertations is 5th September 2014. Two permanent-bound copies in 'soft' or 'hard' covers are required. Ensure that your name, MSc programme name, short title and the year are clearly visible on the dissertation spine. You must also submit a copy of your dissertation via Blackboard and on a CD (Information Services offer a CD-writing service).
- Several weeks before submission, visit the University Bindery (with Central Print Unit in the Nantlle Building, Normal site, Holyhead Road, open 8-12, 13-16 hours, Tel: 382969) or Zip Print on Bangor High Street to find out the costs and time needed for a) soft-binding and b) hard-binding.
- A SD1 form for approval to submit a dissertation (a copy will be made available on the DXX4999 Blackboard site) must be submitted to the Student Records Office between 10-28 days before submission.
- Dissertations should be bound using a permanent binding method.
- You should give the two bound copies of your dissertation + CD to the SENRGY MSc Administrator.
- If you are away from Bangor, you may post your dissertations using Recorded Delivery. The date of posting will be taken as the date of submission.
- Address the parcel to:
 SENRGY MSc Administrator, Thoday Building,
 Bangor University, BANGOR, Gwynedd LL57 2UW, UK.

EXTENSIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION

SENRGY MSc programmes are designed for completion within 12 months.

The normal expectation is that all dissertation projects will be submitted on time. Late submission within one week will be capped at 40%, later submissions will be given a zero mark.

Extensions of up to three months can be approved administratively by SENRGY in special circumstances. Admissible reasons for submitting work late are, for example: serious personal illness with a doctor's certificate (a self-certified medical note will not be accepted); the death of a relative or close friend, serious family problems such as divorce, separation, and eviction. If an extension is requested due to illness, you must obtain a medical certificate from a doctor.

In exceptional cases a delayed project start may be grounds for an extension, if the delay is outside the student's control and could not have been anticipated. In this case extensions must be requested WITHIN four weeks of the commencement date. Examples where an extension might be considered include a change in FCO advice or civil unrest

Usual fieldwork problems such as small sample sizes or poor weather and laboratory problems such as access and time constraints will not normally be grounds for an extension. Nor will other time commitments such as exams, having other work to do (including paid work except in the case of part-time students) or holidays. Other practical problems such as having access to a computer, having computer related problems, not being able to find any references on the subject and delays in binding or translation are also excluded.

Extensions requests must be made by students through their supervisor to Dr Graham Bird, Director of Teaching. Any extension beyond three months must be formally approved by the Chair of the University Senate Graduate Committee or his / her nominated representative.

Please bear in mind the granting of an extension may mean that the student's work is not considered at the Autumn exam board, and may delay graduation until the following summer.

OTHER DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

University guidelines on the production of dissertations ("[Postgraduate Diploma/Master's courses – a student guide](#)") are available from the Academic Registry website at:

<http://www.bangor.ac.uk/londonbusiness/documents/GeneralHandbookLCFAQ.pdf>

A student guide is also available here and although it is a few years old now, it still contains some relevant and helpful information.

http://www.bangor.ac.uk/ar/main/research/docs/gt_guide.pdf

For additional guidelines, covering aspects such as writing style and subject-specific technical instructions, you should refer to Professor Colin Price's document "[The Style and Presentation of Written Work](#)" (Price, 2003), which is available electronically on the SENRGY website at:

www.bangor.ac.uk/senrgy/intranet/ug/resources/CP_S&P.pdf

USEFUL HINTS AND TIPS

A well-defined and relatively small research project is much easier to conduct to a high standard than a highly ambitious and complex research project with vague research objectives.

Don't leave it until the last minute. The dissertation is far too large a task for this.

It is good practice to give a late draft to a trusted friend or colleague to proof read (expert subject knowledge is not necessarily required for this task). Examiners will deduct marks for poor presentation, excessive spelling mistakes; references quoted in the text but not the bibliography and incorrect or poorly cited references.

Discuss your progress with friends and colleagues throughout the process. Talking with others about your research is a healthy part of the research process and often reveals new and different insights.

This document was prepared by combining elements from guidelines that existed for a number of programmes in SENRGy. The contributions of the anonymous authors of those guidelines are gratefully acknowledged.

Appendix A: Example Title Page

Assessing and ameliorating the fragmentation of forest in Snowdonia using GIS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of *Master of Science* (MSc) in Conservation & Land Management,
Bangor University

By (*YOUR NAME*)
BSc Forestry (2010, Bangor) (*title, year and university where you gained
your first degree*)

School of Environment, Natural Resources and Geography
Bangor University
Gwynedd, LL57 2UW, UK
www.bangor.ac.uk
Submitted in September, 2012.

Appendix B: Example Declaration Page

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Candidate: (A. Student)

Date:

Statement 1:

This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

Candidate: (A. Student)

Date:

Statement 2:

This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation except where otherwise stated.

Candidate: (A. Student)

Date:

Statement 3:

I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for interlibrary loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Candidate: (A. Student)

Date:

Appendix C: Marking Criteria for Dissertations

	Distinction (70%)	Merit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Pass (40-49%)	Fail (<40%)
Objectives & Justification	An extremely convincing rationale for the project is presented. An extremely clear statement of the research hypotheses or objectives is made.	A convincing rationale for the project is presented. A clear statement of the research hypotheses or objectives is made.	The project rationale is not totally clear and/or may not be entirely convincing. Research hypotheses or objectives are stated, but are imprecise.	A weak rationale for the project is presented. Research hypotheses or objectives are ambiguous.	The rationale for the project is not presented. The research hypotheses, objectives and rationale are entirely absent or completely invalid.
Introduction					
Literature & referencing	An extremely comprehensive survey of the relevant peer-reviewed literature is presented and expertly understood. All external sources of information are correctly, consistently and accurately referenced using a standard system.	A comprehensive survey of the peer-reviewed literature is presented although some literature of minor importance may have been omitted. All external sources of information are correctly, consistently and accurately referenced using a consistent system ¹ with only a few inaccuracies.	A fairly thorough survey of literature is presented but some relevant literature has been omitted. Some of the more complex literature cited might not be fully understood. Limited critical judgement about information quality. External sources of information are referenced using a standard system, with only a few minor errors.	A limited survey of the literature is presented and some important material has been omitted. Some of the cited literature presented is irrelevant and/or not fully understood. Little critical judgement about information quality. External sources of information are referenced but there are inconsistencies and errors in the reference list.	An extremely superficial survey of the literature is presented and much of the important material has been omitted. Much of the cited literature is clearly not understood and/or is irrelevant. No critical judgement about information quality. Referencing is unacceptable due to failure to employ a standard system and/or inclusion of a large number of errors.
Methods	The methods employed are entirely appropriate in relation to the aims of the work and resources available. The limitations of the techniques employed are fully recognised. All procedures are described or referenced in full so that the work could be repeated.	As above although some small improvements in technique could have been made. Procedures are described or referenced in full so that the work could be repeated.	The methods employed are generally valid although some improvements in techniques could have been made. The methods employed are not entirely understood and/or there is some lack of recognition of their limitations in relation to the aims of the work. Some procedural details are either omitted or not described or referenced fully.	Some of the methods employed are not valid or are inappropriate in relation to the aims of the work. The methods employed are not well understood and/or there is lack of recognition of their limitations. Some important procedural details are omitted or not described or referenced fully.	Invalid or inappropriate methods are employed widely throughout the project to the extent that the majority of the results obtained are seriously undermined. The procedures followed are inadequately described or referenced.
Methods					
Data collection	A substantial amount of relevant data has been collected or sourced allowing additional insight into the study. The selection and use of secondary data is fully valid and justified.	An appropriate amount of relevant data has been collected or sourced. The selection and use of secondary data is fully valid and justified.	The amount of data collected or sourced is acceptable but more data would have produced more robust findings. Some parameters that could realistically have been measured or recorded have not been. The use of secondary data is not always fully justified.	The amount of data collected or sourced is just sufficient to support findings. Important parameters that could easily have been recorded have been ignored. There are large gaps in many data sets and/or much of the data are not reproducible. The use of secondary data is inadequately justified.	Little data has been collected or sourced. Many data sets are irrelevant, or there are large gaps so that the data are neither reproducible nor satisfactorily replicated. Use of secondary data is completely unjustified.

¹ The exact choice of formatting may be left to the student, but should be consistent throughout the work.

	Distinction (70%)	Merit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Pass (40-49%)	Fail (<40%)	
Results	Data analysis	A very thorough and correct analysis of all the data is performed allowing all major effects/trends in the data to be identified and verified.	A thorough analysis with only a few small omissions. Techniques are not always entirely appropriate but only minor effects/trends remain unidentified or unverified.	Some data sets are inadequately analysed. Some of the techniques used are inappropriate or incorrectly performed. Some important effects/trends remain unidentified or unverified.	Although the overall analysis is acceptable, a considerable number of data sets are not appropriately analysed. A significant number of important effects/trends are neither identified nor verified.	All or very few data sets are inadequately analysed. No important effects/trends can be verified.
	Tables & figures	All tables and figures are relevant and extremely clear, precise and accurately presented; all can be interpreted without needing to refer to the text.	All tables and figures are relevant and very clear and precise, some minor inaccuracies present in some but all can be interpreted without needing to refer to the text.	A large majority of tables and figures are clear and precise, but a few contain inaccuracies so that they are not readily interpreted without referring to the text. Some tables and figures are redundant or irrelevant.	Most are clear and precise, but a number contain significant inaccuracies so that they are not readily interpreted without referring to the text. Many tables and figures are redundant or irrelevant.	Very unclear and/or imprecise with major inaccuracies so that they cannot be readily understood. Most tables and figures redundant or irrelevant or no tables/figures presented.
Discussion	Interpretation	The results are interpreted expertly and objectively in relation to the limitations of the methods and data. Very thorough critical comparisons are made to other published findings in the research area. There is evidence of ability to collate information from a variety of sources to aid interpretation and to perceive novel relationships.	The results are interpreted thoroughly and objectively. Good critical comparisons are made to other published findings in the research area. There is evidence of ability to collate information from a variety of sources to aid interpretation.	The results are interpreted thoroughly although a significant degree of subjectivity is present. Limited critical comparisons are made to other published results in the research area. Limited use is made of other information sources to aid interpretation.	The results are interpreted superficially and a significant degree of subjectivity is present. Few critical comparisons are made to other published findings in the research area. Very limited use is made of other information sources to aid interpretation.	Extremely weak and superficial. A significant degree of subjectivity is present in the interpretation. No critical comparisons are made to other published results in the research area and no use is made of other information.
	Conclusions & Recommendations	All relevant conclusions are drawn and justified. There are no unsupported assertions. The potential value of the work is fully explored and translated into practical recommendations where appropriate.	All important conclusions are drawn and justified. There are a few minor unsupported assertions. The potential value of the work is translated into practical recommendations where appropriate.	The most important conclusions are drawn and justified but there are some notable omissions and/or unsupported assertions. Where appropriate some limited practical recommendations are stated.	A few basic conclusions are drawn but these are poorly justified. Some important potential conclusions are omitted while other assertions made cannot be supported by the results. Little attempt is made to formulate any practical recommendations.	No valid conclusions have been drawn. Any conclusions stated are completely invalid being unsupported by the results. No appropriate practical recommendations are made.

	Distinction (70%)	Merit (60-69%)	Pass (50-59%)	Pass (40-49%)	Fail (<40%)
Structure	The project report follows the required format. The report is within the word limit.	Some minor disparities from the required format may be present. The report is within the word limit.	Some significant disparities from the required format are present in some sections. The report is within the word limit.	The presentation is acceptable overall but some major disparities are present. The report is within the word limit.	There is very little or no adherence to the required format and/or the report is outside the word limit.
Required format ²	The writing is extremely clear, succinct and precise allowing no ambiguity of meaning.	The writing is clear, succinct and precise. There is good use of language with only a few minor errors.	The majority of the writing is clear but there is some minor confusion of meaning in some sections. Language usage is generally succinct and correct although with a few minor errors.	In some sections the writing lacks clarity and precision leading to some significant ambiguity. Expression is occasionally verbose Language usage is generally correct but with some significant errors.	The writing consistency lacks clarity and/or language usage is very weak leading to extensive confusion of meaning. Expression is often verbose or unfocussed.
Writing & language	A very high level of originality is demonstrated, both in project formulation and interpretation of material.	A high level of originality demonstrated, although this may not be the case in all aspects of the project.	Limited originality demonstrated.	Very little originality demonstrated.	No originality demonstrated.
Originality of thought	Extremely effective use has been made of the supervisor's expertise and advice. Extremely effective use has been made of available time and resources.	Effective use has been made of the supervisor's expertise and advice. Effective use has been made of available time and resources.	Limited use has been made of the supervisor's expertise and advice. Limited use has been made of available time and resources.	Little use has been made of the supervisor's expertise and advice. Little use has been made of available time and resources.	Ineffective use of supervisor's time and/or advice. Available time and resources not used or wasted.
Use of time & resources					
Supervisor's assessment					

² It is acceptable practice to submit your dissertation in the form of a research paper where this has been agreed with your supervisor