

CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

University of Glasgow

RESEARCH METHODS AND DISSERTATION TRAINING

2009-2010

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COURSE LECTURER:

Various

TERMS ONE AND TWO

- 1) Introduction to the philosophy and methodology of research in the social sciences and economics: 28 September
- 2) Planning, researching and writing your dissertation: 5 October
- 3) Accessing literature and data: Glasgow University library services: 12 October
- 4) Narrowing down the dissertation topic and formulating an appropriate research question: 19 October
- 5) Finding relevant material: developing your research and reading skills: 2 November
- 6) Using sources effectively and avoiding plagiarism: 9 November
- 7) Descriptive statistics: 26 *October*, 4 November, 11 November, and 16 November
- 8) Quantitative analysis using statistical software: week of 23 November (to be confirmed)
- 9) Research example 1: 11 January
- 10) Research example 2: 18 January
- 11) Analysis of dissertation proposals: 25 January
- 12) Small-group sessions: 1 February

MSc DISSERTATIONS

All MSc students are required to write and submit a dissertation for examination as part of the MSc Degree requirements. Part-time MSc students submit the dissertation at the end of their second year of study; however, they may, if they wish, attend the Research Methods and Dissertation Training course during the first year. This document outlines the procedures to be followed, and the training, support and supervision that you should expect to receive in the preparation and submission of your dissertation.

RESEARCH METHODS AND DISSERTATION TRAINING

Starting in Week One there will be a programme of research methods and dissertation training consisting of lectures, seminars and lab sessions designed to introduce you to research methods and information sources, and to equip you to research and write your dissertation. This programme is compulsory for all students who will receive supervision in the Centre for Development Studies.

Aims

1. To provide training and support that will enable students to research and write a dissertation which satisfies the requirements of the relevant MSc programme and which includes the following elements:
 - (a) A review and critical assessment of the literature relating to the dissertation topic;
 - (b) The formulation of a hypothesis to be tested or a problem/question to be addressed arising from the literature review;
 - (c) An analysis of statistical data or of other materials designed to confront the hypothesis or elucidate the issues that the dissertation seeks to address.
2. To provide the opportunity for students to share ideas and experience in developing research proposals and methods, and to develop presentational skills through presenting these ideas to groups of fellow students and staff.
3. To enable students to develop and deploy library and internet skills in literature search, and in identifying and utilising data sources.
4. To introduce quantitative analysis and data presentation using appropriate software.
5. To develop students' IT skills.

Intended Learning Outcomes

In completing their dissertation, students should be able to demonstrate ability to:

1. Undertake a substantial, focused piece of research using research methods and analytical techniques that are appropriate to their programme of study.
2. Research the literature relating to a specific topic or issue relevant to their programme of study, and present a synthesis and critical review of that literature.
3. Identify and formulate hypotheses to be tested or problems to be addressed arising from the literature.
4. Mobilise data relevant to addressing these hypotheses or problems; analyse the data (using statistical or other relevant methods) and evaluate findings.

5. Present a substantial piece of genuine written work that is clearly motivated and structured, and conforms to the requirements specified in the course documentation with regard to length, layout, and presentational features such as referencing and bibliography.

Course outline (please note that changes to the sequence of lectures are possible)

1. Introduction to the philosophy and methodology of research in the social sciences and economics (T. Gloyne)

Aims

The main objective of this session is to address some of the issues involved in the process of research i.e. **how** to attempt to 'find out' and to consider the **status** of what we claim to have found out.

General Outline

Amongst the topics to be discussed will be:

1. The status of economics as a social science; is it really 'scientific' at all and what do we mean by scientific? Positive versus Normative issues.
 2. Inductive and deductive reasoning. The notion of inference.
 3. Competition between rival 'schools' of economic orthodoxy.
 4. The importance of assumptions, explicit and implicit.
 5. Some problems of finding out and especially cause and effect and the post hoc ergo propter hoc issue.
 6. The Heisenberg 'Uncertainty Principle' in economics and 'Goodhart's Law'.
 7. Some illustrations using contemporary problem situations.
 8. Some do's and don'ts. The critical path.
2. Planning, researching and writing your dissertation (A. Paloni)

This session explains in detail what students are required to do in their dissertations and how the dissertation may be structured. The session also provides advice on the various chapters of the dissertation as well as on the planning stages of the work. Students should read this document (especially the part on the nature of the dissertation) in advance of the session.

3. Accessing literature and data: Glasgow University library services (D. Tait, Subject Librarian)

Nowadays libraries are much more than repositories for books. This session aims to familiarise students with the services provided by the University library, including access to electronic journals; software for bibliographic searches; inter-library loans; datasets availability (through library network access or requiring registration); and others.

4. Narrowing down the dissertation topic and formulating an appropriate research question (B. Weightman, Effective Learning Adviser)

This lecture aims to guide students in their effort to specify a focused research question which can be at the heart of the dissertation. This is very important since a research topic that is too broad and unfocused does not lend itself to a clear empirical analysis and will result in a weak dissertation.

5. Finding relevant material: developing your research and reading skills (G. Pringle, Faculty International Officer)

One of the main tasks of the postgraduate student is finding relevant material and identifying useful points for their own written work. This lecture aims to guide students in their search for literature on a chosen topic. Internet search engines, such as Google, though sometimes useful, may be rather inefficient. The lecture introduces students to skills in the essential use of other internet resources and bibliographic databases. The class will also explore effective reading strategies which can be used to identify key points and determine relevance. The ability to search the literature and find relevant material is necessary not only at various stages of the dissertation work but also when studying for the taught courses and working on the coursework.

6. Using sources effectively and avoiding plagiarism (G. Pringle, Faculty International Officer)

Proper attribution of the ideas expressed in written work raises the quality of the work and allows students to demonstrate their contribution to the development of ideas and arguments. Moreover, proper referencing is necessary to avoid the suspicion of plagiarism, which is an offence that the university takes very seriously and that may be punished through the imposition of penalties. This lecture uses examples of both good and poor practice to explore what plagiarism is and to demonstrate how sources can be used appropriately to support student work.

You may wish to consult the section on plagiarism in the MSc Handbook for further information and advice on avoiding plagiarism.

7. Descriptive statistics (4 lectures, I. Moldovan).

Aims

The general aim of these lectures is to provide the basic tools of statistical data analysis, which students will be able to use in their own research projects.

General Outline

1. Descriptive statistics: (i) tabular and graphical methods and (ii) numerical methods. Data transformations, clusters, time series concepts.
2. Probabilities, random variables, and the normal distribution.
3. Sampling distributions. Estimating means: point estimates and confidence intervals.
4. Hypothesis testing: means and differences in means.

Recommended Readings

You can read about descriptive statistics methods in *any* introductory statistics textbook and the library has many. A few are listed below, for your convenience:

- Anderson, David R., Sweeney, Dennis J. and Williams, Thomas A. (1997). *Essentials of Statistics for Business and Economics*, West Publishing Company.
- Weiss, Neil A. and Hasset, Matthew J. (1991). *Introductory Statistics*, 3rd edition, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Moore, David S. (2000). *The Basic Practice of Statistics*, 2nd edition, W. H. Freeman and Company, New York.

8. Quantitative analysis using statistical software

The aim is to illustrate the use of statistical software available to students in the University's computer labs. The session(s) will illustrate various quantitative techniques, including those covered in the lectures on descriptive statistics given by I. Moldovan.

9. Research example 1 (A. Paloni)

10. Research example 2 (M. Cerrato)

Each of these lectures presents real examples of research, which aim to illustrate the thought process that the students might follow when planning and writing the dissertation as well as the 'fit' between real research and the dissertation requirements.

11. Dissertation proposals (A. Paloni)

The aims of this session are (i) to explain the characteristics that are expected from a dissertation proposal; (ii) to discuss some of the students' proposals; (iii) to give instruction to the students' groups about their work and function in the forthcoming session.

12. Small-group sessions in which students present and discuss research proposals/dissertation outlines.

Each student group is expected to evaluate the individual proposals and make recommendations for improvement.

The nature of the dissertation in CDS

It may be helpful to think of the dissertation as a slightly extended article, rather than something more substantial such as a book. Therefore, the consultation of published articles is an invaluable aid not only during the process of deciding the topic of the dissertation but also during the preparation of the structure of the dissertation.

a) A specific focus

The key point is that the dissertation must have a *specific focus* on a central hypothesis or problem which is confronted, just like an article. The dissertation must be well motivated, i.e. there should be a convincing statement of why the dissertation is of interest. The emphasis on a "specific focus" intends to highlight the fact that the dissertation should not address a generic problem. For example, a dissertation should not be on the causes in general of financial crises; the effect of World Bank programmes; the consequences of the reform programmes adopted in a certain country; corruption and economic development; etc.

The dissertation should not be on a question for which the answer can be simply found in some publication. The dissertation must have a specific focus on a specific issue which deserves to be researched, and for which there are available data that students can analyse to provide support for the arguments that are put forward. In other words, the dissertation must have an element of originality.

Thus, to continue with the examples made above, the dissertation should analyse not the causes of financial crises in general but, for example, whether the currency crisis in a certain country caused the banking crisis or vice versa, or could present an estimation of the cost of crisis in terms of output losses. It should analyse not the effects of World Bank programmes in general but, for example, whether they led to de-industrialisation or restructuring of the industrial sector, or the effect of these programmes specifically on economic growth, or poverty reduction, or food security, etc. It should not be on the general link between corruption and economic development but should analyse whether, for example, the eradication of corruption is a pre-condition for economic growth, or whether a specific country's aid giving is affected by the presence of corruption in recipient countries. It should not be "forward-looking" and discuss the future prospects of the adoption of an independent central bank (as no data could be used) but should be based on something for which there are data that can be analysed: for example, do countries with independent central banks have faster economic growth (or lower business cycle volatility or lower inflation, etc.) than countries where the central bank is not independent? It is the answer to this question (which is the focus of the dissertation) that can then have policy implications concerning the prospects of the adoption of an independent central bank. The dissertation should not discuss generic effects of reforms in a country but should analyse, for example, whether the liberalisation of the domestic banking sector has led to an increase in the amount of financial intermediation, or whether large and small firms have benefited equally (in terms of access to credit, or the cost of credit) from the financial sector reforms.

These are just a few examples. The crucial aspect of these examples is that the dissertation must be about a well-defined specific issue which can be addressed through an analysis of appropriate economic/statistical data.

b) The introduction

The introduction must present the motivation for the dissertation. The author is expected to explain in very clear terms why the topic is worth researching and the dissertation is worth reading. The motivation can be cast in "theoretical" terms, e.g. one theory says that financial crises (i.e. "twin crises") are started by banking crises; another theory says that exchange rate crises are at the root of twin crises. Therefore it is interesting to analyse whether in a particular country it was the banking crisis or the exchange rate crisis which caused the financial crisis. As another example, one theory says that trade liberalisation would result in a stronger domestic industrial sector; another theory says that liberalisation would weaken the industrial sector. It is therefore interesting to analyse which theory is supported by the data.

The motivation can also be cast in "empirical" terms. For example, while in theory corruption leads to the waste of aid, do countries give aid only to low-corruption countries? Or, as another example in the area of corruption, is it empirically the case that fast-growth countries are the low-corruption ones?

The dissertation can never be motivated by the argument that the author wanted to know more about a certain topic. The reader needs to be motivated to read the dissertation!

In addition to presenting the motivation of the dissertation, the introduction should explain how the dissertation is structured and quickly summarise your main arguments.

c) The literature review

Following the introduction, there should be a survey of the existing literature relevant to the topic. This literature should normally contain both theoretical and empirical elements. For example, in a dissertation that aims to explore whether liberalisation leads to de-industrialisation or industrial restructuring, the literature survey should report those studies which discuss how in theory liberalisation could strengthen the industrial sector (e.g. by increasing the competition of domestic firms which are open to international competition). The survey should also review those studies which are critical of the benefits of liberalisation for the domestic industrial sector (e.g. because liberalisation could kill domestic infant industries). In fact there are several channels through which liberalisation could affect – either positively or negatively – the industrial sector and these should all be discussed in the literature survey.

The literature survey should not be limited to theoretical contributions. Given that the dissertation contains an empirical chapter, the empirical literature should also be reviewed. Continuing with the liberalisation and industry example, the literature review should examine the empirical findings of papers concerned with the effect of liberalisation on the industrial sector, no matter whether in a cross-country, time-series or case study setting.

The literature survey can be done in one single chapter or in two chapters (one for the theoretical literature, one for the empirical literature), as appropriate to the nature of your specific dissertation topic.

It is important to remember that all the different parts of the dissertation must be tightly integrated with each other. Therefore, the literature survey must cover exclusively those issues that are relevant to your discussion of the dissertation topic. This consideration suggests that a good literature review is not simply a list of published papers summarised one after the other. Rather, the survey must be organised around concepts/issues, summarising the points of view emerging from the literature about those concepts/issues.

d) The empirical chapter

This is meant to be the key chapter of the dissertation. This is an applied, empirical chapter which directly addresses the main hypothesis of the dissertation. In this chapter, students are expected to make use of and analyse economic/statistical data.

The use of econometrics is not required while the use of at least some basic techniques of descriptive statistics is a requirement (for this purpose your work on the dissertation is supported by lectures on descriptive statistics in the “Research Methods and Dissertation Training” course). Students must show that they are not frightened by numbers and can, to the contrary, use and manipulate (through appropriate techniques) data to support their argument.

Normally, the empirical chapter is expected to contain a description of the data and a motivation of the data used. A practical problem that any researcher faces is that the data which are available are only a very imperfect reflection of the theoretical concepts they are supposed to measure. For example, concepts such as de-industrialisation or liberalisation cannot be measured directly and the available economic data give only an approximate indication of de-industrialisation or liberalisation. Therefore, this chapter should describe which data are used (including the source of the data) and why they are appropriate (reference to other empirical studies that have used the same data for the same purpose as the dissertation would be useful in this context). The limitations of the data should also be clearly pointed out. In the example of liberalisation and industry, an additional complication is

that some economic data may indicate an industrial contraction but may not easily discriminate between the alternative hypotheses of de-industrialisation or industrial restructuring. How one intends to test one hypothesis against the other should be clearly explained.

Following the description of the data and the motivation for their use, the chapter should clearly explain your testing strategy (i.e. how you are going to assemble and manipulate the data in order to answer the particular research question which is at the core of your dissertation) and the techniques of analysis that you are going to use (without merely reproducing a few pages of a statistics textbook). For example, if the dissertation aims to analyse whether trade liberalisation has a contractionary or expansionary effect on the industrial sector, you could take a group of countries that have liberalised their trade regime and test whether their industrial performance after liberalisation is statistically different from their performance before liberalisation.

Subsequently, the empirical results are presented and discussed. The empirical chapter should normally close with a discussion of the limitations of the analysis and possible alternative interpretations of the results.

A dissertation where the student makes no use of economic/statistical data would not be acceptable.

e) Conclusions

The final chapter presents the conclusions. These must be based on the analysis performed in the dissertation, rather than generic conclusions with policy implications that are unrelated to the rest of the dissertation. The conclusions put forward must be justified and supported by the analysis performed. This does not mean that broader statements are not admissible. However, the student must make it very clear to what extent the dissertation can shed light on a certain topic, which of the conclusions and policy implications can be justified by the work presented in the dissertation and which conclusions and policy implications are, by contrast, more tentative and less grounded on the dissertation.

The dissertation structure described above is one that a reader would expect to find. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is no prescribed formula for the form which a good dissertation should take. For example, depending on the specific topic of a dissertation, there may be other chapters, such as a chapter on certain policies adopted in a specific country. Also, the form of the empirical chapter will depend both on the nature of the hypothesis that one intends to test and on the interests/strengths of the student.

Dissertation planning: time schedule

a) Choice of department and broad research area

Dissertations are normally supervised in the department of Economics but it is possible for students to make individual arrangements with supervisors in other departments. All students are required to choose the department where they wish to be supervised and communicate it to the CDS office by **Friday 30 October 2009**. After this deadline, it will be impossible for students to change the department where the dissertation is supervised.

Please note that the Department of Accounting and Finance (which every year supervises a number of CDS dissertations) runs a Research Methods course which is compulsory for those who intend to receive supervision in that department. Those who fail to attend their lectures in Research Methods cannot receive supervision in the Department of Accounting

and Finance. Students who would like to receive supervision in other departments should enquire about similar compulsory Dissertation Training courses.

b) Choosing the dissertation topic

The section above on “The nature of the dissertation in CDS” has clearly stated and explained that the dissertation topic must consist in a precise and focussed research question which must be addressed through the analysis and manipulation of economic/statistical data.

It is also suggested that the choice of the topic would be helped by the consultation of published literature, especially articles in specialised journals. Thus, the starting point for any search for a suitable topic can only be a search of the literature (not only through Google but, more importantly, through bibliographic search engines such as EconLit or through Repec). You should aim to find papers which analyse a topic you are very interested in. This topic must be amenable to analysis through the use of economic/statistical data.

Once you have found a topic you are interested in and relevant literature on this topic you are not at the end of your search for a suitable research topic yet. First, you must determine how your dissertation would not simply replicate published papers. Remember that your dissertation is intended to represent an original contribution to the literature. There are a number of possible modifications which might lend originality to your dissertation. For example, while the published papers you found might include cross-country analyses of the effects of a certain policy/institution, your dissertation may focus on the effects of that policy/institution in a specific country, or vice versa. Or the published papers might concentrate on one country, while you intend to focus on another. As another example, the published papers may compare some countries along a certain dimension, while you are interested in comparing those countries along a different dimension. For example, while the published studies may investigate whether countries that have liberalised their trade regime have achieved faster economic growth, your dissertation may analyse whether those countries have seen an expansion (or a contraction) of the industrial sector. In planning your dissertation you must also consider how your change in perspective compared to the published papers modifies not only the empirical section of your dissertation but all the other sections as well.

In the process of thinking about your original modification of the published literature, you must assess the feasibility of the research, particularly with respect to two aspects, namely, the feasibility of the statistical analysis and the availability of data. Let us start with the feasibility of the statistical analysis. Nowadays, published papers tend to make use of very sophisticated techniques of analysis which may be too demanding for your capacity. You have to ask yourself how you can simplify the statistical approach in a way that still allows you to sensibly address your research question. Remember that you are not required to undertake advanced econometric analysis (though you may do so if you have the capacity and wish to do it): you are only required to show that you have some numeracy skills and can employ appropriate statistical techniques of analysis. Ask yourself this question: if I were asked to find an answer for this question, what kind of empirical evidence could I bring to give a sensible answer? If you feel that the required statistical technique is too demanding and a simpler approach would not be meaningful, your research topic is not feasible and you should think of a different one.

Feasibility should also be assessed with respect to the availability of data. Do you have access to the data that are required? Through the library website, you can have access to a very extensive dataset, namely, the World Development Indicators. Many other datasets can be accessed after simple registration (ESDS international is particularly useful, as it gives access to a large number of datasets in addition to the World Development Indicators).

Datasets are also available through the World Bank website. Many datasets are freely available through the internet. It is imperative that, already at the stage when you are trying to determine your research topic, you ascertain that you have access to the data you require. Never assume that you will find the required data but always check that you have access and that the data are appropriate for your purpose.

Please note that, if you wish to consult previous years' dissertations, you should be very careful in how you evaluate this information: first, you should not look too far back in the past, since over the years the dissertation requirements have changed and become progressively more demanding (do not look for dissertations that were written more than one or two academic years ago); second, you do not know the grade received by the dissertation you are consulting.

c) Dissertation proposal

Having determined your dissertation topic, your next step is to write your dissertation proposal. The section above on "The nature of the dissertation in CDS" has clearly explained the typical structure that a dissertation in CDS is expected to have. Therefore, your dissertation proposal must contain the title, an explanation of the background and motivation for the dissertation topic, an outline of the structure, a detailed summary of the research methodology and approach (NOT the textbook description of the statistical technique), a description of the data which will be employed, and an indication of the main bibliographical sources. How to write a good dissertation proposal will be discussed in the penultimate session of the Research Methods and Dissertation Training course.

The final session of the Research Methods and Dissertation Training course will take the form of small-group sessions in which the group will analyse, and suggest improvements to, dissertation proposals that each student will submit in writing to their group. The aims of the group are to ensure that the individual proposals conform to the format described in the previous paragraph (exploring in particular that the topic is well focused and motivated and that the empirical approach is well determined, feasible and appropriate to the task) and to make suggestions for improvement.

After these group sessions, students have the opportunity to revise their proposal in the light of the comments made by the group before the final proposal is examined by the supervisor. Dissertation proposals must be submitted to the CDS office by **1.00 pm on Thursday 11 February**. Late submission of the dissertation proposal without good reason is not acceptable and supervisors may not provide supervision in the absence of a proposal. Please note that students will not normally be allowed to change their dissertation topic after the proposal has been submitted, though – with the supervisor's agreement – a minor change of focus necessitated during the process of research is admissible. A change of topic will only be allowed under special circumstances after discussion with the CDS director and the assigned supervisor. Supervisors will be allocated shortly after submission of the proposals and students are expected to have contacted their supervisor by **19 March 2010** at the latest.

d) Dissertation preparation and writing

Work on the dissertation should be carried out throughout the year, including vacation periods. It is particularly important that students continue to work on the dissertation at least during part of the Spring Vacation in order to be able to complete the writing-up phase on time after the final exams. You are strongly advised not to leave the work on the dissertation until after the examinations. This is far too late: you would run the risk of failing the dissertation and, even if you do not fail, you would almost certainly be unable to do well.

Having clearly identified the precise topic of the dissertation and having set out precisely the format of the empirical chapter of the dissertation, it is strongly recommended that, by the beginning of the third term, students should (i) find and collect the data required for the empirical chapter; (ii) perform extensive literature searches for the survey of the theoretical and empirical literature; (iii) read at least some of this literature. Postponing these actions to after the examinations will seriously jeopardise chances of success in the dissertation. In addition, it is recommended that the empirical analysis is at least started before the end of the Spring Vacation.

After completion of the examination diet and throughout the Summer vacation, students are expected to work on the dissertation. CDS will not explicitly permit students to leave the University until the dissertation is submitted, except under special circumstances.

Format of dissertation and submission

Dissertations must be presented in printed form, using a word processing package. The length is 12000-15000 words and a word count must be included. The word limit includes everything, though, in special circumstances, the dissertation may contain an appendix – with explicit approval by the supervisor – which would not go towards the word limit. Dissertations that do not conform to these limits will be penalised by the reduction of secondary bands at the discretion of the examiners.

Two copies of the dissertation (one soft-bound, and one electronic copy) must be submitted to the CDS office by **1.00 pm on Wednesday 1 September 2010**. This is a strict deadline and late submissions without good cause will be penalised by the reduction of secondary bands, as described in detail in the CDS Scheme of Assessment.

Students who resit exams qualify automatically for an extension of one month for one resit exam or two months for two or more resit exams. In all other cases, extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances with the supervisor's support. Any request for an extension to the deadline for submission of the dissertation must be submitted in writing (via e-mail) and approved by the CDS director/deputy director. The length of the extension sought must be specified and have received the supervisor's approval.

The format of the dissertations should conform to the following requirements.

- The dissertation should be printed on A4-sized paper on one side only.
- It should be double-spaced (not 1.5-spaced or single spaced) using Times Roman 12 point. It is recommended that you leave 2.5 cm (one inch) all-round margins – more on the left-hand side depending on the binding.
- It should include a title page.
- It should include a summary (maximum 200 words); a table of contents listing chapters, sections and sub-sections; a separate list of tables, figures and charts; appendices (only if relevant), and a detailed bibliography arranged in a consistent system, such as that adopted by the *Economic Journal*. References in the text and footnotes should also follow this system.
- The dissertation should only include your student number (but NO NAME) to preserve anonymity during second marking.

Please note that dissertations will be checked for plagiarism. When submitting the dissertation, students will be required to sign a statement that no plagiarism has been committed.

Support and supervisor's role

The dissertation is conceived as a broadly independent piece of work. The "Research Methods and Dissertation Training" course aims to provide appropriate support for the students to engage successfully with the task of writing the dissertation. The course should therefore guide the students through the different stages involved in the writing of the dissertation, particularly the planning stages. For further support, a supervisor will be appointed for each student, though we would expect students to be able to proceed independently and not to require meetings with the supervisor more than five times before the dissertation submission.

Supervisors can give guidance and advice on the specification of the dissertation topic, the dissertation proposal and work plan, the structure of the dissertation and at various stages of the work for the dissertation. However, in their meetings, it is the students who are expected to take an active role. For example, while supervisors can give advice on the exact specification of the topic of the dissertation and the form of the empirical chapter, they will not resolve the problem for the students if their proposal is not well specified, i.e. if it is very broad and unfocused, there is not a clear research hypothesis, the applied chapter is not defined, etc. Students are expected to take the lead in the discussions with their supervisors, rather than passively waiting for the supervisor's suggestions. For example, if the student's proposal provides no evidence that the student has been searching and reading some literature, the supervisor will not tell the student how to turn a vague proposal into a tight dissertation. The student must make the first step.

Supervisors are not expected to comment on successive drafts of each chapter, or on final drafts of one chapter at a time. As a norm, supervisors will comment on students' plans, and the final draft of the entire dissertation, giving guidance on the structure of the dissertation, the tightness of the presented argument, etc. rather than advising on the precise content of the dissertation. Supervisors are not expected to check if their comments have been included in the dissertation. Students must bear in mind that supervisors will require a reasonable period of time to comment on their final draft. Supervisors are first markers of the dissertation.

Students are required to write the dissertation in an adequate standard of English or dissertations may be marked down. Supervisors will not provide language support or edit the dissertation.

It is the students' responsibility not to plan meetings with the supervisor when the supervisor is on holiday or absent. In the case of an extended period of absence, supervisors make arrangements with colleagues for cover should the student be in need of urgent guidance.

N.B.

The above guidelines apply to students whose dissertations are supervised by the members of staff of the Department of Economics.

Those students who are supervised by members of staff from other Departments should follow the guidelines of that Department.