

IBO4001 Business Dissertations

The Proposal

- This work counts for 5% of your overall Dissertation grade.
- **Hand-in date:** 28 October 2009
(refer/defer work 30 November 2009).
- You must hand-in a printed copy to Park Campus SAO **and** an electronic copy via the module's NILE site.
- Word limit: 1000 words

Introduction

- The essential purpose of writing a detailed proposal is to set out the "what, why, and how" of your Dissertation.
- This means explaining what area(s) you wish to research, why those areas are important, and how you intend to research them.
- The process of writing the proposal also helps to ensure that some serious and structured thought has been given to the Dissertation.

Structure

- You should adopt the following structure for your proposal.
- Remember *must* discuss the areas listed below with your supervisor **before** including them in your finalised piece of work.

Title

- Your first title will be a working title and may change – in fact it almost certainly will change.
- Keep it short! The title doesn't have to explain everything that your dissertation covers...

Hypothesis or Research Question

- A hypothesis is a statement that provides a basis for your investigation
- for example: *Multinational corporations always exploit the countries in which they invest*
- A research question has the same purpose, but is phrased differently
- for example: *Do multinational corporations always exploit the countries in which they invest?*

Background

- An brief outline of the contemporary business issue that you want to explore. This should let the reader know where the idea has come from and demonstrate why the Dissertation is worth doing.
- It should demonstrate that you know something of the area in which you are intending to research.
- You ***have to*** show that ***your work relates to previous theory and analysis*** – this should only be an *overview* of key sources ***not*** a full critical literature review which you will undertake later.

Aim and Objectives

- These should be written as clearly as possible and should work like action points for the Dissertation itself.
- The successful completion of the research and write-up may well depend on the clarity of the stated questions and objectives!
- These should set observable outcomes not vague statements of intent.
- But... remember these are intentions – and intentions may change as the research process develops over the coming months.

Method

- Where and how are you going to go about the research?
- Primary research – for example, a survey or interviews – is NOT a requirement in this module, but it may be appropriate for some Dissertations.
- You should demonstrate to the reader that you have thought thoroughly about the problems and methods in advance i.e. your chosen method will match the objectives.

Reference list

- Your written proposal ***must*** include a detailed reference list, emphasising the academic publications you have consulted.
- Use Harvard referencing
- This does not count toward the 1000 word limit for this piece of work.

Overall the proposal should demonstrate:-

- considerable background research in respect of the current business issue chosen.
- a case for the “do-ability” of the proposal, ie the title and research question match well with the proposed research method.
- that *all* sources are referenced using Harvard referencing.

Advice

- Getting started with a Dissertation is often the hardest part. Make sure you *discuss your ideas with your supervisor **before** finalising this piece of work*. In fact, you should make sure you ask your supervisor for advice on a draft of this assignment.
- Although the proposal is an important part of the Dissertation, it is worth noting that it does *not* commit you to following a direction that later proves to be inappropriate. Changes of detail and direction are likely, and even inevitable, as your research progresses.

Reading

- Saunders M, Lewis P and Thornhill A (2006), *Research Methods for Business Students*, 4th ed, FT Prentice Hall