



Kolegji AAB

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DISSERTATION STUDY GUIDE

Bachelor Programs (BA, BSc)

2014

By the Quality Assurance Office

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What is a dissertation?

The dissertation or as it is otherwise called, the research project, is probably the most important task or project that a student will undertake and work on during university, and is often a key indicator of the communication and research and skills of a student.

A dissertation adheres to some basic principles of academic writing:

- It is a structured piece of writing that develops a clear line of thought (an 'argument') in response to a central question or proposition ('thesis').
- A dissertation is an extended piece of work, usually divided into chapters, and contains a considerably more detailed examination of what it addresses and, as such, requires more work than in the case of writing an essay.
- You, as students, have the responsibility to choose a research topic from a field or subject that you liked the most. It also falls upon you to find supporting material for your topic.
- Your dissertation shows your ability to conduct research both independently, and with the support of a professor who will be your mentor.
- Each student will have a mentor (advisor), who will be selected by the student, provided that they have a doctorate degree in the relevant field you have selected as the topic of your dissertation.
- The student should pay great attention to the research methodology they use to reach their conclusions. Students can also discuss this with their mentor.
- For those students who use quantitative analysis with varying data, they must make sure to use the appropriate software for the quantitative analysis. Students can also discuss this with their mentor.

A dissertation as a form of evaluation differs from the other evaluations you had throughout your studies in other subjects. The expectation is that you, as students, will hold yourselves accountable for your own learning, for you to review existing literature on a topic that you have selected, for you to select a methodology for your research, and for you to write down your findings and discuss the results in a discussion session - which is also called the dissertation defense.

For most students, an important element of their final year of study is an independent learning project. According to Todd et al (2004), even though these projects may vary greatly in their purpose and nature (e.g., an extended dissertation or extended essay; design and projection of several types of artifacts, research projects and workshops, reports, various exhibitions and discussions, etc.) most of them share a number of similar features. These similar features are mentioned below. Also, the assignment of the final independent project, or your dissertation, also depends on the faculty and your field of study.

- **Firstly**, the student determines the focus and direction of their work.
- **Secondly**, this work is done individually - but with support from the mentor (as mentioned above).
- **Thirdly**, there is usually a research component, which is essential to the project, which may require primary data collection and / or analysis of existing data or secondary data.
- **Lastly**, the student will work longer on the chosen topic than in the case of writing an essay or other assignments defined by professors across different subjects. As a result, the student is expected to have a more in-depth analysis and presentation of researched results.

Dissertation topic selection

- The student must select their own topic for their dissertation in the last year of their studies after having completed all the lectures in all subjects.
- Professors will give recommendations on various topics in their field or subject during their lectures throughout the years.
- Students are encouraged to think for themselves, and pick what they enjoy the most. Then, the topic that the student is thinking of selecting should be discussed with any professor of that particular field.
- Students will receive examples of topics they can select from their professors, but they must make the selection independently and, preferably, decide on a topic they feel they can contribute the most on.
- After the student selects the dissertation topic, they then must also select a mentor.
- A mentor is a professor with a doctorate in a certain field, who has the task to monitor or observe the work of the student. Also, a mentor has a duty to advise students and guide them towards the best possible outcome for their dissertation.
- All students are encouraged to, from the start of their final year, to think about which topics they are most interested in, and start consultations with their professors, to make a proper dissertation selection.
- The selection of the dissertation topic is half the work.
- Make sure that, as students, you are ready to find facts, data, literature, equipment and also time for the topic you have selected, or are on the verge of selection.

Academic ethics and etiquette

- Writing a dissertation is a great responsibility. In other subjects or courses, it is clearly defined what professors want you to find, learn, and test you on. The dissertation, however, is entirely your individual opinion (with advice from your mentor). There is more freedom in how you treat a topic, and from what point of view you tackle it, but this also comes with more responsibilities.
- You need to make sure that your topic is not a copy or duplication of another author's work. Taking the works of others and using them as your own is considered an academic crime and has penalties. This is called plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is punished in AAB College, in accordance with the regulations. Read this document carefully before beginning to write your dissertation.
- At AAB College, academic misconduct and academic dishonesty are:
 - Plagiarism
 - Submitting the same paper more than once
 - Secret agreements / collaborations between students

- Cheating during exams and colloquia
- False presentation of sources or references, and inadequate citation.
- Inadequate references / citations

All of these acts will be penalized accordingly.

- When writing your work, it is okay to use someone else's work, as long as you cite and reference the works according to the rules of the Harvard system, Vancouver system, or any other recognized systems. Please read the guide on this.
- In fact, it is important to use many different sources for a particular topic when writing your paper. The professor may evaluate you on your source reference usage. This indicates that you have researched and read a lot or several sources / articles.
- Any citations from published or unpublished works by other authors should be identified clearly and placed inside quotation marks, and students should document the sources as accurately and as completely as possible.

Why should references be mentioned and cited?

- By referring to the material you have used as a source, you legitimize your work and at the same time, you display the breadth of your research.
- All references should be cited in accordance with the required system of referencing. For more information, read the Regulation for citation and references of AAB College.
- Your list of citations will give the reader the opportunity to find the source of the information.
- Not using information sources properly for an essay, report, project,
- work, plan, analysis, article or book constitutes plagiarism, and you will be punished for it.
- **Regulations and penalties for plagiarism at AAB College** can be found in the document of academic misconduct. Read this document carefully.
- Students should be aware that AAB College takes plagiarism seriously and students may be expelled when caught.

Presentation form

The structure of the dissertation should look as follows:

- Title Page:
 - Name of the College
 - Name of the faculty / program
 - Emblem
 - Title of topic
 - Name of mentor and candidate
 - Year of work
- This page should be blank

- This page should contain the identical data seen on the title page
- Contents
- Introduction,
- Elaboration of topics,
- Conclusion and,
- Bibliography.

Submission of the dissertation topic

Pages	Submission of written work	Content
Page one	Title of dissertation topic	Title of the paper Your Name / No. and ID Mentor name and title Course title / Study program Date
Page two	Content	Contents of the research paper with page numbers for each chapter, subchapter, title, subtitle, etc.
Page three	List of tables and graphs	The whole list of used tables, graphs, figures, exhibitions, works, etc. Number of the pages where these tables and graphs can be found.
Page four	List of abbreviations (if any)	List of all abbreviations (if any) used in the paper, presented in alphabetical order.
Page five	Abstract	The abstract is a summary of what you have researched, what you have discovered and the conclusions you have drawn.
One to two pages of	Introduction	The Introduction starts with a general description of the issue being researched and ends in a narrowed down statement.
Two to four pages of	Literature Review	Mainly concerns with the description of literature relevant to the issue you elaborate. You need to present how you set up your research topic and how it compares with existing work in that field.
One to two pages of	Methodology	This is where you have to answer the questions 'how have I chosen these methods to answer the

		question of my dissertation, how will this methodology help me in reaching the conclusions of my work, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach as a means of generating new knowledge in this field, what equipment, which programs have I used on the computer, why, and how I did it?’
Main part of the dissertation. Number of pages may vary.	Findings / Results	All findings or results of the paper should appear here in the form that contributes most to give meaning to your work. Presentation of results should be made as clear as possible for the reader.
Main part of the dissertation. Number of pages may vary.	Discussion	The purpose of this part of the paper is interpretation, analysis-making and evaluation of results achieved.
One to three pages of	Conclusion (and if necessary, recommendations)	The conclusion of the work must once again return to the Introduction and give a short answer to the questions you have laid out.
Number of pages may vary. Usually, one to three.	Bibliography / References	A list of all the references should be written here: books, diary articles, magazines academic, various journals, sites internet, newspapers and other resources you used in this dissertation.
Number of pages may vary depending on the amount of data presented.	Appendix	Questionnaires, transcripts of interviews, transcripts of surveys, detailed tables, graphs of detailed formulas and econometric models, that you used during your study should be presented here.

Detailed description of pages

Abstract

The second page of the dissertation should be reserved for the Abstract. The title should be placed in the middle of the page. The abstract is a summary of what you have researched and the conclusions you have

drawn. Usually, the abstract is compiled after the paper is completed. The abstract must consist of 100-150 words. The abstract should include hypotheses, methodology, results and conclusions.

I. Introduction

The dissertation will continue with the title Introduction. The Introduction starts with a general description of the issue being researched and ends in a narrowed down statement. The issue should be discussed in general first, followed by a brief description of the relevant literature, and a conclusion with a clear and detailed description of the purpose of your research.

You should end the introduction with a sentence that summarizes the aim and purpose of the research you are doing. In this section you should indicate what you expect from the results (based on the theoretical discussions and other research that has been cited earlier in the introduction). In case you have no expectations for the results, note it as well. Here you should also explain how you have organized your paper, so that the reader is aware of what awaits them further in the reading.

II. Literature Review

Literature Description is mainly a description of relevant literature to the issue you address. Usually, it should not focus only on the specifics of the issue, but should also consider other related issues that you are discussing. However, the citation form must be clearly defined. There are some citation rules like; "Jones and Jones (1994) show that ..." or "... in the research of war and PTSD (Jones and Jones, 1994) argue...". The citation rules depend a lot on the referencing style. As a student you should refer to the citation policy. You have to discuss with the dean's office on what style of referencing they want used. The most used citation and referencing styles are the Harvard style, Vancouver style and the Chicago style. Each of these styles are acceptable, but you must specify in the methodology section which one is used in your dissertation.

III. Methodology

This part of the dissertation continues with a title in the middle of the page "Methodology" and should be divided into four subtitles. This division also depends on the field of study or the faculty. There may be a methodology section even without the subtitles. You need to decide together with your mentor how you want to present your dissertation methodology to the reader. The methodology should be clearly written and very understandable to the reader. Each dean's office must decide on how they want their methodology written. For social sciences, economics, and science faculty, this form is often the one used for the methodology.

1) Participants in surveys / questionnaires or in used data

The following information should be provided in this section:

- Total number of participants or respondents or data used
- Sampling population (e.g; first year students of AAB College), or used sample of existing data
- Selection (random, voluntary, etc.), or data selection
- Other details that may have an impact on the research results such as: age, gender,
- education, knowledge of the participants on the issue to be researched

- Sources of used data (e.g World Bank, IMF, Central Bank, Municipality, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy, Statistical Office of Kosovo, etc.)

2) Equipment/ tools / computer programs

- It is not enough to list the tools that have been used, they need to be specified in detail so that the reader can understand more easily.
- Different faculties use different software programs
 - (e.g., Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences may use IBM SPSS, Excel, EVIEWS, STATA etc)
 - (e.g., Faculty of Architecture, and Faculty of Arts may use AUTO CAD, Adobe Professional, Photoshop, etc)
 - (e.g., Faculty of Computer Sciences may use VBA, Liquid XML Studio, Netbeans, Java Platform, Access, etc)

3) Experimental design

- This section should describe the design or models. Explain your selection's advantages over other designs / models
- Explain the dependent and independent variables and present econometric formulas if necessary.
- Explain how participants were divided into groups and all other information that contributed to your design / model.

4) Procedure

- This section describes everything that happened from the moment the experimenter met with the respondents until the moment the meeting ended.
- All important events that occurred during the research should be described.
- The procedure of interviewing, surveying, model formulation, or other procedures that correspond to your field of study should be presented.

IV. Findings / Results

The presentation of results or findings should be made as clear as possible to the reader. Data and statistics tables should not be included in this part of the paper, but in the form of appendices.

The results section should include clearly collected data, averages, standard deviation, and confidence intervals in table form. In results or findings, it will be necessary to begin with the main achievements and then move on to the less relevant ones.

V. Discussion

The discussion section is usually the penultimate part of this dissertation. The purpose of this section of the dissertation is the interpretation of achieved results or findings. Comments and descriptions of obtained graphs from results and findings should be placed here. Unusual results that have been achieved should also be included.

Always try to give your simplest interpretation of the results so that it is as original as possible. The discussion should also include the research question and how the results achieved answer this question. Unlike the introduction, the discussion begins from the narrow perspective on the issue and continues by expanding on it.

VI. Summary / Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the final chapter or the last part of the dissertation. This chapter should gather conclusions as well as, if it is reasonable and necessary, note any recommendations for practice. You should not include new ideas or analyses at this stage - they should have been addressed in the discussion section. You can include some thoughts on the research work you have done and also identify ways in which you, or others, can conduct further research in the same or similar fields.

References

Usually, the reference page is about listing all the sources you have used in the dissertation, alphabetically based on the author's last name. All sources should be cited in this section.

- **Appendices and Figures**

This is the part where data, figures, statistical tables, calculations, etc., are written. Each appendix must have a title.

- **In-text references**

- Write the name of the author and the year, for example: Adrian (1990) stated that, or a recent study by (Adrian, 1990) shows that ...
- For more authors, list all the names of the authors for the first time as: Filani, Fisteku, Fisniku and Adam (1990), and the second time as: Filani et al. (1990), with a dot after "al".
- Write the page number you are referring to, after the year, for example (Lopez, 1993, p. 311),
- If you have more than one author, it should look like: (Smith, Jones, et al., 1991) or (Smith, Burke, et al., 1991).

- **Referencing forms:**

- **From unknown authors (taken from journals):**
- Caffeine linked to mental illness. (1991, July 13). New York Times, pp. B13, B15.

- **From books:**

- Strunk, W., Jr., & White, E. B. (1979). *The elements of style* (3rd ed.). New York: Macmillan.
- American Psychiatric Association. (1990). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Freud, S. (1961). The ego and the id. In J. Strachey (Ed. and Trans.), *The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 19, pp. 3-66). London: Hogarth Press. (Original work published 1923)

- Text reference would look like (Freud, 1923/1961).
- **From book chapters:**
 - Shapiro, K. L., & Raymond, J. E. (1994). Temporal allocation of visual attention: Inhibition or interference? In D. Dagenbach & T. H. Carr (Eds.), *Inhibitory mechanisms in attention, memory, and language*. New York: Academic Press.
- **Group of authors or institutions:**
 - University of Pittsburgh. (1993) The title goes as follows. *Journal of Something*, 8, 5-9.
- **From scientific articles**
 - Spitch, M. L., Verzy, H. N., & Wilkie, D. M. (1993). Subjective shortening: A model of pigeons' memory for event duration. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes*, 9, 14-30.
 - *From journal articles*
 - Gardner, H. (1991, December). Do babies sing a universal song? *Psychology Today*, pp. 70-76.
- **Electronic media**
 - **FTP** : Bixley, T. S. (1995) *Sentient microfilaments: A tempest in a tubule*.
 - [On-line]. Available:
ftp://blahblah.princeton.edu/pub/harnad/psyc.95.3.26/consciousness/11/ bixley.
 - **Gopher**: Bixley, T. S. (1995) *Sentient microfilaments: A tempest in a tubule*.
 - [On-line]. Available:13
gopher://somecomputer.princeton.edu/pub/harnad/psyc.95.3.26/consciou sness/11/bixley.
 - **World Wide Web**: Bixley, T. S. (1995) *Sentient microfilaments Home Page*. [On-line]. Available: <http://www.microfilaments.com/consciousness/synchronicity/quantumtube.html>

Mentoring, consulting, evaluation and submission deadline

- The Dean's Office may request professors to publish possible bachelor dissertation topics.
- After the completion of exams corresponding to the study program, the student coins the right for the beginning of the bachelor dissertation procedure.
- Bachelor's theses may only be chosen from the basic subjects from the narrow field of study in the respective study program.
- After the completion of the exams, the student coins the right to address to the Scientific Teaching Council of the Faculty a request for permission to begin the procedure of the bachelor dissertation, "theses" and "Bachelor project proposal", and may also propose the mentor and commission members.

- The Scientific Teaching Council, after reviewing the request for the admission of the bachelor dissertation, decides for the "approval" or "dismissal" of it.
- By approving the Bachelor dissertation, the Scientific Teaching Council of the faculty appoints a three-member commission, from which, it appoints the chairman of the commission and the mentor who will work with the candidate. The Scientific Teaching Council may decide to fill a member's place within the commission in case one of the members withdraws from the commission, and may also decide to change the commission if one of the members does not perform the prescribed obligations.
- The bachelor's dissertation must be the original work of the candidate and must meet the criteria of professional standards, must be clearly written in accordance with the rules of the compilation of research papers, with a compiled terminology and with appropriate editing and technique.
- The student may choose the topic from the list of bachelor topics approved by the dean's office that are announced to the faculty staff, and may appoint another topic provided that has not been chosen during the past three years.
- Each student at AAB College will have a mentor for his/her Bachelor (dissertation) topic. You will have regular meetings with your mentors. You will arrange appointments in accordance with your mentor.
- Your mentor must have the title of professor or doctor of science or PhD, who will help and guide the student's work. In principle, the mentor should be chosen from among the faculty professors and who has experience in the field in which your topic will be elaborated. After the mentor approves the selected thesis topic, the student asks the dean of the faculty to approve the accordance.
- During the process of dissertation writing, the student should have regular consultations with his/her mentor. It is not good for the candidate to work independently for a long time and then consult the mentor and submit the main part of the work, without first receiving suggestions on the smallest issues.
- Consultations are also the responsibility of the mentor. So, before preparing the final draft, the candidate is obliged to submit (at least) a version to the mentor and after he/she has agreed that the paper is completed, the candidate submits the paper for review.
- The dissertation must be completed before the deadline. The term lasts 1 year to defend the diploma thesis. If you finish it earlier, it is not a problem.
- If you need more time to complete the diploma thesis you should talk to your mentor and dean. The deadline can be extended with the consent of the mentor and the dean, if there are strong reasons.
- The final draft should be well prepared and completed when submitted to the members of the commission. If there are numerous comments, then the candidate must correct them, and if not, the faculty council decides to organize the defense: a date is set and it is announced publicly.
- Each student must defend the topic of his/her diploma in front of the commission, which consists of 2 members and a mentor. The student defends the diploma thesis orally in front of the

commission, which is appointed by the dean. One of the members of the commission, is the chairman of the commission. The mentor should present the student and the topic in short points.

- The bachelor thesis must be defended within 1 (one) year from the date of the decision to work on the dissertation.
- The candidate, after completing the bachelor's thesis, submits the same to the members of the commission. The mentor in cooperation with the other two members of the commission, for a period of 7 days is obliged to write the reference letter for the candidate and the bachelor dissertation, and the same to be signed by all three and submitted to the Scientific Teaching Council of the Faculty.
- If one of the members of the commission has a different opinion, he/she can draft a separate reference letter and attach the same to the main reference letter.
- The Scientific Teaching Council, after receiving the reference letter from the commission, makes a decision for the "approval" or "dismissal". In case the referral is approved, you may set the date of the defense which cannot be earlier than 7 days from the date of decision. In case the referral is dismissed, you may be set a deadline of 14 days for completion and improvement.
- The candidate must submit the bachelor thesis in 6 copies:
 - A copy in original format (prepared in A4 book) for the library;
 - A copy in original format (prepared in A4 book) for the Archive;
 - A copy in original format (prepared in A4 book) for the student file;
 - Three copies in original format (prepared in A4 book) for each member of the Commission;
 - A CD in PDF format for the AAB electronic library.
- The defense of the diploma thesis is done publicly in front of the commission, teachers, students, colleagues, family, friends and other interested parties.
- The candidate presents the diploma thesis in the form he/she chooses (slides, sheets, etc.) depending on the type of thesis.
- The duration of the presentation is from 15 to 30 minutes. The chairman of the commission, after the end of the presentation gives the opportunity to the members of the commission to ask questions about the diploma thesis and the presentation itself. Questions can also be asked by the chairman and the audience.
- After the presentation and questions/answers, the commission leaves the class for 5 to 15 minutes to complete the evaluation of the diploma thesis and the presentation of the candidate. Each member independently and equally proposes the evaluation while the chairman makes the final calculation and evaluation. The student has the right to ask for some time in order to prepare the answers.
- Candidate evaluation can be "with success" or "with distinguished success".
- After the return, the chairman of the commission announces the decision, the evaluation of the commission and the title of the candidate, and a copy of the decision is given to the candidate.

- Administration, Archive, Responsible Officers, are obliged to keep regular records (copy of diploma thesis, copy of commission decision and other documents) for all graduates.

Technical information and expectation information

Instructions on the number of pages or words

- The dissertation or thesis topic should have approximately 7,000 to 10,000 words written from the introduction to the conclusion of the paper, and this does not include the words used to list references and appendices. It takes about 15 to 20 A4 pages to write, without including graphs, charts, figures, and more.
- Faculties may decide separately on the number of words or pages to be written for the Bachelor thesis. The student should be aware of this.

Instructions on margins, font and space between rows

- The document must be written in MS Word, .doc, or .docx.
- The font size used must be 12 for the written text, for the chapters 16, for the subchapters 14, and for the dissertation title on the first page must be size 20.
- The font model used must be Times New Roman.
- The space between the rows must be 1.5.
- The text must be Justified. Select the text and press CTRL + J on the keyboard.
- The margins must be the same on all sides. Click on Page Layout and select Normal.

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By:

Quality Assurance Office

AAB College, Kosovë

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CILËSI. LIDERSHIP. SUKSESI!