CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH HANDBOOK

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND DISSERTATIONS/THESIS

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY
CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH HANDBOOK

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS AND DISSERTATIONS/THESES

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PREFACE

One of the dignified indicators of academic excellence of any scholar is the contribution to acknowledge through research and publications. The process of undertaking academic research demands that academics follow approved conventional systematic guidelines. Unfortunately, in most tertiary institutions, one of the difficulties that students face when expected to engage in senior academic research is the application of the methodologies. The confusion that surrounds the uneasiness and the insecurity of the student’s approach to achieving quality research output has been described by one school of the thought as, “The Incompetence Syndrome”. This is a feeling of not knowing what to do; and how to do it, (especially how to start the whole process).

This monograph explicitly provides the methodological guidelines to assist both students and supervisors at the Copperbelt University to enhance and consolidate the quality of academic research and publication. The Copperbelt University is a transformational academic institution that upholds quality research activity to be at the core. Thus, to facilitate quality research activities at all levels of its academic endeavors (i.e., undergraduate and postgraduate), the guidelines have been evolved to provide the needed direction that has been a missing link between guided teaching in the lecture rooms and engagement of independent research by students.

For the Copperbelt University to achieve its goal of being a centre of academic excellence, quality research output is a key indicator. The measurement of this goal requires that every member of the academic community is obliged to seriously reflect on the right procedures to conduct academic research and hence produce the acceptable publications that meet international standards.

This document has been produced to streamline how academic research is to be pursued by students. It is thus, to guide students and their supervisors in research proposal and report writing.

Thomas Kweku Taylor Dean (DSc)
School of Graduate Studies
November 2008
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1.0 INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH

1.1 Definitions

Research is one concept which has several definitions depending upon the needs and interests of the individual concerned. But the following definitions seem to capture the essence of research in terms of the objectives of this Handbook.

1. Research is an organized and systematic way of finding answers to questions.
2. Research is seeking through methodical processes to add to the body of knowledge by the discovery of non-trivial facts and insights – it is a foray into the philosophy of knowledge. (Cooper & Schindler, 2006)

In both academia and industry/professions, ideas have to be understood, new information has to be accumulated, plans have to be made and discoveries have to come out of the scientific processes.

Research therefore is the systematic and scientific vehicle through which both the communication and utilization of the results of research can be done both effectively and efficiently. It requires systematic planning within a structured framework, and hence the need for some guidelines to enable upcoming coming cope with its demands of rigor, critical analysis and synthesis of multitudes of information.

While bad research is poorly planned and carried out, good research is that which is guided by the scientific method standards which are the utilization of systematic and empirical methods that produce research which is replicable.

This Handbook emphasizes the scientific approach to research since it is both efficient and effective in terms of problem-solving both academically
and managerially. Hence it is organized to ensure the conducting of good, relevant and replicable research.

1.2 Dissertation versus Thesis

It is very important that the difference between a dissertation and a thesis is made at this stage for students to understand what is required of them.

**Dissertation:** Is a research project that is undertaken at the end of an academic programme of study which comprises taught courses. It partially fulfills the requirement for the award of a degree (bachelors, masters, doctoral) in a given field of study.

**Thesis:** Is a research project that is undertaken at the end of an academic programme of study where taught courses are not a main requirement. It partially fulfills the requirement for the award of a degree (masters and doctoral) in a given field of study.

The guidelines in this Handbook are therefore meant for both undergraduate and post-graduate degree dissertations and theses.

1.3 The Research Proposal

Upon successful completion of the taught course component of their degree studies, students will be requested to prepare a research proposal on a topic of their choice subject to the conditions in section 2.1 below. The student must obtain the approval of the course coordinator concerning the chosen topic prior to proceeding to the preparation of the proposal. The research proposal stage marks the start of the application of the skills and knowledge the student has acquired during his/her studies, hence it is a very important part of the whole course of study at this level. The dissertation proposal should be 2 – 10 pages long as compared to a thesis proposal which should be 20 – 50 pages long.
In general, it is made up of the following components: (see a sample in Appendix 1).

Research Proposal Components

1. Research Topic/ Title
2. Research Problem
3. Research Questions
4. Research Objectives/ Interim Hypotheses
5. Scope of the study
6. Interim Literature Review
7. Interim Methodology
8. Programme of Research Activity

1.3.1 Research Topic
This is really the title of the study and it should reflect an area of interest to the student which should also possess potential to be researched upon.

1.3.2 Research Problem
This should be a brief statement of the problem to which the research would like to come up with solutions or answers and it should be stated very clearly.

1.3.3 Research Questions
The research problem is then broken down into a series of questions concerning the relationship between the cause (independent variable) and the effect (dependent variable).

1.3.4 Research Objectives
These are the goals which the research is supposed to attain and there can be one general objective and a number of specific objectives which are derived from the former. Interim hypotheses may or may not be included at this very initial stage in the research.
1.3.5 **Scope of the Study**
This should indicate what the research covers and what it does not. It is really the range of the study which should adequately deal with the research problem and resolve it.

1.3.6 **Interim Literature Review**
This should briefly touch on some initial important aspects of work previously done on the subject area by other scholars.

1.3.7 **Interim Methodology**
This should also briefly mention the research methods which the student plans to utilize in her/his investigation, e.g., study design (case, cross-sectional, longitudinal, exploratory, etc.), population, sample size and sampling methodology, data collection (variables, measures/instruments, methods) and data analysis techniques.

1.3.8 **Programme of Research Activity/ Work Plan**
This is the work plan for the whole research and, for purposes of efficiency and effectiveness, should preferably be in the form of a Gantt chart as the example in Appendix 2 indicates.

1.4 **The Research Proposal Defense**
The research proposal should be orally defended to a panel of evaluators using MS- PowerPoint presentation. Each student has to orally defend his/her proposal before a panel of experts or lecturers from the School/ Faculty and other Schools of the university.

A research proposal defense schedule/order of appearance should be given to each student and it should indicate the following (see Appendix 9):

i. The date on which the student is to defend the research.

ii. The time and order of appearing of each student

iii. The duration of the defense – usually it is 10 minutes student
presentation and 5 minutes of questions from the evaluation panel. This depends on the size of the student population scheduled for presentation.

The student presentation should be in power-point form hence, students are required to come with both a hard and soft copies of their presentations, usually on a flash disk or other suitable storage media.
2.0 RESEARCH GUIDELINES

General Requirements

Although research is a highly individualized activity which is tailored to suit specific needs, there are some common characteristics of degree student research which include:

a) The student can come up with a suitable research topic or the topic may be suggested by a potential supervisor. Lecturers have areas of research interest and therefore it is very important for a student to also consult.

b) The research must be completed within a given time period which is 6 to 12 months in this case.

c) The research and its findings must be presented in a specified manner or format.

d) The dissertation topics may include the following:
   • Practical business problems.
   • Practical human resource problems.
   • Evaluation of business/company performance.
   • A critical discussion/evaluation of the current state of research in a specific area of study.
   • Any other topic as may be approved by a panel or Head of Department or Dissertation/ Thesis Coordinator (who will be responsible for managing this kind of student research) or by the Supervisor of the research study.

e) The student will be expected to meet the following requirements:
   • Identity the research problem (s).
   • Analyze the problem and derive the research questions.
   • Conduct extensive literature review to determine to what extent existing theory can be of guidance in critical evaluation of the problem (s).
   • Plan and execute any necessary investigation into the problem (s).
• Synthesize the knowledge and skills learned with the results from the field work/ investigation.
• Provide practical and viable solution(s) to the problem(s) identified earlier.
• Make relevant recommendations from the solutions.
• Write logically and clearly while paying particular attention to formal reference requests on research papers and other published sources.
• Meet the study deadlines as set by the appropriate department or school.
• Submit a bound hard copy of the report as well as a soft copy on a diskette in Microsoft Word on or before the stated date.
• Adhering to the specifications as outlined in the following sections of this guideline.

Report Size/Length

Dissertation

The report should have a minimum number of 10,000 words and a maximum number of 18,000 words for a bachelors degree; a minimum number of 15,000 words and a maximum number of 20,000 words for a masters degree; and a minimum number of 25,000 words and a maximum number of 30,000 words for a doctoral degree.

The suggested size of the dissertation excludes all the ancillary material, i.e., tables, figures, graphs appendices and any type of attachments.

2.2.2 Thesis

This report should have a minimum number of 100,000 words and a maximum number of 150,000 words for a masters degree; and a minimum number of 150,000 words and a maximum number of 200,000 words for a doctoral degree.
The suggested size of the thesis report excludes all the ancillary material, i.e., tables, figures, graphs appendices and any type of attachments.


The research report comprises of:

A. Preliminary Pages (numbered in Roman numerals) as follows:
   1. Title page
   2. Declaration
   3. Dedication (optional)
   4. Acknowledgements
   5. Table of Contents
   6. List of Tables
   7. List of Figures
   8. List of Acronyms
   9. Abstract
   10. Main report body
   11. Acknowledgements

B. The Text Pages (numbered in Arabic numerals) which consist of the following headings arranged as chapters:
   a) Introduction or Background to the study
   b) Literature Review and/or Theoretical Framework
   c) Theoretical and Conceptual Framework
   d) Methodology
   e) Data Preparation and Analysis
   f) Research Findings/Results
   g) Discussion of Results and Findings/Interpretation of Results
   h) Conclusion: Summary
   i) Recommendations (depending on type of study)
   j) References and Bibliography
   k) Appendices
The Title Page

This is the top page of the report and should include the title of the dissertation, name of the author (student), purpose for which the dissertation has been submitted, the department, school, university and the date (see Appendix 3 for a sample).

The Declaration Page

This is a statement whose format is indicated in Appendix 5 and this should be adhered to.

The Dedication Page

This is a statement where students may dedicate their work to whoever they may wish to like family members, loved ones, friends, etc. (see Appendix 6)

The Acknowledgements Page

This is a statement to acknowledge any assistance received during the course of the research study (see section 3.4 below and Appendix 7)

The Table of Contents

This is a quick reference guide to the report (see section 3.2 below).

List of Tables

This is a list of all tables in the report and should be on its own page.

List of Figures

This is a list of all figures, charts and drawings in the report and should be on its own page.
List of Plates

This is a list of all the pictures (photographs) included in the report and their respective page numbers.

List of Acronyms/Abbreviations

This is a list of all terms/abbreviations used in the report and their long forms.

The Abstract

This is a summary of the report. It is a concise and focused description and explanation of the issues raised in the entire report. It should not be more than 1½ page long.

The Main Content of the Report

The main body of the research report comprises several chapters of theory, descriptions, analysis and discussion which should culminate into the formulation of your study’s research questions, hypotheses and logical conclusions and recommendations. The chapters are described next.

CHAPTER 1

2.3.11.1 Back ground to the Study

This is the first suggested chapter of the report which introduces and lays the background to the research study. It should include the following parts:

1. Background to the study
2. The Research Problem/Statement of the Problem
3. The Research Questions
4. Research Aims and Objectives
5. The Scope of the study
6. The Significance of the study
7. The Organization of the rest of the report
The research problem should be stated clearly in the form of a statement so as to unambiguously indicate the problem that needs a solution and the following is a suggested one:

**RESEARCH PROBLEM**

*The high fuel prices on the global markets are causing many non-oil producing country economies to go into a recession but the causes of such oil spikes are still largely unknown. Hence there is a strong need for the factors which are influencing the upward movement in fuel prices to be determined.*

Research questions should be in question form starting with ‘How’, ‘What’, ‘Which’, ‘When’ and ‘Who’ and ending in a question mark (?). Examples of research questions are:

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. *What could be responsible for the rise in fuel prices on world markets?*
2. *Why is Zambia economically poor when she is natural resource-rich?*
3. *How can productivity be increased in the Zambian copper mines?*
4. *When will the global economy go into a recession?*

It is recommended that a research study should have one overriding objective which is then broken down into a number of specific objectives. For academic research, a single objective will not normally suffice. For example:

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

*Main Research Objective:*
To determine the causes of the endemic poverty in Zambia.

*Specific Research Objectives:*

1. *To determine the causes of the poor purchasing power among Zambian households.*
2. *To determine why Zambians in general are getting poorer every day.*
3. To identify the ratio of disposable incomes to household requirements in Zambia.
4. To find out why the majority of Zambians do not own titled property.

CHAPTER 2

2.3.11.2 Literature Review

This is the second chapter of the report which provides the theoretical basis of the study by comprehensively evaluating what other scholars had already done on the topic or topic area of study, i.e., in more detail than what was covered by the Research Proposal. Hence you should report on what others have already done and discovered concerning your chosen topic.

CHAPTER 3

2.3.11.3 The Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This third chapter provides the interrelationships or linkages between the concepts/constructs of the study. This should result into the development of a conceptual model that tries to address the research problem and research questions and provide the requisite answers.

The following is an example of a conceptual model.

![Conceptual Model]

Fig. 2.1: The BFI Action-Profit Linkage Model (Epstein & Westbrook, 2001).
CHAPTER 4

2.3.11.4 Methodology

This fourth chapter explains what the researcher (student) actually did to provide answers to the research questions. It gives details of how the study was actually carried out and ends in the development of the study hypotheses and/or propositions. It should include the following:

1. The Research Design
2. The Research Population
3. Sampling Design and Sample Size
4. Data Collection
5. Data Analysis
6. Hypotheses
7. Study Variables (Independent, Dependent, Control)

The research design provides the framework within which a particular research study is conducted; hence it is critical to the success of the whole endeavour. An example of a research design can be as follows:

Table 2.1: Framework of the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH PHASE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Description</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model Development</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Instrument Design</td>
<td>Questionnaire Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire Pilot Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Content Validity Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Hand-deliver Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Testing: Reliability; Validity; Hypotheses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypotheses guide the research and hence it is imperative that they are stated correctly. They should thus be stated in the following manner:

**The Null Hypothesis.**
**H₀**: The age of a customer account does not affect the chance of payment being made to settle the account.

**The Alternative Hypothesis.**
**Hₐ**: The age of a customer account affects the chance of payment being made to settle the account.

**THE SAMPLE SIZE**
The following are some of the most common formulas for calculating/estimating the sample size for the study:

(a) **Sample Size for Questions Concerning Means**
\[ n = \frac{s^2}{s'？} \]
where
n = sample size
\( s^2 \) = sample variance
\( s'_？ \) = population variance

(b) **Sample Size for Questions Concerning Proportions**
\[ n = \frac{pq}{s_p^2} \]
where
n = sample size
pq = measure of sample dispersion used to estimate the population dispersion (instead of standard deviation)
\( s_p \) = standard error of the proportion
CHAPTER 5

2.3.11.5 Data Presentation and Analysis

This fifth chapter describes how the collected data was prepared, analyzed or manipulated and then used to test the research hypothesis. The data has to be initially entered into some spreadsheet like Microsoft Excel to create a database from which data can then be subsequently manipulated. Statistical computer software packages like the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), SAS, Minitab and others are normally used to analyze the data by running regression analyses, factor analyses, correlation analyses, structural equation modeling (SEM), etc. Graphical tools like tables, graphs, charts, computer printouts, etc. are used to present the results of the data analysis.

An example of a regression equation which can be estimated using a regression analysis for hypothesis testing is:

\[ Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + \ldots + b_nX_n \]

where

Y = dependent variable (the effect)
X = independent variables (the causes)

CHAPTER 6

2.3.11.6 Research Findings/ Results

This sixth chapter describes the outcome of the data analysis especially the results of the hypotheses testing. All the research findings are presented here.
CHAPTER 7

2.3.11.7 Discussion and Interpretation of Results

This seventh chapter interprets the research findings and discusses them in light of the research problem and research questions. It provides a connection between the findings of the study and the problem in terms of providing a solution or some answers.

NOTE: Alternatively Chapters 5, 6 and 7 can be amalgamated into a single Chapter entitled “Data Analysis, Findings and Discussion”, if so desired.

CHAPTER 8

2.3.11.8 Conclusions and Recommendations

These should be based on the discussion in the main report body (Chapter 1 to 4) and on the Research Findings. All creative/innovative ideas from the findings should be prominently highlighted here.

2.3.11.9 References and Bibliography

International copyright laws require that all work from published sources should be properly and formally acknowledged. All references should be put at the end of the dissertation report in alphabetical order (see section 3.5 below).

A bibliography is a secondary source (to a reference) that helps to locate a book, article, photo, etc. Hence, it should be placed after the references (if required).
3.0 ANCILLARY MATERIAL

This is the material that is not part of but supplementary to the main report body. Hence, it supports the study’s arguments, justifications, validations, etc. and as such it deserves to be handled with the same amount of seriousness as everything else to do with the study. It includes the following items:

3.1 The Abstract or Research Summary

This is a very brief summary of the entire investigation or research study. It is meant to save time for those interested parties who do not have the time to read the whole report. But the summary should be able to give such readers the information contained in the report.

3.2 The Table of Contents

These serve as a quick reference guide to the report and also to provide an indication of the scope of the research work. These should list the chapters, parts, appendices and other attachments or ancillary material. But it is not necessary to list every section, sub-section and sub-sub-section of the chapters. Then should follow accurate separate lists of tablets, figures, acronyms, maps and plates.

*Example:* The contents lists of this handbook.

3.3 Forewords, Prefaces and Introductions

Normally, the foreword is written by eminent personal scholar to recommend a book or some other literary work. This is not for a dissertation type of work. The preface on the other hand is written by the author (student) to explain briefly how the report or book came to be written, what purpose it is supposed to serve, who the target readership is, how it should be utilized, etc.
3.4 Acknowledgements

Any assistance which you received during the duration of the research study should be acknowledged. This is simple common courtesy but when submitting the final copy of dissertations, it is mandatory to acknowledge any academic assistance that one received.

In a dissertation or a book, acknowledgements should be placed before the contents lists.

3.5 References and Bibliography

Any information, idea, concept, etc. which you include in the report but is not yours (i.e., from a publication or some other worker) **MUST be acknowledged** in the text by placing a marker immediately after it. This is called citing or citation. Then list all such marked sources at the end of the text/report under the heading References. All other secondary sources should be similarly listed under ‘Bibliography’.

3.5.1 Citations

The citation requirement is met as follows:-

a) By placing the last name of the author and year of publication in brackets after the publication has been referred to. *For Example:* ‘It has been shown that ………………..’ (Maliti, 2001).

b) If there is no date, refer to as ‘undated’ or ‘s.d.’ (which stands for ‘sine datum’ = ‘without date).

c) If the source is an up published one, refer to as ‘upubl.’

d) If it has been accepted for publication but the full publication details are still not known, refer to as ‘in press’.

e) If it is a personal communication from another researcher or worker, refer to as ‘[date] pers. comm.’.

f) If the publication’s author’s name is a part of the syntax of the sentence, only put the date in brackets, e.g. ‘Maliti (in press) has proposed that ……………’. 
g) If you want to utilize insert quotations, e.g. ‘Maliti (2001) argues that ………………’, then it is usually neater to include the reference into the sentence before the actual extract.

h) But where the reference follows the extract, then it should be in brackets/parentheses after the final full stop of the extract, e.g. ‘it has been shown that …………….’ (Mulenga, 2000).

i) Where a short quotation is placed in the text, then the reference is put in brackets and placed before the final full stop of the sentence, e.g. “In this world of globalization and intense price wars, companies would be prudent to switch to alternative fuels” (Mubiana, 1999).

j) Do not include the author’s initials, unless more than one author with the same surname is quoted; author’s title should never be included.

k) If there is need to quote various publications by a single author in a single year, then use letters to distinguish among the publications. *Example*: Economic partnership agreement (EPAS) have been recommended as a way to provide access to western markets for development country exports (Sichone, A.C., 2001 a; 2001 b). A contrary view has been expressed by much more recent research (Sichone, J., 2006; Sichone, L., 2007).

l) Two authors should be cited as (Phiri and Musole, 2005).

m) More than two authors should be cited as (Phiri et al., 2005). (‘Et al,’ ‘Et alii’ or ‘And other persons’).

n) Quote an organization’s publications where no personal author has been credited as (The Post, 2008).

o) Where you have to quote what one person (Reviewer) alleges that another person (Originator) had written, make the reference as (Originator, 2007, quoted in Reviewer, 2008). But the full reference list should only include the Reviewer’s paper. You could also cite originator in the text but provide the originator’s details in the full reference list and then followed by ‘Cited by Reviewer, 2008 ……………… (giving the full reference).
p) Quoting several sources concurrently has to be done in a consistent manner: either put authors in alphabetical order or in date order and use a semi-colon to separate the authors, e.g. (Chongo, 2000; Zulu, 2001).

q) The term ‘ibid’ = ibidem’ or’ in the same place’ may also be used instead of repeating the same reference especially if it recurs but without any other reference breaking the pattern.

r) Another citation form is ‘op. cit.’ = ‘opera citato’ or ‘in the work’, e.g. ’Chuma, op. cit.’ means ‘by Chuma most recently’.

3.5.2 List of References

References should be listed in full at the end of the main report text in the following manner:

a) First, in alphabetical order of the summaries of the first-named authors cited in the text.

b) Second, in alphabetical order of the initials of the first – named authors.

c) Third, in alphabetical order of the surnames of (if any) second-named authors, third-named authors, etc.

d) Fourth, in chronological order of the date of the publication cited.

e) Fifthly and finally, in the order of the reference letter following the same alphabetical order/sequence of the titles.

For Example:

Chanda, C.B (2000)
Chansa, A. (2000)
Chansa, A. K. (1999a)
Chansa, A.K. (1999b)
Chansa, A.K. (in print)
Chansa, B. and Bwali, C.T (2000)
Chiliba, B.M. (1999)

**Full Reference:**

i) This should be the same as the citation in the report in order to avoid ambiguity and facilitate tracing of the original source.

ii) The names of all the authors should be included.

iii) Typography, punctuation and layout do vary between Schools and Universities.

iv) **Examples of Layouts:**

- **Personal Communication.**
  Chabala, E.M. (2008). Personal Communication, School of Business, Copperbelt University, Kitwe, P.O Box 21692

- **Contribution to an Edited Volume/Book.**

- **A Journal article.**
- **A Book.**

- **A Newspaper article.**
  Maliti, B. (2008): The Causes of the endemic poverty in Zambian Households. The Post, October 24, p.4

- **An unpublished report.**
  Maliti, B. (unpubl.): Examining performance variables in the Zambian Food and Beverage Industry using the action – profit linkage (APL) model. Cleveland State University, Ohio, USA.

v) **It is important to also note the following:-**
- Always give the full title of the journal instead of merely abbreviating it.
- For the title of a book or journal, some capital letters and *italics* are used.
- The volume number is usually in **bold** type or is *underlined* and then is followed by page numbers (see iv) above).
- Contributions to volumes that have been edited are given page numbers indicated by “pp.”
- For books, the place of publication and the publisher should be indicated.
- Important government publications/documents are published by the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and are given command numbers.
  e.g.: Ministry of Finance (2008): Fifth National Development Plan, Cmd xxxx. Lusaka: GRZ
- Acts of parliament are just given their full title, their date and the publisher again is GRZ.
e.g.: The University Act 1999, No. 11. Lusaka: GRZ

- It is always advisable to list personal communication and the address(es) of the source(s).
- Ensure that all the citations have been put in the list of references and that all the items in the list of references have been cited in the text as well.

3.6 Appendices/Attachments

Appendices comprise the following materials which are relevant to the research document:

a) Material which is so bulky that it can impair anyone reading the text.

b) Material which gives examples of a process or some principle which has been covered in the text.

c) Material which is from the work of others as given in the literature review.

d) Material which does not distract from reaching a conclusion but is relevant to the topic.

Only material which supports the reading and comprehension of the report must be in the appendices. Any unnecessarily material should not be included therein. Each appendix should have content that is cohesive but not necessarily sequential in format. Additionally, each appendix should be indicated in the text where it is of most help to guide the reader.

Appendices may be numbered in two ways:

(i) According to the chapter which is applicable, e.g. appendix 1.1 for Chapter 1 materials.

(ii) Using a series of Roman numerals, e.g. Appendix I, Appendix II, etc.

Although normally placed after the references, appendices should be placed before the references if the appendices cite the reference.
4.0 REPORT FORM AND BINDING

The final copy of the research report should be produced according to the following specifications:

4.1 Paper

Colour = White
Size = A4 (letter size)
Material = Bond
Weight = 80 g/m² (gsm)

The report MUST BE TYPED (word processed) using the appropriate Microsoft Word version.

4.2 Final Report Binding

The standard of report binding should be one that is acceptable to the Department /School.

The preliminary dissertation report to be assessed by the examiners should be spiral bound.

Three (3) copies of this report should be submitted to the Course Coordinator/ department by the specified date.

The final dissertation report should be prepared after the student dissertation defense and upon being approved by the examiners. This report should be bound as a hard cover and three (3) copies should be deposited with the course coordinator/department by the specified date.
4.3  Dissertation Report Specifications

The report format/sequence of pages is as specified under section 2.3 of this Handbook.

4.3.1  Title Page

4.3.1.1  Title of the Report

Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow; All CAPS (all capital letters) case.

Font Size: 14 pt

Font Style: Bold no italics.

Text Alignment: Centered

4.3.1.2  Author’s Details

Names: First name then followed by surname/last name

Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow; Title case.

Font Size: 12 pt

Font Style: Bold with no italics

Text Alignment: Centered

4.3.1.3  The Purpose for which the Dissertation is being Submitted

Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow; Sentence case.

Font Size: 14 pt

Font Style: Regular (no bold, no italics)

Text Alignment: Centered

4.3.1.4  The Name of Unit/School/University

Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow; Sentence case.

Font Size: 16 pt

Font Style: Regular (no bold, no italics)
4.3.1.5 The Month and Year of Submission

Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow;
Sentence case.

Font Size: Regular (no bold, no italics)

Text Alignment: Centered

4.3.2 Page Numbers

The report pages must be numbered in the right order.
All the report pages that contain text, apart from the Title Page, MUST be numbered.
Page numbers must be placed at the bottom of each page and centre-aligned.
The page number should be in Greek numerals (1, 2, 3, …….).
But the following should have page numbers in Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.): The declaration, dedication, acknowledgement, table of contents, lists of tables, figures, charts, acronyms and the abstract.

4.3.3 Report Headings

4.3.3.1 Chapter Headings

Font Face: All CAPS (All Capital Letters) case; Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow.

Font Size: 16 pt

Font Style: Bold and no italics

Text Alignment: Centered

4.3.3.2 Main Headings (Heading 1)

Font Face: All CAPS (All Capital Letters) case; Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow.

Font Size: 14 pt

Font Style: Bold and no italics
Text Alignment: Left

4.3.3.3 Sub – Heading (Heading 2)
Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow;
Sentence case
Font Size: 14 pt
Font Style: Bold an no italics
Text Alignment: Left

4.3.3.4 Sub-Sub Heading (Heading 3)
Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow;
Sentence case
Font Size: 12 pt
Font Style: Italics and no regular
Text Alignment: Left

4.3.4 Main Report Body Text
Font Face: Times New Roman, Arial or Arial Narrow;
Sentence case
Font Size: 12 pt
Font Style: Regular (no bold and italics)
Text Layout: 1 (single) column
Text Spacing: 1.5 lines
Text Alignment: Justified

4.3.5 Page Setup: Margins
Top: 2.5 cm
Bottom: 2.5 cm
Left: 3.5 cm
Right: 3.0 cm
4.4. **Acronyms**

An acronym has been explained under section 2.3.8 and the first time that it is used in the report it must be typed out in full to indicate what it stands for and the acronym put in brackets immediately after.

*For Example:* The Development Bank of Zambia (DBZ) was set up to provide loans to Zambian Entrepreneurs.

Following this introduction, the acronym DBZ can then be used alone throughout the report. But acronyms should not be used to begin a sentence but instead its full description should be thus utilized. If many acronyms have been used in the text, then either a list of acronyms or a glossary of acronyms should be included.

4.5 **Tables, Figures, and Charts**

- **Headings:** Titles and Descriptions
- **Font Face:** Times New Roman, Arial or Arial narrow; Sentence case.
- **Font Size:** 12 pt
- **Font Style:** Regular (no bold and italics)
- **Text Alignment:** Justified and 0.6 hanging

**Tables:**

Text width = 18 cm or half- text width = < 8.5 cm

Table Number and Full Heading (Description): Above table with full-stop at end.

Full colon: After table number.

*Example. Table 1:* Number of Graduates in the School of Business since 1988.
**Figures:**
Text width = 18 cm or half-text width = < 8.5 cm.
Figure Number and full heading (Description): Below the figure with full-stop at end.
Full colon: After figure number.

*Example. Figure 4: Bar chart of student majors in the school.*

### 4.6 Ancillary Materials and Attachments

#### 4.6.1 Tables, Figures, Maps, Plates, Charts, Diagrams

With regard to all the above items, highest quality standards in terms of accuracy, clarity and neatness are very important in dissertations. This is because they are an indication of the level of care that one has put in his work.

For figures and tables, use them to display a large quantity of information and then highlight the data’s important attributes within the report.

Tables: Best for revealing small differences in a discrete continuous variable (e.g. gender), for instance.
Figures: Best for bringing out any important trends in a continuous variable (e.g. return on investment.)

Any item that is not mentioned in the text is superfluous to understanding the report and hence should either be placed in an appendix or completely left out.

All tables, figures, diagrams, maps, plates, charts, etc. must be appropriately numbered and captioned, as outlined under section 4.5.
Numbering can be sequential (e.g. Figure I – IX) or by chapter number (e.g. Table 1.1, Figure 2.4 found in chapter 4 of the report)
For graphs, both axes (y and x) must be labeled and scaled in appropriate units. The dependent variable is usually on the vertical (y) axis and the independent variable on the horizontal (x) axis.

Figures should not be cluttered with data as this can lead to confusion. Similarly, maps, plans, plates, etc. must be neat and clear, with the scale and compass points shown clearly.

Ensure too that photocopies are of very high quality or they may negatively impact the impression of the dissertation.

4.6.2 Tables

Arrange and place all tables so that they can be easily interpreted and understood independent of the text. A good table should have the following attributes:

- Reveal important relationships among variables.
- Facilitate comparisons between subjects.
- Make evident important classifications and categorizations.
- Save valuable space.

Tables should have the same layout if they are to be compared to each other. Tables should also be arranged so that their values can be totaled by columns (downwards) rather than by rows (across).

Arrange tables in manner which makes it possible to have in a single column any figures that is to be compared.

For example: column 1 for year, column 2 for income, column 3 for costs, etc.

**Important:**

1. To avoid clutter, minimize the usage of superscripts as indicators of footnotes to the tables in the report.
2. If the use of superscripts cannot be avoided completely, then make sure that they do not flow into other boxes/fields.
3. Where numbers are large, then it is better to scale them up, e.g. put 000… in the heading.

4.6.3 Artwork and Drawings
Due to advances in Information Technology, it is now possible to generate artwork and drawings either by using a scanner to scan an item or by using a host of computer software packages.
The resulting image or output can then be imported/ transferred directly into a Microsoft Word document.
5.0 THE FINAL DISSERTATION/THESIS REPORT

5.1 Report Submission
The final dissertation report **MUST** be typed/word processed as specified above, spiral-bound and three (3) copies should be submitted to the Course Coordinator or department by the specified date which should have already been communicated to the students.

5.2 Research Presentation/ Defense/ Examination
Each student has to orally defend their report before a panel of lecturers who teach on the programme.
A research defense schedule should be given to each student and it should indicate the following (see Appendix 8):

i. The date on which the student is to defend the research.
ii. The time and order of appearing of each student.
iii. The duration of the defense – usually it is 10 minutes student presentation and 5 minutes of questions from the evaluation panel – depends upon the size of the student population scheduled for defense.

The student presentation should be in power-point form hence students are required to come with both a hard and soft copies of their presentations, usually on a flash disk or other suitable storage media.

5.3 Report Assessment
Both the oral defense and the spiral-bound copies of the dissertation/thesis are assessed by a panel of evaluators and two (2) examiners respectively, both groups composed of lecturers from the different schools of the University.
The scoring sheets used for scoring the report and the defense are given in Appendix 10 at the end of this Handbook.

At the bottom of the scoring sheets will be a total mark given to the student, which will be out of 100 and the student will either pass if he/she scores at 50 and above or fails if he/she scores below 50.

A failed student in this regard may be asked to make some corrections to the report in a given time period which will again be assessed to determine suitability for a passing grade. Usually the assessors and examiners will provide detailed written comments regarding shortcomings in terms of the report and these comments are given to the student. The student has then to correct the shortcomings pointed out in the assessment report to the satisfaction of the assessors and examiners before the report is passed.

Once the report has been passed, the student will be given a date when to submit the final hard cover report which should be in three (3) copies to the department.

One of these copies should be sent to the university library and the other two copies should be retained by the department.
References


Maliti, B. (Unpubl.). Business Research Methods Lecture Notes for MBA class. CBU, Kitwe.

# Appendix 1

**The Copperbelt University**  
**School of Business**  
**Department of Postgraduate Studies**  
**MBA Programmes**

**Powerpoint Slide Format for Dissertation Proposal Presentation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLIDE I</th>
<th>Topic of Research Proposal and Name of Candidate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SLIDE II</td>
<td>Research Problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLIDE III</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLIDE IV</td>
<td>Research Objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLIDE V</td>
<td>Scope of the Study</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLIDE VI</td>
<td>Interim Literature Read on the Subject Matter</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLIDE VII</td>
<td>Interim Methodology to Collect and Analyse Data</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLIDE VIII</td>
<td>Programme of Research Activity</td>
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APPENDIX 2

Programme of Research Activity (Gantt Chart) for the study.

<table>
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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Week 2</th>
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<th>Week 4</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Days 5-9</td>
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APPENDIX 3

THE TITLE PAGE: MASTERS

THE COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY

THE MANAGEMENT OF DRINKING WATER SOURCES: A CASE STUDY OF
THE XYZ WATER AND SEWERAGE COMPANY.

Likumbi Mwila
Bachelor of Science in Production and Operations Management, The Progressive
University, Zambia

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of the Master of Business
Administration degree of the Copperbelt University

October 2008
APPENDIX 4

THE TITLE PAGE: DOCTORAL

THE COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY

THE MANAGEMENT OF DRINKING WATER SOURCES: A CASE STUDY OF THE XYZ WATER AND SEWERAGE COMPANY.

Likumbi Mwila
Bachelor of Science in Production and Operations Management, The Progressive University, Zambia
Master of Business Administration, Copperbelt University

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the award of the Doctor of Philosophy degree of the Copperbelt University

October 2008
I, Likumbi Mwila, do declare that this work is my own and that the work of other persons utilized in this dissertation has been duly acknowledged. This work presented here has not been previously presented at this or any other university for similar purposes.
APPENDIX 6

THE DEDICATION PAGE

To my beloved parents who unfortunately did not live to witness their love and sacrifices for me bear these wonderful fruits.
I would like to acknowledge all the invaluable assistance rendered to me by the following individuals during the course of this work in order to bring it to fruition: Dr. ABC, my supervisor, for his patience, perseverance and fatherly advice to me; Prof. DEF, for help with the data analysis; Mrs. GHI for helping to type the work; my lecturers J, K, L,…..; all my classmates during the postgraduate studies whom I had turned into a surrogate family – thanks for all the material, spiritual and moral support; and to all people who were connected in one form or another to the realization of this dream.
To you all I shall forever remain indebted and may God bless you abundantly in all your endeavours.
APPENDIX 8

THE COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
MBA STUDENT DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DEFENSE

ORDER OF APPEARANCE FOR PRESENTATION

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APPENDIX 9

THE COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
MBA STUDENT DISSERTATION DEFENSE

ORDER OF APPEARANCE FOR PRESENTATION

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# APPENDIX 10

## DISSERTATION/THESIS DEFENSE SCORING SHEET

**THE COPERBELT UNIVERSITY\n**
**POSTGRADUATE STUDIES DEPARTMENT**
**MBA THESIS/DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT FORM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component of the Report</th>
<th>Maximum Mark to be Awarded</th>
<th>Mark Awarded</th>
<th>Total Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introductory Pages of the Report</strong></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5 1.0 1.5</td>
<td>5.0  Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic and its relevance to the MBA programme</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5 1.0 1.5</td>
<td>5.0 Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract exposition and its explicit explanation of the project</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0</td>
<td>5.0 Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures in relation to the text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Background of the Study** | 1.5 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 | 5.0 Total |
| Introduction | 1.5 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 | 5.0 Total |
| Research Problem | 2.5 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 | 5.0 Total |
| Research Goals and Objectives | 2.0 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0 | 5.0 Total |
| Scope of Research | 1.5 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 | 5.0 Total |
| Description of the Study | 2.0 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 2.0 | 5.0 Total |
| Significance of the research in contemporary business and national development | 1.5 | 0.5 1.0 1.5 | 5.0 Total |

<p>| <strong>Literature Review</strong> | 3.0 | 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 | 11 Total |
| Quality of the Review | 3.0 | 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 | 11 Total |
| The Relevance of Issues Raised | 4.0 | 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 4.0 | 11 Total |
| The Depth of the Review | 3.0 | 1.0 1.5 2.0 2.5 3.0 | 11 Total |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Marks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adoption and application of existing theory or concept</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evolution and appropriateness of new concepts and theories</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evolution and quality of research hypotheses</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality of research questions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conventionalism of Style of Write-Up</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis and Findings</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Quality of data generated and used</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Methodology used in generating the data</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Procedures used in analyzing the data</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Inferences made from the data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Inferences made to answer the research questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Method used in evaluating each research hypotheses and its validity</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The relationship of the research outcome and the validity of the theories and concepts applied</td>
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<td>Conclusion and Recommendation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Main conclusions drawn</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Main recommendations, i.e. their viability and practicability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Issues on the Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Style of Writing, i.e. professional manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Grammatical errors, typing mistakes, etc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Observation of standard procedures of referencing and citation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Level of innovation and ambition of the researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tidiness and formatting procedures observed</td>
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<tr>
<td>- General presentation of the document</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation and Defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Self-expression</td>
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<td>Total Mark Awarded</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Marks (Page 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes as Guidance for Marking</td>
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<td>Where there are 2 categories in grading: 0.5 = Average; 1.0 = Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where there are 3 categories in grading: 1.0 = Average; 2.0 = Good; 3.0 = Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where there are 3 categories in grading: 1.0 = Average; 2.0 = Good; 3.0 = Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where there are 4 categories in grading: 0.5 = Poor; 1.0 = Average; 1.5 = Good; 2.0 = Very Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where there are 4 categories in grading: 1.0 = Poor; 2.0 = Average; 3.0 = Good; 4.0 = Very Good</td>
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Interpretation of the Final Mark:

- Less than 40 Points = **Fail**
- Above 50 Points = **Pass**
- Between 50 and 69 Points = **Pass with major corrections**
- Above 70 Points = **Pass with minor corrections**