

HOW TO WRITE MASTER DISSERTATIONS

Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights (RIGDPR)
Ahfad University for Women (AUW)

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These dissertation writing guidelines were originally conceived and written for the old Gender Institute in 1998 by Dr. Mustafa Babiker, and the Chief Librarian at Ahfad University for Women, Dr. Asia Maccawi, who has also updated them regularly since then. This last version (2012), now entitled *How to Write Master Dissertations*, has been edited by Dr. Katharina Hoffman (Oldenburg University and visiting lecturer at the RIGDPR) and Dr. Nuria Brufau Alvira (RIGDPR) in line with —and as a complement of— the *How to become a Master Student Manual: Guidelines for Academic Communication Skills and Study Tips*. In this sense, the new *How to Write Master Dissertations* guidelines have been adapted according to the present needs of the RIGDPR Master students. Efforts have been made to avoid repetitions in both documents as well as to offer more detailed instructions and tips in specific areas that necessarily appear in both documents, such as how to deal with references. Based on the spirit with which they were originally conceived by their author, Dr. Maccawi, we hope that these guidelines are of use for those Master students that are required to write academic Master dissertations as part of their curriculum.

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0. Introduction

Dissertations are argumentative texts which start with a main question about a specific topic and finish with a main answer to that question. The starting question or questions are usually known as *hypothesis/es* and must be contextualized and justified. They always imply a suspected answer, which will be proved through your *argumentation* at the final stage, known as the *conclusion*. These hypotheses can be related to empirical and theoretical studies, they can be new questions, or old ones with different expected answers. They are related to information gaps or inconsistencies detected when approaching the chosen topic.

Dissertations require serious research that will allow you to get the data, notions and contextual information you need to properly argue for your expected answer(s). A theoretical framework that sustains your work, as well as a methodology that proves the correct academic treatment of the data, resources, etc., are also necessary.

Dissertations prove not only the potential expected answer to a question, but also the author's abilities to gather and analyze information, to organize it in a reasoned way, to follow a work pattern, to present complex ideas and relations in a clear way, to critically review established literature, to provide correct and useful references, and to format texts adequately, amongst other skills.

In Ahfad University for Women (AUW), dissertations are required for some Master degrees. At the RIGDPR you must write a dissertation for the GAG and the GMMS MSc programmes. Dissertations should be significant academic contributions presented in a reasoned, concise and well-founded manner. They should provide evidence of the candidates' abilities to work independently and creatively, and they must be the work of a single author.

These guidelines have been written in an effort to help students to write dissertations in a comprehensive way, and therefore they include both academic and writing processes. They aim at providing uniform processes and format norms for dissertation writing, according to the AUW Academic Council, as well as some other writing tips. They are basically designed to serve as a guide for formal presentations, so they can also be followed to write other minor argumentative text types like papers, reports, articles, etc.

These guidelines are organized in chapters according to the different stages of the dissertation writing process, i.e. writing the proposal, writing the dissertation, checking the format and revising the dissertation final version. Checklists have been included at the end of the last three chapters to ease your revision work.

Some of the skills needed to write a dissertation are critical reading, writing essays, dealing with references and online sources, etc. The *How to Become a Master Student Manual: Guidelines for Academic Communication Skills and Study Tips* is a reference that might come in handy as a complementary source. On the one hand, the present guidelines are specifically targeted at dissertation writing, which can be seen as some sort of bigger and deeper essay. On the other, they try to provide a more comprehensive perspective by also including the stages to follow in the academic process.

1. Dissertation Writing Process

1.1. Introduction

Dissertations are text types that follow a set of general standardized norms, both regarding the process and the document itself. In connection with the process, all dissertations are the result of research, be it theoretical and/or empirical, that has been anticipated in a research proposal and that is supervised by someone with more experience. In this chapter, we explain the steps to be followed.

1.2. Dissertation process

It could be said that all dissertation completion processes start by the choice of *a topic* and *a supervisor*.

With regard to the topic, it is advisable that you like it, since you will spend many hours thinking and working on it. Once you select your specific field of research, you need to come out with the “question(s)” we referred to in the introduction. This question or questions should address the gaps in the knowledge and perspectives on the topic, either by completing or by criticizing the established theories or research results about it. For this reason, it is very important that you get an overview of the previous understandings, views and facts about your chosen topic. That general idea might allow you to think of your hypothesis or research question(s).

As for the supervisor, it is wise to choose one who is familiar with the topic and who is willing to accompany you throughout the process. Supervisors are like lighthouses that give you orientation whenever you are lost; they are helpful in guiding you through the different stages until you reach the finishing line of this exciting and hard race against yourself. The RIGDPR academic staff might suggest supervisors for different topics and students. However, the final decision about your supervisor will be taken by the Postgraduate Committee at the AUW. They will try to find the most appropriate supervisor for each topic and student.

Dissertations are always part of an academic structure, which means that once you have your topic and your supervisor, you have to register your research plans at the institution you are attached to. Why? First, because that way your topic will be “taken” and it will be official that there is someone studying that specific field, and second, because your degree will be granted by that institution. To do so, you usually need to fill in/write a *research proposal*. You will probably learn how to do it in your Research Methodologies course. Your supervisor can help you with your proposal too.

If your *research proposal* is accepted, it’s time to write a *draft schedule* and *work plan*. In all cases, the schedule will help you with the internal structure of the document, and the work plan will be useful to organize your time and efforts. Your supervisor can help you with these two tasks. Once your research is registered, and you have your draft schedule and your work plan, you can continue reading, taking notes, interpreting, analyzing sources and writing. At this stage your main target is to get a deep and clear view of the state of the art, and to adopt a critical

standpoint that will allow you to come up with theoretical arguments either to contribute to the existing patterns of knowledge on the topic or to challenge them.

Currently at the RIGDPR, many dissertations include an *empirical part* that implies carrying out some field research (data collection in the field), i.e. going to places to be studied through interviews, surveys, primary source analysis, etc. However, even mainly theoretical dissertations can include many examples that can come from a different kind of field research.

While *writing*, remember to keep in mind the research question(s) that need to be explained and answered based on all the information — both theoretical and empirical — you have managed to gather. Don't hesitate to go to your supervisor at any of these stages. S/he might help you by suggesting literature, reading parts of your dissertations, advising approaches and methods, reorganizing the structure of ideas, providing you with examples, revising your views or just encouraging you to keep working.

Once you have a final draft with your conclusions, remember to adapt it to the required form(at), and to proofread it as many times as possible, or ask someone else to do it for you.

1.3. Responsibilities for the Preparation of the Dissertation

Although the primary responsibility for the dissertation lies with the students, there should always be supervisors to provide them with advice, guidance and support throughout the process.

1.3.1. The Candidate's Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the students include:

- Choosing a topic.
- Discussing with her supervisor the type of guidance and comments she finds most helpful and agreeing on a schedule of meetings.
- Taking the initiative in raising problems and difficulties, however elementary they may seem.
- Maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with stages agreed with the supervisor, including — in particular — the presentation of written materials, as their revision requires time, as well as to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage.
- Organizing and presenting the content of her dissertation accordingly.
- Looking for appropriate literature and materials for the research.
- Carrying out the necessary fieldwork and assuming all related costs.
- Writing a legible, correct and accurate document for the supervisor to correct (bibliographical items, tables, and other illustrative materials included).
- Revising the final version of the dissertation based on the supervisor's suggestions and corrections, both in content and form.
- Depositing two approved and signed copies of the dissertation: one at the library + CD (PDF format), and one at the RIGDPR administration office, at least three weeks before graduation.

1.3.2. The Supervisor's Responsibilities

Each student is assigned to a supervisor. In some cases there may be more than one supervisor. The responsibilities of the supervisor(s) include:

- Accepting the candidate and the topic.

- Giving guidance about:
 - The nature of the research and standard expected
 - The work plan
 - Relevant literature
 - The schedule (internal structure) of the dissertation
 - The theoretical framework and methodology
 - The format.
- Maintaining contact through regular meetings or electronic feedback.
- Giving advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled agreed times.
- Requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time.
- Reporting on the students' progress to the RIGDPR.
- Ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequate progress or standards of work below those generally expected.
- Supporting the candidate throughout all stages.

2. Research Proposal Writing

2.1. Introduction

The first stage when writing a dissertation is to clearly identify the topic and the target by asking yourself what are known as research questions or hypotheses. These will help you write the proposal needed to get the academic process started. Your topic and supervisor must be approved by the Postgraduate Committee at AUW. Your proposal must be approved by your supervisor.

The following guidelines cover the major components that are expected in a research proposal, and address some general issues concerning the proposal structure and content. Generally, it is preferable that the total length of research proposals should not exceed 2,000 words.

What follows is a brief discussion of the most important components expected in the contents of any research proposal. It should be stressed that these are guidelines, not a recipe for success or a “how to do it”. They are not section headings; rather, they are meant to indicate the conceptual break-down of any research proposal and its presentation.

2.2. Title, Abstract and Keywords

Although many authors and researchers would agree that titles are best given at the end of research studies, it is good to think at the beginning of a title that offers a transparent idea of the content and purpose of the research. The title can be changed in later stages to meet your needs.

Also, the abstract is usually provided to offer further information on the research but in a summarized way, so that readers can get a general overview of the research basis and plan in just some sentences. As a piece of advice, it is often useful to leave the abstract writing for the end, when you have a very neat understanding of what and how you want to study.

Keywords must always accompany abstracts, as they help documentation experts classify research proposals and studies, which will ease their location in the future. Both abstracts and keywords can also be changed in later stages.

2.3. Problem and Justification

This section should normally make up between one-quarter and one-half of the proposal. It should describe the problem that is to be researched and the questions that will guide the research process. Note that proper justification of the importance of the research questions to be addressed requires some sense of the likely contribution to knowledge that the research will make and its place in current debates on the specific field of study. Often this can be presented in the form of research hypotheses to be tested.

This section should provide a brief overview of the literature and research done in the field related to the problem and of the gaps that the proposed research intends to fill.

In addition to the theoretical significance of the research problem, the practical/policy implications anticipated should be clearly stated.

2.4. Research Objectives

The objectives section of a proposal is typically very brief, usually half a page at most. This is because the rationale for each objective will already have been established in the problem and justification section, while the ways of achieving the objectives should be explained in the methodology section.

The general objective provides a short statement of the pursued scientific goal. The specific objectives are operational in nature. They may indicate specific types of knowledge to be produced, certain audiences to be reached, etc. These are the objectives against which the success of the research will be judged.

2.5. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The proposed research may be more theoretical than empirical (quantitative and/or qualitative), or the other way round. However, the methodology section should begin in all cases by defining the conceptual framework and theoretical form of reference that will guide the research. The main explanatory and dependent variables should be identified and related to one another.

2.6. Literature Review

The literature review should provide information about what others may have said about the topic before. It is also important to state whether there are any similar research studies already and, if so, whether their findings are consistent or contradictory. Also, are there flaws in the body of existing research that you feel you can remedy? The length of the review can vary, but it should be selective and should concentrate on how the present study will contribute to existing knowledge on the topic. It should be long enough to demonstrate to the reader that the researcher has a sound understanding of the relationship between what has been done and what will be done.

2.7. Methodology

It is best to organize the methodology to explain how each specific objective will be achieved. The proposal should provide enough details to enable an independent scientific assessment of the proposal. Assuming that the research questions and hypotheses to be addressed have been clearly identified in the “problem justification” section, the purpose of the methodology section is to show how these questions will be answered in the most rigorous possible way. The methodology section deserves greater emphasis than applicants typically give to it. The proposal needs to be clear about what activities are envisaged in the pursuit of each objective.

A very important part of the methodology description includes the methods of data collection and analysis if the research is based on an empirical study. Often Master students at the RIGDPR carry out empirical studies. However, theoretical studies can also be undertaken, which will consist of a literature review, analysis and argumentation.

2.7.1. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The research proposal should indicate what approaches and methods will be used to collect primary and secondary data and information. Provide details on available sources of secondary data or the methods to be used for the collection of primary data, such as questionnaires and group discussions. Outline the procedures for the development, pre-testing, and administering of any research instruments. Data collection methods vary from general quantitative surveys to qualitative personal interviews. If survey work is involved, give detailed information on the study area. If the research is related to human populations, information on the studied population should also be provided. Include a description of the procedures for selecting the population sample and the sample size. Finally, describe how the data will be analyzed, depending on whether it is quantitative or qualitative.

2.8. Provisional Table of Contents

Already at this stage it is recommendable to write a provisional table of contents: for example giving a provisional distribution of information in chapters and their sections. However, the researcher will not satisfy the supervisor or examiner by simply giving titles. A brief description of contents is necessary, even at this early stage of the research. Bear in mind that tables of contents are constantly modified during the research process. However, make sure that at the end all chapters and sections are clearly and coherently reflected in the final table of contents.

2.9. Timeframe and Budget

Indicate the time needed to carry out each phase of the research as well as its total duration. Indicate possible constraints in adhering to the timetable. If you are enjoying a scholarship or have received a grant, estimate the total cost of the research. All budget items must be quoted in national currencies and their USD equivalent. Don't forget to indicate the exchange rate applied.

2.10. Format

The proposal should be written in Times New Roman font, size 12, and in single spaced, 0.2 indented and justified paragraphs. The margins: "normal" (1cm at top and bottom, and 1.25 on both sides).

CHECKLIST OF CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1. Have you provided a title for your research that condenses its main topic and target?
2. Have you written the abstract and selected keywords?
3. Have you indicated the research objectives in a clear way?
4. Have you offered a good base of previously published work in your literature review?
5. Have you defended the relevance of your research?
6. Have you defined the framework and basic notions on which to base your research? Have you advanced some possible interrelations?
7. Have you sufficiently explained the methodology to be followed:
 - a. Which method(s) will you choose? (e.g. comparative case studies, a single case study, discourse analysis, evaluation and interpretation of interviews, etc.)
 - b. Where are you planning to obtain your information? Which type of sources do you want to use? (primary or secondary literature, your own evidence obtained through personal interviews, etc.)
8. Have you presented a provisional table of contents that reflects your intended information distribution and structure?
9. Is all the information clear and well structured in the proposal (paragraph distribution, sections, connectors, etc.)?
10. Have you revised your English (grammar, spelling, etc.)?
11. Have you checked that the format follows the instructions?
12. Have you read it from an intersectional perspective that takes into account all sorts of inequalities, like gender, race, etc.?

Well done! Please submit the research proposal online as a Word document so that any comments can be included directly in the text.

3. Dissertation Writing (Contents)

3.1. Introduction

Dissertations must always include six components: title, table of contents, introduction, chapters, conclusion and bibliography. They can also include acknowledgments and appendixes.

3.2. Title

Titles should condense the spirit of the dissertation. Since titles should be like a window to the dissertation by showing the topic and the purpose of the research, even though you might have written one for the research proposal, you can always update it and change it so that it meets your needs. It is also possible to add a subtitle if it completes the information by making it more accurate.

3.3. Dissertation Abstract

Candidates might be asked to include an abstract of their dissertation. Abstracts should give sufficient information about the content, purpose, methodology and parts of the dissertation. They should be clear and brief outlines and must not exceed 300 words in length. It should be included in both English and Arabic. Candidates are advised to consult their supervisors about the content of the abstract.

3.4. Table of Contents

Tables of contents are like maps to the dissertation. They should show in a very clear and organized way the different parts of the document. They should help to see in a glimpse the internal structure and the logic of the dissertation. Just like titles, tables of contents can and will change many times during the dissertation writing process. Just make sure that at the end the titles of chapters, sections and subsections appear in the exact same order and wording as in the dissertation. You can chose between a very detailed table of contents or a simpler one that includes just chapters and main sections. In both cases, they have to be consistent with the internal structure of the dissertation. Format wise, it is better to create and insert the table of contents at the end, to avoid undesired inconsistencies.

3.5. Introduction

Introductions prepare readers for what is to come. They serve to explain and justify the writing of the dissertation (what led you to write it, why it is convenient and relevant), and they show the research questions that work as a guiding line throughout the research, the theoretical framework adopted and how the document integrates in the current state of the art.

Even though they appear at the beginning of the document, introductions are always written in their final versions after the dissertation is finished.

Bear in mind that quotations and references should be explicitly indicated intra-textually from the introduction to the conclusion. All references should appear in the bibliography.

Footnotes can appear from here to the end. They are used to clarify meanings or to make side comments that are not compulsory, but might be relevant and interesting.

3.6. Chapters

Chapters form the main body of the dissertation. They are necessary not only because they structure the information and connect the different intellectual components of the dissertation, but because they make reading easier.

First chapters are often used to give an overview of the state of the art, as well as to introduce and clarify the main perspective and notions used in the rest of the dissertation. They include an elaboration of the research question(s) and a defence of the adopted standpoint. A justification of the choice of ways and methods (amongst the many available) to tackle the research question(s) is also part of these chapters.

Middle chapters usually contain the analysis of the topic. The analysis of the collected data (if any) and the examples provided (be they visual, textual or discourse related) should be clearly explained in order to be used as arguments for answering your research question(s), i.e. to prove your hypothesis/es. This is the place to include the reasoning, the chain of thoughts, the comparisons, contradictions, similarities, connections, abstractions and all the possible logical thinking that you might have used to sustain your point of view.

At the RIGDPR, you are expected not to forget the gender perspective, which should always be related to other perspectives that are alert to inequalities.

The clearer your exposition is, the better your conclusions will be understood and respected.

With regard to the argumentation methods, avoid using clichés like (it’s always been said, everyone knows, etc.) and try to base your statements on proven sources or on logical reasoning.

3.7. Conclusion

Conclusions always appear at the end of the dissertation. They show the main results of the research in a very clear and concise way. They are strongly connected to the introduction, so as to make the document “circular”. It is advisable to go back to the framework adopted and explained at the beginning, as well as to the state of art described in the first chapters. It is the moment to check and show whether your conclusions provide answers to your research question(s) or in what way and why they lead to further ones.

3.8. Bibliography

Bibliographies are somehow proof of your research in that they show the many sources consulted, which demonstrate that you are familiar with the relevant literature on the topic. They also demonstrate your academic capability in quoting and referring to different texts, as well as in connecting the different ideas found in them. In addition, they provide your dissertation with a serious and solid academic base.

They require very meticulous and exhaustive work since all references in the dissertation must appear in a complete way, so that they can be tracked back if needed.

Bibliographies say so much about you and your work that some members of tribunals start reading dissertations from the end.

CHECKLIST OF CONTENTS

- **Are there the six compulsory components: title, table of contents, introduction, chapters, conclusion, and bibliography?**
- **Have you included an abstract, if required?**
- **Is your title clear and concise enough? Does it include all the important information?**
- **Does the table of contents reflect the internal structure of the dissertation? Do titles and pages coincide?**
- **Does the introduction include key information about the research question(s), the methodology and the organization of the content of the dissertation?**
- **Are there chapters? Have you included chapters with the state of the art, your approach towards the research topic, the reasoning, the challenges, etc.?**
- **Does the conclusion go back to the research question? Does it summarize in a concise way the main relevant findings?**
- **Is the bibliography complete?**
- **Have you added any lists or appendixes necessary (lists of maps, charts, drawings, acronyms, etc.)?**
- **Have you prepared a cover page with the necessary information?**

4. Dissertation Writing (Form[at])

4.1. Introduction

All academic writings follow certain format rules that help differentiate text types. This makes it easier to share documents internationally because they all contain the same basic information distributed and presented in a similar way. Failing to do so might lead to articles being rejected, dissertations not being admitted, etc.

4.2. Format Norms

Form(at) norms are based on an international consensus. There exist different recognized and internationally accepted standards. Whenever the systems differ, it is fine to follow any of them as long as you are consistent. Of course, institutions, journals, publishing houses, etc. are allowed to choose one of these systems or to elaborate their own. When addressing to them, be sure to use the required system.

At the RIGDPR, the most common system is followed. However, in certain aspects two different options are accepted. They will be properly indicated.

In this case, dissertations follow a pattern that is based on their argumentative nature. As with the content, the form(at)/s adapt to a systematic order that makes their reading easier.

4.2.1. Length, Font and Size

The maximum length of the dissertation should not exceed 40,000 words excluding appendices. The printing of the final version should be on A4 size paper and one-sided only. Dissertations should be written in Times New Roman font and 12 point size.

4.2.2. Margins and Pages

Margins should be “normal” (at least 1 cm top and bottom and 1.25 on both sides).

Pages should be numbered at the bottom, starting with the first page of text and using Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). Page numbers should appear centred and at the bottom of pages. Hyphens should not appear either before or after page numbers. The title page is assumed to be page 1 but is not so numbered. Software text management programmes now allow you to include a title page at the end automatically.

All major sections and subsections may begin immediately after preceding material. Headings in dissertations must be internally consistent. Try not to leave them at the bottom of the page. New chapters require a page break, however.

Partly filled pages of text are not permitted except at the end of a chapter or where there is not sufficient room to place lines of text above or below a table.

4.2.3. Paragraphs and Indentation

As with any formal documents, dissertations should be written in clear interconnected paragraphs, which should be typed with a 1.5 spacing between lines. The format regarding titles, subtitles, etc. should be consistent. Paragraphs should be justified and indented 0.25” on the left.

4.2.4. Writing Style

The writing required in a dissertation should be clear, formal, of a high register, and honest. Of course, like any good text, documents should be coherent in content and consistent in form.

With regard to the coherence, make sure your ideas are not repeated, that paragraphs are used to reflect the internal structure of your thinking, and that connectors are properly chosen to clarify the interconnection of thoughts. Good writers write efficiently condensing the information into effective statements, i.e. they use all the necessary words — and no more — to express with accuracy what they want to say.

With regard to the consistency, all texts must be in Arabic or English, and must follow certain format standards.

Traditionally, an *impersonal style* of writing has been required. This can be achieved by using the passive voice extensively, or trying to base the argumentation on the data provided or the authors cited (e.g. “According to these data”, or “Badri’s view on...”). However, in the past few years, candidates are increasingly allowed to express their views more openly in a formal way, thanks to expressions like “in my view”, “from my point of view”, etc.

Also, *be very careful about making absolute statements* (e.g. “no one can deny...”) since opinions can always be denied. *Use words that make it sound that something is possibly true, not definitely true.* You can use verbs of probability (appear, seem to, tend to, may, might, etc.), expressions of possibility (it can be said, it is possible that, it can be deduced, etc.), adverbs of uncertainty (possibly, perhaps, apparently, probably, etc.).

Dissertations have to be written in a *high register formal mode*. This can be achieved in different ways: use the appropriate terminology, avoid any textual or linguistic traits of conversational or informal communication (like contractions, signs and symbols, slang words or hesitations, expressions such as “you know”, “like”, etc.). Choose the more formal option for words and discard phrasal verbs or very vague words (like “thing”, “issue”, etc.).

Pay special attention to the punctuation, as it helps to organize the information within the paragraphs and makes sense clearer.

Abbreviations are widely used in academic writing. Most of these abbreviations have their origin in Latin (i.e., e.g., vs., id., etc.). The ones that are less commonly used should appear in italics (*apud, idem*, etc.)

If you include acronyms (UN, UNESCO, AU, etc.), make sure you give their full meaning at least the first time they appear, and make sure that you include a list of acronyms used at the end of the dissertation.

In connection with the use of bold, italic or underlined words, bear in mind that sub-headings and non-English words should usually be italicized.

Make sure you are consistent in the choice of date writing system, be it the British one (21st March 1969; Thursday, 30th May 1960) or the American one (March 21st 1969; Thursday, May 30th, 1960). It is preferable that you give the names of the months in full, otherwise it might lead

to confusion since these two systems locate the month and day in different positions: the day comes first in the British system, and after in the American one.

Numbers up to ten should be spelled out (e.g. one, four, seven, ten, and not 1, 4, 7, 10). Higher numbers are normally given in figures (e.g. 11; 20; 640; 1,251).

With regard to the spelling of certain words, make sure you are consistent with the system you use, be it the British (e.g. analyse, centre, labour) or the American (e.g. analyze, center, labor).

Of course, make sure there are no grammar mistakes. Feel free to consult dictionaries, grammar and style books, as well as guidelines if you think it might help you.

At the RIGDPR you are expected to use a sensitive style by writing in non-sexist, non-racist, etc. language. There are many guidelines that might help you in this task. Bear in mind that sensitiveness is not only connected to the words themselves, but also to the way in which ideas are expressed. Sexism or racism are attitudes of the writer, which can be shown in the content too in a hidden way (by ellipsis, by basing arguments on prejudices and challengeable assumptions, by supporting ideas from specific authors, etc.).

4.2.5. Quotations

Direct quotations should correspond exactly to the originals in wording, spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Short direct prose quotations should be incorporated into the text of the essay and enclosed in double quotation marks. If the quote appears inside another quote, the quotation marks inside should be simple.

Quotations of two or more sentences which at the same time run to four or more typewritten lines should be set off from the text in single spacing and indented in their entirety with no quotation marks at the beginning or at the end. Of course, don't forget to add the references in brackets (author's surname SPACE year of publication: page/s).

You may need to make an addition to a quotation to help it make sense in the context of your writing. Such additions or alterations should be indicated with square brackets, e.g. "This attempt [to redefine the role of design] seems to ignore the social role of the designer" (Smith 1986: 14).

If you are interested in ignoring part(s) of a quotation, you can, but you need to indicate it by including brackets with three dots inside in the location of the deleted part, e.g. "This attempt seems to ignore the (...) role of the designer" (Smith 1986: 14).

Occasionally you may not be able to gain access to the original document in which some important elements or quotes appear, your knowledge of it having come by way of a secondary source. In this case, you should refer to the material as "cited in" or "*apud*" plus the secondary source, and not list the primary reference alone, e.g. According to Simons, "phallogocentrism" could be taken as the translation of "male chauvinist pig" (Marks 1978: 842 *apud* Simon 1996: 88).

4.2.6. Cover Page

According to AUW's regulations, the hard front cover will be blank — nothing written on it — and in black colour. The candidate's name, the degree for which the dissertation is submitted, the date and the word (AHFAD) must appear on the spine of each copy of the dissertation. The writing should read from the bottom to the top of the spine. For example; AUW MSc. in GAG Name of student Research Title Year.

After the hard front cover page (blank), each copy shall include an internal cover page headed “Ahfad University for Women” and “Regional Institute of Gender, Diversity, Peace and Rights”, and giving the following information, centred:

- Title of the dissertation.
- The name of the candidate.
- The name of the supervisor.
- The degree for which the dissertation is submitted.
- The date of submission.

The title registered must agree with that on the cover and title pages of the dissertation, so if you decide to change the final title, you should indicate this to the administration.

4.2.7. Table of Contents

The table of contents, which corresponds to the different chapters and section headings, should let the reader know quickly and clearly how the dissertation is organized. Tables of contents may be quite brief (chapter titles) or considerably elaborate (chapter titles, headings and subheadings). Of greater importance is that the author must be consistent in using headings and subheadings, and that these correspond exactly in order, wording and form with the table of contents. This applies to lists of figures, tables, and other parts when included in the table of contents. Make sure you include the page numbers where chapters and sections begin. As a tip, it is best to do the final table of contents at the end. Text management software programmes include tools to help you to do so.

4.2.8. Charts, Maps and Drawings

Charts (tables, bar graphs, line graphs, pie charts and organizational charts), maps and drawings may be included within the text or appear on separate pages; if on separate pages, however, they should be placed near the text which refers to them, rather than collected in a group at the end. Charts, maps and drawings must also fit within the margins previously mentioned, and should have a title on top, and the year and the source underneath.

It is often useful to follow the table of contents with a list of tables and figures. If this is included, the wording must correspond exactly to that used on charts, maps and drawings. Scanned photographs, if any are needed, should be treated as drawings.

Charts, maps and drawings must be numbered. They can be so either consecutively throughout the text (e.g. Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, etc.; Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, etc.) or consecutively within each chapter bearing the chapter number (e.g. Table 1.1, Table 2.5, Table 6.8, etc.; Fig. 3.1, etc.; Fig. 4.2, Fig. 5.4, etc.). They must appear as such, together with the title, the year and source, in the list.

4.2.9. Footnotes

Footnotes should be marked through superscripts on the words or sentences they are related to. In English, the superscript appears after the dot. When the notes appear at the end of the document they are called endnotes, but at present footnotes are preferred.

4.2.10. Bibliography

With regard to how literature is to be referenced and bibliographies constructed, there are many ways of doing it, always following one norm: referencing systems and bibliographies must be consistent throughout the dissertation and fully agree with each other. Every significant idea that is not your own, as well as every direct quotation, must have its source acknowledged by a reference in the text and appear in the bibliography at the end.

Intra-textual references usually appear between brackets and include the surname of the author followed by the year of publication, colon and the page or pages in which the ideas or quotes appear, e.g. “Second wave feminism dealt with the workings of knowledge systems and their impact on women’s lives (Whelehan and Pilcher 2004: ix).” When you give the name of the author/s you just need to add the year of the publication included in the bibliography in between brackets, and the page numbers if necessary, e.g. “... as stated by Badri (2008).”

The publication details of the original source should be given in a reference list or bibliography at the end of the dissertation.

Do not reference anything that is common knowledge, and do not load your paper with references and quotations in the belief that it is a mark of scholarship. References are there primarily to acknowledge significant sources, and to help the reader follow up a line of thought, but remember that they are used to support your arguments, not to replace them.

In the preparation of the bibliographical references the following points should be observed: **the name of the author and/or editor, the year of publication, the title of the article and/or the title of the book, the publishing house, the place of publication, the pages of the article, and the translator if it is a translation MUST be provided, and they are usually presented in that same order.**

- The first thing to appear is **the author’s family name** followed by her/his first name (given name), separated by a comma, which indicates the change of order. In this sense, it is preferable whenever possible to write the full first name instead of just the initial, especially if you want to make women authors visible.

Badri, Balghis

- If there is more than one author, the other names should appear in their standard order (given name + family name) with no commas.

Badri, Balghis and Mai Izeldeen

Badri, Balghis; Mai Izeldeen and Omeyma Sheikh

- If the number of authors is very high, you can just write the first one, and then add the abbreviation “*et al.*” in italics.

Hoffman, Katharina *et al.*

- If the number of authors is really very high, as in encyclopedias, etc., you can just write VV. AA., which means “various authors”.
- If the book does not have a known author/s, you can either write “Unknown author”, instead of his/her name” or (n.a.), meaning “no author”.
- If the author(s) is/are editor(s) of the work, this should be noted by including the abbreviation “ed./eds.” after her/his/their name/s. It can appear between brackets.

Hoffman, Katharina and Lydia Potts (eds.)

- After the author/s or editor/s, **the year of publication** should follow between brackets. You can also find dates without brackets, just followed by a dot. If the year of the edition you are working with is different from the first one, you should include the latter between square brackets inside the main round ones, e.g. ([1995] 2003).
- If you are dealing with a translation, you should write into square brackets the year of the publication of the original, and in the round brackets, the year of publication of the translation.
- If you use more than one work by (a) given author/s and they have been published in the same year, label these a, b, c, both in the text and in the bibliography.

Intra-textual reference

(Hoffman 2011a: 56)

(Hoffman 2011b: 99)

Reference in the bibliography

Hoffman, Katharina (2011a)

Hoffman, Katharina (2011b)

- If no date of publishing is given, you should indicate it by adding (n.d.), meaning “no date”.
- Right after the year of publication, if you are dealing with **an article, its title** should appear first between double inverted commas, followed by “in” and the complete information about the book or journal it is in, and the page numbers.
- If you are dealing with a complete book/journal, **the title of the book/journal** is what should appear right after the year of publication, or after the name of the editor, which follows the title of the article separated by the preposition “in”. Titles of books and journals should be in italics (or substituted by single underlining, although this is less common).
- In the case of journals, **the volume number and/or issue number of the journal** should be given right afterwards.
- **The place of publication and publisher** should also be provided, especially when dealing with books. It is most often given by writing the place, colon, and the publisher.

London: Routledge

- Whenever you are dealing with any sort of documents that have not been published yet, you should indicate it by adding (unpublished). If there is no information on the publisher or the place of publication whatsoever, indicate so by adding (n.p.), which stands for “no publisher” or “no place of publication”.
- **The page numbers of the articles** should appear after the information about the publisher and place of publication, by adding “pp.” and the sequence.

.pp. 65-89

- Whenever you are dealing with translations, **the name of the translator/s** should be also written. It should appear at the end.

Trans. by Nuria Brufau-Alvira

or

Translated from the English by Nuria Brufau-Alvira

- If the document is available on the web, you should include the internet address and the date on which you last accessed it.
- If you are referencing websites, you should indicate the name of the website, the internet address and date of access.
- If you are referencing films, the system is similar to book referencing. However, instead of indicating the author, date of publication and publishing house, you should write the film director’s name, the date of release and the production company.

In general, there are also some other norms that you should follow:

- Don’t number the items.
- Begin each source on a new line.
- List alphabetically by author’s family name.
- All documents referred to should appear in the bibliography (including DVDs, CDs, TV programmes, tapes, websites, etc.). However, do not include books that you might have consulted but that you do not refer to in the text, like dictionaries or grammar books. When referencing them, remember to include the author’s name if mentioned, and the date of publication, publisher, etc. if available.

At the RIGDPR, two models are accepted:

For books:

Bailey, Peter (1978) *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, London: Methuen.

Bailey, Peter. 1978. Leisure and Class in Victorian England. London: Methuen.

For book chapters or articles:

Robinson, Victoria (1993) “Introducing Women’s Studies” in Diane Richardson and Victoria Richardson (eds.) *Introducing Women Studies*, London: McMillan, pp. 1-26.

Robinson, Victoria. 1993. "Introducing Women's Studies". In Diane Richardson and Victoria Richardson (eds.) Introducing Women Studies, London: McMillan, pp. 1-26.

For Journal Articles:

Gouanvic, Jean-Marc (2005) "A Bourdieusian theory of Translation, or the Coincidence of Practical Instances Field, Habitus, Capital and Illusio" in Moira Inguilleri (ed.) *The Translator*, vol. 11:2, Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 147-166.

Gouanvic, Jean-Marc. 2005. "A Bourdieusian theory of Translation, or the Coincidence of Practical Instances Field, Habitus, Capital and Illusio". In Moira Inguilleri (ed.) The Translator, vol. 11:2, Manchester: St. Jerome, pp. 147-166.

For Online Documents:

BBC website: www.bbc.co.uk. Accessed on 8th September 2011.

BBC website: www.bbc.co.uk (last visit: 8th September 2011).

4.2.11. Revision

It is always difficult to find errors in one's own work, especially when you have the impression that you have read your text already many times. However, your eyes might be skipping some misspellings, inconsistencies, etc. For this reason, it is advisable that you "put the final version to sleep", and that then you print it and revise it all again. Also, you can ask someone else to read it for you.

Once you have finished writing your dissertation, and before you turn it in, it is very important that you proofread it one last time as a complete document. This way you will make sure that you present the best version of your work. The following checklist might help you to do so:

FORM(AT) CHECKLIST

- Are your ideas properly organized in paragraphs?
- Are there introducing and concluding sentences in all paragraphs?
- Does each paragraph have (a) topic sentence(s) stating the main idea?
- Have you used examples and specific details to describe your topic?
- Are transitions used between sentences and paragraphs?
- Have you used connectors between sentences and paragraphs when necessary?
- Does your dissertation have an impersonal style?
- Are your statements categorical? Remember they should not be.
- Have you used explanatory sentences to give your opinion or judgment on the topic?
- Is your dissertation written in a sensitive way by using non-sexist, non-racist language?
- Have you written in a high register formal mode?
- Have you managed to choose Latin-root verbs *vs.* phrasal verbs?
- Are there any contracted forms in your text? There should not be.
- Are your acronyms explained (at least the first time you use them)?
- Have you included a list of used acronyms?
- Does each sentence follow clearly and logically from the one before it?
- Do all your sentences have a subject and a verb? Are all your sentences complete?
- Have you run two sentences together incorrectly without a period, conjunction or semicolon separating them?
- Have you ended every sentence with a period or question mark?
- Are your thoughts within sentences, and series, broken up correctly by commas for easier understanding? Have you put a comma after connecting words?
- Have you used a period/full-stop after abbreviations?
- Do your subjects and verbs coincide in person?
- Do your sentences have a proper length? Sentences that are very short tend to produce a jerky style of writing, but if they are too long, they become difficult to read and understand.
- Are your apostrophes correctly located? (The girls *vs.* The girl's *vs.* The girls')
- Have you used and combined the different tenses correctly?
- Have you used the correct form of the verb to express the tense you want?
- Have you used the upper case for names of people, cities, countries, streets, languages and titles?
- Are you sure of the spelling of all words in the document?
- Have you checked the combinations of vowels as in "ei", "ie", etc., as well as the endings ("-ing|" *vs.* "-ed"), and words with one or more sets of double letters?
- Are non-English words in italics?
- Are your spellings and dates consistent (be it according to the British or the American systems)?
- Are your numbers from 1-10 spelled in letters and the rest in numbers?
- Have you respected the original content and format of your quotations?
- Are they properly referenced intra-textually and in the bibliography?
- Have you indicated whose ideas you have used in your dissertation by properly referencing them?
- Have you properly organized your cover page and your table of contents?
- Do your chapter titles and table of contents coincide?
- Have you properly entitled and referenced your charts, maps and drawings?
- Is there a final list of them?
- Do your footnotes include only comments and explanations?
- Is your bibliography complete, consistent and honest? Is it properly organized?