

# Dissertation

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## Introduction

The dissertation is the final stage of the Masters MEd degree and provides you with the opportunity to show that you have gained the necessary skills and knowledge in order to organise and conduct a research project. It should demonstrate that you are skilled in identifying an area, or areas, suitable for research; setting research objectives; locating, organising and critically analysing the relevant secondary data and authoritative literature, devising an appropriate research methodology, analysing the primary data selected and drawing on the literature in the field, drawing conclusions; and if appropriate making relevant recommendations and indications of areas for further research.

A dissertation is a 'formal' document and there are 'rules' that govern the way in which it is presented. It must have chapters that provide an introduction, a literature review, a justification of the data selected for analysis and research methodology, analysis of the data and, finally, conclusions and recommendations for action may also be required. Advice on the range of suitable topics which relate to the subject areas of your Masters degree will be approved by your Guide, dissertation co-ordinator and Principal.

The MEd level dissertation is distinguished from other forms of writing by its attempt to analyse situations in terms of the 'bigger picture'. It seeks answers, explanations, makes

Comparisons and arrives at generalisations which can be used to extend theory. It shows a new path to the society and research field. As well as explaining what can be done, it addresses the underlying why. The most successful dissertations are those which are specific and narrowly focused.

### Aims of the Dissertation

The aims of the dissertation are to:

- Put into practice theories and concepts learned on the programme.
- Provide an opportunity to study a particular topic in depth.
- Show evidence of independent investigation.
- Combine relevant theories and suggest alternatives.
- Enable interaction with practitioners (where appropriate to the chosen topic)
- Show evidence of ability to plan and manage a project within deadlines.

After completion of the dissertation students should be able to:

- define, design and deliver an academically rigorous piece of research.
- understand the relationships between the theoretical concepts taught in class and their application in specific

situations.

- Show evidence of a critical and holistic knowledge and have a deeper understanding of their chosen subject area.
- appreciate practical implications and constraints of the specialist subject
- Understand the process and decisions to be made in managing a project within strict deadlines.