

“Why should I do a dissertation in my final year at AMBS?”

Doing a dissertation may sound formidable, but it needn't be.

Indeed it's true that you will need to work hard and be self-disciplined, and time management skills are a “must”.

However, the most important point is that by doing a dissertation, you can take ownership of your personal development. Here are some answers to your concerns regarding embarking on a dissertation.

- **Can doing a dissertation make me more attractive in the job market?**

Certainly it can. Actually, dissertations are far more likely to be discussed in a job interview than a normal course.

An advantage is that researching and writing a dissertation will enable you to enhance a wide range of skills, including; project planning, project management, market analysis, time management, and possibly, skills to communicate managers and/or customers in a real business world, which you may develop through fieldwork interviews for your dissertation.

Another advantage is that you will be able to obtain a good knowledge of a specialised area by doing a dissertation. You may already have a career plan or be interested in a specific industry or even a post. Then, doing a dissertation in a related area will put you in a very strong position.

- **How many words do I need to write?**

As a rule-of-thumb, a dissertation should be **around 12,000** words. This is a *guideline*.

Students often try to write (or unintentionally end up with) a longer dissertation. However, the length per se is *not* a good indicator of quality – and quality is what matters most; it will be demonstrated through clear and well-structured arguments, well-focused literature review, rigorous methods, in-depth analysis, etc.

So, please try to write within the suggested length mentioned above. Although there is no penalty to a shorter/longer length than that, it is advisable that you focus on the quality, rather than a (longer) length.

Please bear in mind that having your dissertation too-long (or too-short) could often be a negative factor in your mark, because it could indicate that you were not able to organise your research within a relevant length neatly.

- **How much support can I get during my dissertation period?**

You dissertation work will be guided by your chosen supervisor on a regular basis.

However, it is essential for *you* to take the initiative. Remember, a dissertation is fundamentally **your** work, *not* a joint venture with your supervisor.

Your supervisor will provide you with guidance/suggestions/comments. It is up to you how and how much you take them into account.

- **How can I find a supervisor?**

Please visit the AMBS academic staff directory; <http://www.mbs.ac.uk/research/people/Default.aspx> This link is a good source to explore the profiles of the academic members of staff at AMBS. Please take a careful look at their specialised areas and research interests, and make contact – firstly, send an email to make an appointment.

Please note that you should have a clear plan **before** making contact with a prospective supervisor. Although AMBS staff is here to help you, they will *not* give you a dissertation topic. It is **your** task to decide the dissertation topic and develop it.

- **How self-disciplined should I be?**

Although you have an academic guide (i.e., your supervisor), regarding other aspects of dissertation, you DO need to be self-disciplined and self-managed. There is no excuse for missing deadlines, computer-related troubles, printer errors, binding delays etc. etc. You need to plan your work carefully in view of contingencies, and take responsibility for it.

As your dissertation is worth 40 credits, your independent work on this should represent 400 hours over the course of the two semesters. Students are expected to arrange regular supervision meetings in semester 1 and semester 2, and dates and times for these should be arranged directly with your supervisor. The purpose of these supervision meetings is to check on your progress, offer support and advice and help develop the structure of your work.

- **How can I get the very best out of my dissertation?**

A dissertation is worth **40 credits**. This means you will need to do a lot of work. However, the potential rewards are enormous if you approach the whole process in a professional manner.

One strong point is that your dissertation supervisor will be one of your referees, and if you work on your dissertation enthusiastically and professionally, your supervisor is most likely to

provide you with a glowing reference.

Another benefit is related to your CV. You can make a strong statement in practical and analytical skills, which you will have advanced through doing a dissertation (and at the end of the day, you can evidence your skills by your dissertation!)

Your dissertation will be the biggest project you do at University. The more effort you put into it, the more you will gain from it – definitely. Good luck!