Research Project Guidebook

Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

Asia-Europe Institute

The Guidebook provides information, guidance and a point of reference for students under the International Masters Programme at Asia-Europe Institute (AEI).

It is divided into two sections:

Section A provides a general overview of the Research Project.

Section B deals with the activities involved in the pursuit of the Research Project.

SECTION A: OVERVIEW

Research Project enables students to carry-out research in an area of their interest which would not have been possible within the structured courses of the International Masters Programme, as well as apply relevant techniques appropriate to the chosen area of research. The report should demonstrate that the student has the ability to carry out research and/or the ability to carry out constructive criticisms, as well as to report their findings/results accurately and coherently.

This research component leads to a successful completion of the International Masters degree programme at Asia-Europe Institute (AEI).

SECTION B: ACTIVITIES FROM BEGINNING TO END

Report on Research Project need not contain an original contribution to knowledge and practice in the discipline. However, it must demonstrate the student's ability to identify and evaluate relevant literature, to design a well-structured and integrated investigation, to collect and interpret data, and to reach mature discussions and conclusion.

2- TYPE OF RESEARCH

The Research Project paper is an academic research by an individual student under the supervision of a supervisor.

2.1.1 Topic Selection

The selection of a topic undoubtedly is one of the most important steps which require careful thought. The overriding consideration should be students' personal interests and future career orientation. Within this general framework students are required to determine/select a topic which:

a) Is worthy of further attention and contributes to the existing body of knowledge,
b) Can be undertaken within the constraints of resource availability, and
c) Has to be in the same discipline as the chosen area of specialisation for student intake.

The early phase of the research should contain all or most of the following:

- Preparation of a short proposal of about three pages, double-spaced and type-written, outlining the topic, research design, main literature, references and if possible, limitations that might be encountered.

- Once the student is assigned a supervisor, the student will need to expand the initial proposal into a more detailed written proposal. This should also include a work schedule and target dates for the various stages of the research based on consultations with the supervisor. This is to ensure that the objectives of the study are realistic and achievable and work is completed within the timeframe set for the research.

- A thorough initial search of the relevant literature.

- Early planning is crucial but keeping the plan flexible is equally important in order to minimize the effect of any unforeseen events/circumstances affecting the progress of research.

2.1.2 Responsibilities

The Student:

- Students may, on their own, discuss the research proposal with any Visiting Professor/Part-Time Lecturers/Academic Staff at AEI. Upon obtaining an agreement with the potential supervisor, the student must inform the International and Student Affairs Unit, Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) in writing. Students are given the opportunity to suggest their own supervisor. However, the final decision is subject to the agreement of the supervisor and the approval of the AEI.

- Students are required to consult their supervisor on a regular basis and work towards their own intellectual independence.

- Students must ensure that the structure of their report for submission complies with the guidelines stipulated in this Guidebook.

- Students should ensure that the report submitted is original and not borrowed, lifted or copied directly from any other sources except for citations that are duly acknowledged. Refer Section 6 of Part II (General Discipline) of the Rules of University of Malaya, Universities and University Colleges Act 1971)P.U.(A) 267).

2.1.3 Management of the Project

After the initial proposal has been submitted and accepted, a typical sequence for a research project involves the following stages:

   (a)   A thorough initial search of the relevant literature.
   (b)   Development of detailed objectives.
   (c)   Review of existing literature.
   (d)   Design of research including development of research method.
   (e)   Data gathering
   (f)   Analysis and interpretation of data
   (g)   Report writing and conclusions/recommendations.

Once you have decided on a topic, and bearing in mind the considerations in Section 1 (a) and (b), you should move quickly to develop detailed objectives. You should be careful to avoid some of the common pitfalls in research management. The most common fault is probably trying to cope with too wide a topic. Researchers frequently underestimate the time required for each stage. They often take a longer time than anticipated. It is important to develop a progress timetable for each stage in the project and draft of the probable chapter headings.

After obtaining the agreement of your supervisor on the research topic and objectives, you should then "read around your topic". This is essential not only to gain a deep understanding of the topic and to learn from experience of others but also to ensure that you are asking the right questions when you go out later to do your fieldwork. It is important to be meticulous in keeping a careful and full record of all reference. You may find that a card index system is helpful. It is also essential that you keep a "log book" on your project-never trust your memory.

The type and objectives of the research determines the value of the method development for the study. Regardless of whatever method developed, you must ensure that you have the skills, time and resources to carry it through. The course on Research Methodology would have provided you with some useful references on methodological issues. You are strongly advised to again consult some of these references in order to keep abreast of the various issues involved in developing an appropriate research design.

The Supervisor:

Generally, it is important that the students and their respective supervisors meet on a regular basis so that each understands how the other views the progress of the research.

Supervisors will provide full, prompt and informative feedback to students on a regular basis regarding the progress of their research.

2.1.4 Writing the Research Project

1. Know Your Case Subject

A good grasp of the subject requires appreciating fine nuances of issues. To gain a thorough understanding, you may need to interact with individuals from different organisations (government agencies, companies, local communities, trade associations). It is important to remember that symptoms are only indicators of problems. Your analyses and recommendations should address the underlying problems and not their symptoms.

2. Be Specific, Be Realistic

Your report should be practical and realistic. Your recommendations and justification for those recommendations are the most important parts of the report. They should be substantial, specific and original.

In real time situations, one will never have all the information one would like to have. As such, resort to reasonable assumptions about unknowns, carry out the appropriate analyses having made explicit what those the assumptions are, and then make a decisions based on such analyses. So too must be the manner you approach your

research project. There is no such thing as a complete report. Always supplement your empirical findings with available secondary data obtained through library search. Library research is always required in research.

Your recommendations must be specific. Broad generalisations help no one. For example, if you recommend a market penetration strategy, justify it and tell what, why, when, where, who, and how that strategy is to be implemented in your particle case. Where possible, numbers, dollar estimates, ratios, percentages and other quantitative indices can ensure you steer clear of generalities and vagueness.

Your recommendations should be realistically feasible. That is, the organisation you are studying must have the capabilities and resources to carry out your recommendations. For example you need to specify clearly whether debt, stock or a combination of debt and stock is to be used to obtain the capital to carry out your recommendations. Also, do not ignore alternatives. Present the advantages and disadvantages of feasible alternatives in such a way that it is clear that your interpretation of the evidence is reasonable and objective.

3- STRUCTURE OF REPORT

The structure of the research report is based on a standard format which contains the following sections:

1. Preface
2. Text
3. Supplement

The arrangement of these sections is subject to agreement between the student and the supervisor(s).

3.1 Preface

This section consists of the following:

Title Page

The title page is the first page and should include the research title which has been approved by the Institute, name of candidate according to the registration records, and the statement"… submission of Research Project for the partial fulfilment of the Degree of Master of…" and the date of submission.

Abstract

Generally the abstract is written after the completion of the Research Project. It summarises the structure of the whole text and the major facts it contains. It should be written in the same language as that used in the text and contain not more than

250 words. The abstract should be placed on the page immediately after the title page.

Acknowledgements

This sub-section is not compulsory but most Research Project reports convey appreciation to those who have been involved in the study.

Table of Contents

The table of contents lists the chapter, topics, and sub-topics together with their page numbers. Topics and sub-topics should be labelled according to the chapter, for example, first topic in Chapter 1 should be marked 1.1 and the first sub-topic, 1.1.1. The use of letters in parenthesis {for example, 1.3.7 (a)} is appropriate as a means of differentiating sub-topics of the same topic from each other. The numbering system provides a clear picture of the relationship between chapters and topics and show how they are connected.

List of Figures

This list contains the titles of figures, together with their page number, which are listed in the text or in the appendix. The numbering system is the same as that used for topics, for example: Figure 1.3, Figure 1.3.7 and Figure 1.3.7 (a).

List of Tables

The list contains the title of tables, together with their page number, which are listed in the text or in the appendix. The numbering system is the same as that used for topics and figures, for example: Table 1.3, Table 1.3.7 and Table 1.3.7 (a).

List of Symbols and Abbreviations

This list follows the list of tables and figures.

3.2 Text

There is no specific format for the text. Candidates and supervisors should ensure that the text follows the agreed conventions of AEI.

3.3 Supplementary

Specific items which were not included in the main body of the text should be put in this Additional/Supplementary section. Typically this section includes the following.

- Research instruments such as questionnaire and maps.

- Appendices consisting of additional illustration of data sources, raw data and the quoted citations which are too long to be placed into the text. The appendix supports the written text of the research project.

- It can be divided into Appendix A,B,C and etc. Each appendix needs to be listed in the Table of Contents. All tables and figures in each appendix are numbered and listed in the List of Tables and List of Figures.

- All works or studies referred to in the research Project report in the form of quotations or quotations citations must be included in the bibliography.

- The references/bibliography should be written in the specific format approved by AEI. The list of references/bibliography should not be numbered.

4- FORMAT SPECIFICATIONS

The approval of the supervisor(s) of the final report is required prior to the final submission. TWO (2) hard cover copies and an electronic copy of the final manuscripts should be submitted to the International and Students Affairs Unit, Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya.

4.1 SUBMISSION FORMAT

4.1.1 Submission and Binding

Requirements for final submission:

1- Two bound copies – hard cover

<u>Front Cover to show the following:</u>
- Title
- Author
- Name of the university
- Year of submission
- Font size 15, UPPER CASE LETTERS

<u>Colour of hard cover:</u>
- International Masters in European Regional Integration (IMERI): Yellow
- International Masters in ASEAN Studies (IMAS): Red

2- Electronic copy in the form of CD (in PDF Format)

CD must be labelled with the following details:
   a) Name:
   b) Matric no:
   c) Title of Research Project:

3- Turnitin Report

You are required to have a **similarity index of less than 15%.** For instructions on how to access Turnitin, please consult the reference Librarian at the UM Main Library.

4.1.2 Length

The minimum length (excluding footnotes, appendices, tables and preface) of the report is:

- Approximately 10, 000 - 15,000 words

4.1.3 Printing and Duplicating

Manuscripts should be printed on high quality A4 paper (201 x 297 mm: 80 gm/m2). The final manuscripts, in comb-binded copies, must be typed and duplicated by offset printing or good quality photocopying. All copies must be clean and neat in order to ensure easy reading.

A high quality laser or ink-jet printer should be used for the printing. The use of cellophanes tape is not allowed.

4.1.4 Formatting

Sections should be typed using Times New Roman and font size 12. For mathematical texts, the Latex font is appropriate. Scripts fonts are under no circumstances permitted.

<u>Line Spacing</u>

The body text should be typed with double spacing. Single spacing is only permitted in table, long quotations, notes and citations and in the bibliography/reference.

Margin

The text should have the following margin:

Top	: 1.0 inch	Right	: 1.0 inch
Left	: 1.5 inch	Bottom	: 1.0 inch

Page Numbering

All page numbers should be printed 0.8 inch from the bottom margin and placed at the right hand side without any punctuation. Font size 8 is recommended for numbers.

Roman numerals (i,ii,iii etc) should be use in the preface section. Although the Title Page is the first page of the Preface, no number is to be printed on it. Numbering begins on the second page with (ii).

Arabic numerals (1,2,3 and so on) are used on the pages of the text and supplementary sections.

Sub-topics

No specific arrangement is required for the numbering of sub-topics but, whatever arrangement is adopted, it must be consistent.

Spelling

Consistency in spelling is important. British spelling is preferred by AEI. Refer to The Concise Oxford Dictionary. In quoted material and titles of books, article and so forth, the actual spelling in the original is used.

Punctuation

A few common usages are given in the following examples:

The boy,girl, or dog ate it.
The boy, girl, and dog came.
He commented that the weather was "not as expected".
She said, "I have no idea what you mean."
He gives a bleated, though stilted (and somewhat obscure), exposition of the subject.
" I have no idea what 'xyz' means."
Abbreviations

Write in full name of countries; use abbreviations only as adjectives, for example,
the United States (noun)
the U.S. Government

the U.S. dollar but US$6
Use USA (noun) only when necessary, and in tables for lack of space.

Example of other common abbreviations:
Dr.G.H Short
et al.   (roman, not italics)
MPs   LDCs ASEAN PTA
c.i.f   f.o.b   per cent
G-5   G-14

<u>Dates</u>

18 May 1981
in the eighties   in the 1980s
in the early eighties   in the early 1980s
in the mid-eighties   in the mid-1980s
in the late eighties   in the late 1980s
in the nineteenth century
1969-79
AD150
150BC

<u>Numbers</u>

Spell out number from to one hundred, except in technical or statistical discussion involving frequent use, foe examples, "67 infants, 14 teenagers, and 5 adults".
pp.24-26   pp. 123-46
pp.298-314   pp. 101-6

In text, when referring to parts of a book, numerals are not spelled out, for example, Chapter 6, page 98.

<u>Quotations, Notes and Footnotes</u>

Short quotations in the text should be enclosed within double quotations mark. Direct quotations exceeding four type lines of a manuscript should be set off from the text by indenting 1 cm from the left and right margins and omitting quotation mark.

Material added by the author should be enclosed in brackets [ ], not parentheses ( ). Omissions in a quotation are indicated by ellipses, using three dots (periods when types) where one or more words are omitted. If this happens at the end of the sentence, four dots--a period, followed by three spaced dots-- must follow: for example,"…[Steward] emphasized… the effect which the introduction of agriculture had upon population density…. He also…"

Tables

Tables are printed within the body of the text at the centre of the frame and labelled according to the chapter in which they appear. For example, tables in Chapter 3 are numbered sequentially: Table 3.2 etc.

Table 3.1
Short Title

If the table occupies more than one page, the continued table on the following page should indicate that it is a continuation: for example:' Table 3.1 continued'. If the table contains a citation, the sources of the reference should be placed below the table.

Figures

Figures, like table are printed within the body of the text at the centre of the frame and labelled according to the chapter in which they appear. For examples, figures in Chapter 3 are numbered sequentially: Figure 3.1, Figure 3.2 etc.

Figure3.1
Short Title

Figures, unlike text or table, contain graphs, illustrations or photograph and although the format of their labels follows that used for tables, they are placed at the bottom of the figure rather than at the top.

If the figure occupies more than one page, the continued figure on the following page should indicate that it is a continuation: for example:' Figure 3.1 continued'.

If the figure contains a citation, the source of the reference should be placed at the bottom, after the label.

How to Quote Literature References

Much frustration and waste of time can be avoided by making sure that references are always clear and accurate. This implies that you should include sufficient detail to enable the reference to be identified without recourse to further searching. Author and title are just not enough. Also, make a habit of recording the full details of the reference at the time you use it.

The suggestions outlined here may be followed unless you have been told otherwise. In the text, you refer to references by name (without initials) and year as illustrated in the following passage:

Advertising critics believe that advertising contributes to the rise in materialism among consumers (Bursteins, 1981; Pollay, 1986; Rositter, 1980). It is said to have shaped our way of life (Belk and Pollay, 1985b, Standfield and Standfield, 1980).

Whenever you quote a paper in a text written by two authors you must use both their names. Where there are more than two you give all their names the first time, but thereafter the first name only followed by "et al". You may refer to specific page in a work by putting the page numbers after the year, e.g., Martindale (1972, pp.57-85). If the author is not named, you use the corporate author, e.g., Monopolies Commission, or title instead. Avoid the use of footnotes, if possible. List reference in alphabetical order at the end of your text under the headings: "Reference" or "Bibliography". Include only those references cited in the text. When referring to more than one paper by the same first-name author in the same year, you add a,b,c, etc., after the year,e.g.,1976a,1976b.

The following examples show you how to give references for the bibliography which will appear at the end of your text.

I. Books

(1) Author (Year), Title, Principal place of publication: Publisher.

   Balfour, C. Arnold (1972), Industrial Relations in the Common Market, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

(2) If the book had editors instead of authors you should acknowledge this by adding "eds." after their names, e.g., Wiseman,S. Philip,ed. (1967), Intelligence and Ability, Hardmondsworth: Penguin Books.

(3) Use the corporate author for books without individual authors.

(4) If a book is better known by its title than its authors or editors then use it instead, e.g.,

   Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, (1964), Prepared by W. Little,
   Revised and edited by C.T. Onions, 3rd .ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
   In the text citation, you may shorten the title to "Shorter Oxford (1944)".

(5) For a book that has been reprinted use the date of the first printing of the edition referred to. The date of reprinting is only added if of importance, e.g.,

   Darwin,C. Reynold (1882, reprinted 1928), Origin of the Species, London: Dent.

(6) To refer to specific pages in a book use "p" for one page and "pp" for two or more.

(7) You may wish to refer to one paper from a collection in a book. The following example illustrates:

Aaker, David A. (1978), "The Social and Economics Effects of Advertising," Consumerism: Search for the Consumer Interest. David A.Aaker and George S.Day (eds.) New York: The Free Press, 174-193.

II. Conference

Use similar methods as for books, e.g.,

Belk, Russel W. (1986), "Yuppies as Arbiters of the Emerging Consumption Style." In advances in Consumer Research, 13, Richard J. Lutz, ed., Provo, Utah: Association for Consumer Research, 514-519.

III. Theses

(1) Use similar methods as for books, e.g.

Burrel, J. Gordon (1973), The Importance of School Tours in Education, M.A. Theses, Queen's University, Belfast.

(2) For American theses, it is helpful although not essential to quote the University Microfilms order number found in Dissertation Abstracts International, e.g.,

Tsai,C.Son (1972), Synthesis of Some Potential Antimalarias, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Michigan.

Note: Series statements are added after the publisher. This is optional and is done only if you think the series help to identify the book.

IV. Journals

Authors (Year), "Title of Journal, Volume number,issue (month), pagination, e.g.

Buchholz, Rogene A. (1983), "The Protestant Ethic as an Ideological Justification of Capitalism," Journal of Business Ethics, 2 (February), 51-60

Midgley, David F. and Grahame R. Dowling (1978), "Innovativeness: The Concept and Its Measurement," Journal of Consumer Research, 4 (March), 229-242.

SUGGESTED TEXT FORMAT FOR ACADEMIC RESEARCH REPORT

CHAPTER 1   :   INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Significance of the Study
Research Questions/Objectives of the Study
Scope of the Study
Limitations of the Study
Organisation of the Study

CHAPTER 2   :   LITERATURE REVIEW

(Prepare an organised review of related and relevant literature. Your review must include recent findings in the area.)

CHAPTER 3   :   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Development of Hypotheses
Selection of Measures
Sampling Design
Data Collection Procedure
Data Analysis Techniques

CHAPTER 4   :   RESEARCH RESULTS

Summary Statistics
Analyses of Measures
Testing of Hypotheses
Summary of Research Results

CHAPTER 5   :   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusion
Suggestions for Future Research
Implications (indicate what group, theory, organisation, discipline might be able to benefit from your research)

1. Example of the Title Page (Hard Cover)

JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY AND JAPAN-ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION

MIEKO ISHIKAWA

Asia-Europe Institute,
University of Malaya
Kuala Lumpur
2017

2. Example of the FIRST PAGE of the report

JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY
AND
JAPAN-ASEAN SECURITY COOPERATION

Mieko Ishikawa

QGD 070001

Project Paper as a Partial Fulfilment for
International Masters in ASEAN Studies (IMAS)

Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya
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