

UNIVERSITY OF BUEA RESEARCH PLANNING DAY: RESOURCING AND SHAPING UB RESEARCHERS FOR SMART RESEARCH ENGAGEMENTS

Day 2: PG School's Expectations on Thesis/Dissertation Writing

Presentation by Gideon A. Ngwa
Coordinator, University of Buea PG School

Outline

- Preparations for PG studies at The University of Buea
- Structure of the Master's degrees Programme at the UB
- Structure of the Programme for the PhD degree at UB
- Role of the Departmental Scientific Committee
- Overall structure of the PG studies
- Writing of the Thesis/Dissertation
- Other issues

Preparations for PG studies at UBuea

- Application into the appropriate PG programme
 - Consultation with the Department
 - Online application
 - Selection by Admissions Committee
 - List of admitted students is published by the VC
- Selected students register into the University
 - Administrative registration
 - Academic registration
- Student prepares a file containing vital Bio-data information
 - The file is then submitted to his/her Department

Structure of the Master's degree programme at UB

Year	Activity	Distribution of Credits by type of Master	
		Research Master's	Professional Master's
Year 1	Course Work	60	60
Subtotal for Year I		60 Credits	60 Credits
Year 2	Research leading to Thesis	42	24
	Research Methodology and Scientific Writing	06	06
	Seminars/Entrepreneurship/Practicum/Production/Internship/Industrial Attachment, etc.	12	30
Subtotal for Year II		60 Credits	60 Credits
Total		120	120

Structure of the Programme for the PhD at UB

1. Length of programme: 3-5 years
2. Year 1:
 1. First two semesters: course work (54-60) Credits
 2. Next three months: Comprehensive examination (6 credits)
3. Years 2- year 5: Research Leading to the PhD Dissertation, interspersed with monthly progress seminars

Role of the Departmental Scientific Committee

1. Oversees the academic function of the department
2. Meets to discuss course allocation to accredited staff
3. Meets to discuss sharing of supervisors
4. Meets to approve theses/Dissertations submitted by students for onward transmission to the Faculty Scientific committee
5. Meets to evaluate students during pre-defence seminars
6. Is the technical arm of the department in academic matters
7. Selects members to read & clear theses during pre-defence

Overall structure of the PG studies

- Year 1: Course work
- Years 2 onwards: Research phases. (Little course work)
 - Seminar I: Presentation of Research proposal
 - Seminar II: Follow up seminar on progress of research
 - Seminar III: Defence of first draft of thesis (for Masters)
 - Other seminars can be planned for the PhD
 - Required courses set by University for all Masters programmes:
 - Research methodology and Scientific writing
 - Entrepreneurship (ENT600)
 - Pre-defence Seminar

The Research Proposal

The **Research Proposal** must be developed and defended before the **Scientific committee of the Department** during the First Seminar (Seminar I) Presentation. The Scientific Committee will ascertain if

- The topic is well conceived
- The project is well conceived
- The project is feasible
- The project is realizable
- There is provision for adequate funding, Etc.

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Student-supervisor meetings: At the first meeting, the student should be given information on the following:

- The venue (on campus) of consultation meetings;
- What will be expected of each consultation;
- The resources necessary for the project should be identified;
- Any special skills/techniques required for the project should be identified, and training for these skills programmed;
- Together with the supervisor, a provisional time-table for carrying out the research should be agreed upon.

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Distinction between long essay, master's thesis and doctoral dissertation:

- The material in the long essay, an undergraduate project, is expositional in nature and it is not expected to be original work. However the student must demonstrate mastery of the scientific method of enquiry and presentation of facts and findings.

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Distinction between long essay, master's thesis and doctoral dissertation:

- **The material in the master's thesis is Postgraduate level work.** It can be expositional in the form of a review, but can also be original. In most cases, the master's thesis is expected to be the original work of the student in the sense of re-interpretation of existing results or representation of known facts in a more lucid form.

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Distinction between long essay, master's thesis and doctoral dissertation:

- **The PhD dissertation** is the product of student work at the doctoral level, distinguished from master's thesis study chiefly by its deeper, more comprehensive, and more mature professional and scholarly treatment of the subject. **The material in the dissertation must be the students work** and it is expected that the student must clearly show in the dissertation **contribution to knowledge in the subject area**. It is required that the student **must have published from the PhD dissertation study** and that the length of the thesis be of acceptable size.

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Characteristics of a good Thesis/Dissertation:

- All theses and dissertations must show: **originality, individuality, and rigor**. Since it is rare to find a topic that has not been researched before to some extent and by some procedure, the **originality** criterion is met if the student continues to study an unresolved problem, or replicates existing results, in a way that is substantially different from prior approaches. **Individuality** means that the study is conceived, conducted, and reported primarily by the student. **Rigor** means the use of scientific method

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Characteristics of a good master's thesis. It should:

- **Give** the master's graduate a first-hand experience in conducting investigations and familiarize the one with the kind of effort and integrity demanded by research.
- It should **prepare** those who aspire to the doctorate degree adequately.
- It should make the student **an expert** in at least one aspect of the discipline wherein he/she is to be called a master.
- It should be able to serve as a capstone for a significant unit of advanced study.

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Characteristics of a good PhD Dissertation.

- The work in the PhD Dissertation should enhance scholarship in the sense of looking for truth, built on the existing body of knowledge, and to **create original knowledge**
- The Dissertation must demonstrate to other scholars that the writer is a competent specialist who **understands the theories and concepts of the domain** and who has a systematic knowledge of the chosen field rather than a smattering of insights here and there;
- Show proof of international acceptance via **publications** and presentation at seminars and international colloquia

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Writing the thesis: **Piecemeal** approach versus **integrated** approach

Certification of the Thesis: Certification by the supervisor before the oral examination.

This is to certify that the work described in the thesis entitled XXXX By XXX Was carried out in the Department of XXXXX Under the supervision of XXXXXX

(Name and Signature of Supervisor)

Date.....

Expectations during thesis/dissertation writing

Certification of the Thesis: Certification by the Administration after the oral examination.

The thesis/Dissertation of..XXX... Entitled..XXX... Submitted to the department of.. XXX...in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of..XXXX...In the Faculty of ..XXX... of the University of Buea has been read, examined and approved by the examination panel composed of:

(NAMES OF PANELISTS AND THEIR DESIGNATION ON PANEL HERE) followed by allowance for the signature of the HOD, the Supervisor(s) and HOE

Other issues

Common ills, mistakes and Lacunae

1. Plagiarism
2. Poor citations policy
3. Too ambitious, a life-time's work
4. Unrealistic time plan, no priorities
5. Uncritical background review
6. No focus
7. Unrealistic budget
8. Intellectual property rights (who owns the result from a thesis/dissertation work?)

Other issues

Preparation to submit for Oral Examination

- Fees clearance
- Complete transcript for course work
- Proof of registration into courses
- Loose bound volume of thesis/dissertation
- CV of candidate (especially for PhD)
- Proof of publications from thesis (if PhD)

Other issues

Preparation to submit to the Central Library

- Proof that all requested corrections are made
- Relevant certification page is signed
- Clearance from the Department
- Scrupulous respect of Library's format
- Hard bound volume(s) of thesis

Other issues

Preparation for the Defence:

Thesis vetted by Departmental and Faculty Scientific committees

The Academic Office authorises defence for the masters

(After positive review by competent authorities Department)

The Vice-Chancellor authorises defence for the PhD dissertation if

- Supervisor(s) submit a positive pre-defence report

- Scientific committees submits positive reports

- External reviewer of the dissertation returns a positive report

- Internal reviewer of the dissertation returns a positive report

Thank you for your attention