



GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE MASTERS FINAL WORK

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Guidelines for Writing the Masters Final Work

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1 Introduction

These guidelines are designed to provide students with the tools need to write and submit their Masters Final Work (MFW).

In order to obtain a masters degree, a student has to carry out a final work under the supervision of a professor designated by the Scientific and Pedagogical Committee of the relevant masters programme. The purpose of the Masters Final Work is to demonstrate that the student, as a masters candidate, has the capability of applying the knowledge acquired during the taught course component and of critically and independently analysing a specific topic in their field.

According to the Regulations for Masters Degrees at the Technical University of Lisbon (Diário da República, 2nd Series, Nº 207, 26th October 2006), and the Regulations for Masters Degrees at ISEG, successful completion of the masters degree presupposes the writing of a Masters Final Work in the form of a scientific dissertation, project or internship report.

Independent of the format chosen by the student, it is generally expected that the MFW be completed predominantly in the 4th semester of the course. It is worth 42 credits (of which 12 are from the 3rd semester and 30 from the 4th) which is equivalent to around 1,100 hours of work.

The Regulations for Masters Degrees at ISEG define the procedures for preparing for the oral examination or *viva voce* of the MFW. These guidelines focus on aspects that students need to help them write the MFW, whether in relation to content or form. The different possible MFW formats are characterised and a detailed description given of the requirements at the different stages of research.

2 Characterisation

The Masters Final Work may take one of three different forms: dissertation, project or internship report. Each of these is described in detail below.

2.1 Dissertation

According to Article 6 of the Regulations for Masters Degrees at ISEG, a dissertation is “*a work of research on a theme or topic within the scope of the programme. It must include an element of contextualisation and critical discussion of the relevant literature as well as a theoretical or experimental component which suggests an innovative look at the theme or topic being dealt with. It should also present a conclusive summary and suggestions for future work.*”

In choosing this option for the MFW, the student is opting to base their work on research on a relevant topic within the field of their masters. Typically, the research project arises as the result of an in-depth analysis of the available literature and aims to address a relevant question from the theoretical perspective. It should include a component of theoretical contextualisation and of theoretical or experimental work, as well as a conclusive summary

and suggestions for future work. The results should be generally applicable on a local or universal level, as appropriate.

2.2 Project

According to Article 6 of the Regulations for Masters Degrees at ISEG, a project is defined as *“work in the chosen area which integrates knowledge and skills acquired throughout the programme with a special emphasis on presenting solutions or recommendations for practical problems arising from the programme content. Multidisciplinary and experimental aspects will be taken into account, as long as they are backed up by sound theoretical and methodological practices.”*

This format involves the student carrying out an applied work that includes use of skills and knowledge acquired on the course, with a view to presenting solutions or recommendations for dealing with practical problems related to the area of study. Such projects normally arise from a concrete issue faced by the student while in the course of their professional activities. It is important to note that, despite its practical component and focus on solving a real-life organisational problem, a theoretical framework and methodological justification is also required. Therefore, the initial approach to the problem should be made by way of the literature, followed by a technical-scientific analysis.

2.3 Internship Report

The Regulations for Masters Degrees at ISEG defines an internship report as a *“detailed work of description and reflection about activities carried out within the sphere of an internship with an institution approved by the Scientific and Pedagogical Committee. Functions exercised and tasks carried out must be fully described within an appropriate theoretical and methodological framework. The articulation between the training and the application of the knowledge acquired must be explored and explained.”*

This requires the student to describe in detail and reflect upon activities completed in the context of a professional work placement. Responsibilities and tasks should be given a contextual framework, and the relationship between training undertaken as part of the masters course and its application in the workplace should be explained.

3 Research Methodology

Study of a specific problem, be it to resolve a problem in day-to-day life, in the course of scientific analysis of a research question, or as the basis for making an economic decision, requires the use of information. There is a need to increase knowledge about that particular issue, and for that to happen, information is needed. A MFW is therefore always a process of dealing with information. In all of the above cases, information is selected because it is considered relevant for understanding the problem and for forming a basis to act upon it.

Any research project has to start with a clear identification and precise definition of the topic to be studied. It has to be clearly outlined and its relationship with related questions or topics well defined (*where does this problem end and another one start?*). Otherwise, structured thinking on the subject becomes impossible and it will consequently be difficult to effectively organise the research necessary to carry out the study. This may result in consuming resources (time, energy, money) to find, access and process information that later turns out to be irrelevant. At the same time, you may miss other more relevant information. It is worthwhile pointing out the reflective nature of this stage. It is, primarily, a reflection on what you already know, a chance to organise your thoughts on the subject, while exploring and assimilating all the generic points of information which will contribute towards clearly outlining the project. It is apparent that 'identifying the question' is crucial in the success of the subsequent steps in the research process.

It is also evident that the efficiency with which information is gathered and processed is equally important in terms of the success of a research project. This is not a one-off activity, but is a series of interlinked actions which take place over time: it is a *process* which should be carried out efficiently in order to maximise the results obtained with the resources available. For this reason it is essential that we should have a clear idea of every stage of that process. Only by improving our performance at each step is it possible to improve the global efficiency of the process i.e. to guarantee that we achieve our final objective with the time and other resources available to us.

This fundamental economic principle – maximising results with the available resources (time, money, human and technical resources) – is a characteristic of any good research project as well as a natural part of the professional activity of any economist or manager. In fact, given their professional training and experience, professional in those areas should be particularly able to apply the concept. In giving opinions or making decisions, they are expected to be able to correctly identify the problem on which they are being asked to give an opinion or offer a solution. This means they have to be able to rigorously characterise and define the question, prioritising some elements above others, and interpreting them in light of prior knowledge. However, more and more, their performance is judged on their ability to *bring together appropriate information and process it in a timely fashion* in order to answer the question that has been put to them: they have to be efficient in that process.

Thus we see that in discussing *research methodology* we are in fact looking at a concept that is extremely relevant in the training of an economist or manager.

This document looks at some of the fundamental questions related to the different phases of research and presents some methodological aspects that should be followed in producing a MFW. It is impossible to create a universally applicable set of rules for every type of situation a researcher will encounter. We therefore focus on the aspects most relevant in economic research (and that of other professions and social scientists): find solutions to a question through research and information gathering. Basically, it is the selection of a chosen type of

work in the field of economics/management, which will establish the framework for work to be carried out in the course of the masters degree.

In the process of researching and drafting documents around a specific theme, there are four main phases, which we shall call definition, research, analysis and writing up. Each of these phases may be subdivided into different processes, each of some complexity.

Success in each phase is not linear. In fact, at any moment of a given phase, it might become apparent that it is not possible to go forward under current conditions, and that a review and subsequent return to a preceding phase has become necessary. There are two junctures in particular when this might happen – after the research phase and after the analysis.

Those are not the only possibilities. Theoretically, this might also happen following the writing up, as happens many times in academic life: work will be submitted and evaluated in the form it has taken up to the point of being written up. However, we might then be given an alternative suggestion and use that to review the work.

The definition phase is the initial investigation of a theme, the search for its definition and a general understanding of it. This phase will tend to define the limits of the research and, as such, should facilitate the subsequent phases as much as possible, thereby contributing to the success of the overall project.

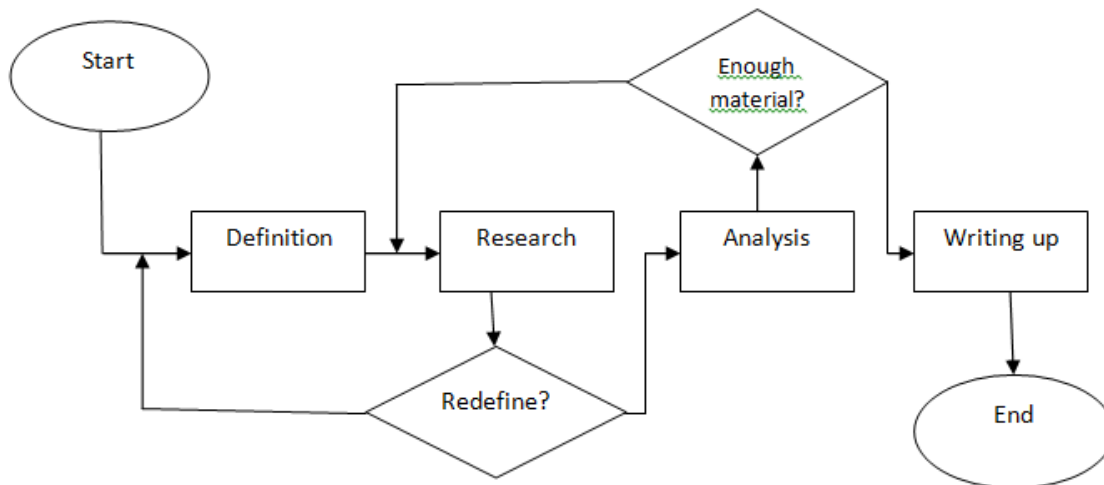
All academic work includes a research phase in which documentary and statistical information on the chosen topic is sought out before proceeding to its assessment. It is possible that no documents or data on the chosen topic will be found, or at least not within the previously defined limits. In this case, it will be necessary to redefine the project.

Once in possession of the relevant documents and data on your chosen theme, the next step is their analysis. The analysis itself might call into question whether the information initially chosen is sufficient to answer the question satisfactorily. The question may need to be asked as to *whether there is sufficient material* to complete the study.

Following definition, research and analysis, the final phase is when the results are written up. The main conclusions derived from the project are presented, describing the steps which enabled those conclusions to be reached. Eventually the work will be presented orally before an informed audience. The various phases and possible moments for reflection and review are shown in Figure 1.

We will explore the different aspects of each phase in more detail, specifically those which are relevant in terms of method. Their use should be viewed as the fundamental methodological framework which students should follow in producing their Masters Final Work (MFW). The MFW will be an opportunity to put some of these principles into practice and to confront some of the difficulties of producing a research paper that are described below.

Figure 1 – Phases in the process of producing a Masters Final Work



3.1 Definition of the theme

This is the phase for defining and gaining an initial understanding of the process of researching a specific theme. It is now that the content of what will be the research topic is outlined and precisely established. The success of the rest of the project depends to a large extent on this phase being carried out well.

Your start point is a generic theme and you are asked to identify a specific topic within it to study. It might relate to academia e.g. selecting a question to investigate for the purposes of writing a dissertation, a paper for publication, a presentation at a conference etc. It could equally be motivated by sheer intellectual curiosity leading you to look more deeply into a subject in which you already have a general interest. It may also be an attempt at better defining a very general request that has been made of you, one which has left you, as a specialist researcher, with some freedom to decide your direction.

Initially, any study is based on little or no material other than some general ideas combined with some descriptive and bibliographical materials from the relevant course units, from accumulated knowledge (practice, lectures, etc.), or from occasional contact with specialists in the area.

However, very often, a research project is initiated with a very clear topic already defined, with a specific question already having been defined by someone else e.g. when a consultant or expert is hired to execute a very specific project. In that case, the researcher's entry point will already be at a later phase in the process. In this situation, it may also happen that the question is too generic to be properly researched, and will require better definition before going forward. In that case, the researcher could be said to be coming on board still in the definition phase. We can therefore see that the definition phase covers a broader sense than we might initially have thought.

Thus, it is often from a base of very general and diverse information (which is not thematically organised) that the research theme is often derived, with a preliminary investigation then leading to a better comprehension and definition of the theme to be studied. An important aspect of that preliminary research will be the selection of a small number of sub-topics within the main theme.

There are therefore three important sub-phases in defining a topic:

- Definition of the theme
- Outlining the topic(s)
- Comprehension of the selected topic(s).

Let us take the study of financial crises as an example. In choosing a theme such as this, there are no concrete questions or problems to research. It is a very wide area and there will need to be some refining and definition of limits (starting with a list of possible questions or topics related to the theme) if any effective study is to be carried out. This is the start point for the research project.

With the definition or choice of theme, the author begins the work that will lead them to better identify a particular aspect or analytical perspective of their chosen theme. The process should start by addressing some basic questions (individually or in a group):

What do I know about this subject?

What do I think is important to know about this subject?

Once a theme is selected, the idea is to identify and define a particular aspect of it (outlining the topic). Bear in mind that the broader the theme, the more information will have to be processed, and the more difficult and complex the process will be. Furthermore, if we intend to address the theme ourselves, we should make sure our topic is limited according to the means we have at our disposal (time available, level of knowledge on the subject, capacity to overcome any difficulties we might encounter, etc.) Thus, it is recommended that the topic is outlined taking the minimum requirements for addressing it into account.

Topics can be defined through asking questions that allow a more specific aspect within the theme to be identified. A viability test can be applied to the chosen topic in three steps:

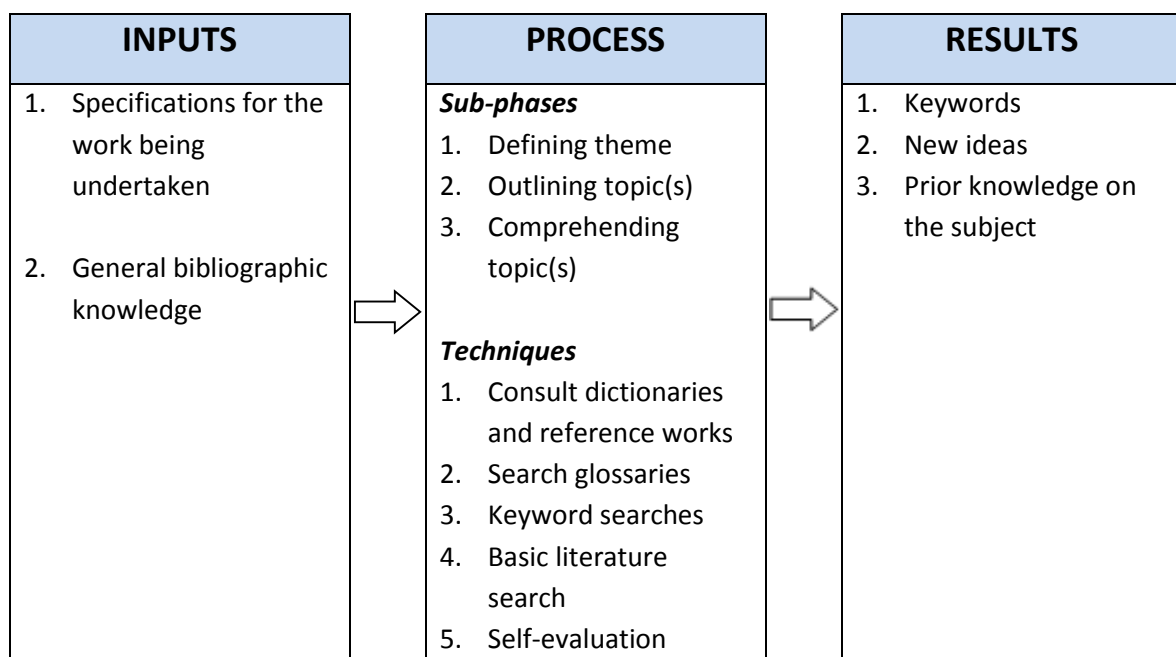
- Identification of keywords and/or fundamental concepts related to the question;
- Online literature search (by keyword) to create a simple list of references on the subject;
- Statistical database search (by keyword) to check for the existence of quantitative data on the topic.

The student should understand what the question related to their chosen topic actually is (comprehension of the topic), reading up on and reflecting on the fundamental concepts behind it. Those concepts should be analysed and carefully reviewed. Some of these will be the keywords themselves. Comprehension of the concepts maybe enhanced by consulting reference books such as encyclopaedias or specialist dictionaries.

Figure 2 summarises the steps to define a topic from the initial inputs (specifications and general literature on the subject) through the definition process (sub-phases, techniques and resources) to the self-evaluation in which the student asks themselves, “What do I know about this theme?”

The results take the form of further ideas on the theme, with defined keywords that can be used in a literature search and to define the concepts that will have to be explored in more depth later.

Figure 2 – Definition of the topic



3.2 Research

Once the research question has been identified, the next important step is researching information. This will require that the researcher is rigorously aware of what information is relevant and necessary to analyse the problem. That in turn requires theoretical training to enable the researcher to distinguish between what is relevant and what is not, among all the information that is sent to us as well as that which we actively seek out.

Furthermore, it is only possible to research information if we know how to access it. This requires awareness of possible sources of knowledge and mastery of modern search

techniques. A search will be more successful if information is organised within an information system, and the search will be more effective if the researcher knows how the information is organised.

The research phase therefore starts with the identification of what information will be necessary to address the research question (identification of information needs). The next step is a general search for information (including documentary and quantitative information) which should cover books, periodicals, internet and statistical databases.

Because of its potential scope, this phase merits an initial plan for accessing data sources, identifying the libraries, websites, bookshops etc. that will maximise your ability to gather as much relevant information as possible. This activity can include successive levels of research with the intention creating a backup plan in case the first sources do not yield the desired information. For example, one of the first places a masters student should look is the Francisco Pereira de Moura Library at ISEG. Given its quality, scope and specialisation, it may be able to provide all the information needed on a given topic.

Another activity related to the research phase is the definition of characteristics to use in the evaluation process i.e. the criteria that will be used to decide whether specific materials will be selected for inclusion in the final analysis or not.

To make the search as efficient as possible, it will be necessary for the student to be aware of the following:

- How documentary information is organised, and what different types of information exist;
- How quantitative information is organised, and what different types of information (statistical databases) exist;
- How to classify subjects (classification systems exist and it is useful to know them).

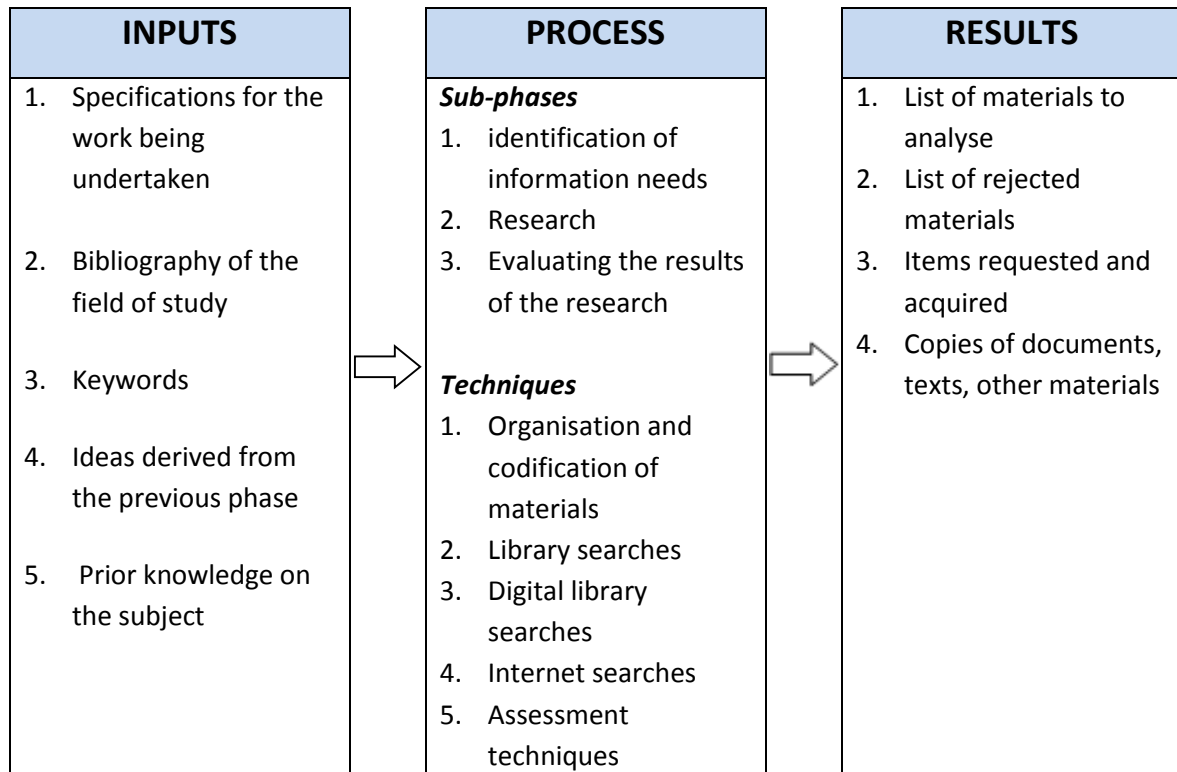
Finally, the student should evaluate the information they have researched and found in order to make a selection. The goal is to select a limited amount of information with which to progress to the following phases of the MFW. It is recommended that the selection is carried out in three steps:

- Carry out an initial evaluation of the documentary information (author, publication date, edition, etc. as well as any other identifying data);
- Analyse of the contents of that information;
- Carry out an initial evaluation and a content evaluation of quantitative information (type of information, source, calculation method, etc.; its suitability for the concepts to be analysed, etc.).

Figure 3 sums up the research phase. As a result of this phase, you will have identified the materials to be analysed. At the start of the phase, there will be a lot of material to cover. You will need to understand the organisation and codification of library materials and well as how

to search library and online resources. Your knowledge on how to assess bibliographical material will allow you to critically examine the different types of documents that are being considered for reading and analysis. Keep a record of materials that are rejected - it may still be of interest later to examine the documents that were not selected for analysis to look at why they were excluded.

Figure 3 – Research



3.3 Analysis

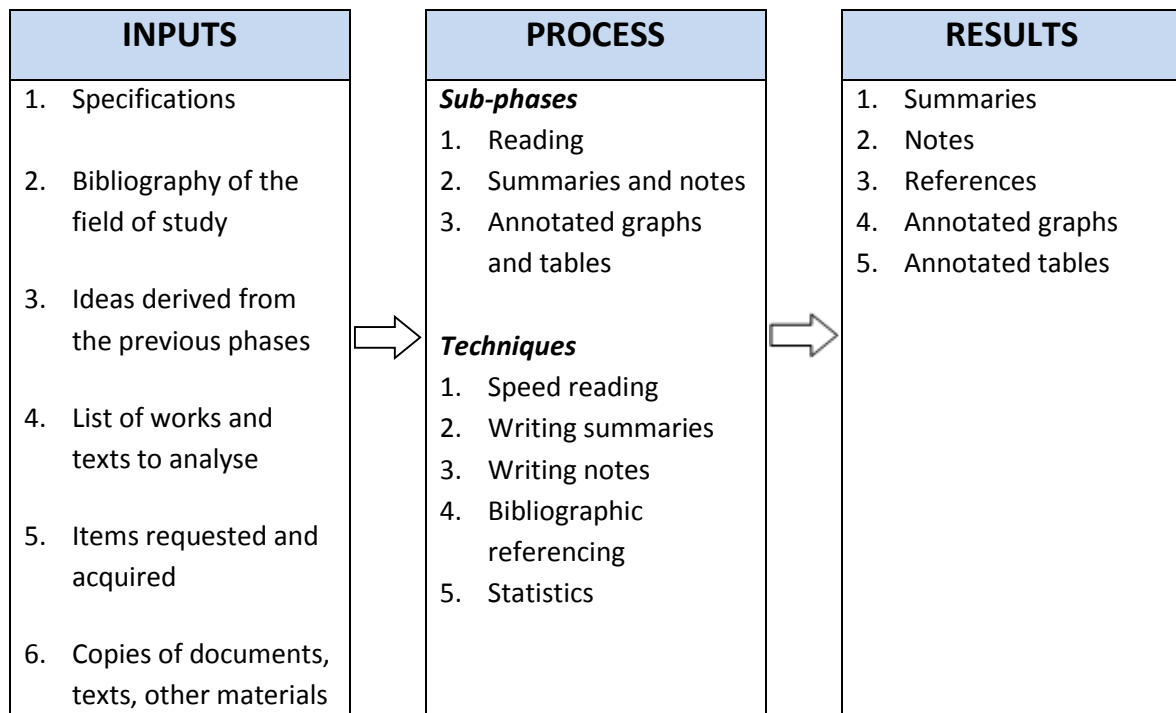
The use of information to comprehend or explain a question requires its analysis using appropriate analytical tools of varying degrees of sophistication, depending on the nature of the problem and the characteristics of the data under analysis. The most basic form of analysing the information is to produce a summary (which can take many forms) of it, highlighting the most important points in terms of relevancy for the study. This then is the phase in which documentary information is summarised, with précis being written of some of the selected texts with notes to be used later on.

Students should use their statistical training to produce a similar summary of the quantitative information (statistical data).

Figure 4 shows a breakdown of the analysis phase, including the material brought forward from previous phases i.e. from the definition (presentation specifications and bibliography), from the research (list of works to analyse, works requested and acquired, copies of texts) as

well as from both combined (ideas). It also presents a set of techniques for use by the student in analysing documents and statistics. This phase should lead to the production of summaries, notes, bibliographical references, and annotated graphs and tables. It is now time to review the work to date to determine if the results are sufficient to continue or if, as seen in Figure 1, it will be necessary to return to the research phase.

Figure 4 – Analysis



3.4 Writing up

A research project ends with the organisation of its results into an appropriate formal presentation (the writing up and submission). A report should be written which contains not only the analysis of the problem (text, tables, graphs) but also a description of the methods (this is fundamental). This report is the means of communicating the results of the analysis, and as such it needs to follow certain rules regarding the style in which it is presented, which will be to some extent governed by the characteristics of the problem, the type of analysis carried out, and the intended audience.

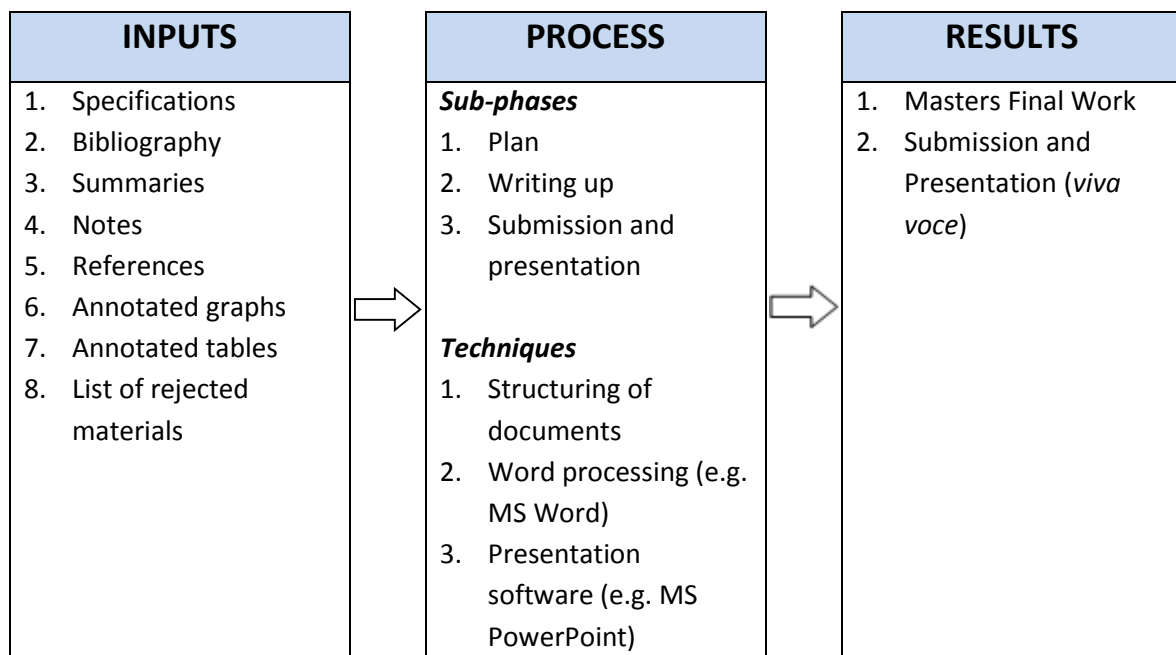
In this phase, the materials used are the products of all the preceding phases, which will be put together using the student's know-how on structuring and organising written texts, ready for submission. Students will be assisted to some extent by the references they have studied as well as having the support of their supervisor. However, it is expected that they will have some prior knowledge of word processing and of writing presentations.

The first step in this phase is to write a plan, which will serve to guide the writing up process and will be included in the final work as a table of contents. Please note that the table of

contents may not be final, even after all the notes, tables and graphs have already been included. During the process of writing up, the final definitive structure of the MFW will be established. However, an initial effort to create a table of contents that is as close to definitive as possible will reduce the number of modifications necessary during the course of writing up, and will assist in the faster completion of the work.

This phase is represented in [Figure 5](#), which clearly shows the essential nature of the products derived from the preceding phases, and the technical requirements demanded of the student to successfully complete this final phase.

Figure 5 – Writing up



4 Components of the Masters Final Work

Next we will look at the various components that result from the various phases of research. We will also examine the role of the supervisor.

We previously mentioned that the research process begins with the definition of the theme. We will now look in more detail at how that is achieved, who plays a part in this phase, and which pieces of work constitute the definition of a theme.

It all begins with the student's initiation to research techniques, done with a view to their putting together a research proposal which will later be presented to potential supervisors. This phase often involves the first contact with scientific papers on topics of interest to the student, and is a work very much centred on searching the literature. The next step will be the critical review of that literature, this being undertaken already with the support of a supervisor. The project will progress following the research methodology for collecting and

analysing data, in accordance with the research proposal. We will now look in detail at the requirements for each step.

4.1 Research Proposal

The research proposal is the document that will be used by the student in the process of selecting a supervisor. It shows the faculty the type of research the student intends to carry out and indicates their knowledge and scientific skills. It typically includes the following sections, which will later be described in the first chapter (introduction) of the MFW:

- I. Description of the field(s) of research (in the case of a dissertation) or a brief introduction to the company where the internship will be carried out (for an internship report) or an outline of the problem to be solved (in the case of a project).
- II. Justification for the choice of topic.
- III. Theoretical and managerial relevance.
- IV. Problem statement and research questions.
- V. Summary of literature to be included in the literature review.
- VI. Description of the methodological approach
- VII. Brief description of the empirical context of the research.
- VIII. Description of the structure (chapters) of the final work.
- IX. Schedule of activities up to the date of the viva voce.

4.2 Typical Structure of a Masters Dissertation

A masters dissertation normally has five chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methods and Data
- Chapter 4: Analysis
- Chapter 5: Conclusions, Contribution, Limitations and Future Research.

This structure can also be applied for writing up a project. Since a dissertation is meant to address a relevant theoretical question, it is expected that the literature review be very in-depth. For a project, where the idea is to address practical, concrete issues within an organisation, the analytical emphasis should be more on the methodological approach and the careful analysis of the data gathered in order to offer solutions to a specific organisational problem. Although this last format does emphasise the practical component, it is nonetheless expected that the literature review will provide a basic theoretical framework and methodological justification.

4.3 Chapter 1: Introduction

The main goal of the first chapter of the MFW is to show the reader the importance of the research. This first chapter should describe what is being studied and how the study has been

carried out, as well as why that particular topic was selected. Before starting to write, the student should ask themselves three questions:

- 1) Does the study deal with a relevant theme from the point of view of scientific and managerial relevance?
- 2) For the specific topic being investigated, what do we know already from prior research and why has that work not already provided the answer to the problem being addressed in this study?
- 3) What is the problem statement and to what extent is it original in relation to preceding studies?

In order for the student to effectively address these questions, they should always bear the following in mind: (1) *“What is the main question I wish to address?”*; (2) *“What is the basis or logical connection between the problem I want to study and the methodological approach?”*; and (3) *“What is the relationship between my research project and others already completed on the same topic?”*.

This chapter should define the main study problem in detail (the problem statement) as well as the questions that are central to addressing that problem, which will form the basis for the empirical component of the project.

4.3.1 Problem Statement

The problem statement is a fundamental component that needs to be defined in order for the student to properly structure their ideas. It involves the *central problem* that the student hopes to address in the empirical and theoretical section of their dissertation. It will generally also contain one or two more specific objectives that will be met or solved through the research.

The student should try to define the *central problem* as clearly as possible, without showing any behaviour that is biased or skewed towards a specific conclusion. It is important to make a distinction between topics of greater or lesser relevance, and that the problem is properly delimited in those terms in order to assure that the approach taken is the most relevant.

The students should ask themselves:

- 1) Is the problem concrete enough?
- 2) Is the problem researchable?
- 3) Is the problem relevant in academic terms?
- 4) Are the objectives achievable during the time I have (according to the masters regulations) to pursue them?

Do not forget that it is preferable to execute a simple project well than an ambitious one badly.

4.3.2 Research Questions

The main research questions coincide with the main topics that will really be studied during the course of the research project. These are the questions that will enable a structured approach to the problem. In formulating the questions, the student should be continually asking themselves about the best order to address them in. Together, the research questions should address the central problem.

As a general rule, the research questions should be broad enough to allow an in-depth review of the literature, allowing for a natural adaptation of that review process to form the structure of the MFW.

4.4 Chapter 2: Literature Review

This is the chapter in which the student has the opportunity to show their scientific skills. It is extremely important in the sense that it is here that the student will be able to show the reader what has already been done in terms of research in their particular field, to justify the approach taken in their research, to explain the relevance of the topic, and introduce the hypotheses or propositions that will be tested in the empirical section.

This chapter should contain an in-depth analysis of the existing literature. That analysis should be selective, rigorous, critical and focused around the objectives of the work. Typically, this review forms the basis for a *conceptual framework* for the hypotheses/propositions to be tested.

The student should orient their bibliographic research towards scientific literature, based on facts that have previously been identified and described by other researchers or credible sources, focusing primarily on work published in high-quality, peer-reviewed international academic journals. Books and conference publications are of secondary importance, although are still relevant in terms of being able to substantiate your assertions.

A visit to the Francisco Pereira de Moura Library is recommended as it has a vast range of online and print copies of journals in all the scientific fields taught and researched at ISEG.

4.5 Chapters 3 and 4: Methods, Data and Analysis

These chapters form the empirical component in which the student will take a methodological approach to the problem in hand in order to obtain the answers to their research questions. In terms of **methods and data**, the student will need to justify their choice of methods, explaining the advantages over other possible approaches. The methodology needs to be carefully described in such a way as to provide the reader with a deep understanding of all of the student's choices. This is the section in which the research questions are put into operation, and it is essential that the methods used are appropriate for measuring the variables and data used in the research process.

In **analysing the results**, the student should once again be careful to justify the analytic methods proposed and try to stick to the results that are relevant. Remember that, for the

reader to be able to follow them easily, the methods and results need to be properly organised with a clear structure. Also, all tables and figures should be created in order to present the relevant information clearly and in a single location.

4.6 Chapter 5: Conclusions and Future Research

This is a section that students have a tendency to complete less well, perhaps because they have already reached saturation point with their dissertation when they reach this phase. Our advice is that you take a break for a few days after finishing Chapter 4, and do not make any alterations in that period. Use it instead to reflect on the results and try to structure the conclusions that you actually want to communicate to the reader. In terms of assessment, the importance of this section lies in the fact that it enables the reader to make inferences on the student's ability to use data to draw conclusions and form concrete opinions.

5 Supervision

The role of the supervisor is to guide the student during the process of producing their dissertation. That requires robust criticism of the various chapters to enable the student to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work, which should not be a cause for demotivation. In fact, this is good preparation for facing future criticism of the work, either in the *viva voce* oral exam, or when it is presented at conferences, if that time comes.

The supervision process normally takes the form of meetings in which the supervisor gives students suggestions on how they can improve their work. During the first meeting with your supervisor, it is essential that you reach an agreement on activity planning, preferably deciding on dates for all the following meetings until the date of submission. There are some rules to be followed in terms of the supervision process:

- a. Meetings with your supervisor should normally take place during regular working hours.
- b. Occasional queries can be addressed via email.
- c. Text to be analysed in an upcoming meeting should be sent *at least one week* before that meeting to give the supervisor time to review it properly.
- d. All chapters submitted to the supervisor should have been checked for spelling and grammar, and should include a properly formatted cover sheet, a provisional table of contents, and a correctly formatted reference list.
- e. Whenever a new version is submitted to the supervisor, it should be accompanied by the previous version (with the annotations of the supervisor).
- f. The student should confirm the preferred format for submitting documents with their supervisor at their first meeting.
- g. With the exception of the literature review, which usually requires two meetings to discuss progress, it is expected that each of other chapters will require a single review meeting.

- h. The expectation is that the supervisor will meet with the student *five* times during the supervisory process:
- 1st meeting – Identifying the theme and research questions. Discussing the research proposal. Planning and scheduling activities.
 - 2nd meeting – Presenting the Introduction and the first draft of the Literature Review.
 - 3rd meeting – Presenting the Literature Review and the final design of the research project.
 - 4th meeting – Assessing the work completed to date. Discussion of analytical methods.
 - 5th meeting – Analysis of the provisional final version of the dissertation, which will still be subject to corrections.
- i. The final version of the dissertation should be submitted to the supervisor at the beginning of July in the academic year in which the supervisory process began. The maximum size is 10,000 words and 35 pages (not counting appendices, contents/indexes, and bibliographic references). If there are appendices, the total size of the dissertation including those appendices may not exceed 50 pages (not counting contents/indexes, and bibliographic references). Quality and rigor are essential, and superfluous or irrelevant text is to be avoided. The dissertation should be well written, include a thorough literature review, clearly identify its purpose and the research methodology chosen, use appropriate analytical techniques, and relate its conclusions to the available literature in the field.

As a last piece of advice, in order to stick to the plan as scheduled, it is recommended that you create a weekly work timetable. That timetable should be realistic and you should plan to follow it closely. Even on less productive days, you should stick to the stipulated times for reading, writing and thinking about your dissertation.

You should write down your notes, references, ideas, etc. It is essential to write as you read. Remember, that for a dissertation project *what is not written down simply does not exist*.

6 Formatting

The MFW should be formatted according to the document “Rules Governing the Presentation of Written Work at ISEG/UTL”, by Luís F. Costa.