Guidelines and Resources for Master Thesis and Project

E-Business Technologies Graduate Program

The following guidelines are intended to provide general information for the students of the E-Business Technologies graduate program. You will also find links to useful resources at the end of this document where you can access additional information.

1. Searching for a supervisor

You need to find a supervisor for your project or thesis. For this, you need to identify professors whose areas of research match your interest and background. First, you should research the professors' home page, their publications, courses taught, and projects they might have available. When you identified the potential professors, email them on an individual basis to schedule an appointment to discuss your qualifications, and obtain more information about the professors' areas of research and activities.

In your email to the potential supervisors, include, at the minimum, the following information:
- (a) your CV
- (b) a short paragraph about your research areas of interest (keep your scope wide and general, not too narrow and focused)
- (c) the start date of your program
- (d) the expected date of your graduation
- (e) how many (which) courses you have taken during your program
- (f) how many (which) courses remained to be taken

This information will help the professors to assign you projects that are mutually interesting to both of you, and fit your and their timelines.

For additional guidelines on searching for a supervisor, see section 3.1 (pp. 6-8) : « Finding a thesis supervisor » of **Guide for Master's Thesis and Project:**
http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1374
http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1339
PDF version :
http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Portals/29/theses/Guide%20Preparing%20a%20a%20Thesis%20or%20a%20Research%20Paper_En_%20final.pdf

2. Project

A project is <u>6 credits</u>. It requires the effort and dedication equivalent to, at least, a 6 credit course. A project should be well circumscribed and provide an authentic and pertinent learning experience. It usually takes about <u>216 hours</u> of work AFTER your project supervisor has approved the proposal and agreed to supervise the project. Quite often, students will have discussions with professors and participate in their research teams for one semester, before officially registering and starting to work on the project in the following semester.

The project should have clear goals and at least one concrete "deliverable" (e.g. data collection, conducting a survey, developing a software module, literature review). It should also identify some regular milestones as this will afford opportunities for both the supervisor and student to chart progress and to receive feedback.

2.1. Project Proposal

In coordination with your supervisor, you are required to prepare a proposal for your project and submit it to the graduate office.

The project proposal should include, at the minimum, the following components

(a) title of the project
(b) objectives and goals (or the problem statement and the proposed solutions)
(c) tasks that need to be accomplished during the project
(d) the outcome (or goals) to be achieved
(e) a workplan (timetable) that identifies the milestones and the progress to be achieved at each milestone

Note: Your project supervisor may have additional requirements that you must fulfill in order to successfully complete your project.

2.2. Project Submission and Evaluation

The deliverables of the project, as well as the final project report must be submitted to the project supervisor by the last week of the last semester in which you are registered for the project. You must be registered to the project a minimum of 1 semester.

Your supervisor will evaluate your final project report and the deliverables, and accordingly, submit a final grade to the graduate office.

As a general guideline, the project should be approximately 50 pages in length including figures and tables and appendices. It is recommended to use 1.5 line space, Calibri (font size 11) or Times New Roman (font size 12). As a general guideline, the project report might include:

- Executive summary (an abstract version of the project report from introduction to conclusion, including goals, approach, results and a discussion of any challenges encountered and solutions applied. If applicable, it may also be interesting to comment on future possibilities for further developing the project.
- Introduction (background, scope of the study)
- Main body (this is where you explain the activities undertaken in the project backed up with figures, charts, tables, etc.)

- Conclusion (a summary of the study, why it was valuable, how it could have been improved, your own opinion, comparisons, future trends, any other comments that the student would like to raise in connection with the learning experience)
- Bibliography (properly cited and referred in the body of the report). See Section 4 "Referencing and Plagiarism" for more information.
- Appendix (If applicable, it may be useful to append the deliverable (or an extract) to the project report)

3. Thesis

A thesis is worth 12 credits of work AFTER your thesis proposal has been approved by your supervisor and submitted to the program director. It requires significant research preparation and an approved thesis proposal before it officially starts. A thesis carries a significant academic and research merit, and in particular, it is an important requirement to fulfil for those who intend to continue their study towards a doctoral degree.

Students typically spend one full year on thesis-related work from the time they complete all courses (including the Research Methods course). This can be reduced if the student starts thesis work part-time with their supervisor immediately upon entering the program while they are also taking the required courses for their program. Most students take at least two semesters to complete and defend their thesis AFTER completing the thesis proposal. Most students will have participated in a research team for at least two semesters before they officially start their thesis.

For normal progress towards a thesis:
   (a) All thesis students are expected to take EBC7100 Research Methods in the first year that they are supervised.
   (b) All thesis students are expected to register for AND complete their thesis proposal in the same semester they take EBC7100 Research Methods.

Students who have not completed a thesis proposal will be required to file a progress report with their supervisor every semester after taking EBC7100 before they are allowed to register.

Students who have not completed their thesis after 6 semesters of registration will be required to file a progress report with their supervisor every semester as well before they are allowed to register.

3.1. Thesis Proposal

Thesis proposal is compulsory for the students who opt to do a Master thesis. The thesis proposal, prepared in coordination with your thesis supervisor, must be submitted to the graduate office at the end of the semester you are registered for the proposal. Your thesis proposal must be approved by your supervisor and the director of the EBT graduate program before you can officially register for the thesis. Normally students complete the Thesis Proposal the same semester as the Research Methods course.

The proposal for a thesis should include, at the minimum, the following components
   (a) title of the thesis
   (b) objectives and goals (or the problem statement)

(c) motivation
(d) literature review (background study)
(e) methodology (and proposed solutions)
(f) validation of the proposed solutions
(g) a workplan (timetable) that identifies the milestones and the progress to be achieved at each milestone

<u>Note:</u> Your thesis supervisor may have additional requirements that you must fulfill in order to successfully complete your thesis.

3.2. Thesis Submission and Evaluation

As per the guidelines of the Faculty of Graduate and Post-doctoral Studies (FGPS), a thesis needs to be examined by a committee comprises of, at least, two professors in addition to your supervisor(s). The thesis needs to be submitted to the "Thesis Examining Committee" at least 30 days before the date of the oral defence exam. An oral defence exam will be scheduled by the graduate office in coordination with your thesis supervisor.

For further information on writing and defending the thesis, please consult:
Guide for Master's Thesis or Project
http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1374
http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1339
PDF version:
http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Portals/29/theses/Guide%20Preparing%20a%20a%20Thesis%20or%20a%20Research%20Paper_En_%20final.pdf

Also, see Section 4 "Referencing and Plagiarism" for general rules on citing others' works and ideas in your thesis.

4. Referencing and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense at the University of Ottawa. It applies not just to your thesis or project report, but also any deliverable that you hand in for a course, or anything you publish (whether submitting a paper to a journal, conference or workshop, or writing on a website) while a student at the University of Ottawa.

Often students do not realize the seriousness of this issue for universities. Visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plagiarism or http://www.plagiarism.org/ for a list of various types of plagiarism and how to prevent them.

At the University of Ottawa, there is a detailed list of sanctions that may occur ... UP TO AND INCLUDING EXPULSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY.
http://www.uottawa.ca/about/policies-and-regulations/academic-regulations#r72

Please be aware and follow the guidelines listed below carefully in all writing you submit while attending the University of Ottawa.

The University of Ottawa's document on plagiarism states that:

"PLAGIARISM is taking another person's words, ideas or statistics and passing them off as your own. The complete or partial translation of a text written by someone else also constitutes plagiarism if you do not acknowledge your source.
When borrowing another person's words, use quotation marks and include complete reference (author's name, date, pages). Internet sources must also be acknowledged. Also, when borrowing another person's ideas, acknowledge their origin."
(https://www.uottawa.ca/about/sites/www.uottawa.ca.about/files/plagiarism.pdf)

In writing thesis or project report, try to minimize the amount of text you borrow from other sources. There might be cases where you see it appropriate to quote exact sentences from the source. If that is the case, you shall use quotation marks and include complete reference (author's name, date, pages).

If you paraphrase sentences from other authors, you shall still cite the full references and give them credits. When paraphrasing, avoid keeping the same sentence structure used in the original source. Instead, try to use your own words in paraphrasing the original sentences.

Even when you "properly" reference your sources, whether you quote them exactly or paraphrase them in your own words, you should still avoid importing too much material from other sources in your writing. Keep in mind that this is "Your" document. As such, it should mainly include your contributions in your own words.

There are software applications to check the similarity of your written materials with other sources available on the Internet, published journal articles, conference proceedings, theses and technical reports. Here are some examples of such software applications:

- WriteCheck (http://en.writecheck.com/), to check for plagiarism and grammar
- iThenticate (http://www.ithenticate.com/), used by publishers to check similarity
- Turnitin (http://www.turnitin.com) available to all Telfer professors free of charge.

5. Resources
The following resources prove to be valuable and useful when planning for your project or thesis, searching for supervisor, writing the proposal, conducting the research, and writing the final project report or thesis.

5. 1. Research Workshop
Two workshops are scheduled throughout the academic year: one in late September, and the other one in late January. The workshops will include short talks and poster presentations. During the workshops, you will have the opportunity to hear from the professors on their areas of research, as well as the students who will demonstrate their projects and theses researches.

5.2. Guide for Master's Thesis and Project
http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1374
http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1339

PDF version:
http://www.grad.uottawa.ca/Portals/29/theses/Guide%20Preparing%20a%20a%20Thesis%20or%20a%20Research%20Paper_En_%20final.pdf

5.3. Academic Writing Help Centre (AWHC)
The goal of AWHC is to help students develop strategies and writing skills that will enable them to:
- **Understand the requirements of academic writing**
- **Develop their argumentation skills**
- **Expand their critical thinking abilities**
- **Master the written language of their choice**

Individual appointments, online documents and our Writing Resource Centre are some of the services the AWHC offer to all students - undergraduate and graduate alike - from all faculties and departments.
http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/writing/
http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/redaction/

5.4. Library
http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca/html/index.jsp?lang=en
http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca/html/index.jsp?lang=fr

NOTE: the subject librarian responsible for the e- Business programs is:

> Jessica MacEwan
> Management Library (DMS)
> 55 Laurier E, rm.2141
> 613-562-5414
> jmcewan@uottawa.ca

There is a special LibGuide available for e-Business students:
http://uottawa.ca.libguides.com/ebiztechnologies
This LibGuide includes a tab on « Starting your research »
http://uottawa.ca.libguides.com/content.php?pid=212588&sid=1774901

5.5. Graduate Student Mentoring Centre
http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/mentoring/graduate/
http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/mentorat/superieurs/