



Bachelor Dissertation Guidelines at Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR)

Overview

At the Protestant University of Rwanda (PUR), bachelor's degree programs include a final year *Short Dissertation*. It must be **no more than 30 pages** (excluding preliminary pages, references and appendices) and must include the general **introduction, literature review, methodology, presentation of findings, discussion, general conclusion and recommendations**. Students must choose **either a qualitative or a quantitative approach; no mixed methods are allowed**. A minimum of **15 published sources** must be cited using the **APA referencing style**.

1. Choosing the Topic

- Students select their research topic. Topics must be researchable, relevant, and based on available literature. Where possible, 2 or 3 students can do a dissertation project based on the nature of the topic. In that case the Faculty Council will approve the topic and assign a lecturer that will supervise that project. The title should answer the question: What is your research about? It should be a short, concise phrase. The Faculty will publish an official list of approved topics and supervisors.

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2. Dissertation Structure

Chap 1. Introduction

- An introduction and background section outlines why you chose your topic and how important it is. The section should include:
 - ① General description of your research topic
 - ② What prompted your interest in the topic
 - ③ The problem statement: Justify the study and state the core issue, the problem should be derived from literature or case studies.
 - ④ Research questions and objectives: Formulate 2–3 specific research questions. What is the research question you are trying to find the answer to? Also state general and specific objectives of your research project. No hypotheses should be stated in the study.
 - ⑤ The scope: indicate the domain under which the study falls, the period of time and geographical area covered by the study (if applicable).

Chap 2: Literature Review (state of research): with the following main parts:

- Definition of key concepts
- Identification of existing literatures
- Brief summary of your literatures

Chap 3. Methodology

- Research design: Choose **one method**: qualitative *or* quantitative.
- Explain the research population and the sample size as well as the sampling technics: For qualitative approach the limit of the sample size is 5 respondents and for quantitative approach the limit of the sample size is 25 respondents.
- Research instruments: Explain your tools of data collection (e.g. interviews, focus group and survey/questionnaire), and justify your choices.
- Data collection

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- Data Analysis: For qualitative approach use thematic or content analysis methods for data analysis, For Quantitative approach use Excel for data analysis. Others tools may be used by the student if they can afford it but this is optional.

Chap 4. Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

- Organize and display the data you have collected usually through tables, charts, or graphs to make it easy to understand.
- Analyze the data by identifying patterns, trends, relationships, or differences based on your research questions.

Chap 4. Conclusion and recommendations

- Draw clear and concise conclusions based on the evidence presented, summarizing the main takeaways of your study.
- Provide practical or theoretical recommendations for future research, policy, or practice, depending on your study's focus.
- This chapter should show the significance of your research and suggest how it can be applied or further explored.

3. Supervision

Students must begin working with their assigned supervisor as early as possible, not later than the beginning of the first semester of the final year. A work plan and calendar should be developed together and be submitted to the Faculty Council. The allocation of research dissertation topics should align with each lecturer's area of expertise and be distributed equitably by the Faculty Council. A report should be submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academics with a copy to the Director of Quality Assurance. Progress report on dissertation supervision from supervisors should be regularly presented and discussed in Faculty Council meetings whose reports are duly submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academics. To request a change of supervisor, a student must submit a written request to the Faculty Council, which will decide whether or not the change is approved. The supervisor also has the right to

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request that the Faculty Council release them from supervising a student. In such a case, the supervisor must submit a written request to the Faculty Council for a decision.

4. Timeline

The dissertation must be completed, submitted and defended before the end of the second semester of the final year. Delays must be justified. Unjustified delays may incur extra fees for students and employment sanctions for supervisors. Extensions cannot exceed six months.

5. Disputes in Supervision

Concerns about supervision may be submitted in writing to the Faculty Council. In case of irregularities in the supervision process, the request to change a supervisor may be initiated by the student, the Faculty Council or the supervisor with supporting evidence to resolve any issues related to the supervision process. A formal response will be provided in writing within **five working days**.

6. Plagiarism

Originality is mandatory. Proper referencing is required. Plagiarism leads to the rejection of dissertation.

7. Referencing

All references must follow **APA style**. In-text citations shall indicate the year of publication of the source used and the page(s) referred to.

- Use consistent formatting.
- Include in-text citations and a final reference list.
- Minimum: **15 references**.

8. Format & Submission

- Length: Max **30 pages** (excluding preliminary pages, references and appendices).

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- Font: Style (Times New Roman), size 12, spacing 1.5, justified on A4 paper. No colors or pictures in the text.
- The dissertation is a property of a student, therefore the logo of Protestant University of Rwanda should not be included on the cover page.
- Submit in both **hard and electronic** copies.

9. Appendices

Questionnaires, interview guide, recommendation letter for data collection, maps, pictures, should be placed in the appendices and referred to in the text.

10. Dissertation defense and approval of grades

The Faculty Council appoints two members of the panel (examiner and president of the jury) who have expertise required by the domain in which the dissertation is written. They are given two weeks (maximum) to read the paper and report to the Faculty whether the dissertation is ready or not for defence. In case they find it not ready for the defence, they provide guidance as to how it can be improved. The report is shared with the supervisor who will help the student to make the necessary corrections.

Students defend their dissertation in a session of 30-60 minutes. The supervisor will be part of the panel and will participate in evaluating the student's overall work. The three panel members: The chairperson, examiner, and supervisor should hold a consultative meeting prior to the defense to prepare for the session. The overall dissertation evaluation is based on:

- Clear topic and problem statement
- Coherent objectives and questions
- Relevant findings and conclusions
- Proper APA referencing

The grade awarded for the dissertation and its defense shall be communicated by the chairperson of the panel as either 'Pass' or 'Fail.' The corresponding grade shall be recorded in accordance with the standard academic procedures at PUR. It shall become official only after the submission of the corrected version of the dissertation. The student must complete the corrections recommended by the jury under the guidance of the examiner, who will authorize

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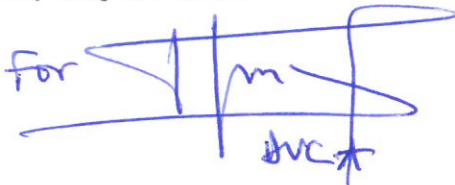
the submission of the final version to the Library within the timeframe specified during the defense. "

11. Final clause

This document provides general guidelines for the writing up and defence of a BA dissertation at PUR. **Each faculty may adapt these guidelines to suit the specific nature of their research projects.**

Approved by the PUR Senate

Huye, April 17, 2025

for 
DVC

Prof. Olu Ojedokun

Vice-Chancellor of PUR and Senate Chair

