General guidelines for written assignments and reports

(MSc in Cultural Sociology)

(version November 2020)

This paper contains the current guidelines concerning the contents and layout of written assignments and reports handed in for the study programme MSc in Cultural Sociology. The guidelines only apply if there are no separate rules in the course description or the assignment given for the course in question.

Contents

1. Handing in of assignments

All assignments must be handed in digitally on the given date at noon. The handing in is done via the course page on Black Board / Itslearning under the button "Tools". Then select "Digital Exam". The file format must be pdf. Appendices may be in another format if relevant. Name the file as this: **Surname Name Year Course.** Groups only need to hand in one copy of the assignment digitally. If handing in as a group, write all names in alphabetical order. If you by mistake hand in a wrong copy, please contact Student Services before the deadline. They can help you bring things in order.

2. Layout in general

Margins (minimum):   **Other:**
Left: 3 cm.   Line spacing: 1.5 pkt.
Right: 2 cm.   Font: Times New Roman is recommended
Top: 2 cm.   Font size: Corresponding 12 pt. Times New Roman
Bottom: 1.5 cm.   One page: 2400 keystrokes

3. The elements of the report

In addition to the content itself, reports must contain a cover page, a sworn statement, and a list of references. In addition, longer reports should contain a table of contents. Finally, in some cases it is relevant to add a preface, and there may be appendices. The order of the components of a report should be as shown in the text box to the right.

In reports, the pages should always be filled to the bottom. Only new elements, e.g. a new chapter, in the report should start at the top of a new page.

> Title page
> Preface (optional)
> Sworn statement
> Abstract (optional except in Bachelor's project and Master Thesis)
> Table of contents
> The main report
> List of references
> Appendices

3.1. The title page

The title page should resemble the exemplary title page shown to the right and MUST include the displayed information.

At the top, state the name of the university, city, faculty, as well as the delivery date for the report.

The title of the report should be put at the middle of the title page along with the name of the course. The title can be predetermined from the assignment given by the teacher/university. If the title is not predetermined, it is the responsibility of the student to find a title covering the contents of the report.

At the bottom of the page, the authors should be listed in alphabetical order by surname. If two authors have the same surname, the first name determines the order of the two.

Under each name, date of birth must be written along with the study and if relevant, the semester in which the report is handed in. For a person who studies economics and business administration on the 2nd semester, for example, it will look like this:

Anders Andersen
31121985, Economics and Business Administration, 2nd semester

Note that when the name of the authors is given on the front page, you should NOT state the examination or study number.

The names of supervisors or examiner for the subject should be written at the left right-hand side of the sheet. The supervisors are indicated by name and department. If they are external to University of Southern Denmark, the name of the institution which they belong to must also be given. Write the supervisors in the order with the principal supervisor first and secondly the co-supervisors. Hereunder the number of signs (incl. spaces). Number of signs must be according to the course description.

3.2. Sworn statement

The page following the title page must contain a sworn statement of the following wording:

> " I hereby solemnly declare that I have personally and independently prepared this paper. All quotations in the text have been marked as such, and the paper or considerable parts of it have not previously been subject to any examination or assessment."

The declaration must be signed by all authors. Each signature must be supplemented by the relevant name in typeset letters.

It is important that all statements and results in the report are corroborated either by references to other research from for example peer review journals or by data gathered by the student in connection to the current course.

3.3. IMPORTANT: Avoid cheating (plagiarism)

References must be clear. Quotations (reproduction of text from other authors) must be clearly marked as such in the text – for example by use of quotation marks. Use of such text produced by others without indication that this is the case is regarded as illegal copying which is a form of exam cheating. If such a cheating is if discovered, it will be reported to the vice-chancellor, who is the authority that decides what sanctions will be made. The extent of the use of citations should typically be quite limited, as they are not independent work.

Also use of material from own, formerly handed in assignments or reports without clear reference to this work is regarded as illegal copying.

3.4. Page and section numbers

Sections are numbered consecutively. All topics with equal importance should have the same level of heading. There should not be more than three levels of headings. The numbering can be as shown below:

1. Heading
1.1. Subheading
1.1.1. Subsubheading

Numbering of pages starts on the first page in the report. This means that pages before the table of contents and page displaying the table of contents are not numbered. The numbering starts on the first page in the introduction. This page gets the number "1".

Page numbers should be inserted to the right at the bottom of each page.
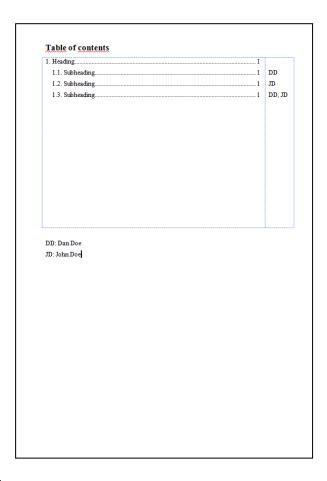
3.5. Table of contents

The index should include all sections in the report except sections placed before the list of contents. This means that preface, abstract, and sworn statement should not appear in the table of contents. Also, the table of contents heading should not appear in the table of contents.

In several subjects, there is a requirement that the report clearly indicates which of the sections each author is responsible for. This declaration can be placed in the foreword or in connection with the table of contents. An example of this can be seen to the right. It should be noted that the division should be meaningful as it must be used as the basis for an individual rating.

Initials can, as is demonstrated to the right, be placed next to the page numbers in the table of contents. Usually, it is allowed that there is more than one author of a few sections, typically introduction and conclusion. How this is explicated is also demonstrated in the figure to the right. An explanation of the initials used can be placed at the bottom of the page.

3.6. Figures and tables

Figures and tables are welcome in the text as they can help the reader in understanding or get an overview of the text. This is especially the case if there are many numbers in the text or if the text explains about causal or other relationships.

All figures and tables must be assigned a number and a title. In addition, a reference for numbers used or where the figure is taken from must be given along with the table or figure. If you have produced a figure yourself, it is often preferable to indicate "own work" as source. By this, there will be no confusion about the source.

3.7. Appendixes and list of appendixes

Appendixes must be numbered consecutively independently of the numbering of the sections in the report. Each appendix must be independently pagenumbered.

Appendixes are inserted after the list of references.

3.8. List of references

The list of references is inserted at the end of the text. All references used as documentation in the report must appear on this list. The list starts at the top of a page.

The list should be made according to a reference system. Examples of well-known reference systems are American Psychological Association (APA) 5th ed., Harvard, Chicago, and Vancouver. In Word2007, there are facilities for using APA and Chicago.

When for instance using the APA standard, in-text references are given as (author, year) and the list of references (bibliography) is alphabetically sorted based on the name of the author. In the list of references, author, title, city of publication and publisher must appear. If the reference is an article in an academic journal, the name, volume and issue number of the journal must also appear in the list of references. If there is more than one reference from the same year by the same author, these are sorted alphabetically according to the title and the year is supplemented by a), b) and so on.

As regards books, the title should be in italics. As regards articles from journals, the journal title should be in italics. Please note that if the reference is a chapter in a book with several authors, the author of the chapter must appear as author along with the title of the chapter and the title of the book and the name(s) of the editor(s) appears after this. The title of the book must be written in italics.

Materials downloaded from the internet must be referenced to and appear in the list of references in the same way as other references. In addition to this, the date on which the material was downloaded should also be given and the url (the internet-address). If the url is very long, consider whether it is possible to find the source with just the start of the url and the title of the material.

Sometimes, references, especially on the internet, do not state who the author is. If this is the case, it may be necessary to just insert the organization behind as author. If this information is also not available, the source may not be a good source. If it is necessary to use the source anyway, then state as much information about the source as possible.

We recommend using computer reference software as for example Endnote or the reference facility in Word2007. Reference Manager is available for students at the IT-department.

Examples of references in the list of references based on APA

Andersen, I. (2005). *Den skinbarlige virkelighed*. (3. udg.) Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur.

Husted, P. (2007, 5. januar). Whatever. *Newsweek,* pp. 6. Sport og Fritid.

Jepsen, A. L. & Madsen, S. O. (2006). Om at foretage kvalitative interviews. In S.Voxted (Ed.), *Valg der skaber viden - om samfundsvidenskabelige metoder*. København: Academica.

Jepsen, A. L. (2007). Factors affecting consumer use of the Internet for information search. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 21(3),* 21-34.

University of Chicago (2010). The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th edition. Accessed 23 January 2012. http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Wulff F, L. Rahm & D. Swaney (2006). Nutrient budgets of the sub-basins of an estuarine sea. Accessed 21 May 2006. http://nest.su.se/mnode/europe/balticregion/Baltic2001/baltic_seabud.htm.

How to make in-text references:

a) A general reference at the beginning of a section if the section is a description of for example a theory and the description is mainly based on one ore a few sources, or

b) In the text like this: bla bla (Jensen, 2008) bla bla (Olsen, 2007; Petersen 2005a). If the citation is from a book or is an exact citation, a page number should be given as well. Like this: "It is customary to….." (Olsen, 2007:25)

c) References to the internet can be in precise form as described in the above. If the reference is to an internet site in general, just indicate the site in the text. For example www.sdu.dk.

4. Example of the structure of a written report

The bullet points show topics that should be covered. These will normally not have section headings. The actual headings in a report should tell something about the contents of the section.

Cover Page
Preface and sworn statement
Abstract if required
Table of contents
1. Introduction
   - Relevance of the problem
   - Description of the problem
   - Analysis of the possible perspectives on/solutions to the problem
   - Problem statement and research questions/hypotheses
   - Preconditions for carrying out the study and delimitations
   - Clarification of use of concepts/important definitions,
   - Choice of theoretical framework if relevant
   - Choice of general methodology (survey, experiment etc.)
   - Structure of the report
2. Theoretical background
   - Description and analysis of relevant theory and empirical findings by others
   - Often results in a detailed need for information
3. Method
   - How the need for information will be/was covered
   - Research design
4. Results – possibly in several sections
   - Description, validation and cleaning of the data from the study
   - Section(s) with results from the analysis/analyses
   - Summing up of the results from the analysis sections
5. Discussion
   - Of method (How certain are our results? Where do we know of shortcomings?)
     Of the results (What have we learned? Are the results as expected? How do they differ? Do we have explanations for that?)
6. Conclusion
   - What can we, based on the results from the study and the discussion conclude regarding the research questions?
   - What is the answer to the problem statement?
   - Putting the results into perspective – possible generalizations? Possible implications for business and for future research.
   - Did we find new issues that we had not foreseen?
List of references
Appendices