



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

GUIDELINES FOR UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION/PROJECT REPORT

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ECONOMICS

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY
The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Mode, Kerala

GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATION / PROJECT REPORT - B21EC01PR

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ECONOMICS

Credits: 6

1. Introduction

As part of the undergraduate curriculum in Economics at Sreenarayanaguru Open University (SGOU), learners are required to submit an individual Dissertation/Project Report during their Sixth Semester. This course carries six credits and is a core requirement for the completion of the BA Economics programme. The dissertation component is intended to provide learners with the opportunity to engage in independent research in the discipline of economics. Under the guidance of a qualified faculty supervisor, each learner selects a relevant research topic, frames a research question, and carries out empirical or theoretical analysis through a structured academic process. This exercise allows learners to apply the conceptual frameworks, quantitative and qualitative tools, and theoretical knowledge acquired throughout the programme to address real-world economic issues or contribute new insights to the field. The project should be rooted in both primary and secondary sources of data, and must reflect academic rigour, originality, and analytical depth. While each dissertation will be unique in its scope and content, all submissions must adhere to the University's academic standards, formatting requirements, and evaluation criteria as detailed in the subsequent sections of this document.

2. General Guidelines

Learners are expected to follow the general instructions below to ensure academic quality, uniformity, and adherence to university regulations:

- a) Read these guidelines carefully to understand each stage of the dissertation process, from topic selection to final submission.
- a) The dissertation/project may be prepared using MS Word or LaTeX, or be handwritten in a neat, legible format.
- b) Handwritten dissertations are permitted, but must be neat, legible, and follow the same structural and page limit requirements (minimum 30 pages).
- c) Remove all personal contact information (email, phone number, address, etc.) from the document. Only the name and enrolment number should be included.
- d) Learners must consult with their assigned supervisors/guides throughout the research process to finalise the topic, develop the methodology, and complete the analysis.
- e) Learners shall submit the final dissertation to their respective Learner Support Centre (LSC) on or before the last date notified by the University.
- f) The Controller of Examinations will officially announce the deadlines for submission and the dates for Viva Voce examination.
- g) Two learners are not permitted to submit the same topic or a joint project. Plagiarism, duplication, or submission of previously submitted material will result in strict disciplinary action, including cancellation of the dissertation.
- h) Learners are strongly advised to retain a soft copy of their work for reference and backup purposes.
- i) There will be no provision for revaluation of Dissertation/Project.

3. Selection of Topic for Dissertation / Project Report

Choosing an appropriate topic is a crucial first step in the research process. The quality, relevance, and timely completion of the dissertation heavily depend on the research question chosen.

The topic must:

- Be relevant to economics and aligned with the learner's academic interest.
- Offer scope for inquiry using primary and/or secondary data.
- Be feasible to complete within the available time and resources.
- Allow scope for original contribution or critical analysis.

Suggested Steps:

- a) **Identify Areas of Interest:** Reflect on courses, readings, or issues that personally interest you within the domain of economics (e.g., development, labour, environment, finance, public policy).
- b) **Review Existing Research:** Use academic journals, economic surveys, and recent studies to identify gaps or current debates.
- c) **Discuss with Supervisor:** Share your initial ideas with your guide, who can help assess its viability and academic relevance.
- d) **Assess Feasibility:** Ensure you can access required data and literature within the given timeframe.
- e) **Refine and Narrow:** Convert your area of interest into a clear research problem or question with defined scope.
- f) **Develop a Working Title:** Draft a specific, descriptive title that reflects the research question and context.

Topics must be approved by the assigned Supervisor before the learner begins detailed research or data collection.

4. Literature Review

The literature review is a vital component of the dissertation. It situates your research within the existing body of knowledge and helps justify the need for your study. A well-written literature review demonstrates that the learner understands the context, trends, and gaps in their chosen topic.

Objectives:

- To provide background and theoretical framework for the study.
- To identify relevant debates, schools of thought, or models in the area of research.
- To highlight research gaps your study aims to address.
- To inform the choice of methodology and data sources.

Steps to Conduct a Literature Review:

- a) **Define the Scope:** Set boundaries on the topic, time period, and nature of sources to be reviewed.
- b) **Search Strategically:** Use academic journals, books, government reports, working papers, and databases like JSTOR, EconLit, Google Scholar, etc.
- c) **Read and Note Critically:** Focus on theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and limitations of previous studies.

- d) **Organise and Synthesise:** Group literature thematically or chronologically, compare arguments, and draw connections.
- e) **Cite Appropriately:** Acknowledge all sources using APA 7th edition format as prescribed later in this guideline.

A strong literature review will not only inform your research design but also strengthen the academic quality of your analysis.

5. Executing the Research Project

Once the topic is finalised and a literature review is conducted, learners should proceed to the core phase of the dissertation: executing the research. This phase involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, leading to well-grounded conclusions.

Key Components:

1. **Research Design:** Choose whether your study will be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method based on your research question.
2. **Data Collection:**
 - **Primary Data:** Field surveys, interviews, questionnaires, case studies, experiments, etc.
 - **Secondary Data:** Published government reports, NSSO/CSO data, RBI bulletins, Economic Surveys, books, journal articles, etc.
3. **Sampling:** Clearly define the sample size, sampling technique, and justification for its use.
4. **Analytical Tools:** Use suitable statistical or economic tools and software (e.g., Excel, SPSS, R) if required.
5. **Ethical Considerations:** Maintain confidentiality, seek consent where needed, and avoid any form of data manipulation.

Throughout this phase, learners must remain in regular contact with their supervisors for guidance. A systematic approach to data gathering and critical evaluation is essential to ensure the quality and reliability of the research.

6. Writing and Presentation

The dissertation must be written in a clear, coherent, and scholarly manner. Effective presentation of your ideas is as important as the quality of research conducted. The document should demonstrate your ability to structure arguments, apply economic reasoning, and present findings with academic precision.

Writing Guidelines:

- Use a formal academic tone throughout.
- Structure your content with appropriate headings and subheadings.
- Ensure logical flow between sections and chapters.
- Avoid plagiarism by paraphrasing appropriately and giving due credit to sources.
- Maintain clarity, objectivity, and consistency in terminology and citations.

Structure of the Dissertation:

A typical dissertation should be divided into at least four chapters, including:

1. **Chapter I:** Introduction – background, objectives, scope, significance, research methodology, and limitations of the study
2. **Chapter II:** Literature Review and Theoretical Framework
3. **Chapter III:** Data Analysis, and Interpretation
4. **Chapter IV:** Conclusion and Suggestions

Final Checks:

- Revise and proofread your draft multiple times.
- Ensure page numbers, tables, and figures are labelled correctly.
- Verify that citations and bibliography are accurate and complete.
- Discuss your final draft with your supervisor before printing and submission.

Remember, a well-organised and well-written dissertation reflects not only your research skill but also your academic discipline.

7. Dissertation Supervisor

The role of the dissertation supervisor is pivotal to the success of the research project. Supervisors guide learners in topic selection, research design, analysis, and final presentation.

Eligibility Criteria for Supervisors:

A dissertation supervisor must belong to one of the following categories:

- a) Faculty members of Sreenarayanaguru Open University
- b) Faculty members (permanent/guest/contractual) from government or aided colleges
- c) Retired faculty members from government/aided colleges or universities
- d) Academic counsellors associated with SGOU
- e) Ph.D. holders

NB: A dissertation supervisor must be a Ph.D or NET holder in Economics.

Bio-data cum Certificate: A Bio-data cum Certificate (Annexure II) must be submitted along with the final dissertation, signed by the supervisor, confirming their eligibility and willingness to supervise the learner.

Learners must remain in regular contact with their supervisors throughout the project period and seek written or verbal approval at each stage of development.

8. Academic Integrity

Learners must maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity throughout the dissertation process. Any form of misconduct may result in disciplinary action, including disqualification of the dissertation.

The following actions constitute academic misconduct:

- a) **Plagiarism:** Using another person's work, words, or ideas without proper acknowledgment. This includes copying from books, internet sources, peers, or AI-generated content without citation.
- b) **Self-Plagiarism:** Reusing your own previously submitted academic work, in part or full, without appropriate disclosure and permission.
- c) **Fabrication:** Inventing, altering, or falsifying data or research findings.

- d) **Cheating:** Receiving or giving unauthorised help in the preparation of the dissertation.
- e) **Misrepresentation:** Providing incorrect or misleading information about your research.
- f) **Unauthorised Collaboration:** Working jointly on a project that requires individual submission.

Institutional Policy:

All dissertations will be subjected to academic scrutiny, including plagiarism checks. If misconduct is detected, the dissertation may be rejected and further penalties may be imposed under the Regulations for the Prevention of Malpractices in University Examinations, 2023.

Learners are advised to:

- Use plagiarism detection tools before submission.
- Cite all sources accurately.
- Seek guidance from supervisors if unsure about proper citation.

Maintaining academic integrity is a foundational principle of scholarly work and ensures the authenticity and credibility of your research.

9. Dissertation Submission

Learners must adhere to the following norms during submission of the final dissertation:

- a) Submit one hard copy of the completed and bound dissertation to the respective Learner Support Centre (LSC) on or before the last date notified by the University.
- b) The dissertation must be spiral bound or hard bound. Use of plastic covers or lamination is not permitted.
- c) A printed dissertation should be of minimum 25 pages. If handwritten, it should be a minimum of 30 pages.
- d) The dissertation must include a Certificate by the Supervisor and a Declaration by the Learner, both duly signed (refer to Annexures II and III).
- e) The learner must retain one copy of the submitted dissertation and bring it during the Viva Voce examination.
- f) Learners are advised to keep a digital copy of the report for future reference and record.
- g) The date and venue for the Viva Voce examination will be notified by the Controller of Examinations.
- h) Late submissions or submissions without proper certification will not be accepted and may be liable for disqualification.

10. Format of the Dissertation

All submitted dissertations must conform to the prescribed academic format. Any deviation may lead to rejection or return for correction.

Order of Contents:

1. **Cover Page:** Must include:
 - Title of the Dissertation
 - Name of the Learner
 - Enrolment Number
 - Programme Name (e.g., BA Economics)
 - Name of the University

- Date, Month and Year of Submission
- 2. **Certificate by Supervisor** (Annexure II)
- 3. **Declaration by Learner** (Annexure III)
- 4. **Acknowledgement**
- 5. **Table of Contents:** With section and page numbers
- 6. **Chapters (Minimum 4):**
 - Chapter I: Introduction
 - Chapter II: Literature Review / Theoretical Framework
 - Chapter III: Chapter III: Analysis of Data
 - Chapter IV: Conclusion and Suggestions
- 7. **Bibliography / References**
- 8. **Appendices** (if applicable)

Formatting Specifications:

- Paper size: A4, one-side print only
- Font: Times New Roman
 - Title: Size 15, Bold
 - Sub-headings: Size 14, Bold
 - Body text: Size 12, Regular
- Line spacing: Double spacing throughout
- Paragraph spacing: No additional space between paragraphs
- Margins: 1.5 inches on the left, 1 inch on top, right, and bottom
- Page numbers: Placed at the bottom-right corner
- Each chapter should begin on a new page

Follow APA 7th edition format for references unless otherwise instructed by the supervisor.

11. Examples of reference list in APA 7th format

Single Book Author:

Format: Author, A. A. (Year). Title of book (Edition/Vol. if any). Publisher.

Example: Hiriyan, M. (1994). *Outlines of Indian philosophy*. Motilal Banarsidass.

Multiple Authors:

Format: Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). *Title of book*. Publisher.

(For 3–20 authors, list all names separated by commas and use “&” before the last author.)

Example: Cottingham, J., Stoothoff, R., & Murdoch, D. (1985). *The philosophical writings of Descartes: Vol. 1. The meditations on first philosophy*. Cambridge University Press

Edited book:

Format: Editor, A. A. (Ed.). (Year). *Title of book*. Publisher.

(If multiple editors: Editor, A. A., & Editor, B. B. (Eds.))

Example: Bhadra, M. K. (Ed.). (2004). *A critical survey of phenomenology and existentialism*. Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

Encyclopaedia (print or online)

Format: Author, A. A. (Year). Title of entry. In E. E. Editor (Ed.), *Title of encyclopedia* (Vol. xx, pp. xxx–xxx). Publisher.
(If online: add URL)

Example: Smith, J. M. (2010). Logic. In *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. 19, pp. 123–135). Encyclopedia Britannica.

Kenny, A. (2023, August 15). Aristotle. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aristotle>.

Journal article

Format: Author, A. A. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, volume(issue), page range.
<https://doi.org/xxxxx>.

Example: Handelman, S. (1990). Facing the other: Levinas, Perelman, and Rosenzweig. *Religious Studies and Theology*, 22(3–4), 61–84.

Online website

Format:

Author, A. A. (Year, Month Day). Title of page. *Website name*. URL

Example:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2022, March 15). Phenomenology. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2022 Edition)*.
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology>

12. Assessment and Evaluation

The dissertation/project report will be evaluated for a total of 100 marks, distributed as follows:

- **Dissertation/Project Report:** 70 marks
- **Viva Voce Examination:** 30 marks

Evaluation Criteria for Dissertation:

1. **Originality and Relevance of Topic** – 10 marks
2. **Review of Literature and Theoretical Foundation** – 10 marks
3. **Clarity of Objectives and Hypotheses** – 10 marks
4. **Methodology and Data Collection** – 15 marks
5. **Analysis, Interpretation and Use of Data** – 15 marks
6. **Structure, Language and Presentation** – 10 marks

Evaluation Criteria for Viva Voce:

- Clarity of research objectives
- Understanding of methodology and tools
- Interpretation of findings
- Communication and presentation skills
- Ability to answer questions related to the project

The evaluation will be conducted by an external examiner appointed by the University. Final marks will be based on the combined assessment of the written report and oral defence.

13. Sample Topics for BA Economics Dissertation

The following list of sample topics is intended to inspire and guide undergraduate learners in selecting a relevant, feasible, and meaningful research area. Topics are designed to reflect the scope of undergraduate-level inquiry, focusing on applied, local, and foundational issues in economics. Learners may choose any topic in consultation with their supervisor and are encouraged to modify, narrow down, or combine themes as appropriate.

1. Development and Public Economics

- Access to Public Healthcare Services in Rural Areas
- Awareness and Utilisation of Welfare Schemes (e.g., PMAY, PMJAY)
- Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Educational Outcomes
- Role of Local Governments in Implementing Development Projects
- Evaluation of Social Security Pensions for the Elderly
- Impact of Kudumbashree on Women's Empowerment

2. Environmental and Agricultural Economics

- Effects of Climate Change on Local Farming Practices
- Economics of Rainwater Harvesting in Households
- Cost and Benefits of Organic Farming: A Local Case Study
- Farmer Awareness on Government Subsidies and Schemes
- Household Practices in Waste Segregation and Composting
- Economic Implications of Plastic Ban in Kerala

3. Labour and Employment

- Migration for Employment: A Study of a Local Community
- Job Preferences among College Students: Public vs. Private Sector
- Youth Unemployment in Kerala: Causes and Trends
- Working Conditions of Domestic Workers
- Daily Wage Labourers and Minimum Wage Awareness
- Career Aspirations among Rural Youth: A Gender Perspective

4. Financial Literacy and Inclusion

- Financial Literacy among Rural Women
- Bank Account Ownership and Digital Transactions
- Usage of Mobile Payment Apps among College Students
- Awareness of Insurance Schemes in Semi-urban Households
- Role of SHGs in Promoting Savings and Credit
- Evaluation of Jan Dhan Yojana in Local Context

5. Consumer Behaviour and Marketing

- Impact of Social Media on Buying Behaviour of Youth
- Brand Preference in the FMCG Sector: A Local Survey
- Changes in Consumption Patterns after COVID-19
- Role of Advertisements in Influencing Children's Choices
- Online Shopping Trends among College Students

6. Education and Health Economics

- Access to Online Education During COVID-19
- Cost of Higher Education: A Family Perspective
- Public vs. Private Schooling: A Parental Choice Study
- Menstrual Health Awareness among Rural Girls
- Economic Burden of Lifestyle Diseases in Households
- Influence of Mid-Day Meals on Nutritional Outcomes

7. Informal Sector and Local Enterprises

- Street Vendors and Urban Livelihoods
- Challenges Faced by Small Retailers during the Pandemic
- Women Entrepreneurs in Home-Based Businesses
- Informal Sector Contribution to Local Economy
- Economic Activities in Local Markets (e.g., Fish Market Study)

8. Tourism and Local Economy

- Role of Houseboats in Kerala's Tourism Sector
- Economic Impact of Local Festivals and Fairs
- Influence of Tourism on Employment in Coastal Areas
- Homestay Businesses and Community Development
- Sustainability Challenges in Ecotourism

9. Digital Economy and Technology

- Usage of UPI and QR Code Payments in Small Shops
- Awareness and Use of E-Governance Services
- Cybersecurity Awareness among Digital Users
- Use of Digital Platforms for Local Product Marketing

10. Gender and Economic Participation

- Women's Participation in Local Self-Government
- Gender Division of Labour in Households
- Gender Differences in Access to Mobile Banking
- Economic Impact of Early Marriage on Girls' Education
- Attitudes Toward Working Women in Rural Communities

11. Regional and Kerala Economy Topics

- Trends in Out-Migration from Kerala
- Role of Gulf Remittances in Household Economy
- Traditional Occupations and Livelihoods in Kerala
- Impact of Floods on Local Economy and Recovery
- Historical Development of Local Industries (e.g., Coir, Handloom)

These topics are suggestive and not exhaustive. Learners may select or adopt topics in line with their own interests and data availability. The final title must be approved by the supervisor before proceeding with the research.

14. Supervision and Responsibilities

Role of the Supervisor

- Guide the learner in refining the research topic and objectives
- Recommend appropriate literature, frameworks, and methodology
- Review drafts and provide constructive academic feedback
- Ensure academic honesty and research ethics are maintained
- Approve the final draft before submission

Responsibilities of the Learner

- Initiate contact with the assigned supervisor and schedule regular meetings
- Prepare research proposal and collect relevant literature independently
- Maintain an academic log of meetings and progress
- Submit drafts and respond to feedback within agreed timelines
- Acknowledge all sources and avoid any form of plagiarism

Conflict Resolution

In case of any unresolved academic dispute between the learner and supervisor:

- The learner may submit a written representation to the Head of the Department / Programme Coordinator.
- The university will facilitate a fair and timely resolution in consultation with both parties.

15. Language of the Dissertation

- The dissertation must be written in English.
- All technical terms, citations, and references should be clearly explained and properly formatted.
- Learners must ensure that the language is formal, academic, and free from spelling or grammatical errors.
- Use of software tools for grammar and plagiarism checks is encouraged before submission.

Annexure I: Cover Page

DISSERTATION TITLE

In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of the Undergraduate Programme in Economics

Submitted by:

FULL NAME OF THE LEARNER

Learner Enrolment Number

**UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME IN
ECONOMICS**

Under the Supervision of:

NAME OF THE SUPERVISOR



Name of the Learner Support Centre

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

KOLLAM

MONTH AND YEAR OF SUBMISSION

Annexure II:
Certificate by the Supervisor

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled: “ _____ ”
submitted by **Mr./Ms.** _____, Enrolment No.
_____, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the **Bachelor of Arts
in Economics**, has been carried out under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, the
work is original and has not been submitted previously for any degree, diploma, or other
academic recognition.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Signature of the Supervisor

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Institution: _____

Annexure II:
Bio Data of the Project/Dissertation Supervisor

1. Name:

(As in service records):

2. Designation & Official Address:

.....
.....
.....

3. Communication Address:

.....
.....
.....

(a) Mobile No(s):

(b) E-mail id:

4. Category of the Supervisor:

Please put a tick mark (✓)

Faculty member of Sreenarayanaguru Open University	
Faculty members (permanent/guest/contractual) from government or aided colleges	
Retired faculty member of government/aided colleges or Universities	
Academic counsellors associated with SGOU	
Ph.D. holders in the relevant subject/discipline	

5. Date of Regular Appointment in Academic/ Research Institute (Govt./Aided Colleges or University):

Date/Month/Year:/...../.....

Completed years of service:

Retired In Service

6. Educational & Professional Qualifications:

Sl. No.	Degree	Year of Passing	Subject/Discipline/ Specialisation	University
1				
2				
3				

7. Teaching Experience: As on the date of submission of Bio Data Cum Certificate

(a) Undergraduate Level: years months

(b) Postgraduate Level: years months

8. Field of Specialisation/Special Interest (if any):

I.

II.

Willingness to work as Project/Dissertation Supervisor

I am willing to serve as Project/Dissertation Supervisor for UG programme of Sreenarayanaguru Open University subject to the rules in force.

I hereby declare that the details furnished above are true and correct to the best of my knowledge. In case any of the above information is found to be false or misleading or misrepresenting, I am aware that I may be held liable for it and my empanelment as Project/Dissertation Supervisor may be immediately cancelled and necessary action, as deemed fit, may be taken against me.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Signature of the Supervisor

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Institution: _____

Annexure II:

Certificate by the Supervisor

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled: “_____”

submitted by **Mr./Ms.** _____, Enrolment No. _____, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the **Bachelor of Arts in Economics**, has been carried out under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, the work is original and has not been submitted previously for any degree, diploma, or other academic recognition.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Signature of the Supervisor

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Institution: _____

Annexure III:
Declaration by the Learner

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled: “_____”

submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the **Bachelor of Arts in Economics** to **Sreenarayanaguru Open University**, is my original work. It has not been submitted previously by me or any other person for any degree, diploma, or academic recognition. All sources used have been appropriately acknowledged.

Date: _____

Place: _____

Signature of the Learner

Name: _____

Enrolment Number: _____