

L-UNIVERSITÀ TA' MALTA



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

MA Comparative Euro-Mediterranean Education Studies

Dissertation Guidebook and Logbook

Version 2010-2012



Name:

Contact Telephone N°:

Email:

The Dissertation in the MA-CEMES course:

1. The dissertation is a **central element** of the course, to which 30 ECTS credits are assigned, and which is expected to be between 25,000 to 30,000 words in length. Students are encouraged to commence work on their dissertation as early as possible during the course.
2. **Important information** concerning the dissertation element in post-graduate courses followed at the University of Malta are available at the Registrar's website, at http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/general/postgraduate_harmonised_regulations - while Bye-Laws specific to the MA-CEMES are available at <http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/faculties/emcer/ma-cemes-2005>
3. Students are encouraged to, as far as possible, orient their **assignments** for each study unit followed to the dissertation topic they are focusing on. In this way, assignments can contribute towards the process of building up the knowledge base required for the dissertation.
4. The **research proposal** should be submitted before the end of the first semester, and should include the following elements:

[a] Research Problem: What research problem (or question) is this study designed to address? What hypotheses, if any, will this study seek to test?

[b] Theoretical Framework: What disciplines or other sources of knowledge will you draw upon to build your conceptualization for the proposed research? What are the fundamental theoretical perspectives upon which the study is based? What are the major concepts informing your study, and how are they connected? What is the key literature?

[c] Research Method: Describe and justify each of the following aspects:

- **Design:** What general label would you use to describe your research (e.g., ethnographic, experimental, historical, survey research) and how will you construct the specific design for the study? What is the key methodological literature?
- **Sample:** From what sources will you gather data and/or information?
- **Data Collection:** How will you seek to collect valid and reliable information? In what contexts? Using what kinds of data and/or information collection procedures?
- **Data Analysis:** How will you organize data and/or information for purposes of analysis? What procedures will you use to analyze your data and/or information in order to address your research questions or hypotheses?
- **Report Format:** How will you present your findings?

[d] Significance of the Study: What implications will the findings of your study have for theory *and* policy/practice in education?

[e] References: What are the major sources from the literature that are important for the study?

5. Dissertation supervision: You will have a supervisor or supervisors appointed to help you, who will have overall responsibility for the direction of your work on behalf of EMCER. In most cases, two supervisors will be assigned, with one being a specialist in the area of your research, and the other ensuring that your work has a comparative dimension. Typically, you should expect to have individual meetings with your supervisors for one hour not less than two to three times each term, but the frequency may vary according to the time of year and according to the stage you are at in your research programme.

6. The role of the supervisor/s consists in:

- Establishing a timetable of regular meetings for detailed discussion of your progress (the frequency of meetings will depend on the stage you are at in your research but typically you would expect to meet with your supervisor two or three times per semester).
- Agreeing to a research plan and programme of work, and establishing clear academic expectations and milestones.
- Setting a timetable for the submission of written work, and agreeing to providing critical comments on work submitted within a reasonable time.
- Assessing formally your subject-specific and personal and professional skills training needs on a regular basis and ensuring that these needs are met.
- Co-operating with you to produce a detailed joint report on your progress at the end of each semester.
- Ensuring you are aware of the formal requirements in relation to the final submission, and helping you to incorporate these into your plan of work.

7. The role of the student includes:

- Maintaining regular contact with your supervisor/s, and responding to them in good time.
- Meeting with your supervisor regularly, keeping a written record of your discussions, and giving due weight to any guidance or corrective action proposed.
- Drawing up a research plan and timetable of work in consultation with your supervisors, and keeping relevant records of all aspects of your work.
- Co-operating with your supervisors to make a detailed joint report on your progress at the end of each term.
- Taking responsibility for your research programme, including the development of subject-specific, research, and personal and professional skills.
- Taking responsibility for (i) the preparation and content of your thesis, giving due regard to any advice from your supervisors, and (ii) its timely submission in accordance with the timetable set.
- Being aware of the University's guidance on plagiarism and of any ethical, legal or intellectual property issues arising from your research.
- Pursuing opportunities to engage with the wider academic community at University, national and international level.

- 8. Training provision in research methods:** You will follow a 10 ECTS study unit in research methods in comparative education during the first semester of your course. The first part of the study unit will be dedicated to qualitative research methods, while the second will focus on quantitative methodology. In addition to that, a further set of research seminars will be organized during the second semester of the first year. Issues related to the specific methodology/methodologies you use in your dissertation can be discussed directly with your thesis supervisor/s. Graduate research seminars will be organized from time to time, providing you with an opportunity to present your work-in-progress, and to benefit from feedback from participants.
- 9. Ethical issues:** The University of Malta has adopted stringent guidelines concerning the ethical issues that must be respected by students and staff carrying out research involving persons. Students whose research entails ethical clearance must submit their research proposals to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), through the EMCER Board of Studies, using the standard forms available at <http://www.um.edu.mt/urec>. Field work cannot be started before the approval of this Committee.
- 10. Submission of the dissertation:**
- [a] **Paper size:** International Standard Size A4 (29.7x 21cm).
 - [b] **Typing:** Double spacing for the main text. Single spacing for footnotes. Single spacing may also be used for long quotations in the main text. Left-hand margin of 3.5 cm. Top and right-hand margin of 1.5 cm. A top margin of 5 cm to be left on the first page of every division, i.e. chapters, bibliography, etc. Footnote(s) should appear at the bottom of the relevant page or after every chapter.
 - [c] **Format:** The main text, including the introduction (if any), the bibliography and any appendices of the dissertation shall have Arabic numerals; the title page, dedication (if any), preface, acknowledgements, table of contents, etc. preceding the main text, shall have Roman numerals;
 - [d] **Binding:** Three unbound copies of the dissertation shall be submitted. After a successful defence, two copies of the dissertation as approved by the Board of Examiners, shall be sewn and bound as follows: in black cloth, with lettering in gold on the front and spine showing: the name of the student; the title of the dissertation; the degree for which the dissertation is submitted; and the year of submission.
 - [e] One **bound copy** of the dissertation shall be deposited in the University Library and one in the library of the Centre; and
 - [f] **Layout of title page:** title of dissertation and subtitle (if any), followed by the name of the student, the subject, and the date of submission. For example, "A dissertation presented in the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research in the University of Malta for the degree of Master of Arts (Comparative Euro-Mediterranean Education Studies), followed by month and year of submission.

The Dissertation Log Book

- 1. Purpose:** The purpose of the Log Book is to:
 - keep a record of your meetings with your supervisor/s;
 - clearly identify the outcomes of each meeting and the actions that are required on the part of the student;
 - support the self-evaluative and reflective process that is necessary when writing a dissertation;
 - provide evidence of that process to the Board of Studies as well as the Board of Examiners.
- 2. Student's responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the student to keep this log book up to date. Students are expected to comply with the supervisors' suggestions and recommendations as noted by the student in the Log Book and approved by the supervisors.
- 3. The log book has to be submitted together with the dissertation.** EMCER reserves the right not to accept the dissertation for examination if the log book is not properly documented.

Key Information:

Dissertation Title:

Dissertation supervisor/s appointed by MA-CEMES Board of Studies (name/s):

..... and

Dissertation Proposal submitted on (date):

Dissertation Proposal approved by the MA-CEMES Board of Studies on (date):

Where applicable:

Amendments to Dissertation title:

Amendments to title approved by MA-CEMES Board of Studies on:

Meeting No.1

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.2

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.3

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.4

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.5

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.6

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.7

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.8

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.9

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Meeting No.10

1. Date of meeting:

2. Themes/Topics/Issues discussed:

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3. Suggestions/Recommendations/Agreed Actions:	Time frame:

Students' signature:..... Supervisor/s signature/s:.....

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Supervisor/s' comments, if any:.....

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Submission stage

Submission deadline: Regulations stipulate that the dissertation has to be submitted at the end of the two-year course. Students can request for a 6-month extension from the MA-CEMES Board of Studies. Further extensions, up to a maximum of 2 years, require Senate approval.

Students submitting a final draft of their dissertation are required to complete this page and present it to the MA-CEMES course director duly signed:

“I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work, and has not been presented in fulfillment of other course requirements at the University of Malta or any other University.”

Name: Signature:
Date:

Supervisors are also required to sign the following certification:

“I/We, the undersigned, being the supervisor/s of the thesis titled
....., and written under our guidance by, confirm that the dissertation is certified as ready for submission.”

Name: Signature:
Name: Signature:
Date: