



Guidelines and Rules for Students

General Rules for the M.A. European Studies and B. European Studies (Hons) Dissertations

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Introduction

All students in the Bachelors and Masters European Studies courses currently writing a dissertation or who are to submit a proposal to write a dissertation in the final year of their course are to read this document carefully and to note in particular the stipulated deadlines.

The Dissertation is a compulsory element of the B. European Studies (Hons) and of the M.A. European Studies course.

1.0 General Guidelines Applicable to both B.A. and M.A. Dissertations

The proposed research topic must be within the areas of study covered by the course and must be relevant to European Studies.

Before submitting a title, you are to verify that a thesis by a similar title has not already been submitted in the past or is in the process of being written. You are obliged to warn the academic staff (see below) if this is the case. While verifying whether a thesis by the same title has already been submitted you are required to consult not only the Institute for European Studies thesis titles but also those of related disciplines. Thus if you are writing on a subject from a legal perspective you are obliged to check whether dissertations with the same title has already been submitted in the Faculty of Law or is in the preparatory stage within that Faculty. The same applies for other disciplines.

In preparing your proposal ensure that the title of the dissertation is such that a full-time or part-time member of the Institute for European Studies' academic staff can advise you. In many cases the same member of the academic staff will also be appointed as your supervisor by the Board although this is not automatic. You must liaise with the relevant member of staff at an early stage.

The dissertation proposal must include the following main elements:

3.1 A title that must be clear and focused

3.2 A set of research questions which the researcher will try to answer when writing the dissertation

3.3 A clear description of the methodology that would be applied

3.4 A list of those individuals (both academic and technical) consulted in the drafting of the proposal

The proposal must be accompanied by an initial bibliography giving proof that the student has already reviewed the relevant literature when preparing his/her dissertation proposal;

The proposal must be discussed with a member of the academic staff who will help the student develop the draft proposal further and who may eventually be appointed to act as his supervisor;

In exceptional circumstances, the Board of Studies of the Institute for European Studies may designate a specialised person from outside the University as 'specialist assistant'; students should not make their own approaches.

It is crucial that, before the dissertation proposal is submitted for approval, it is thoroughly discussed with a member of the staff. The proposal must be signed by the member of staff whom the student has consulted. If this is not done the proposal will not be discussed by the

Board of Studies and will be postponed to the next meeting. Such delays could be detrimental to the student.

2.0 Consulting Your Supervisor

Students are to ensure that they consult their supervisor continuously throughout the writing period and that the supervisor has seen a complete copy of the final dissertation in good time before its submission; Indeed the final draft must be given to the supervisor at least three clear weeks before the submission date in order to allow him enough time to suggest improvements before submission.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to present the draft parts of the dissertation to their tutor in as complete and clear writing style as possible. They are to ensure that drafts are thoroughly spell-checked and that they are presented in a coherent form. Drafts are to be presented in print form unless the supervisor directs otherwise.

Under exceptional circumstances that could not be foreseen at an early stage, and after consulting the supervisor, he/she may ask for an extension. The Board of the Institute for European Studies normally gives extensions of not more than a fortnight. A request for an extension will only be contemplated if such a request is made in writing at least two clear weeks before the date of submission and if accompanied by a note from the supervisor specifying the reasons behind the request for an extension.

3.0 Late Submissions

If a dissertation is submitted late without the Board's permission then the maximum mark that can be awarded to it will be 45 per cent.

4.0 Writing the dissertation

When writing the dissertation ensure that the very first chapters thoroughly cover:

- a discussion of the research question
- a literature survey
- a discussion of the research methodology applied in the analysis. The research methodology is extremely important and must be tackled adequately in the first chapter before you go on to subsequent chapters. The methodology can also be discussed in a separate dedicated chapter.

Subsequent chapters are to include:

- the analysis itself
- the conclusion which should show very clearly and unambiguously the main findings and which should adequately answer the questions posed in the introductory chapters.

The dissertation will be evaluated in accordance with the student's ability to meet these criteria. Obviously a higher level of analysis is expected at Masters level.

5.0 Plagiarism

You are not to engage in plagiarism - defined as the unacknowledged use, as one's own, of work of another person, whether or not such work has been published. Those who are caught plagiarizing or cheating in any other way will have their dissertation marked as Fail and the case will be referred to the University Disciplinary Board.

6.0 Length of the Dissertation

The length in words of the Bachelors and Masters dissertations must be within the limits indicated below. You may only exceed this limit by permission of the Board on a written request supported in writing by your supervisor. The supervisor must thoroughly justify such a request.

7.0 Format

The dissertation must be typed – double or 1.5 space on A4 paper. The font must be Times New Roman size 12. Students are reminded to distinguish between normal text, headings and subheadings. Footnotes must be placed at the end of each page. All appendixes must appear at the end of the dissertation. A detailed bibliography must also be included. All margins must be at least 15 mm wide, including the page numbers. The left-hand margin must be at least 40 mm wide in order to allow for binding. In the front of the dissertation the following details must be included:

- An abstract not exceeding 500 words;
- A contents page;
- The title of the dissertation;
- The name of the writer;

- A note indicating that the dissertation is being submitted in part-fulfillment of the B. Eur. Studies (Honours) or M.A. in European Studies of the Institute for European Studies as the case may be;
- The date of submission;
- A declaration signed by the student attesting to its authenticity.

Before being allowed to graduate, students must submit one leather-bound copy and one digital copy of their dissertation with the year of submission and the name of the writer appearing in gold colour on the spine of the dissertation. The title of the dissertation must be reproduced on the front cover.

8.0 References

Please refer to the referencing guidelines on our website.

9.0 Assessment

As has been indicated above, the assessment of the dissertation will take into account the student's ability and academic standards attained in writing the dissertation in accordance with the guidelines listed in this document. The overall grading of the dissertation follows the grading system of the University.

Examiners shall be provided with more detailed assessment criteria based on the University's approved criteria.

B. European Studies

The dissertation proposal must be submitted by the end of March in the second year. You will be notified a clear deadline in due time. If the proposal is in order and as required it is likely to be approved by the end of July.

The dissertation must be between 10,000 and 12,000 words long including footnotes but excluding the bibliography. In addition, the dissertation should include an Abstract of not more than 500 words, Contents Page, Acknowledgment of about 50 words, and the Declaration of Authenticity form. These are not included in the word count.

Students may be required to make a presentation on their thesis methodology during the first semester of Year III. Details of the seminar will be announced by the Institute for European Studies.

Three spiral bound copies of the dissertation are to be submitted for examination.

The Board of Examiners of the dissertation may approve the dissertation. It may require the student to make amendments by a set deadline or to completely re-write the dissertation in which case it is to be re-submitted by not later than the end of September.

M.A. European Studies

The M.A. dissertation must be between 15,000 and 20,000 words, including footnotes but excluding the bibliography.

Three copies of the dissertation, spiral bound, are to be submitted for examination.

At its discretion, the Board of the Institute for European Studies may grant the student an extension. These extensions are of limited duration and only granted for exceptional reasons justified in writing by the supervisor; in such case there is no guarantee that the process will be concluded in time for graduation in November.

The Board of Examiners of the dissertation may approve the dissertation or it may also reject it completely. It may require the student to make amendments or to completely re-write the dissertation in which case it is to be re-submitted by a stipulated deadline.