

Faculty for the Built Environment University of Malta



Guidelines for the Preparation of Research Papers and Dissertations

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Faculty for the Built Environment
University of Malta

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
APA	American Psychological Association
GoM	Government of Malta
ISO	International Standardization Organization
KSU	Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (University Students' Council (Malta))
MLA	Modern Languages Association
UoM	University of Malta
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee

0 Introduction

0.1 Background

0.1.1 This document is intended to provide you with practical guidance on the writing of research papers and dissertations. In many instances, you will find that there is a range of choices open to you. You will need to use your judgement to decide which solution is most appropriate to your case, consulting your study-unit lecturer (in the case of research papers) or supervisor (in the case of your dissertation) as necessary.

0.1.2 These Guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Students' Charter which can be accessed in the University of Malta website (UoM & KSU, 2011). The Charter was jointly formulated by the University and the Education Commission of the University Students' Council (KSU), and provides a concise yet comprehensive set of principles and rules, regarding "... the unique relationship between the University and its students as equal stakeholders in higher education".

0.2 Structure of document

0.2.1 These Guidelines are made up of five sections, each of which focuses on specific aspects as follows:

- Sections 1 and 2 give an indication of what research papers and dissertations, respectively, are about, and what you would be expected to think about when you plan your work;
- Section 3 refers to components of research papers and dissertations, such as the layout, different types of paragraphs, characters, tables and figures;
- Section 4 discusses referencing styles; and
- Section 5 considers research ethics.

1 Research papers

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 During the course of any taught programme of studies, you will be asked to produce a number of written research papers. Such work is intended to give you the opportunity to focus on a specific issue and to develop your analytical and presentation skills. Research papers normally have a word limit of a few thousand words. The word count should therefore be used as economically as possible, in order to ensure that the question is being answered effectively.

1.2 Effective writing

1.2.1 The following are some basic rules that can help you write more effectively, by helping you avoid some of the more common pitfalls.

Make sure you have understood the question

1.2.2 The question you are asked to investigate will typically require you to focus on a specific aspect or angle. Read the question carefully to ensure that you have understood it fully, even before you start planning your answer.

Keep to the point

1.2.3 Adding information that is not relevant to the question or to your argument will not make it a better answer, and may even be penalised. Part of the discipline of written is to address a problem in a direct and focused manner, without any unnecessary digressions and convolutions. Do not try to write everything you know about the subject.

Plan and structure your work

1.2.4 The successive steps in your argument, from question to conclusion, should be clearly planned before you start writing. The proper use of sub-headings and paragraphs will help the reader to follow the structure of your argument.

Clear, neat and consistent presentation

1.2.5 Correct use of English, not only in spelling and grammar, but also in the construction of clear, readable and flowing sentences, would greatly help the reader to understand your argument. Avoid using long and convoluted sentences and terms the meaning of which you are unsure of.

1.2.6 In cases where you need to refer to your opinions, findings, publications, and so on, you are advised to avoid using the first person, for example:

This author submits that...

In the considered opinion of this author...

1.2.7 Tidiness and consistency in layout, format and referencing are also essential in any work that you present to others, and will influence the way it is understood, and graded (Refer to section 3 below).

1.3 Referencing

1.3.1 You may use one of the referencing styles indicated in section 4 below, or as otherwise indicated by the lecturer setting the research assignment.

2 Dissertations

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The dissertation is intended to provide you with the opportunity to carry out in-depth research in a specific field pertaining to the area of studies covered by the degree course to which you are registered. The process leading to the completion of this document involves the following fundamental processes:

- the identification of the objectives of your research programme, the research questions and/or hypotheses;
- the exploration and critical evaluation of the literature pertaining to the field in question, which is referred to as the literature review. The literature review enables you to familiarise yourself with the major contributions to and debates about key aspects of the field of interest, and provides you with the knowledge base to which you may refer in the development of your research framework;
- the review of the research and analysis methods available to you, the identification of the methods that you will adopt, and the justification of your choices and decision[s]. This aspect of the research work is referred to as the methodology;
- the carrying out of the actual research which, depending on the field in which you are interested, would consist of archival research, laboratory work, field surveys of different types, observations, interviews of different types, and so on;
- the subsequent identification of the data/information generated by the 'actual research', the analyses of these data/information, and the drawing up of conclusions from the results of the analysis.

2.1.2 The dissertation would therefore consist of a report on the work carried out, leading to the generation of the findings of the research programme and their evaluation, together with the conclusions you have reached.

2.1.3 The final product would therefore be a contribution to knowledge with respect to the field of study in question. Such contributions [to knowledge] do not necessarily have to be ground-breaking or original. Indeed, a substantial amount of research is carried out in order to confirm, refute, or update the findings obtained by other researchers. In other words, the work reported in a dissertation forms part of a continuous process of intellectual exploration.

2.1.4 The approaches that you may adopt in the formulation and implementation of your research programmes are discussed in the study unit of the your course which is concerned with research methods and techniques.

2.2 Structure of the dissertation

2.2.1 The dissertation should normally be made up of the following parts:

1. Preliminaries
2. Main Body
3. End Matters

2.2.2 Preliminaries

Components

2.2.2.1 The Preliminaries will normally consist of the following parts:

1. Title page
2. Dedication (not compulsory)
3. Declaration of Authenticity
4. Acknowledgements
5. Abstract
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables
8. List of Figures
9. Glossary
10. Introduction

Title page

2.2.2.2 The title page should contain the following information:

1. title and subtitle of the dissertation in the top part of the page;
2. the name of the author, which should be located below the title/subtitle;
3. the following statement:
Dissertation submitted to the Faculty for the Built Environment, University of Malta
in part fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of the degree of *name of
the degree*
should be written in the middle of the page; and
4. month and year of submission, which should be placed just above the bottom
margin of the page.

Dedication

2.2.2.3 The dedication should be simple and not overly sentimental. As is indicated above, this page can be left out of the dissertation.

Declaration of Authenticity

2.2.2.4 The declaration of authenticity should consist of the following signed [by the author] statement:

I, the undersigned, declare that the dissertation entitled *title of the dissertation* is authentic in so far as it is the end product of my own research. All statements or conclusions arrived at are mine unless otherwise stated.

Acknowledgements

2.2.2.5 In this page you may identify and thank the persons, starting with the supervisor, who would in one way or another have contributed to the work you carried out in connection with the dissertation.

2.2.2.6 The statement of acknowledgement should be concluded as follows:

... I take full responsibility for any shortcomings in this dissertation.

2.2.2.7 Avoid making pompous statements when referring to the qualities and/or qualifications of the mentioned persons.

Abstract

2.2.2.8 The Abstract is not an introduction to the dissertation. It is rather a concise sum-up of the dissertation which should highlight the main considerations and findings of your research. It should not consist of more than 250 words.

2.2.2.9 The Abstract should be followed by four or five key words which give as accurate as possible indication of what the dissertation would be about.

2.2.2.10 Keep in mind that other researchers exploring contributions to their fields of interest normally decide whether they read a dissertation, paper, article and so on the basis of the contents of the Abstracts.

Table of Contents

2.2.2.11 As is shown in section 2.2.3 (on page 16), the Main Body of the dissertation has to be made up of chapters. Chapters would be made up of sub-chapters, known as 'sections'. Sections, would in turn be made up of 'subsections', which can in turn be divided into sub-subsections. It is not usually advisable to go beyond four such levels, as the system will become unwieldy.

2.2.2.12 The table of contents should identify the location (page number) of headings (i.e. titles) of the chapters, sections, subsections, and sub-subsections. For more information about headings, the reader is referred to section 3.4 (on page 22).

List of Tables

2.2.2.13 The list of tables identifies the location in the dissertation of tables.

List of Figures

2.2.2.14 The list of figures identifies the location in the dissertation of figures.

Glossary

2.2.2.15 The Glossary should consist of two 2-column tables in which all the technical terms abbreviations, acronyms, and so on, used in the dissertation are listed together with the meanings of these abbreviations:

- the first table would be concerned with the technical terms, and
- the second, with abbreviations and acronyms

Introduction

2.2.2.16 The Introduction shall normally include the following five sections:

1. A brief background describing the context of the core topic of the dissertation.
2. The goals and objectives of the research.
 - a. The goal would be a statement of intent written in broad terms, which gives a general indication of what the student would have sought to achieve when the original research proposal was made.
 - b. The objective defines the measureable/tangible outcome[s] that were to be attained through the research work.

Avoid making exaggerated claims regarding your work, for example that your research is a ground-breaking contribution to the field of study in question.

3. The research questions and hypothesis (if any) which the research would have been expected to answer and/or test.
4. Overview of the research methods used in the research.
5. Structure of the dissertation, through which the reader is provided with a chapter by chapter outline of the contents of the dissertation.

2.2.3 Main Body

Components

2.2.3.1 The main body of the dissertation shall normally consist of chapters which cover the following aspects:

1. Background and Context
2. Literature Review
3. Methodology
4. Description of Research and Discussion of Results
5. Recapitulation and Conclusion

2.2.3.2 The type of information that you may need to present in your dissertation may require you to present your work within a structure which is different to the one outlined above and discussed below. You are strongly advised to discuss your plans in detail with your supervisor

Chapter 1: Background and Context

2.2.3.3 Chapter 1 should discuss the field of study to which the topic of the dissertation pertains, and discuss the relevance of the topic and its links to other aspects of the same field of study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.2.3.4 Chapter 2, literature review, should be the starting point of your own work on their dissertation, given that it enables the development of the framework of the research project and should contribute towards the formulation and/or development of clear objectives.

2.2.3.5 The review should also enable you to develop your knowledge of the field of study in question, avoid duplication, and identify openings which could be worth exploring.

2.2.3.6 The above implies that the review is not a simple account, chronological or otherwise, of the writings. It should be an analytical evaluation of the

- literature which covers a comprehensive cross-section of contributions, which are recognised as seminal with respect to the development of the field of study in question, and
- of critiques of such contributions, which may support or question aspects such as the quality of research methodologies, the interpretation of results, and so on.

2.2.3.7 The review should therefore demonstrate your awareness of debates which feature in the development of your fields of study, and to understand that all ideas are subject to being questioned, even if these are expressed by established authorities.

2.2.3.8 This means that the literature review is not simply a descriptive account of readings, but a critical assessment of contributions and debates. This said, you should be aware that being critical involves the careful examination the material that they cover. It is therefore essential for you

- to read original works rather than simply reviews or critiques of such works. There is always the possibility for the authors of such reviews or critiques to misinterpret the writings that they discuss, and
- to go through the works of a wide range of contributions, reviews, and critiques.

Chapter 3: Methodology

2.2.3.9 The term 'methodology' refers to the study of the method[s] of research. In a dissertation, you should not just make use of research methods/techniques without having first evaluated

- the methods used by other researchers in the field of study in question, and
- texts which discuss and analyse research methods and techniques.

2.2.3.10 In this chapter, therefore you are expected to review the research methods and techniques that are 'available' with reference to authoritative texts, and subsequently identify and justify the ones adopted in the research work.

Chapter 4: Description of Research and Discussion of Results

2.2.3.11 In Chapter 4 you are expected to describe the procedures/protocols that were followed in the course of data collection and the generation of results. This chapter should not be a simple description of the adopted approaches; it should also refer to their limitations.

2.2.3.12 The section[s] of the chapter which discuss your findings will not simply present the results of your research work. You are also expected to submit your interpretations and judgements and compare your assessments with the findings of similar studies. The assessment should also discuss the strengths and limitations, and their implications.

Chapter 5: Recapitulation and Conclusion

2.2.3.13 The concluding chapter should be made up of three major sections, namely:

1. Recapitulation
2. Conclusions
3. Further research

General considerations

2.2.3.14 Each Chapter can be divided into Sections (which would be level 2 in the hierarchy of subdivisions, where the Chapter would be level 1), which in turn can be subdivided into Subsections (level 3), which could also be made up of Sub-subsections (level 4), and so on. Each level of subdivisions should focus on specific aspects, the lower the level the more specific the focus. The ISO 2145:1978 (ISO, 1978) standard suggests that the number of subdivisions should be limited "... so that reference numbers remain easy to identify, to read and to cite" (p. 1).

2.2.3.15 Chapters 1 to 4 should include a two sections as follows:

- an Introduction, which should describe the contribution of the chapter to the dissertation, and a section by section guide to the contents of the chapter, and
- a Summary of the chapter (the last section of the chapter), which would highlight the main issues discussed in the chapter in a concise manner

2.2.4 End Matters part

Components

2.2.4.1 The End Matters part of the dissertation should consist of the following:

1. Bibliography
2. End notes
3. Appendices

Bibliography

2.2.4.2 The bibliography should present all the sources cited or referred to in the Main Body of the dissertation. The manner in which bibliographic entries are presented is discussed in Chapter 4 (on page 27)

End Notes

2.2.4.3 The referencing styles which you are expected to adopt (see section 4 on page 27 et seq) imply that footnotes or endnotes should not be used often. Under such systems, footnotes or endnotes should be used to provide information which may be of interest to some readers but are not essential with respect to the quality of the main text.

2.2.4.4 In the case of dissertations which include tables, charts, figures, and so on, end notes are more practical than footnotes. For this reason, you are expected to insert endnotes whenever you need to include information of the type indicated above.

Appendices

2.2.4.5 This part should present information which backs your research, such as, but not limited to the following:

- letters,
- questionnaire forms,
- survey results,
- transcripts of interviews, group discussions, and so on,
- illustrative material,
- statistical tables, excerpts or summaries of which would have been presented in the main body, and
- printouts of results, excerpts or summaries of which would have been presented in the main body.

2.2.4.6 The Appendices may have to be presented in separate volumes, in cases where the amount of information is substantial.

2.2.5 Submission and assessment

First and revised drafts

2.2.5.1 The first draft of the dissertation would be submitted for assessment by the Board of Examiners (set up under Regulation 12 of the University Assessment Regulations (GoM, 2009). The submission date and number of printed and digital copies to be submitted would be transmitted to you three months before the deadline.

2.2.5.2 This draft would be bound with a black plastic comb bind, with the title and back pages being protected by means of a plastic transparent and black opaque covers respectively.

2.2.5.3 The Board of Examiners may recommend that you insert modifications to your dissertation before submitting the final draft. Such modifications could be:

- **minor revisions**, which means that the revised draft would have to be submitted within three months of the official issue of the assessment results,
- **major revisions**, which means that the revised draft would have to be submitted within six months of the official issue of the assessment results
- **total revision**, which means that the dissertation would need to be redone, with the submission date of the new draft have to be submitted within a period of not less than nine months as established by the Board of Examiners.

2.2.5.4 The Board of Examiners may decide to ask for more than one revised draft.

Final draft

2.2.5.5 The final draft would be submitted after the Board of Examiners is satisfied that either

- the first draft is acceptable without the need for revisions, or
- a revised draft is acceptable.

2.2.5.6 You would be informed of the deadline for the submission of the printed draft and the number of the required printed and digital copies that would need to be submitted.

2.2.5.7 Each copy of the printed final draft must be hardbound, with the colour of the cover being green.

2.2.5.8 Each cohort of students is expected to get together and appoint one binder for all the theses submitted in a particular year. Prior to the binding they should submit a sample of the cover fabric and a design proposal for the front cover and the spine for the approval of the faculty for the Built Environment.

3 Layouts and Formatting

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section is applicable to both research papers and dissertations. It considers the following aspects:

- Page set-up
- Page numbering
- Paragraphs
- Characters
- Tables
- Figures

3.2 Page set-up

3.2.1 The required page set-up settings for both research papers and dissertations are summarised in the following table:

Table 3-1: Page set-up settings

Aspect	Setting
All margins	2 cm
Gutter	1 cm
Orientation	Portrait
Multiple pages	Mirror margins (setting for duplex printing)
Paper size	A4
Section start	New page
Headers and footers	Different odd and even
	Different first page
	0.2 cm from edge
Page: vertical alignment	Top

3.2.2 The above indicates that document should be set for duplex printing. The students are advised that in such cases title pages should be on odd numbered pages.

3.3 Page numbering

3.3.1 Preliminaries part

3.3.1.1 The numbering of pages in the preliminaries part of the dissertation should involve the use of small Roman numerals, e.g. i, ii, iii. Numbering should start from the title page, however, numbers should not appear on title page, the declaration page, and the declaration of authenticity page. In other words, the acknowledgement page should be page 'iii'.

3.3.1.2 Page numbers should be placed in the bottom margin of the page on the right in the case of odd numbered pages and the left in the case of even numbered pages.

3.3.2 Main Body part

3.3.2.1 The page numbering in the main body should be Arabic numerals. The numbering should be continue from the Preliminaries part.

3.3.2.2 Page numbers should be placed in the bottom margin of the page on the right in the case of odd numbered pages and the left in the case of even numbered pages.

3.3.3 End Matters part

3.3.3.1 The page numbering in the Bibliography and End Notes parts of the dissertation should also be Arabic and continue from the Main Body part.

3.3.3.2 The Appendices should have independent page numbering systems.

3.4 Paragraphs

3.4.1 Introduction

3.4.1.1 A dissertation is made up of different types of paragraphs, with the most common being the following:

- headings, i.e. chapter and section titles,
- captions, i.e. table and figure titles,
- the default body text paragraph, which would be commonly used one,
- block text paragraph, which would be used for block quotations
- list paragraphs, which can be numbered or bulleted
- bibliographic entry, which can be numbered depending on the adopted referencing style (see section 4 on page 27)

3.4.2 Paragraph settings

3.4.2.1 The following table presents the settings for headings:

Table 3-2: Principal settings of headings

Settings \ Titles	Chapter	Section	Subsection	Sub-subsection	Caption
Alignment	Left or right	Left	Left	Left	Left or right
Left indent	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion
Right Indent	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion
Special	Hanging	Hanging	Hanging	None	Hanging
Space before	Discretion	Larger than after	Larger than after	Larger than after	Discretion
Space after	Discretion	Max 6 pt	Max 6 pt	Max 6 pt	Max 2 pt
Line spacing	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single

Table 3-2: Principal settings of headings

Settings \ Titles	Chapter	Section	Subsection	Sub-subsection	Caption
Widow/orphan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With next	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lines together	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Page break	Yes	No	No	No	No

3.4.2.2 The settings in the above tables are not rigid, and you may use their discretion where indicated (Discretion). One important consideration refers to the size of the space before and after section headings. The former should always be larger than the latter.

3.4.2.3 The following table presents the settings of the most common paragraphs in dissertations.

Table 3-3: Principal settings of other major paragraph types

Settings \ Types	Body text	Block text	Numbered	Bulleted	Bibliographic entry
Alignment	Left or justified	Left or justified	Left or justified	Left or justified	Left
Left indent	0 cm	Min 0.5 cm	Discretion	Discretion	0 cm
Right Indent	0 cm				
Special	No	No	Hanging	Hanging	Hanging
Space before	3 pt	0 cm	0 pt	0 pt	3 cm
Space after	3 to 6 pt	3 cm			
Line spacing	18 pt	Single	18 pt	18 pt	Single
Widow/orphan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With next	No	No	No	No	No
Lines together	No	No	No	No	Yes
Page break	No	No	No	No	No

3.4.3 Numbering and bulleting

Headings

3.4.3.1 The heading paragraphs which are used for the chapter, section, subsection, and caption titles need to be numbered. The chapter, section, and subsection numbers would need to conform to the ISO 2145:1978 standard (ISO, 1978). The sub-subsection and other chapter subdivision titles should not be numbered.

3.4.3.2 ISO 2145 submits that Arabic numerals should be used for the numbering of headings. The main levels in the hierarchy of headings, i.e.

- Section titles in the case of research papers, and
- Chapter titles in the case of dissertations

would need to be numbered continuously starting with '1'. Introductory chapters titles may be numbered '0'.

3.4.3.3 Second level subdivisions, i.e.

- Subsections of sections in the case of research papers, and
- Sections of chapters in the case of dissertations

would need to be numbered continuously by a number referring to the first level followed by a full stop and another number referring to the title of the second level subdivision.

3.4.3.4 Third level subdivisions, i.e.

- Sub-subsections of subsections in the case of research papers, and
- Subsections of sections in the case of dissertations

would need to be numbered continuously by a number referring to the first level followed by a full stop, a number referring to the second level subdivision, another full stop, followed by a number which refers to the third level subdivision title.

3.4.3.5 For the purpose of these regulations the fourth level subdivision title and other lower level subdivision should not be numbered. The hierarchy between levels would in such cases be indicated by the size the colour, size, and styles of the fonts, the space before the respective headings. You are encouraged to use their discretion with restraint, keeping in mind that the formatting styles that you adopt should contribute to the reader-friendliness of your work rather than mere decoration.

Lists

3.4.3.6 In addition to the level 1 to level 3 headings, you will most probably need to number or bullet paragraphs making up lists. The numbering of lists made up of more than nine numbered paragraphs should be right aligned as follows:

- 9 ninth numbered paragraph
- 10 tenth numbered paragraph
- 11 eleventh numbered paragraph

3.5 Characters

3.5.1 Fonts

3.5.1.1 These guidelines do not specify any particular Font to be adopted in research papers and dissertations. Refrain from using difficult-to-read fonts such as 'Algerian', 'Broadway', 'Brush Script', 'Curlz MT' and so on.

3.5.1.2 The use of fonts should be consistent, throughout the dissertation. At most, two fonts may be used,

- one for chapter, sections, and caption titles, and
- the other for the normal text.

You may decide to use one Font style for both the titles and normal text.

3.5.1.3 The selected Font should be capable of supporting the alphabets of languages, other than the English language, that are used in the dissertation.

3.5.1.4 In the case of the use of the Maltese language, where, for example, reference is made to Maltese place names, street names, and so on, the use of the Maltese alphabet is compulsory for all students irrespective of their nationality.

3.5.2 Font styles

3.5.2.1 As is well known, word processors and desktop publishers make it possible for writers to use italics, bold, bold italics styles with ease. This often results in the overuse of these styles. You are advised to use these styles sparingly and above all consistently.

3.5.3 Font sizes

3.5.3.1 The font sizes in the default paragraph text may vary depending on the font in use. For example, 12pts could be used in the case of the 'Calibri', while 11pts or 11.5pts would be sufficient in the case of 'Times New Roman', 'Arial', and 'Helvetica'. For this reason, the choice of the font size for normal text is left to your discretion and should range between 11pt to 12pt.

3.5.3.2 Font sizes in tables, block quotations, and endnotes should be 0.5pts smaller than that used for normal text.

3.5.4 Tables

3.5.4.1 Tables are representations used to present information in an organised and concise manner. It is essential, therefore. For tables to be reader friendly.

3.5.4.2 In cases where tables have to spread across pages, you need to ensure that the table title and the header row appear in all the pages and for rows not to break across pages

3.5.4.3 In cases where tables include numeric information, you should right align numbers as shown in the first two columns in the following Figure 3-1:

Figure 3-1: Examples of layouts within tables

Acceptable		Not acceptable	
1012	107.8	1012	107.8
10	65.11	10	65.11
210	76	210	76

Source:

3.5.4.4 The use of alignments shown in the second two columns is discouraged.

3.5.4.5 It is important for the sources of the information in tables to be acknowledged as shown in Figure 3-1.

3.5.5 Figures

3.5.5.1 You should use figures to present information in the form of charts, graphs, diagrams and so on or through maps, images, or drawings.

3.5.5.2 It is important for the sources of the information in figures to be acknowledged as indicated in Figure 3-1 (on page 25).

4 Referencing Styles

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 One of the most contentious aspects of dissertation writing refers to the respect that the author should show both the authors of the source material (both primary and secondary) and the readers of their works. It is imperative that all the sources of the data and other information presented in the dissertation is referenced for the following reasons:

- references to sources are expressions of respect to the contributors to the development of knowledge, and give these contributors recognition;
- such references enable the reader to recognise the validity of the dissertation and the value that it adds to knowledge
- referencing and the bibliography makes it possible for readers who may be interested in contributing to the furthering of the knowledge base of the same field of study through further research to minimise the time and effort spent on exploring the field in question and focus on the 'actual research'

4.1.2 It should be noted that the University of Malta has the means to scan students' assignment and dissertations for plagiarism, i.e. the failure of authors of assignments, dissertations, and so on to acknowledge their sources (UoM, 2014a; 2014b).

4.1.3 You are expected to reference and prepare bibliographic entries in accordance to the requirements of the referencing system adopted by the department offering the course that they follow.

4.2 Referencing styles

4.2.1 Over the years, referencing styles have been developed for use by researchers in specific fields of study. You may use one of the styles identified in the following table. For the purposes of the dissertation, you are advised to consider adopting one of these referencing styles or another which is recognised in the field of research that your work falls in, in consultation with your supervisor.

Table 4-1: Referencing styles in use in the Faculty for the Built Environment

Style	Fields of study
American Psychological Association (APA)	Social sciences, such as spatial planning
Modern Language Association (MLA)	Liberal arts and design, such as architecture and urban design
Vancouver	Engineering, construction technology, and physical science

4.2.2 The APA and MLA styles involve the use of in-text referencing (APA, 2009; APA, 2014; Weselby, 2014a; MLA, 2009; MLA, 2014; Weselby, 2014b). The former identifies the

author, publication date, and [in the case of quotations] page numbers. The MLA system refers to the author and [in the case of quotations] page numbers. The Vancouver numeric reference identifies a specific source by means of a number, which refers to the number assigned to the entry of this source in the bibliography (Weselby, 2014c).

4.2.3 Microsoft Word 2007, 2010, and 2013 include a Citations & Bibliography feature in the References tab, which enables the user to construct a data base of and then issues the in-text references and bibliography in accordance with the rules of different referencing systems. All the above-mentioned styles can be accessed in this feature .

4.2.4 RefWorks is a more versatile bibliographic database management software package, which is supported by the University of Malta. You may access and use it through the Library page in the UoM website (RefWorks, 2014). RefWorks is also useful for students using popular word processor programmes such as Open Office (Apache, 2015) and Libre Office (LibreOffice, 2015).

4.2.5 You are encouraged to make use of automated reference management systems of the type mentioned above.

4.2.6 The adoption of a particular style for a research paper or a dissertation should be discussed between you and your supervisors. The choice of style should reflect the field of study to which the paper/dissertation pertains.

5 Research Ethics

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Your research may have ethical implications, which may not necessarily be obvious to you at the outset. Issues of confidentiality, data protection, intellectual property rights of others, and the possibility that your research may in some way be cause harm or discomfort to others should be carefully examined and discussed with your supervisor at the very start of your dissertation research.

5.2 Your responsibilities

5.2.1 In the light of the above-mentioned considerations, research work involving data collection may require prior ethical approval through which the rights of both participants (say, in experiments) and you would be protected.

5.2.2 You expected to submit a declaration whether or not the need for approval applies to your work and, if yes, how you plan to deal with the anticipated ethical issues.

5.2.3 In such cases, you should refer to the University of Malta Ethics Committee page in the University of Malta website (UREC, 2014a) and the Research Ethics flyer (UoM, nd), download and fill a research ethics proposal form (UREC, 2014b) and submit the filled form to the Faculty for the Built Environment Research Ethics Committee (UoM, 2014c) through the Faculty Office, which may in turn decide to refer it to the University Research Ethics Committee.

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