Guidelines for
Institute for European Studies
Ph.D. Dissertations

Contents:
Introduction
- Eligibility to Register for a Ph.D.
- General Guidelines Applicable to Ph.D. Dissertations
- Consulting Your Supervisor and Progression
- Length of the Dissertation
- Format
- References
- Plagiarism
- Submission

Introduction
All students reading for a Ph.D. with the Institute for European Studies are to read these guidelines carefully and to note in particular the stipulated deadlines.

Eligibility to Register for a Ph.D.
Applicants for the Degree must fully comply with the University of Malta general regulations governing the Ph.D. as promulgated from time to time by the University of Malta and the Institute for European Studies Ph.D. bye-laws. To be allowed to register, prospective candidates must be in possession of one of the following degrees:

Either
(a) a Master of Arts in European Studies;
   Or
(b) a Magister Juris in European Law;
   Or
(c) qualifications which the Board deems comparable to the degrees indicated in (a) or (b).

Applicants may submit their application form, together with a comprehensive research proposal outlining the proposed project, including research sources and materials, at any time of the year.

Candidates who are eventually allowed to register for a Ph.D. (initially M.Phil) at the Institute may be required to participate in the Institute’s research and teaching programmes.

Before formally submitting an application prospective candidates are advised to consult the Director who will direct them to a member of the academic staff to advise them on preparing the application.

General Guidelines Applicable to Ph.D. Dissertations
The proposed research topic must be within the areas of study covered by the Institute for European Studies' undergraduate and postgraduate courses and must be relevant to European Studies.

Before submitting a thesis proposal, applicants 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, both at the Institute for European Studies or at the University. While verifying whether a thesis by the same title has already been submitted applicants are required to consult not only the Institute’s thesis titles but also those of related disciplines.

In drafting a thesis proposal, prospective candidates are advised to clearly mark out the title and the research question of the dissertation.

As part of this procedure, applicants shall be interviewed by the Institute’s Doctoral Committee with the participation of the applicants' designated Principal Supervisor in order to assess the applicants' ability and potential to reach doctoral level. Where it is not practical to hold an interview, appropriate alternative means of judging suitability will be used to the satisfaction of the Senate appointed Ph.D. Sub-Committee. The result of the interview shall eventually be made available to the Sub-Committee, together with the Institute for European Studies Board's recommendation, for its consideration.

If the Institute Ph.D. Committee is satisfied with the proposal, it shall give its approval for the application to be formally submitted to Senate in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - Degree Regulations, 2008. A summary of this procedure is included below but candidates are to read the University Ph.D. Degree Regulations 2008 before they submit their proposal. The proposal must include:

a. the provisional title for the thesis;
b. a detailed research proposal, normally of approximately 1000 words;
c. a statement on whether the studies will be undertaken on a full-time or a part-time basis, and, in the latter case, the number of hours that shall be dedicated to this research work;
d. a statement by a member of staff of the University who has agreed to act as Principal Supervisor;
e. a recommendation from the head of department or the division co-ordinator that the research topic is acceptable;
f. where appropriate, a request to present the thesis in a language other than English; and

g. where appropriate, a request to undertake the research outside the University.

h. Accepted applicants shall register for the M.Phil. Degree in the first instance. Senate
may allow the transfer of registration from the M.Phil. Degree to the Ph.D. Degree with the same research proposal if the conditions laid down in regulation 35 have been satisfied.

Format of the Proposal

While the Institute for European Studies does not insist on a definite format for the proposal, students are encouraged to keep the following in mind:

1. The proposal should begin by explaining the subject area in which the research is to be located, and provide an indication of the key theoretical, policy and/or empirical data planned to be addressed.

2. The proposal should also include a brief literature review in which the applicant needs to demonstrate familiarity with the relevant academic literature and theories relating to the research proposal, and an awareness of the major lines of argument that have been developed in the chosen research field.

3. The proposal must also include the research questions to be addressed. Importantly, the applicant needs to demonstrate the manner in which the research questions emanate from: gaps in the existing empirical literature; from the assessment of policies and from the application of a particular theory in a specific industry or national context; or from a synthesis of a number of bodies of literature. Although not essential, research questions that are topical or have policy relevance will be particularly welcome.

4. The research proposal should be as specific and focused as possible. If the research is being driven by gaps in the existing literature, these gaps which the applicant shall seek to address must be indicated clearly.

5. If the research is being driven by theoretical or policy debates, specific points of these debates on which the research will be focusing shall be clearly indicated.

6. The research proposal can also provide some explanation of what led the applicant to choose the topic. Thus, if for example the topic emerges from a long-standing interest or from interests that have developed while studying for a former qualification, this information ought to be made clear in the proposal. It will help to convey better the applicant’s motivation for pursuing doctoral studies.

7. Depending on the nature of the subject, it is desirable to give some indication of the methods that will be used to conduct the research. A variety of different research methods exist. Hence the applicant must seek to identify the method that is most suited to the area of research - econometric modelling, participant observation, survey data analysis, case-study analysis or the analysis of historical records to give a few examples.

8. Should the proposed research involve empirical work, the applicant must provide an indication of how the relevant data is to be collected. For example, the applicant might want to say something about access to particular sources of information (whether on-line access to databases will be required, whether the relevant archives are going to be used etc).

9. Although no indication of the research findings can be presented in a proposal, it is often beneficial if the candidate can conclude the research proposal by indicating the contribution which the research will make to the literature in that particular subject area, or by indicating the potential practical or policy implications of the research. This requires the applicant to provide an indication of the extent to which he/she feels that the research will make an original contribution, suggesting how it may fill gaps in existing research, and showing how it may extend understanding of particular topics.

10. While the research proposal is judged mainly on content, it must also look professional. It should be typed and written in good English. Particular attention will be paid to clarity of expression and also the structure, coherence and flow of argument.

11. Finally, a bibliography must always be included as part of the research proposal that lists books and articles to which reference is made in the proposal.

12. It is natural for ideas to evolve and change, which entails that applicants will not be obliged to adhere strictly to the specifics of their proposal once they are allowed to register for the degree. However, the proposal is the foundation of the working relationship with the supervisor and thus it cannot be radically altered without discussion and consultation with the supervisors and the approval of the relevant Institute for European Studies and University bodies as specified in the relevant bye-laws and regulations.

Consulting the Supervisor and Progression

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.

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to present the draft parts of the dissertation to their
supervisor 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.

Principal Supervisors shall be required to submit a written report to the Board, through the Institute’s Doctoral Committee, every June for all students under their supervision.

Students shall only be allowed to proceed with their studies subject to satisfactory progress reports from their Principal Supervisor. If the report is negative, the Board shall make recommendations to Senate on the student’s continuing registration for the Degree.

At the end of 12 months of full-time study, students are required to submit a report on their research work for consideration by an ad hoc board appointed by the Institute for European Studies Board. The ad hoc board shall be composed of a chairman, and two examiners, one of whom shall be the Principal Supervisor and the other a member of the Institute. The Chairman and the third examiner shall be appointed by the Institute’s Doctoral Committee.

The ad hoc board shall examine the student in a viva voce and shall submit a written report for consideration by the Institute’s Doctoral Committee in the first instance. The report shall contain recommendations according to the provisions of the Principal Regulations.

Length of the Dissertation
Studies for the Ph.D. Degree shall extend over three years of full-time study or six years of part-time study. On the recommendation of the Board and the Sub-Committee, Senate may grant students an extension of studies of up to two years in order to enable them to complete their studies, irrespective of whether they are registered on a full-time or a part-time basis.

The thesis shall be written in the prescribed format and shall not exceed 100,000 words, including footnotes but excluding bibliography, appendices and abstract. The work presented shall conform to the established scholarly standards of the appropriate discipline.

Format
It is impractical to lay down general regulations on preparation, form and content of Ph.D theses. The great majority of candidates will previously have successfully submitted an Honours or Masters thesis, and it may be presumed that they are familiar with the scholarly conventions in the presentation of references, accuracy of quotations and construction of bibliographies applicable to their discipline.

International Standard Paper Size A4 (297 x 210mm) should be used.

The dissertation must be typed, double or 1.5 space. Footnotes must be placed at the end of each page. All appendices must be placed 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:

Order of contents
A thesis follows the following order:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Declaration
- Acknowledgments
- Table of contents
- List of tables, figures and illustrations (if list items are fewer than 10 in number, this is not necessary)
- Main text
- Bibliography or List of References
- Appendices

Title page
A thesis must be preceded by a title page. The University logo is not permitted to be used in the thesis. The title page of the thesis should show:

- the title of the thesis
- the full name of the author
- the degree for which submitted
- month and year
- the name of the Institute for European Studies.
- The title page should also include the following statement: “Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy”
- The dissertation must include a full bibliography.

References
Broadly speaking footnotes should be placed at the end of each page in a numerical continuous form beginning 1, 2, etc. A separate number series is to be inserted for each chapter so that the footnotes in each chapter shall begin from 1. Students are urged to consult a stylebook. The following are being recommended:
The style to be used in the writing of the dissertation must be discussed and agreed with the supervisor at the very beginning of the writing process.

Plagiarism

Students are warned 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.

Submission

Six months before the submission deadline students shall be informed that they are required to inform the Institute for European Studies that they will be submitting their thesis for examination not less than three months before the submission deadline.

The Board shall recommend to Senate the appointment of the Board of Examiners in accordance with the Principal Regulations.

Students shall be required to submit a loose bound copy of their thesis for each member of the Board of Examiners, together with a copy in digital format. The officer in charge of the Institute shall issue a dated receipt.

On successful completion of their studies, students shall be required to submit to the Institute for European Studies, three hard bound copies of the thesis and one copy in digital format within six weeks from the publication of their result. One copy of the thesis shall be kept in the Institute's Library and another at the University Library. Students who do not comply with this bye-law shall not be awarded the Degree.