

## M.A. DISSERTATION STYLE GUIDE

*For further information, students are advised to read carefully the Students' Handbook, which has been distributed prior to commencement of the academic year and is also available on the Centre's website.*

### 1. Structure

The following outline is indicative of the structure expected of an M.A. dissertation. Students are advised to consult their supervisor for guidance on the most appropriate structure for their dissertation.

#### Preliminary Materials

Declaration of Authenticity (to be sent separately)

Title Page  
Abstract  
Acknowledgements  
Table of Contents  
List of Tables  
List of Figures  
List of Appendices  
Acronyms and Abbreviations

#### Recommended Chapter List

Chapter 1 - Introduction  
Chapter 2 - Literature Review  
Chapter 3 - Theoretical Discussion  
Chapter 4 - Methodology  
Chapter 5 - Empirical/Theoretical Research Findings  
Chapter 6 - Analysis  
Chapter 7 - Conclusion and Recommendations;  
References; Appendices

### 2. Style Guide

#### Length

The length of the dissertation should be in the range of **25,000 to 40,000 words**. The word count includes footnotes but excludes appendices, abstract, acknowledgements and bibliography. The dissertation should be written in a scholarly manner and should be properly proofread before submission for typographical and grammatical mistakes.

#### Font and font-size

The body of the script must be in 12pt Times New Roman; Footnotes must be in 9pt Arial.

### Spacing

All paragraphs must be indented by 0.5 cm. The text must be double-spaced while footnotes (if any) must be single-spaced.

### Quotation marks

Single quotation marks must be used throughout, except when presenting a quote within a quote, in which case, double quotation marks must be used. No quotation marks should be used for quotes longer than 30 words.

### Quotations

Quotations of more than 30 words must be single-spaced and form a distinct paragraph without indentation. Quotation marks must not be used in such cases.

### Margins

The left-hand margin must be of 3.5cm, while the top- and right-hand margins must be of 1.5cm. A top margin of 5cm is to be left on the first page of every section/division/chapter of the dissertation – e.g. Acknowledgements, Abstract, Introduction, References, etc. Footnotes (if any) must appear at the bottom of the relevant page (not at the end of each chapter or as a distinct section).

### Dates

The day, month and year - without commas - must be used; e.g. *29 October 1983*.

For decades, both digits and text are accepted; e.g. *1980s* or *Eighties*.

When choosing between two accepted typescript options, students are advised to keep consistent throughout their work.

### Textual reference numbers

Textual reference numbers must be continuous for each chapter. Superscript must be used, without brackets and following – not preceding – punctuation.

### Alignment

The script should be left aligned and not justified.

### Spelling

In case of doubt, students are advised to consult the Oxford English Dictionary.

### Abbreviations

Acronyms should be used when they are generally understood and not when they represent esoteric terms, phrases, groups and organisations. Students are advised to consult their tutor on matters of acronyms and abbreviations.

### Pagination

The main text, including the Introduction, References and any appendices must be numbered in Arabic numerals (1,2,3,4,etc), while the Title Page, Abstract, Acknowledgements, Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures, List of Appendices and Acronyms & Abbreviations must be numbered in Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc.). The Title Page must be considered as 'Page i' but should remain un-numbered. Roman numeral numbering must start from 'ii' on the Abstract.

### Supplementary graphic illustrations

Maps, diagrams, graphs, printed material, etc. should be bound with the dissertation.

### Digitisation

Students must create a digitised version of their dissertation (ETD), for it to be stored by the university's Library Services. For a Step by Step Guide on how to create a digitised version of a dissertation, please visit: <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/etd#instructions>.

## **3. Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be penalized accordingly. All sources used, whether directly or indirectly, should be acknowledged.

If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism or how to avoid it, we suggest you consult the following documents:

### University of Malta Guidelines on Plagiarism

[https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/415950/University\\_Guidelines\\_on\\_Plagiarism.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/415950/University_Guidelines_on_Plagiarism.pdf)

### University of Malta Assessment Regulations

[https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/24868/Assessment\\_Regulations.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/24868/Assessment_Regulations.pdf)

## **4. Submission**

Students are advised to refer to the Students' Handbook to get informed about up-to-date submission and other related deadlines. Whilst the first draft of the dissertation should be submitted electronically to the respective supervisor, the soft copy of the final dissertation is to be sent by email at [cspcr@um.edu.mt](mailto:cspcr@um.edu.mt). A hard copy of the dissertation is not required.

## **5. Dissertation Examination**

Each dissertation shall be examined by a dissertation committee (a Board of Examiners), which is composed of three members. Each Board shall consist of at least one member from each University.