

Ph.D. THESIS GUIDELINES

These guidelines provide a brief overview. Applicants and Ph.D. candidates are strongly advised to refer to [Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D. - Degree Regulations \(2008\)](#) and [Centre's PhD Bye-Laws \(2018\)](#) for complete information on procedures and regulation related to the postgraduate doctorate studies and award of the Ph.D. Degree.

1. Style Guide

Title Page

Layout of title page consists of title of thesis and subtitle (if any), followed by the name of the student, the subject, and the date of submission.

Length

The length of the thesis shall not exceed **100,000 words**. The word count includes footnotes but excludes appendices, abstract, acknowledgements and bibliography. The thesis 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 thesis – 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, candidates 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. Candidates are advised to consult their supervisor 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 thesis.

Referencing style

The candidate is to use the Chicago Manual Style, 16th edition (available at https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html) uniformly through the thesis. Where appropriate other citation styles might be used, if approved by the supervisor/

Digitisation

The candidate must create a digitised version of their thesis (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 thesis, please visit: <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/etd#instructions>.

2. 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/0007/436651/UniversityGuidelinesonPlagiarism.pdf

University of Malta Assessment Regulations

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/24868/Assessment_Regulations.pdf

3. Submission

3.1. Phase 1 (transfer from M.Phil. to Ph.D. status)

After 12 months but not more than 24 months of full-time study and upon satisfactory progress report from a supervisor, candidates are allowed to submit a request for transfer of registration from M.Phil. to Ph.D. status through the Centre Doctoral Committee. The request shall be accompanied by part of their research work in progress. Typically, students are expected to present 2 chapters of their draft thesis which are to be selected based on consultation with their Principal Supervisor. Ad hoc Board of Examiners will be appointed by the Centre Board in order to review the presented research work and ascertain that its quality meets the standards required for the transfer and that it has potential to justify PhD.

3.2. Phase 2 (thesis final submission)

Students are required to inform in writing the Centre Doctoral Committee through the Officer in Charge of the Centre about their intention to submit the final version stating the exact title of their thesis. This needs to be done at least three months prior to the estimated submission date.

Before submitting the work for examination, students shall upload the thesis on **VLE/Turnitin** to check for plagiarism and keep the digital receipt. Along with the thesis, students shall also submit a **signed declaration** that the thesis is their own personal work, and that the greater portion of the work has been done after their registration for the Ph.D. Degree.

The thesis examination consists of two stages:

a) First, the research work will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners composed of at least three members. Students are required to submit their thesis for examination to the Officer in charge of the Centre as follows:

- **One loose bound copy for each member of the Board of Examiners**, which shall include signed Declaration of Authenticity and Research Code of Practice and Ethics Review Procedures
- **One electronic version of the thesis**
- **Turnitin digital receipt**
- **One copy of the submission form** countersigned by the supervisor

Upon submission to the Centre Office, the officer in charge shall issue a dated receipt.

If the Board of Examiners finds the quality of the thesis satisfactory, the candidate shall be admitted to an oral (*viva voce*) examination.

b) During oral examination, the candidate is required to defend their thesis before the Board of Examiners. The examination will take place at the University of Malta and the student will be informed about the date at least 3 weeks prior to the examination.

On successful completion of their studies, students shall be required to submit to the Centre:

- **Two hardbound copies**, which shall include signed Declaration of Authenticity and Research Code of Practice and Ethics Review Procedures. The front and spine shall bear thesis title, full name of the student, the designation of the appropriate degree and a year of submission. The thesis shall be sewn and bound in black cloth and the lettering is to be in a gold print.
- **One electronic version of the thesis**, which shall include a signed declaration of authenticity, within six weeks from the publication of their result. The electronic version must conform to the standards set by the University of Malta Library.