



**L-Università ta' Malta**  
Faculty for the  
Built Environment

**To be handed in at the Faculty Office by no later than Friday 17th April 2026 at 4pm.**

**DISSERTATION PROPOSAL FORM**

Kindly fill in this form and attach the dissertation proposal.

Summary of your proposed work to include (1) 4 Keywords, (2) Short Abstract, (3) Aim/s, (4) Objective/s, (5) Research question, (6) Sample of ***literature review Or consulted research***, (7) Methodology and Technique/s; (8) Method of analysis

Name and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Identity Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title in full: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Dissertation Title:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Required resources for dissertation: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor consulted: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Title

## Name of applicant

### (1) Keywords (around 4 keywords)

e.g. participatory GIS, urban streetscape etc.

### (2) Short Abstract (up to 300 words in a single paragraph)

e.g.

**Topic:** Spatial planning engages with the many controversies that characterise a dynamic built environment. Its practice in a highly dense archipelago such as the Maltese Islands often brings issues of stakeholder representation and of good governance to the fore. The social milieu within which spatial planning takes place is therefore of relevance, especially in the light of the influence of characteristics related to proximate and highly networked communities. Commencing with an assessment of the role of the spatial planner over time and the challenges the profession faces today, the implications of value-based planning and the characteristics of dialogue are considered. **Context:** This is placed in the context of Malta as a relatively young nation and an even more recent member of the European Union. Of notice is the role of interest groups, stakeholders and community groups in statutory processes of representation, with a focus on the power relations affecting all participants, whether practicing planners or stakeholders. In this regard, the potential impact of Participatory GIS as a decision support system was assessed. GIS being already integrated into spatial planning in Malta, it was its value as a tool for fostering dialogue between participants that was of primary interest. **Methodology:** These matters were further analysed through a tri-partite ethnographic process of engagement in participant observation, in-depth interviews and a tri-partite Participatory GIS initiative. The ensuing observations resulted in positive correlations between the use of participatory mapping technologies and the extent to which stakeholders are proactive, as opposed to simply reactive; and thus, on the potential for dialogue in the representation process. Despite this, socio-political factors cannot be ignored, and the dissertation concludes with a call for improved representation towards balancing values and context, legitimacy and efficacy in spatial planning in Malta.

### (3) Aims (around 3 aims in a concise format, describing what you want to achieve)

e.g.

- To investigate...
- To apply...
- To review...

**(4) Objectives (around 3 objectives, describing how the aims are to be achieved)**

e.g.

- To review literature on...
- To engage in...
- To develop...

**(5) Research Question (one primary question with sub-questions if required)**

e.g.

- **How does...?**
  - What...?
  - Which...?
  - Why...?

**(6) Sample of Literature Review or Consulted Research (list of relevant topics)**

e.g.

- Contemporary literature...
- Definition and general terms...
- Historical overview...
- Wider trends...
- Case studies...

**Sample of consulted research (around 10 references which were used to compile the proposal):**

e.g. Aquilina, P.M. (2019). *The Dichotomy between the Politics of Planning and Stakeholder Engagement: The Impact on outside Development Zone Development in Malta*. Web.

**(7) Methodology & Techniques (up to 200 words describing the proposed data gathering methods)**

e.g.

Mixed methods approach:

1. PGIS

- GIS-based methodology through the use of the interactive online platform provided by the University of Malta (<https://uom.communitymaps.org.uk/welcome>);
- Perception Mapping to allow stakeholders to map out emotions; and
- PGIS Workshops consisting of participatory physical mapping exercises conducted in focus groups to have participants map local data, complemented with a digital interactive online mapping exercise.

2. Site observations
  - Photography walks...
  - Choice of case studies...
3. Survey gathering quantitative and qualitative data from the public
  - Public surveys...
4. Interviews with professionals in the field
  - Interviews with...

**(8) Methods of Analysis (up to 200 words on how key indicators from the data gathered shall be analysed)**

e.g.

- Perception mapping from PGIS mapping workshops through quantitative and qualitative content analysis...
- Extraction of key indicators from the surveys and interviews through content analysis...
- Illustration of factors from the site observation of the case study areas through photographic analysis...