

ACA3006 DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

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Introduction

During the final year of the programme of studies leading to a B.A. (Hons.) in Adult Education, Training and Development, students are to produce and submit a researched dissertation (individual work) of 12,000 words (including in-text references, quotations, footnotes, tables, and figures – excluding references' list and any appendices) that discusses aspect/s related to the fields of adult education and/or training and/or professional development.

The topic is chosen by the student in conjunction with an approved supervisor.

The dissertation study-unit carries 16 ECTS. More information on the study-unit is available in the online description [here](#) and later in this document.

The dissertation is examined by a Board of Examiners using the criteria described later in this document, and by three persons appointed by the Department of Arts, Open Communities & Adult Education. **No viva voce examination is pegged to this study-unit.**

The dissertation can involve a project. **When opting for the project, the dissertation can comprise:**

1. An andragogical research dissertation of 12,000 words with a project deliverable appended in an appendix. Examples of a project deliverable can include one or more, **newly developed**:

- plan/s of a lesson / session,
- assessment brief/s,
- roadmaps or other resource to support/facilitate learning or training,
- evaluative tools, etc.

that can be integrated into an educational or training course or programme **for adults**, which already exists and is already running with the involvement of the student, or not; or that could be developed in the future by the student, or other entity.

OR

2. Project deliverable(s) that is/are more elaborately developed (compared to option 1 above). The project deliverable(s) need to be suited for integration into an educational or training course or programme **for adults**, which already exists and is already running with the involvement of the student, or not; or that could be developed in the future by the student, or other entity.

Examples of the more elaborate project deliverable can include **newly developed**:

- a series of lesson plans,
- a resource pack, etc.

The word count of the project deliverable should take around 70% of the allocated 12,000 words.

The remaining word count allocation (c. 30%) should comprise a report outlining the conceptual/theoretical framework underpinning the project and the methodology.

Aims of the Dissertation

1. A practical exercise in developing research and writing skills, whilst contributing original findings/perspectives to the area being researched;
2. Examination of the nexus between theory and practice in the fields of adult education, training, and development; and
3. Critical appraisal and application of a variety of research methodologies.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge & Understanding:

In the dissertation, there will be evidence that the student can:

1. Review concepts, theories and schools of thought that are relevant to the specific topic;
2. Explain the research methodology applied to the particular research problem; and
3. Discuss various strengths and limitations associated with the employed methodology.

Skills:

In the dissertation, there will be evidence that the student can:

1. Formulate relevant and succinct research questions or research problem;
2. Plan a feasible, valid, and reliable research design;
3. Employ relevant research tools to gather and analyse data; and
4. Write a researched dissertation that contributes to the study of adult education and/or training and/or development that is commensurate to the level of the programme of studies.

More information is available [here](#).

While carrying out research and producing the Dissertation the student is responsible for seeking contact with the supervisor and to receive responses/feedback from the supervisor. Exchanges should be as frequent as relevant; but it is advised that intervals between exchanges do not exceed 3-4 weeks.

Any issues encountered with this, and other matters should be communicated via email to the course coordinator and/or the Head of Department.

Proposal

The topic and supervisor (and advisor, when applicable) need to be approved by the Department of Arts, Open Communities and Adult Education.

For this to occur students are to submit the proposal form below by the communicated date (usually during Semester 2 of the year of studies preceding the final year of studies) by uploading the proposal on the VLE space provided in due course.

In the run-up towards the final date of proposal submission, the Department will organise a dedicated meeting to guide and support students with this task.

Important Dates

Before or by:

15 March 2024	Identify supervisor and confirm the supervisor is available.
10 April 2024	Submit proposal using the dedicated VLE Turnitin area.
1 May 2024	You will receive feedback on the proposal. If updates are needed you will need to submit an updated version of the proposal before or up 15 days later.
1 September 2024	Submit FREC documentation.
15 June 2025	Submit the dissertation using the dedicated VLE Turnitin area.

Proposal Form Template

DATE:

STUDENT NAME AND SURNAME:

STUDENT ID / STUDENT NUMBER:

STUDENT UM EMAIL:

DISSERTATION TITLE:

SUPERVISOR'S DETAILS

TITLE, NAME AND SURNAME:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

(DELETE AND FILL-IN AS RELEVANT): The supervisor is a **resident/casual/visiting (senior) lecturer / professor** at the **Department** _____ **of the Faculty** _____ **/ Name of Centre / Institute.**

Please paste below email showing acceptance from supervisor:

ADVISOR'S DETAILS (only if applicable): The advisor would complement the supervisor's contribution in supervising and reviewing the student's work, particularly when the topic being researched requires a very specific expertise (e.g., a specific type of learning difficulty or disability) which might not be one of the areas of expertise of the supervisor.

TITLE, NAME AND SURNAME:

EMAIL ADDRESS:

MOBILE / TEL. NO./S:

(DELETE AND FILL-IN AS RELEVANT): The advisor is a **resident/casual/visiting (senior) lecturer / professor** at the **Department** _____ **of the Faculty** _____ **/ Name of Centre / Institute.**

Please paste below email showing acceptance from advisor:

DISSERTATION TITLE: _____

RESEARCH QUESTIONS (*type in 2-3 brief and focused RQs*):

TYPE OF DISSERTATION (*choose only one*):

- ☐ Research only
- ☐ Research + appended project deliverable
- ☐ Project-based + report

TYPE OF STUDY (*briefly state in 1-2 lines, e.g., (participatory) action research, case study, needs analysis, etc.*):

DATA COLLECTION:

Specify: Quantitative and/or qualitative research method(s) (*briefly state in 1-2 lines*)?

Specify primary data collection method(s) (*if applicable briefly state in 2-3 lines, e.g., questionnaire, (semi-)structured interviews, focus groups, (participant) observation/s, internet-based research, documentary research, etc. + number of data collection instances that each participant will participate in, e.g., one-time or X number of times questionnaire and/or interview/s / observation/s, etc.*)

Specify number of participants and their salient characteristics (*if applicable briefly state in 1-2 lines, e.g., gender, age cohorts, roles / experiences / vulnerabilities etc.*)

Specify modality (*if applicable briefly state in 1-2 lines, e.g., face-to-face, online, hybrid, etc.*)

Specify recruitment / cooperating institutions / gatekeepers (*if applicable briefly state in 1-2 lines*)

Specify use of (un)published secondary data (if any) that you will analyse (*if applicable briefly state in 1-2 lines, e.g., datasets retrieved from Eurostat, NSO, etc. minutes of meetings or other unpublished documents such as writings submitted by students, etc.*)

Note: You can deposit any primary data you collect in the Data Repository of University of Malta (drUM).

Advantages include safe storage that can be set to closed, embargoed or open access. When set to open access, data need to be fully and thoroughly anonymised, if this is the condition of data collection and usage authorised by the FREC. drUM champions FAIR principles, i.e. as much as possible, datasets should be findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. Depositing datasets with open access facilities enhances the possibility of data reuse and citations. Dataset deposit in drUM needs to be declared in the DMP submitted to FREC from the onset, and authorised by FREC. More information is available [here](#).

IMPORTANT!

ALL STUDIES NEED TO BE REGISTERED USING THE URECA SYSTEM,
WHICH WILL GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING WHETHER ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM THE FACULTY'S RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEE IS REQUIRED.

Read information available [here](#) and consult with the course coordinator.

**URECA REGISTRATION NUMBER NEEDS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE EARLY PAGES OF THE DISSERTATION.
THIS IS COMPULSORY FOR SUBMISSION.**

Specify DATA COLLECTION **DOES/NOT (delete as relevant)** REQUIRE approval/s from **cooperating institution/s**
(if yes, please specify, e.g., Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning & Employability, Lifelong Learning Centres, NGOs, etc.)

DATA ANALYSIS - specify which method/s will be used to analyse primary and/or secondary data, (2-3 lines e.g.,
bivariate/multivariate analysis of quantitative data and/or thematic/discourse/content analysis of qualitative data, etc.)

Other comments (if applicable specify in 1-3 lines, e.g., dual role, conflict of interest, etc.):

SIGNATURES:

STUDENT'S NAME AND SURNAME

SUPERVISOR'S NAME AND SURNAME

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE

DATE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

The dissertation proposal is (indicate as relevant):

Approved / conditionally approved / not approved until improved

Feedback:

Signature:

Signed by (name and surname):

Date:



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Education

B.A. (Hons.) Degree Course in Adult Education, Training and Development

Logbook

LOGBOOK

PURPOSE

- To keep a record of the meetings with his or her supervisor (and advisor, if applicable) – – whether face-to-face, or otherwise
- To clearly identify the outcomes of meeting and the actions that are required on the part of the students;
- To provide evidence of that process to the Boards of Examiners.

THE LOGBOOK HAS TO BE SUBMITTED AS AN APPENDIX OF THE DISSERTATION

It is the responsibility of the student to keep this Logbook up to date. The student is expected to comply with the supervisor's suggestions and recommendations as noted by the student in the Logbook and approved by the supervisor (and advisor, if applicable). With the supervisor's (and advisor's, if applicable) permission, the template proposed below can be modified to render it more fit for purpose.

The Faculty of Education reserves the right not to accept the Dissertation for examination if the Logbook is not properly documented. Email or other records of correspondence between student and supervisor (and advisor, if applicable) can also be attached to the Logbook.

Logbook Section 1
Details of the Dissertation

Dissertation Title	
Student Name & Surname	
ID Card / Student Number	
TYPE OF DISSERTATION <i>(choose only one):</i> - Research only - Research + appended project deliverable - Project-based + report	
Date when Dissertation Proposal was approved by the Board (attach Proposal and approval by the Board)	
Supervisor Title Name Surname Department Faculty / Centre / Institute Email address	
Advisor (if applicable) Title Name Surname Department Faculty / Centre / Institute Email address	

<p>(If applicable) List of amendments to the original proposal approved by the Board (insert date and attach copy of official approval by the Board)</p>	
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Logbook Section 2

Student Self-Reported Progress

This sheet needs to be filled by the student **at least once every month** from the day the student starts drafting the proposal to the day the student submits the Dissertation (point form is enough).

Date:
Progress made: <i>Examples:</i> <i>1. I read papers 5 papers on critical education;</i> <i>2. I drafted the participants' interview questions, etc.</i>
Issues of concern / to resolve: <i>Examples:</i> <i>1. How can I maximise response rate;</i> <i>2. Should I video record interviews?, etc.</i>
Way forward to address concerns, including timeframes: <i>Examples:</i> <i>1. I scheduled an appointment to discuss these matters with the supervisor on DD/MM/YY;</i> <i>2. I sought the guidance of FREC and resolved not to video record interviews; etc.</i>

Logbook Section 3

Meeting / Exchange Log

This should be filled-in to document outcomes of every meeting / relevant exchange with your Supervisor and/or Advisor

Meeting number:	
Date:	
Themes / topics / issues discussed:	<i>Examples: sample size, time plan, submitting the required docs to FREC, etc.</i>

Recommendations and Agreed Action	Timeframe

Student's Signature

Supervisor's / Advisor's Signature

--- END OF LOGBOOK ---

Formatting your Dissertation

- (a) **Paper size:** International Standard Size A4 (29.7x 21cm).
- (b) **Print** on both sides of the page.
- (c) **Page Margins:** Use margins of at least 2.5cm (or 1 inch)
- (d) **Typing:** Times New Roman size 12. The font colour should be black throughout. It is suggested that text is aligned to the left. This will avoid extra spacing between words.
- (e) **Page Numbering:** The main text, including the Reference List and any appendices of the dissertation shall have Arabic numerals; the title page, dedication (if any), acknowledgements, table of contents, etc. preceding the main text, shall have Roman numerals. Page numbers should be centred at the bottom of the page.
- (f) **Layout of title page:** Title and subtitle (if any), followed by the name of the student, student ID and the date of submission. For example, 'A dissertation presented in the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta as part of the B.A. Hons. course in Adult Education, Training and Development', followed by month and year of submission.
- (g) **Abstract and Keywords:** The title page should be followed by an abstract of one paragraph of 200-250 words that outlines topic, research questions, methodology, main findings, and recommendations/implications of the study. This should be followed by 4-5 keywords to help readers find your dissertation.
- (h) **Supervisor endorsement:** The abstract should be followed by a page that states the supervisor is endorsing the submission of the dissertation, e.g.

The undersigned supervised (Name Surname of student, ID/Student number XXXXXX) and is hereby endorsing its submission.

_____ (signature)

(Title Name Surname of the Supervisor)

Date: _____

The above can be replaced with an email.

- (i) **References (in-text and final reference list):** Students should follow the style APA 7th edition. Information and guidelines are available here: <https://libraryguides.vu.edu.au/apa-referencing/7GettingStarted>
- (j) **Headings:**
 - a. First level headings – title of the chapter should be in bold with a font size of 16 and with an initial capital letter for any proper noun;

- b. Second level headings (for instance Introduction) should be in bold with an initial capital letter for any proper noun;
 - c. Third level headings should be in bold italics with an initial capital letter for any proper nouns;
 - d. Fourth level headings should be in italics with an initial capital letter for any proper nouns.
- (k) **Word Limit:** Not to exceed 12,000 words including in-text references, quotations, footnotes, tables, and figures – excluding references' list and any appendices. When opting for the project, the dissertation can comprise:

1. An andragogical research dissertation of 12,000 words with a project deliverable appended in an appendix;

OR

2. Project deliverable(s) that is/are more elaborately developed (compared to option 1 above). The word count of the project deliverable should take around 70% of the allocated 12,000 words. The remaining word count allocation (c. 30%) should comprise a report outlining the conceptual/theoretical framework underpinning the project and the methodology.



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ACA3006 DISSERTATION

Examiner / Chairperson Report *(delete as applicable)*

DATE:

STUDENT NAME AND SURNAME:

STUDENT ID / STUDENT NUMBER:

DISSERTATION TITLE:

Assessment Criteria:

BRIEFLY COMMENT ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE DISSERTATION MANIFESTS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE LEARNING OUTCOMES NOTED BELOW. WHEN RELEVANT PLEASE SUBSTANTIATE WITH 1-2 EXAMPLES, PAGE NUMBERS, ETC.

Knowledge & Understanding:

In the dissertation there is evidence that the student.....

1. Reviewed concepts, theories and schools of thought that are relevant to the specific topic
2. Explained the research methodology applied to the particular research problem
3. Discussed various strengths and limitations associated with the employed methodology

Skills:

In the dissertation there is evidence that the student.....

1. Formulated relevant and succinct research questions or research problem
 2. Planned a feasible, valid, and reliable research design
 3. Employed relevant research tools to gather and analyse data
 4. Wrote a researched dissertation that contributes to the study of adult education and/or training and/or development that is commensurate to the level of the programme of studies
-

Other comments:

(As an examiner / chairperson you can use the space below to include other comments that substantiate the mark and grade awarded)

MARK AND GRADE AWARDED:

 TITLE NAME SURNAME

 TITLE NAME SURNAME

 TITLE NAME SURNAME

 ROLE: EXAMINER / CHAIRPERSON

 ROLE: EXAMINER / CHAIRPERSON

 ROLE: EXAMINER / CHAIRPERSON

 SIGNATURE

 SIGNATURE

 SIGNATURE

 DATE

 DATE

 DATE

Marks and Grades

For your reference, UM undergraduate regulations, 2019, available [here](#), with excerpt below:

Descriptor	Mark Range	Grade
Work displaying exceptional quality Exceptional performance showing comprehensive and critical understanding, and application of the subject matter. Evidence of extensive additional reading/research/work.	90% - 100%	A+
Work displaying comprehensive and critical understanding Superior performance showing a comprehensive and critical understanding of the subject matter. Evidence of considerable additional reading/research/work.	80% - 89%	A
Work displaying comprehensive understanding Performance showing a very good working knowledge of the subject matter. Evidence of a moderate amount of additional reading/research/work.	75% - 79%	B+
Work displaying substantial understanding Above-average performance, with a working knowledge of the subject matter. Evidence of some additional reading/research/work.	70% - 74%	B
Work displaying sound understanding Average performance. Evidence of little additional reading/research/work.	60% - 69%	C+
Work displaying satisfactory understanding Adequate performance. No evidence of additional reading/research/work.	55% - 59%	C
Work displaying satisfactory understanding with shortcomings Adequate but inconsistent performance. No evidence of additional reading/research/work.	50% - 54%	D+
Work displaying basic understanding Marginal performance, satisfying minimum criteria.	45% - 49%	D
Work displaying inadequate understanding to varying degrees.	0% - 44%	F ^{1,2}

¹ If mark obtained is between 35% and 44% in Compensatable Study-Units, and is compensated by good performance in other Study-Units, a Compensated Pass (CP) shall be awarded (vide regulation 48).

Descriptor	Mark Range	Grade
² Unjustified absence for an assessment when a valid reason for absence is required, or failure to hand in assigned work on time, or ineligibility to take assessment due to unapproved absence from lectures shall be assigned an F with 0 marks in the calculation of the year average mark.		

40. The following grades when assigned to Study-Units shall not be taken into consideration for computation purposes but form part of the student's academic record:

Grade	Descriptor
P	Pass - when assessment is based on a Pass/Fail basis only. Such a result is not taken in consideration for calculating the final weighted average mark and for award classification purposes.
I	Temporary grade for (a) when the assessment date has been postponed or deadline for submission of work has been extended; or (b) when absence in an assessment is being considered by the board appointed by Senate; or (c) work which is being considered in terms of the disciplinary procedures stipulated in the University Assessment Regulations.