



L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Medicine & Surgery

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis Guidelines

March 2021

1. Submission of Thesis for PhD Degree

Timeframe: Not less than three months before the intended date of submission, students shall signify their intention to the Faculty Doctoral Committee to present their thesis stating the exact title. The process of examination consists of a review of the written Thesis and an oral examination.

Procedure: A Board of Examiners is appointed by Senate on the recommendation of the Faculty Board following Faculty Doctoral Committee consideration.

2. Rationale

The examination is expected to demonstrate evidence of the significant contribution to knowledge in a particular field of study and the originality of the work. The process assesses the ability of the candidate to relate the subject matter of the thesis to the existing body of knowledge and to apply research methods appropriately. A satisfactory level of literary presentation is expected.

3. Organisation of the report

Abstract: An abstract of not more than 2000 characters including spaces to summarise aims of the research, methodology, interim results and discussion.

Keywords: 3-5

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Introduction Chapter: A critical analysis of the existing body of knowledge and arguments supporting the generation of hypothesis for the research. Clear outline of the aims of the research and detailed objectives.

Methodology Chapter: A detailed description of research design and methodology. Confirmation of ethics approval. Scanned approval should be included as an Appendix.

Results Chapter: Presentation of the data and findings including inferences that are drawn.

The research design may consist of inter-related separate study phases and such a design may lend itself better to a structure where the methodology and results of each phase are presented together in separate chapters for each phase. The candidate, with the guidance of the supervisory team is to select the most appropriate scholarly scientific distribution of the chapters.

Discussion Chapter: Reflection on original contribution of the research to knowledge.

Appendices: Include additional material such as research tools, dissemination outcomes (scientific papers, presentations)

References: Cite reference in text with an author – date citation system and list references alphabetically in the references section.

The references in the list should be listed according to the **International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals**. Please refer to: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html

Use of footnotes is recommended for sources such as reports, non-peer reviewed articles, websites and newspaper contributions.

It is recommended to use a tool such as **EndNote**, or **Mendeley** (free online and desktop version) or **Refworks** (freely available for University of Malta students, through the library website) for reference management and formatting.

4. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of another person's work, without the acknowledgement of the sources, as one's own or the deliberate and unacknowledged incorporation in a student's work of material derived from the work (published or otherwise) of another.

Students are referred to guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism, using Turnitin and interpreting Turnitin reports available by the University of Malta at <https://www.um.edu.mt/services/policiesforstudents> and https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/436651/UniversityGuidelinesonPlagiarism.pdf

Students are to submit Thesis through the Turnitin software and submit the report as a softcopy.

5. Organisation of the manuscript

a) Cover

- approved title of Thesis
- name of student and year of submission

b) Title Page

- Approved title of dissertation
- Name of student
- Name of the Department, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta, followed by the year
- required statement: Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

c) Signed Declaration of authenticity available from:

<https://www.um.edu.mt/ms/students/dissertationsubmission>

Word Count: Not to exceed 100 000 words excluding bibliography, appendices and abstract.

Margins: 3.50cm left, 2.50cm top, bottom, right

Pagination: Preliminary pages carry lowercase roman numerals on right side of page.

Arabic numbers start from chapter 1 and continue throughout manuscript including appendices on right side of page.

Spacing: Double spacing for the main text, one and half spacing for the bibliography. Text shall be written on one side of the page only.

Font: Conventional font e.g. Arial or Calibri, size 12 point

General Presentation: Avoid using underlining. Keep colours simple and use when necessary

Title of sections should be bold and in Title Case.

Sections should be numbered by chapter as the first digit and sub-headings by up to three more digits (for example section 2.2.3.4 is in chapter 2) if required.

Figures and Tables: Can be embedded in the text **BUT text should not be wrapped around the figures**. Figures must be clearly legible, and the source acknowledged by citation if applicable. Figures should be presented with a figure legend beneath the figure which clearly describes the figure. The number and title of the Table should be above the Table and the Table legend should be below. Figures should be set at High Definition 300dpi.

6. List of Publications and Abstracts

It is highly recommended for students to present at least 1 (submitted) or more papers in peer-reviewed journals. The work as a presentation or publication should be included under this section. The paper(s) and abstract(s) must have been confirmed by the Supervisor.

7. Submission

Spiral-bound copies should be presented for examination. A total of 4 spiral-bound copies should be submitted. A soft copy should also be forward on doctoral.ms@um.edu.mt.

Students are also required to forward the following:

- Turnitin Receipt
- Submission form which may be downloaded from the following link:
https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/121105/submissiondissertationorthesis.pdf
- Authenticity and Research Ethics Form which may be downloaded from the following link:
https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/254321/authenticityformdoctoral.pdf

The Submission Form and Authenticity & Research Ethics Form should be submitted separately and should not be included in the spiral bound copy or the soft copy of the Thesis.

8. Oral defence of the thesis

Students are invited by the Board of Examiners to attend for an oral defence consisting of:

- a 30 minute presentation by the student highlighting aims of the research, major findings and reflecting on impact of their work.

- Discussion and answer questions posed by the Board of Examiners

9. Final version

Hard-bound copies are to be submitted only once corrections have been made and after the final result has been published. Two hard bound copies of the thesis are to be submitted.

The University of Malta requires students to submit an **electronic copy of their Thesis** to the University Library. To this end, standards were developed by the University of Malta Library and are available on the [Library website](#).

It is the students' responsibility to read through the instructions provided in the "**Information for Students**" and "**FAQs**" web-pages.

Important points to remember:

- The ETD should be submitted as a single file in PDF format.
- The name and surname of the student should appear on the title page of the dissertation.
- Any other personal information about the students or their participants should not be visible in the dissertation.
- The PDF file should **not** include a declaration form; this is to be submitted to the Faculty as a separate document.

10. Governance

The Faculty Doctoral Committee is the committee entrusted to follow the progress of students in their research work and oversees the students' doctoral studies. The Doctoral School of the University of Malta provides guidance and support to doctoral candidates and academic supervisory teams. The Doctoral School organises workshops as part of the Professional Development Programme including addressing a number of activities pertaining to doctoral studies. Useful tools and resources and details of the Professional Development Programme are available at <https://www.um.edu.mt/doctorschool>.

11. Useful Links

Referencing Guidelines: http://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html

Plagiarism: <https://www.um.edu.mt/operatingprocedures/doc/EDU-012-01>

Declaration of Authenticity: <https://www.um.edu.mt/ms/students/dissertationsubmission>

Submission of Thesis Form:

https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/121105/submissiondissertationorthesis.pdf

Library website: <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/etd>

Doctoral School website: <https://www.um.edu.mt/doctoralschool>

SPSS Courses: <https://www.um.edu.mt/itservices/training/spsscourses>