

## **Faculty for Social Wellbeing/Faculty for Medicine and Surgery**

### **MSc in Addiction Studies**

#### **Dissertation Guidelines**

##### **Introduction**

The dissertation is subject to the Bye-Laws of 2019 in terms of the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008 for the Degree of Master of Science in Addiction Studies - M.Sc. - under the auspices of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing and the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery

- The dissertation shall be on a subject in the field of Addiction Studies that is approved by the Board of Studies of the academic programme.
- The dissertation must consist of original work in the sense that it shall either be a record of original research or present an ordered and critical expression of existing data with regards to a particular subject approved in writing by the Board of Studies.
- The dissertation shall be carried out under the guidance of a supervisor or a supervisor and co-supervisor, who have been approved by the Board of Studies. Any one supervising or co-supervising the respective student shall not be related by consanguinity or by affinity to the third degree inclusive. The relationship between the supervisor/co-supervisor and the student is a reciprocal one, and it involves responsibilities and duties on both sides.

##### **Supervisor responsibilities**

- Checking the 'Dissertation Proposal Form' and signing it upon approval;
- Providing the student with advice at every stage in the planning and conduct of research and in the writing of the dissertation;
- In case of a significant period of absence due to unforeseen circumstances, the supervisor should notify the Board of Studies so that replacement supervision would be provided to the student;
- Giving guidance to the student about the nature of research, the standard expected and about plagiarism;
- Maintaining contact through regular meetings and being accessible to the student at other appropriate times when advice may be needed;
- Giving advice on the necessary completion of successive stages of work so that the dissertation may be submitted within the scheduled time;
- Requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time;
- Making the student aware of inadequacy in progress or of standards of work below those generally expected;

- Submitting assessment of the student's work in a timely manner.
- Supervisors are not responsible for the proof-reading of the dissertation. Neither is it their responsibility to ensure that dissertations do not contain plagiarism. They are not responsible for correcting grammar and quality of writing, and students with such difficulties are advised to seek extra support in these areas.
- Supervisors are strongly encouraged to meet their respective students as frequently as necessary in the interest of the student

### **Student responsibilities**

- Making available to the supervisor a copy of the 'Dissertation Proposal Form', and these Guidelines;
- Discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and feedback which the student finds most helpful, and agreeing upon a schedule of meetings;
- Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties;
- Planning a dissertation, which is achievable within a schedule consistent with the requirements of the Course Regulations;
- Taking due account of the supervisor's opinion, which is, however, advisory only, and of the need to take account of the Regulations regarding length, format, organisation and deadlines.
- Allowing sufficient time for the supervisor to correct the work.
- Students who consider that their work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside their control should discuss the matter with their supervisor. Alleged inadequacy of supervisory arrangements during the period of study would not constitute grounds for an appeal against the final assessment given.

### **Ethical Clearance**

- Ethical clearance is to be sought from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. Please visit <https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/students/researchethics> for further guidelines and information. Here you can also download and complete the ethical clearance forms for students. <https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/frec>
- You are also expected to discuss ethics and obtaining ethical clearance with your supervisor prior to FREC submission.
- Your supervisor is required to endorse forms pertaining to ethical clearance, otherwise they will not be accepted by FREC/UREC.
- You must not collect any data until you have received UNCONDITIONAL ETHICAL APPROVAL from FREC/UREC.
- You must also provide your supervisor with documentation from FREC/UREC indicating that you have received unconditional ethical approval prior to commencing data collection.
- Students who submit their dissertation without having unconditional ethical clearance will be considered to have breached the Research Code of Practice and will have disciplinary measures taken against them in accordance with Regulation 5(2) of the University Student Discipline Regulations

## **Structure of the Dissertation**

(i) front matter

(a) The front matter shall include a title page that includes the:

- title of the dissertation
- name of author
- the statement 'A dissertation presented to the Faculty for Social Wellbeing and the Faculty for Medicine and Surgery for the degree of MSc in Addiction studies'

(b) Acknowledgments

(c) Abstract (should not exceed 250 words)

(d) Five key words

(e) Table of contents

(f) List of figures (if applicable)

(g) List of tables (if applicable)

(h) List of Acronyms (if applicable)

The front matter page numbers shall be in Roman numerals

(ii) Chapters of the dissertation

The chapters of the dissertation (including the references) shall follow from the front matter.

The chapters of the dissertation may be organized along the following lines:

- Introduction
- A review of the literature
- Methodology
- Data analysis/ Results/Findings/
- Discussion (in the case of some qualitative traditions a combined findings and discussion chapter)
- Conclusion

(iii) Appendices

The Appendices shall include:

- evidence of final ethical clearance from FREC/UREC;

- Maltese (where applicable) and English versions of the interview schedule, information sheets, debrief forms, any questionnaires and (unsigned) consent forms.
- Furthermore, a summary of the dissertation in a publishable format is to be included in the appendix. The summary, which is not included in the word count, is to be between 3000 and 3500 words in length.

## Turnitin

Refer to the instructions on how to avoid plagiarism by visiting the following website:  
[https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/261324/avdplagiarism.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/261324/avdplagiarism.pdf)

Two dissertation areas will be made available on VLE for students

1. a draft dissertation area which allows students to submit parts of the dissertation and to download an originality report which students are to discuss with their tutor. Students are required to send their supervisor a downloaded copy of the originality report by email or print it out and discuss with them during research supervision.
2. A final dissertation area where students upload the FINAL dissertation prior to manual submission. Students must upload their FINAL dissertation in PDF (including all the dissertation chapters, reference list, appendices etc.) by their dissertation deadline.

With regards to the Turnitin originality report it is important to note:

1. Turnitin produces an originality report after comparing the students' work against electronic sources e.g. Internet, books, journals and other students' work.
2. The originality report highlights any text in the students' work found to be matching with other sources, along with links to the original sources where matched text was identified.
3. The report grades the students' work for similarity between 0% (no plagiarism detected) and 100% (wholly plagiarised) and assigns a colour coding for the whole assignment according to the severity of the alleged plagiarism. The percentage rating (reflecting the amount of content that has been matched) is also known as the similarity index.
4. A judgement about whether or not plagiarism has occurred cannot be based simply on the percentage of matching text that is found. Tutors will analyse and interpret the originality reports carefully as part of their decision-making process to determine if the students' work has been plagiarised or not.
5. Further information pertaining to Turnitin, including frequently asked questions, can be found via the following link:  
<https://www.um.edu.mt/itservices/vle/pds>
6. Cases of suspected plagiarism in a dissertation are automatically referred to the University Assessment Disciplinary Board.

**Word Count:**

This should be between 15,000 - 20,000 words, *excluding* all direct quotations from interviews, footnotes, references and the bibliography.

**Writing, Formatting and Referencing Guide:**

The latest APA edition shall be adopted.

**Submission of Dissertation:**

The deadline for the submission of the dissertation will be announced by the Board of Studies but will normally occur towards the end of the last semester of studies

Items to submit:

- 1 copy of the dissertation, which should be spiral-bound is to be submitted manually .
- One soft copy to be submitted as a PDF through the turn it in area on the VLE created for this purpose
- Submit the ‘Submission of Dissertation Form’ duly signed by both student and supervisor

**Assessment:**

The assessment of dissertations is regulated by the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008 [https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0013/10831/Postgraduate\\_Harmonised\\_Regulations.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/10831/Postgraduate_Harmonised_Regulations.pdf)

Dissertations shall:

- (a) be work of an advanced or original nature in the area of study;
- (b) satisfy the Board of Examiners as regards content and presentation; and
- (c) fulfil the requirements as provided by relevant bye-laws and guidelines as regards format and length.

Principal Supervisors shall signify in writing, on the appropriate form, that they are aware that the student is submitting his/her dissertation for examination by the Board of Examiners.

Dissertations submitted for the award of the MSc in Addiction Studies shall be assessed by a Board of Examiners appointed by Senate for the purpose, on the recommendation of the Board of studies. The Board of Examiners shall be composed of at least three members one of whom may be an external examiner from an overseas institution normally appointed on a

non-visiting basis. Principal Supervisors and co-supervisors shall not be members of the Board of Examiners but the Principal Supervisor shall be invited to attend as an observer during the oral examination.

An oral examination shall be held. A second oral examination may be held at the discretion of the Board of Examiners in cases of resubmission of dissertations following major corrections or resubmission of failed dissertations;

**Please also refer to the following links:-**

*General Regulations for Post-graduate Awards (2008)*, Accessed from [http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/general/postgraduate\\_harmonised\\_regulations](http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/general/postgraduate_harmonised_regulations)

Bye-Laws of 2019 in terms of the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008 for the Degree of Master of Science in Addiction Studies - M.Sc. - under the auspices of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing and the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery  
[https://www.um.edu.mt/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/397083/MasterofScienceinAddictionStudies.pdf](https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/397083/MasterofScienceinAddictionStudies.pdf)

*APA Style Guide*, Accessed from <http://apastyle.apa.org/>

*Data Protection Act XXVI of 2001, as amended by Act XXXI of 2002*, Accessed from <http://www.dataprotection.gov.mt/>

*Library guidelines on the digitised format of dissertations*, Accessed at <http://www.um.edu.mt/library/helpandsupport/guidesandtour>

*Submitting a research proposal to the Social Wellbeing Faculty Research Ethics Committee (SWB FREC)*  
<https://www.um.edu.mt/socialwellbeing/students/researchethics>

*Principles of procedure on the supervision of Masters' Dissertations and Doctoral Theses*,

Accessed from [http://www.um.edu.mt/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/104274/Procedures\\_for\\_Supervision\\_of\\_Masters\\_Dis.pdf](http://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/104274/Procedures_for_Supervision_of_Masters_Dis.pdf)

**Publication**

Furthermore, a summary of the dissertation in a publishable format is to be included in the appendix. The summary, which is not included in the word count, is to be between 3000 and 3500 words in length. Students are encouraged to prepare this in collaboration with their respective dissertation supervisors.

**Prepared by the Board of studies MSc Addiction Studies April 2021  
Amended October 2022**