



L-Università ta' Malta
**Institute for Physical
Education & Sport**

**Institute for Physical Education and
Sport**

Dissertation Committee

**B.Sc. (Hons.) Long Essay Guidebook
2022**

IPES Dissertation Committee

The following members of staff of the Institute for Physical Education and Sport, have contributed to discussing and developing this Long Essay Guidebook.

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- ✓ To communicate with the IPES dissertation committee, kindly send an email to ipes@um.edu.mt addressed to the ‘Chair or IPES Dissertation Committee’.
- ✓ Any content in these guidelines that are being published in November 2022 can be subject to any update to adhere to University of Malta regulations. The IPES Dissertation Committee will inform students of any updates if the need arises.

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November 2022

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1 Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines are to assist students and staff involved in the Long Essay study-unit, which is valued at 8 ECTS (i.e. 200 hours of work). Normally, students are expected to work on this study-unit from the second semester of the second year of full-time study or from the first semester of the fourth year of part-time study, till the last semester of their final year. Students can choose to work in pairs should the need and want arises. This requires that the work to be undertaken and the submitted work is of a level which reflects the effort of two students.

2 The Research Process

The research process requires self-discipline, initiative, creativity and commitment. It allows students to choose an area for in-depth study. Supervisors will guide the students throughout the process, but it is the student's responsibility to read academic literature, to research material, to collect data, to write up the report and to meet the deadlines.

The process of research generally includes the following:

- Choosing an area of interest, generally related to sport and/or physical activity;
- Sourcing, acknowledgement and critical appraisal of the relevant literature;
- Identification of the research question/s;
- Design of a research project that can address the question/s;
- Selection of the appropriate research methods;
- Due and sensitive consideration of ethical issues;
- Appropriate presentation of results;
- Discussion of the research and/or product; and
- Conclusions and recommendations.

3 The Roles of the Supervisor and the Student/s

The Supervisor shall guide and assist the student in all the phases of the long essay. The Supervisor will tutor the student's work, keep records of the student's progress and finally assess the produced work. It is the responsibility of students to seek advice and tutorship from their supervisor. The student is fully responsible for completing and presenting the long essay by the set deadline and in the stipulated formats.

3.1 *Phase one: Proposal*

During this initial phase the Supervisor normally:

- Helps the student/s formulate and write the research proposal; and
- Ascertains that the research exercise is a feasible piece of work in terms of the content, the research methodology and the time-frame allotted.

N.B. Deadline for your proposal is issued by the IPES Dissertation Committee

3.2 *Phase two: Research and writing*

During this phase the Supervisor's main responsibilities include advising on and guiding the student's research and as such include:

- Planning with the student definite time-frames and deadlines for the presentation of the draft of part/s of the work, and of the final write up;
- Recommending to the student to request permission in writing from the IPES Dissertation Committee to effect any major/minor amendments in connection with the officially accepted proposal and title, and/or to request an extension in length/time related to the long essay final write-up; and
- Informing the IPES Dissertation Committee, as a matter of urgency, if a major difficulty occurs which might prejudice the student's presentation of the long essay according to established procedures. On the part of the student, this includes problems of health and other unpredictable circumstances. Supervisors on prolonged leave of absence are to notify the IPES Dissertation Committee of arrangements which are being agreed with the student or seek assistance from the IPES Dissertation Committee.

3.3 Phase three: Examination

The Supervisor will evaluate and assess the final version of the long essay presented by the student/s. The Supervisor shall compile an official Examination Report, as well as provide a final mark and grade for the long essay.

The student/s is/are then requested to submit a digital copy of the corrected work to the Institute for Physical Education and Sport (IPES) by a stipulated deadline and in the required formats as issued by IPES administration.

4 Guidelines as to Data Collection and Final Version

For the purpose of this long essay, student/s may use any one or a combination of research methods (although the use of one research method is recommended). When multiple methods are used, the sample sizes ought to be adjusted as appropriate. The following guidelines are being suggested for sample sizes:

Methods	Individual	In Pairs
Interviews	2 to 3 interviews	3 to 5 interviews
Focus Groups	1 session	2 sessions
Case Studies	1	
Questionnaires/Standard Tests	50 to 150 (or as appropriate)	300 maximum
Experimental Coaching/Teaching	1 to 2 sessions	2 to 3 sessions

The planned research methodology and data collection methods need to be clearly stated in the student's research proposal. The proposal is to be submitted on the official Long Essay Proposal Form of the Institute for Physical Education and Sport. It may be word processed or handwritten.

4.1 *The Final Product*

The final version submitted for examination should not exceed 8,000 words for individual work and 10,000 words if long essay is present in pairs. Tables, Figures, the Reference List and Appendices are not included in the word count. For the purpose of examination, all students are required to submit electronically through VLE in PDF format by the deadline stipulated by the IPES Dissertation Committee. Additionally, supervisors may request students to submit TWO loose (unbound) copy of the long essay on the same stipulated deadline.

4.2 *Main subdivisions of the Long Essay*

A long essay is normally subdivided into the major sections as outlined below; however, this may differ slightly according to the type of research methodology used and the preference of the author.

Title Page

The title page contains, from top to bottom and centred between the left and right margins:

- The title of the long essay;
- The full name of the author;
- The statement: A Work Presented to the Institute for Physical Education and Sport in Part Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor in Science (Honours) in Sport and Physical Activity at the University of Malta;
- The month and year of presentation.

Abstract

The abstract page contains, from top to bottom:

- The word **ABSTRACT** in bold uppercase letters in the top centre;
- The full name of the author or authors;
- The title of the long essay;
- The text of the abstract as a single paragraph of not more than 250 words in 1½ line spacing. The abstract should offer the briefest possible description of the long essay and a concise summary of the main findings and conclusions. The abstract should fit on 1 page;
- The degree title B.Sc. (Hons) in Sport and Physical Activity;
- The month and year of the presentation of the long essay;
- 3 to 6 keywords (in English) in bold uppercase letters.

Author's Declaration

The author's declaration is a signed declaration by the author or authors regarding the originality of the work.

Dedications and Acknowledgements

It is customary to at least acknowledge those who helped in the research, amongst them the Supervisor, and the participants.

Table of Contents

The 'Table of Contents' must, as a minimum, include all chapter headings and subheadings (up to 3 levels) and Appendices. Where applicable, the Table of Contents should also include a List of Tables, a List of Figures, a List of Accompanying Material and a List of Abbreviations and Symbols.

Main Text

A long essay is typically organised around the following chapters:

- Introduction;
- Literature Review;
- Design and Methodology;
- Results
- Discussion;
- Conclusions and Recommendations.

Although this guidebook presents the most common format of having "Results and Discussion" as one chapter, commonly used in qualitative research, the author may decide to separate this into two chapters focusing on "Analysis of Data" and "Discussion of Findings" when the study is either of a qualitative approach or mixed research method. This resides with the preference of supervisor and student, as long as whichever choice is taken, the choice does not have a negative impact upon the presentation and flow of the final submission.

References

The final long essay handed in for examination purposes needs to follow the American Psychological Association (APA) style of referencing 7th edition. Referencing needs to be accurate and consistent throughout the final document. All sources cited in the text must be listed in the References section and vice versa. References must be listed in alphabetical order by author's surname.

Appendices

Supporting material (e.g., coaching session plans, interview transcripts, computer programme listings, etc.) and material which is too long to include in the main text without breaking up continuity should be placed in one or more appendices, if required.

4.3 Presentation

4.3.1 Pagination

The Title page, Abstract, Author's Declaration, and Dedication and Acknowledgement pages are counted but should not be numbered. Numbering starts with the Table of Contents (usually page v) in lower case Roman numerals. The rest of the long essay should be numbered in a single sequence in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4 etc.) starting again with 1 on the first page of the main text. Illustrations, charts, diagrams and other graphics placed on a separate page within the text of the long essay should be paginated as if they were pages of text.

4.3.2 Page layout

The text and, wherever possible, all the material of the long essay, including illustrations, should be produced on A4-size paper and printed on one side only. In exceptional circumstances, the IPES Dissertation Committee may give permission for the use of an alternative format. If it is necessary to bind in material on a paper size larger than A4, it should be produced on paper that can be folded to fit within the long essay.

The upper, lower and right-hand side margins should be at least 2.45cm wide, while the left margin should be 4cm wide to allow for binding. It is strongly recommended that the text is justified throughout the long essay. Uniformity and consistency throughout the Document is expected.

4.3.3 Fonts and headings

- For *normal text* it is recommended that Arial point size 12 or Cambria point size 12 is used.
- The recommended font and alignment for *headings* differs according to level:
 - Heading 1 should be used for Chapter Titles. Heading 1 should be at least 16 pt., be Bold and be either aligned left or centred. Double spacing should be applied.
 - Heading 2 should be used for Sections in the Chapter. Heading 2 should be at least 14 pt., be Bold and left aligned. At least, 1.5 spacing should be applied.
 - Heading 3 should be used for Sub-Sections. Heading 3 should be at least 13 pt., be in Italics and left aligned. At least, 1.5 spacing should be applied.

4.3.4 Line spacing and paragraph formatting

One-and-a-half line spacing should be used throughout, with the following exceptions which should be single-line spaced:

- The Table of Contents;
- Long (blocked) quotations (typically longer than 40 words);
- Computer programme listings;
- Tables;
- Footnotes and endnotes; and
- References (although a blank line should be left between each reference).

It should be clear when a new paragraph is starting. Either indent the first line of each paragraph by 10-15mm, or leave extra space between paragraphs (one can use the paragraph formatting features of the word processor to do this automatically).

Lengthy quotations (exceeding 40 words) should be formatted as a separate single-line-spaced paragraph indented from the left margin by an additional 10-15mm and 20mm from the right margin with no quotation marks.

4.3.5 Numbering and bulleting

Arabic numerals should normally be used for numbering all sequences within the long essay, with the exception of page numbers in the front pages before the main text. To avoid excessive nesting depth, not more than 3 levels of headings should be used, with chapter headings being at level 1 and numbered sequentially as 1, 2, 3 etc. Level 2 headings (subheadings) should be numbered as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc. while level 3 headings should be numbered as 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 etc.

If more than one appendix is included, these should be numbered separately and consecutively as Appendix 1, Appendix 2 etc.

Tables and Figures within the text should be numbered first according to the chapter and then consecutively (e.g. Chapter 1: Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3 and Figure 1.1, Figure 1.2. Chapter 2: Table 2.1, Table 2.2, and Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2 and so on).