



Information Sheet for Dissertations and Theses

All dissertations and theses are to follow strictly the norms detailed in this information sheet. Adherence to the department's Text Conventions and Referencing System is mandatory and is taken into consideration when assessing the work submitted. Students are urged to familiarise themselves with this style early in the course and to adopt it when writing essays and other assignments.

1. LENGTH

B (Hons): 8,000–10,000 words, inclusive of Notes, Bibliography, but not Appendices.

MA (by research):

Option (a): 45,000–50,000 words, inclusive of Notes, Bibliography, but not Appendices.

Option (b): 25,000–30,000 words (inclusive of Notes, Bibliography, but not Appendices) in support of a presentation of artistic practice.

Masters Performance Studies (Dance) (taught): 20,000 words, inclusive of Notes, Bibliography, but not Appendices.

PhD: 80,000–90,000 words, inclusive of Notes, Bibliography, but not Appendices.
(MPhil: up to 50,000 words, inclusive of Notes, Bibliography, but not Appendices.)

2. TEXT CONVENTIONS

Dance Studies follows the [MHRA Style Guide](#) for text conventions. **Students should in the first instance refer to the departmental [‘Text Conventions’](#)**

Layout should strictly follow the guidelines available from the Step by Step Guide to Create a User-Friendly Electronic Dissertation accessible from this link

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

3. REFERENCING SYSTEM

Dance Studies follows the ‘Citation by the Author–Date System’ in the [MHRA Style Guide](#).

4. PRELIMS

The following order should be followed:

- i. Title-page: use the ‘Title Page Template for UG Dissertations’ found at:
<https://www.um.edu.mt/performingarts/dance/students/studentresources/>
- ii. Abstract
- iii. Dedication (if any)
- iv. Table of Contents

- v. List of illustrations/maps/tables/graphs/etc.
- vi. Acknowledgements

5. SUBMISSION OF B HONS DISSERTATION FOR EXAMINATION

Three soft-bound copies of the dissertation are to be submitted to the Head of Department, as well as an electronic copy. B (Hons) dissertations are to be handed in to the department's secretary by *the working day closest to 1 June of the final year*. After the examination, two hard-bound copies should be re-submitted to the department. It is normal practice that students give a (third) copy of their dissertation to their supervisor.

6. PRACTICALITIES

(a) Not later than the end of the first week after the Easter recess of the **second year**, students are to submit (to the departmental secretary) a short proposal including a tentative dissertation title. The department reserves the right to the final decision on the matter. Supervisors and research topics cannot be changed without the department's permission.

(b) Students are to consult their supervisor regularly. No consultation with the supervisor is to be sought after 15 May of the third year, that is, two weeks prior to the deadline for submission.

(c) The supervisor is expected to read and make remarks on each chapter of the dissertation submitted, once only, following which it is the student's responsibility to make the suggested changes and corrections. Towards the end, the student may submit to the supervisor the whole draft of the dissertation in time for the latter to give their final advice before 15 May.

(d) The supervisor's role is to guide and coach the student in research, methodology, and other skills, as well as to discuss content and interpretation, but it is not their role to proof-read the dissertation or correct errors of grammar or syntax.

(e) Supervisors will keep a record of meetings with students. This will include any appointments and deadlines missed by students without reasonable justification or notification.

(f) Students will complete a Supervision Report Sheet (<https://www.um.edu.mt/performingarts/dance/students/studentresources/>) within seven days of each meeting. The report will detail progress since the previous meeting, content discussed during the meeting, and agreed course of action for the following meeting.

(g) Meetings may be substituted by other means of communication (e.g. email, Skype). Students are encouraged to make the most of their communication time with supervisors, to be prepared and to stick with any deadlines and tasks that have been agreed. Students should inform their supervisor of any problems that might potentially impact negatively their progress.

(h) It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the implications of plagiarism and of the University's policy on the matter. See the '[Plagiarism and Collusion Guidelines](#)'. See also '[How to Avoid Plagiarism](#)'.

(i) Although registration for the dissertation study-unit is done in the third year, students are strongly advised to start work on it as early as possible and in particular to take advantage of the summer recess following their second year of studies.

Further Guidelines for B (Hons) Students

YEAR TWO

Semester 1

Week 1

At the beginning of your second year, your attention will be drawn to this information and related documents so that you can start preparing for your Dance Dissertation, study-unit DCS3007.

January

By the end of the first week after the Christmas recess, you will email the departmental secretary with the subject line 'Year Three Research Proposal 1', including the following information on one side of an A4:

Part 1

- (1) Tentative Dissertation title.
- (2) Summary of proposed dissertation, to include:
 - (i) hypothesis, i.e. what you will be focusing upon (be as clear as possible),
 - (ii) 'how' you will discuss your hypothesis (including the relevant bibliographical, historical, theoretical/philosophic detail)
 - (iii) any ethical considerations of the proposed research.

Part 2

- (1) Tentative Individual Dance Project title.
- (2) Summary of proposed mode of research, to include:
 - (i) main research question, and rationale for choosing this ,
 - (ii) 'how' you will go about researching this topic through both theoretical research (including relevant bibliography), and practical workshops
 - (iii) what kind of group of dancers / movers you plan to work with
 - (iv) any ethical considerations of the proposed research

It is important that the IDP and Dissertation topics are different. The department reserves the right to the final decision on both research topic and supervisor for both projects.

Semester 2

Week 1

You will be assigned a supervisor for Dissertation and for IDP by the commencement of semester 2. You will then meet your supervisor to plan the way forward.

March

By the final week of the month, you will submit the following information to your supervisor:

- (1) Bibliography containing about 20 titles (books, articles, and other sources). This should be well-researched, and include a sentence or two justifying each source. Make use of journals and also the internet to track any sources you might use..
- (2) In the meantime, prepare for the next task.

After Easter Recess

By the end of the first week after the Easter recess, you will submit the following information to your supervisor:

- (1) Updated title, updated proposal, and updated bibliography of dissertation.
- (2) Tentative chapter structure of dissertation, including tentative descriptions of each chapter.

You will meet your supervisor to discuss this material and to prepare for the next task.

May

By the end of the penultimate week of the second semester, you will submit the following information to your supervisor:

- (1) Definitive dissertation title.
- (2) Definitive chapter structure (with titles and a summary of each chapter). You should aim to have five to six chapters (inclusive of Introduction and Conclusion). Seven chapters are also possible as long as the stipulated dissertation length of 8,000–10,000 words (inclusive of notes, bibliography, but not appendices) is respected.
- (3) Draft of UREC ethics application (if applicable)

You should now be in a position to start individual work on your dissertation. Ideally, you would have already started the writing process.

Summer

Personal work on dissertation, including:

- (1) research/reading,
- (2) *writing* of dissertation according to your chapter structure. It is up to you (in consultation with your supervisor) to decide the sequence of chapter-writing (e.g. you might want to begin with Chapter 3 rather than Chapter 1).

Note: Though it is possible to anticipate deadlines, your supervisor will not be able to read chapters in July and August.

YEAR THREE

Semester 1 – Semester 2

During this period you are expected to work regularly on your dissertation in consultation with your supervisor. It is essential that you stick to deadlines and complete tasks you have agreed upon with your supervisor.

Semester 1

October

Applications for any projects that require approval from UREC, the University ethics committee will need to be submitted. Upload to VLE confirmed dissertation title, chapter outline, annotated bibliography, and (if applicable) completed Ethics Committee application by second week of October.

January

At the beginning of January, you will hand in at least one full chapter of your dissertation. You are reminded to pay close attention to the departmental text conventions.

Semester 2

June

You will submit your dissertation by the working day closest to 1 June as per the indications provided above.

mst 08.2026