



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

Faculty for the Built Environment

Taught Masters

Dissertation Guidelines for

Students and Supervisors

2023

Approved by
Faculty Board
July 2023

First Published in
2015
Revised in 2022
Revised in 2023
Revised in 2024

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
APA	American Psychological Association
FREC	Faculty Research Ethics Committee
ISO	International Standardization Organization
MLA	Modern Languages Association
UM	University of Malta
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee

0 Introduction

0.1 Background

This document is intended to provide guidance on the preparation of Master dissertations according to the Faculty for the Built Environment. Master candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this guide at an early stage and to adopt it wherever possible when writing their work. In many instances, you will find that there is a range of choices open to you. You will need to use your judgement to decide which solution is most appropriate to your area of research, consulting your supervisor as necessary.

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards 2021 and the Faculty for the Built Environment Bye-Laws in terms of the general regulations for University Postgraduate Awards.

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/460672/PG_Regs_2021_Normal.pdf

<https://www.um.edu.mt/r/about/governance/statutesregulationsbyelaws/course/ben>

0.2 Structure of document

These Guidelines are made up of four sections, each of which focuses on specific aspects as follows:

- Section 1 gives an indication of what dissertations, are about, and what you would be expected to think about when planning your work;
- Section 2 refers to the different components of dissertations, such as layout, different types of paragraphs, characters, tables and figures;
- Section 3 discusses referencing styles;
- Section 4 considers research ethics.

1 Dissertations

1.1 Introduction

The dissertation is your opportunity to carry out in- depth research in a specific field pertaining to the area of studies covered by the degree course to which you are registered.

We recommend that you discuss any initial thoughts with a member of the Faculty's staff, your study-unit lecturer, tutor or Head of Department to assist you further in this process. The process leading to the completion of this document involves the following fundamental steps:

- identification of the objectives of your research; the research questions and/ or hypotheses;
- the exploration and critical evaluation of the literature pertaining to the field in question, which is referred to as the literature review. (The literature review enables you to familiarise yourself with the major contributions to and debates about key aspects of the field of interest, and provides you with the knowledge base to which you may refer in the development of your research framework);
- the review of the research and analysis methods available to you, the identification of the methods that you will adopt, and the justification of your choices and decision[s]. This aspect of the research work is referred to as the methodology;
- the carrying out of the actual research which, depending on the field in which you are interested, would consist of archival research, laboratory work, field surveys of different types, observations, interviews of different types, and so on;
- the subsequent identification of the data/information generated by the 'actual research', the analyses of these data/information, and the drawing up of conclusions from the results of the analysis.

Your dissertation is a document which will consist of an accepted word count (see page 9) leading to the generation of the findings of your research and its evaluation, together with the conclusions you will reach.

The final product would therefore be a contribution to knowledge with respect to the field of study in question. Such contributions [to knowledge] do not necessarily have to be ground-breaking or original. Indeed, a substantial amount of research is carried out in order to confirm, refute, or update the findings obtained by other researchers. In other words, the work reported in a dissertation forms part of a continuous process of intellectual exploration.

The approaches that you may adopt in the formulation and implementation of your research programmes are discussed in the study unit of your course which is concerned with research methods and techniques.

1.2 Structure of the dissertation

The outline of your dissertation can take a form that best suits your work and is agreed upon with your supervisor. The following sections are guidelines that should help you formulate the backbone of your document.

The dissertation should normally be made up of the following parts:

1. Preliminaries
2. Main Body
3. End Matters

1.2.1 Preliminaries

Components

The Preliminaries will normally consist of the following parts:

1. Title page
2. Dedication (not compulsory)
3. Declaration of Authenticity
4. Acknowledgements
5. Abstract
6. Table of Contents
7. List of Tables
8. List of Figures
9. Glossary

Title page

The title page should contain the following information:

1. title and subtitle (where possible) of the dissertation in the top part of the page;
2. the name of the author, which should be located below the title/subtitle;
3. the following statement:

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty for the Built Environment, University of Malta in part fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of the degree of name of the degree _____ (*name of degree*)

should be written in the middle of the page; and

4. month and year of submission, which should be placed just above the bottom margin of the page.

Dedication

The dedication should be simple and not overly sentimental. As is indicated above, this page can be left out of the dissertation.

Declaration of Authenticity

The declaration of authenticity should consist of the following signed (by the author) statements:

For Postgraduate Students

https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/254320/authenticityformpg.pdf

Acknowledgements

In this page you may identify and thank the persons, starting with the supervisor, who would in one way or another have contributed to the work you carried out in connection with the dissertation. The statement of acknowledgement should be concluded as follows:

... I take full responsibility for any shortcomings in this dissertation.

Abstract

The abstract is a summary of your work. It is a concise sum-up of the dissertation which should highlight the main considerations and findings of your research. It should not consist of more than 250 words (there are no citations to be included here). There are four things you need to include:

- The research problem you want to address specifically
- The method you want to employ to address the research questions
- The key results
- A brief conclusion

The Abstract should be followed by four or five key words which give as accurate as possible an indication of what the dissertation would be about.

Table of Contents

The Main Body of the dissertation has to be made up of chapters. Chapters would be made up of sub-chapters, known as 'sections'. Sections, would in turn be made up of 'subsections', which can in turn be divided into sub- subsections. It is not usually advisable to go beyond four such levels, as the system will become unwieldy.

The table of contents should identify the location (page number) of headings (i.e. titles) of the chapters, sections, subsections, and sub-subsections. For more information about headings, the reader is referred to section 3.4.

List of Tables

The list of tables identifies the location in the dissertation of tables.

List of Figures

The list of figures identifies the location in the dissertation of figures.

Glossary

The Glossary should consist of two 2-column tables in which all the technical terms abbreviations, acronyms, and so on, used in the dissertation are listed together with the meanings of these abbreviations:

- the first table would be concerned with the technical terms, and
- the second, with abbreviations and acronyms

Main Body

Components

The main body of the dissertation shall normally consist of chapters which cover the following aspects:

1. Introduction, (including) Background and Context (typically ranging from 1500-2000 words)
2. Literature Review (typically ranging between 3000-5000 words)
3. Methodology (typically ranging between 1500-2500 words)
4. Results (typically ranging between 2000-3000 words)
5. Conclusion (typically ranging between 2000-2500 words)

The type of information that you may need to present in your dissertation may require you to present your work within a structure which is different to the one outlined above and discussed below. You are strongly advised to discuss your plans in detail with your supervisor.

Word Count

While the guidelines are intended to be applicable to all dissertations in Taught Masters delivered by the Faculty, for dissertations of 30ECTS or higher, the maximum word limit allowed for your dissertation may vary according to the taught programme you are following.

Currently, for 15 ECTS dissertations in the taught M.Eng. and M.Arch programmes, the word limit is 15,000 words, while for taught programmes where dissertations carry 30 ECTS, the word limit is 25,000 words.

The word count for a dissertation does not include your abstract, acknowledgments, table of contents, table of figures, footnotes, tables, figure captions, reference list, and appendices, but includes in-text quotations and references.

Structuring Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 should discuss the field of study to which the topic of the dissertation pertains and discuss the relevance of the topic and its links to other aspects of the same field of study. The Introduction shall normally include the following five sections:

A brief **background** describing the context of the core topic of the dissertation.

The **goals and objectives** of the research.

- a. The goal would be a statement of intent written in broad terms, which gives a general indication of what the student would have sought to achieve when the original research proposal was made.
- b. The objective defines the measurable/tangible outcome[s] that were to be attained through the research work.

Avoid making exaggerated claims regarding your work, for example that your research is a ground-breaking contribution to the field of study in question.

The **research questions and hypothesis** (if any) which the research would have been expected to answer and/or test.

Overview of the research methods used in the research.

Structure of the dissertation, through which the reader is provided with a chapter by chapter outline of the contents of the dissertation.

Structuring Chapter 2: Literature Review

The **literature review**, should be the starting point of your own work on their dissertation, given that it enables the development of the framework of the research project and should contribute towards the formulation and/or development of clear objectives.

The literature review in a dissertation, should satisfy two main aims:

- i) Give enough background information about the topic, for any reader to understand the context, and later on understand where the research advancement is;
- ii) In engineering & (science-oriented), provide enough detail, such that any engineering assumption taken on later in the methodology can be justified with respect to the literature review

The review should also enable you to develop your knowledge of the field of study in question, avoid duplication, and identify openings which could be worth exploring.

The above implies that the review is not a simple account, chronological or otherwise, of the writings. It should be an analytical evaluation of the

- literature which covers a comprehensive cross-section of contributions, which are recognised as seminal with respect to the development of the field of study in question, and
- of critiques of such contributions, which may support or question aspects such as the quality of research methodologies, the interpretation of results, and so on.

The review should therefore demonstrate your awareness of debates which feature in the development of your fields of study, and to understand that all ideas are subject to being questioned, even if these are expressed by established authorities.

It is therefore essential for you

- to read original works rather than simply reviews or critiques of such works. There is always the possibility for the authors of such reviews or critiques to misinterpret the writings that they discuss, and
- to go through the works of a wide range of contributions, reviews, and critiques.

Structuring Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology section should clearly demonstrate why your methods fit your objectives and convince the reader that you have taken the best possible approach to answering your problem statement and research questions. A good book which will help you out in this section is the following:

Research Methods for Business Students, 7th Edition

Prof Mark N. K. Saunders, Professor of Business Research Methods, University of Birmingham

Dr Philip Lewis, Formerly of University of Gloucestershire

Adrian Thornhill, Formerly of University of Gloucestershire

- Relate your choices throughout the section to the central purpose of your dissertation and take note of the following: the methods used by other researchers in the field of study in question, and
- texts which discuss and analyse research methods and techniques.
- Review the research methods and techniques that are 'available' with reference to authoritative texts, and subsequently identify and justify the ones adopted in the research work.

In this chapter the following sections are being recommended:

A. Research design (the general strategy for conducting the study)

B. Reliability/ Validity of Study (to indicate how well your chosen method, technique or test measures something)

C. Target Population and sample (population to which the findings will be generalised and from which the sample will be selected, how the sample will be selected)

D. Place/ Setting (where the study will be conducted)

E. Quantitative/ Qualitative [or both] measurement methods (methods of measuring study variables described, including instruments)

F. Plans for data collection (the procedure by which the data will be collected, and who will collect it and for how long will it be stored)

G. Plans for data analysis (eg: qualitative software NVIVO™ or statistical analysis)

techniques which will be used; SPSS)

H. Research Permission and Ethical Considerations

I. Future Research

Structuring Chapter 4: Results

In Chapter 4 you are expected to describe the procedures/protocols that were followed in the course of data collection and the generation of results.

You are expected to present your results as a clean representation of data sets that were collected or to present them in the context of a discussion. This presentation setting will depend upon you and your tutor.

The section[s] of the chapter can discuss your interpretations and judgements and compare your assessment with the findings of similar studies. The assessment should also discuss the strengths and limitations, and their implications.

- Interpret and explain your results
- Answer your research questions
- Justify your approach
- Critically evaluate your study

Structuring Chapter 5: Conclusion

The concluding chapter should be made up of (at least) three major sections, namely:

1. Research Objectives
2. Recommendations
3. Contributions to knowledge

General considerations

1. Research Objectives – including a summary of your findings and the resulting conclusions.
2. Recommendations (remember to keep your focus on how your work will contribute to the research world on a global scale and possibly in the form of a policy recommendation, a product, process or service).
3. Contributions to knowledge (you have now entered a research field where you might possibly be one who knows more about your research topic than any other in your peer group so be clear as to how you wish to share this contribution to the rest of the community).

You may also wish to include a section on self-reflection which would describe how this dissertation has affected you as a research academic.

Additional Material Components

The Additional Material section of your dissertation should consist of the following:

1. Bibliography
2. End notes
3. Appendices

Bibliography

The bibliography should present all the sources cited or referred to in the Main Body of the dissertation.

End Notes

The referencing styles which you are expected to adopt imply that footnotes or endnotes should not be used often. Under such systems, footnotes or endnotes should be used to provide information which may be of interest to some readers but are not essential with respect to the quality of the main text.

In the case of dissertations which include tables, charts, figures, and so on, end notes are more practical than footnotes. For this reason, you are expected to insert endnotes whenever you need to include information of the type indicated above.

Appendices

This part should present information which backs your research, such as, but not limited to the following list. Your appendices section does not contribute towards the total word count. You may include any of the items below but keep this structure relevant to what is necessary to justify your research aims and objectives

- letters,
- questionnaire forms,
- survey results,
- illustrative material,
- statistical tables, excerpts or summaries of which would have been presented in the main body, and
- printouts of results, excerpts or summaries of which would have been presented in the main body.

The Appendices may have to be presented in separate volumes, in cases where the amount of information is substantial.

Submission and assessment

First and revised drafts

The first draft of the dissertation would be submitted for assessment by the Board of Examiners composed as detailed on the Assessment Regulations available at:

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/24868/Assessment_Regulations.pdf.

The submission date and number of printed and digital copies to be submitted would be communicated to you three months before the deadline.

This draft would be bound with a black plastic comb bind, with the title and back pages being protected by means of a plastic transparent and black opaque covers respectively.

The Board of Examiners may recommend that you insert modifications to your dissertation before submitting the final draft. Such modifications could be:

- **minor revisions**, which means that the revised draft would have to be submitted in a time span as decided by the Board of Examiners
- **major revisions**, which means that the revised draft would have to be submitted within three months of the official issue of the assessment results
- **total revision**, which means that the dissertation would need to be redone, with the submission date of the new draft to be submitted within a period of six months as established by the Board of Examiners. This information will be communicated to you.

The Board of Examiners may decide to ask for more than one revised draft. Comments or changes will be approved before final submission.

Please refer to the regulations enforced as of October 2021.

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/460672/PG_Regs_2021_Normal.pdf

Final draft Submission

The final draft would be submitted after the Board of Examiners is satisfied that either

- the first draft is acceptable without the need for revisions, or
- a revised draft is acceptable.

You would be informed of the deadline for the submission of the printed draft and the number of the required printed and digital copies that would need to be submitted.

Each copy of the printed final draft must be hardbound, with the colour of the cover according to the decision stipulated for your course route

Late Submissions or Extensions

The University's Regulations state the following:

'When the mode of Assessment is by dissertation, the deadline for submission shall be established by the Faculty. Submission of dissertations after the deadline and without the express permission of the Faculty, if accepted for evaluation, shall result in a reduction of marks as decided by the Board of Examiners. Requests by students for extensions may be granted by the Board or Senate in terms of the applicable regulations. The Board of Examiners shall take into account the period of extension and may decide on a reduction of marks.'

Education ACT (Cap. 327)

Should you encounter difficulties, (health or otherwise) during the course of your submission you are advised to immediately inform your supervisor who will then discuss what options are best suited to your situation. It is important to flag your situation as early as possible, so the necessary arrangements can be made.

Plagiarism

Students and University staff are to familiarise themselves with the University Assessment Regulations, 2009 that are found on the link below:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/regulations/general>

Further information on the Proceedings of the University Assessment Disciplinary Board and the Proceedings of the Faculty Assessment Disciplinary Board may be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.um.edu.mt/registrar/student-conduct>

The following excerpts are taken from the University Guidelines for students, academics, and Faculties/Institutes, Centres and Schools which may be accessed through the following link:

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/436651/UniversityGuidelinesonPlagiarism.pdf

Major cases of plagiarism include:

1. Significant unacknowledged copying of text, diagrams, tables, images or other material from any published or unpublished material, lecture slides or handouts, whether such material is in manuscript, print or electronic form.
2. Acquisition of work, designs, or concepts (including buying or commissioning work from third parties/professional agencies) prepared by one or more others and presenting the work in whole or in part as the student's own work.
3. Significant amounts of patchwriting (i.e. changing only some of the words, or the order of the words, or redrawing diagrams, etc.) with or without citation. Patchwriting should not be confused with paraphrasing, which is the appropriate (and acknowledged) rewriting of ideas present in a source text in the student's own words and should be actively encouraged as a feature reflecting maturity in academic writing.

Examples of major plagiarism include:

- a. Copying text or a diagram from another source, failing to enclose the copied text within quotation marks, or taking somebody else's ideas, and failing to correctly acknowledge the source of the text, diagram, or ideas.
- b. Purchasing a paper or report from a 'paper mill'; paying others to prepare an assignment but then submitting the work under your own name.
- c. Copying text but replacing some words or changing word order, whether or not the source is correctly acknowledged; re-drawing diagrams and failing to acknowledge the source.

Minor offences of plagiarism include:

1. Individual in-line citations lacking corresponding entries in the references section, or failure to compile a references section.
2. Demarcated text without in-line citation or instances of incomplete or inconsistent in-line citation.
3. Incorrectly written entries in a reference list, when this results in the reader's inability to create a correspondence between the entries in the reference list and in-line citations.

4. Inconsistent citation style, when this results in the reader's inability to identify sources.

5. Unacknowledged borrowing that does not contribute significantly to the text in question.

2 Layouts and Formatting

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This section is applicable to dissertations. It considers the following aspects:

- Page set-up
- Page numbering
- Paragraphs
- Characters
- Tables
- Figures

2.2 Page set-up

The required page set-up settings for dissertations are summarised in the following table:

Table 3-1: Page set-up settings

Aspect	Setting
All margins	2 cm
Gutter	1 cm
Orientation	Portrait
Multiple pages	Mirror margins (setting for duplex printing)
Paper size	A4
Section start	New page
Headers and footers	Different odd and even
	Different first page
	0.2 cm from edge
Page: vertical alignment	Top

The above indicates that document should be set for duplex printing. The students are advised that in such cases title pages should be on odd numbered pages.

2.3 Page numbering

2.3.1 Preliminaries part

The numbering of pages in the preliminaries part of the dissertation should involve the use of small Roman numerals, e.g. i, ii, iii. Numbering should start from the title page, however, numbers should not appear on title page, the declaration page, and the declaration of authenticity page. In other words, the acknowledgement page should be page 'iii'.

Page numbers should be placed in the bottom margin of the page on the right in the case of odd numbered pages and the left in the case of even numbered pages.

2.3.2 Main Body part

The page numbering in the main body should be Arabic numerals. The numbering should be continue from the Preliminaries part.

Page numbers should be placed in the bottom margin of the page on the right in the case of odd numbered pages and the left in the case of even numbered pages.

2.3.3 End Matters part

The page numbering in the Bibliography and End Notes parts of the dissertations should also be Arabic and continue from the Main Body part.

The Appendices should have independent page numbering systems.

2.4 Paragraphs

2.4.1 Introduction

A dissertation is made up of different types of paragraphs, with the most common being the following:

- headings, i.e. chapter and section titles,
- captions, i.e. table and figure titles,
- the default body text paragraph, which would be commonly used one,
- block text paragraph, which would be used for block quotations
- list paragraphs, which can be numbered or bulleted
- bibliographic entry, which can be numbered depending on the adopted referencing style (see section 4 on page 27)

2.4.2 Paragraph settings

The following table presents the settings for headings:

Table 3-2: Principal settings of headings

Titles Settings	Chapter	Section	Subsection	Sub-subsection	Caption
Alignment	Left or right	Left	Left	Left	Left or right
Left indent	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion
Right Indent	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion	Discretion
Special	Hanging	Hanging	Hanging	None	Hanging
Space before	Discretion	Larger than after	Larger than after	Larger than after	Discretion
Space after	Discretion	Max 6 pt	Max 6 pt	Max 6 pt	Max 2 pt
Line spacing	Single	Single	Single	Single	Single

Table 3-3: Principal settings of headings

Settings \ Titles	Chapter	Section	Subsection	Sub-subsection	Caption
Widow/orphan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With next	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lines together	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Page break	Yes	No	No	No	No

The settings in the above tables are not rigid, and you may use their discretion where indicated (Discretion). One important consideration refers to the size of the space before and after section headings. The former should always be larger than the latter.

The following table presents the settings of the most common paragraphs in dissertations.

Table 3-4: Principal settings of other major paragraph types

Settings \ Types	Body text	Block text	Numbered	Bulleted	Bibliographic entry
Alignment	Left or justified	Left or justified	Left or justified	Left or justified	Left
Left indent	0 cm	Min 0.5 cm	Discretion	Discretion	0 cm
Right Indent	0 cm	0 cm	0 cm	0 cm	0 cm
Special	No	No	Hanging	Hanging	Hanging
Space before	3 pt	0 cm	0 pt	0 pt	3 cm
Space after	3 to 6 pt	3 to 6 pt	3 to 6 pt	3 to 6 pt	3 cm
Line spacing	18 pt	Single	18 pt	18 pt	Single
Widow/orphan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
With next	No	No	No	No	No
Lines together	No	No	No	No	Yes
Page break	No	No	No	No	No

2.4.3 Numbering and bulleting

Headings

The heading paragraphs which are used for the chapter, section, subsection, and caption titles need to be numbered. The chapter, section, and subsection numbers would need to conform to the ISO 2145:1978 standard (ISO, 1978). The sub-subsection and other chapter subdivision titles should not be numbered.

ISO 2145 submits that Arabic numerals should be used for the numbering of headings. The main levels in the hierarchy of headings, i.e.

- Chapter titles in the case of dissertations

would need to be numbered continuously starting with '1'. Introductory chapters titles may be numbered '0'.

Second level subdivisions, i.e.

- Sections of chapters in the case of dissertations

would need to be numbered continuously by a number referring to the first level followed by a full stop and another number referring to the title of the second level subdivision.

Third level subdivisions, i.e.

- Subsections of sections in the case of dissertations

would need to be numbered continuously by a number referring to the first level followed by a full stop, a number referring to the second level subdivision, another full stop, followed by a number which refers to the third level subdivision title.

For the purpose of these regulations the fourth level subdivision title and other lower level subdivision should not be numbered. The hierarchy between levels would in such cases be indicated by the size, the colour, size, and styles of the fonts, the space before the respective headings. You are encouraged to use their discretion with restraint, keeping in mind that the formatting styles that you adopt should contribute to the reader- friendliness of your work rather than mere decoration.

Lists

In addition to the level 1 to level 3 headings, you will most probably need to number or bullet paragraphs making up lists. The numbering of lists made up of more than nine numbered paragraphs should be right aligned as follows:

- 9 ninth numbered paragraph
- 10 tenth numbered paragraph
- 11 eleventh numbered paragraph

2.5 Characters

2.5.1 Fonts

The use of fonts should be consistent, throughout the dissertation. You are encouraged to use Calibri as your font for all your work however other font styles are accepted. The selected Font should be capable of supporting the alphabets of languages, other than the English language, that are used in the dissertation. Refrain from using difficult-to-read fonts such as 'Algerian', 'Broadway', 'Brush Script', 'Curlz MT' and so on.

The use of fonts should be consistent, throughout the dissertation. At most, two fonts may be used,

- one for chapter, sections, and caption titles, and
- the other for the normal text.

You may decide to use one Font style for both the titles and normal text.

The selected Font should be capable of supporting the alphabets of languages, other than the English language, that are used in the dissertation.

In the case of the use of the Maltese language, where, for example, reference is made to Maltese place names, street names, and so on, the use of the Maltese alphabet is compulsory for all students irrespective of their nationality.

2.5.2 Font styles

As is well known, word processors and desktop publishers make it possible for writers to use italics, bold, bold italics styles with ease. This often results in the overuse of these styles. You are advised to use these styles sparingly and above all consistently.

2.5.3 Font sizes

The font sizes in the default paragraph text may vary depending on the font in use. For example, 12pts could be used in the case of the 'Calibri', while 11pts or 11.5pts would be sufficient in the case of 'Times New Roman', 'Arial', and 'Helvetica'. For this reason, the choice of the font size for normal text is left to your discretion and should range between 11pt to 12pt.

Font sizes in tables, block quotations, and endnotes should be 0.5pts smaller than that used for normal text.

2.5.4 Tables

Tables are representations used to present information in an organised and concisemanner. It is essential, therefore. For tables to be reader friendly.

In cases where tables have to spread across pages, you need to ensure that the table title and the header row appear in all the pages and for rows not to break across pages

In cases where tables include numeric information, you should right align numbers as shown in the first two columns in the following Figure 3-1:

Figure 3-1: Examples of layouts within tables

Acceptable		Not acceptable	
1012	107.8	1012	107.8
10	65.11	10	65.11
210	76	210	76

The use of alignments shown in the second two columns is discouraged. It is important for the sources of the information in tables to be acknowledged as shown in Figure 3-1.

2.5.5 Figures

You should use figures to present information in the form of charts, graphs, diagrams and so on or through maps, images, or drawings.

It is important for the sources of the information in figures to be acknowledged.

3 Referencing Styles

3.1 Introduction

One of the most important aspects of dissertation writing refers to the respect that the author should show both the authors of the source material (both primary and secondary) and the readers of their works. It is imperative that all the sources of the data and other information presented in the dissertation is referenced for the following reasons:

- references to sources are expressions of respect to the contributors to the development of knowledge, and give these contributors recognition;
- such references enable the reader to recognise the validity of the dissertation and the value that it adds to knowledge
- referencing and the bibliography makes it possible for readers who may be interested in contributing to the furthering of the knowledge base of the same field of study through further research to minimise the time and effort spent on exploring the field in question and focus on the 'actual research'

It should be noted that the University of Malta has the means to scan students' assignment and dissertations for plagiarism, i.e. the failure of authors of assignments, dissertations, and so on to acknowledge their sources (UoM, 2014a; 2014b).

You are expected to reference and prepare bibliographic entries in accordance to the requirements of the referencing system adopted by the department offering the course that they follow.

3.2 Referencing styles

Over the years, referencing styles have been developed for use by researchers in specific fields of study. For the purposes of the dissertation, you are obliged to use APA as your main referencing style which is the recognised style used in the field of research that your work falls in, in consultation with your supervisor.

Look for [APA on RefWorks](#).

You can find all the information regarding referencing in APA in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition (2020).

Microsoft Word include a Citations & Bibliography feature in the References tab, which enables the user to construct a data base of and then issues the in-text references and bibliography in accordance with the rules of different referencing systems. All the above-mentioned styles can be accessed in this feature.

Using Refworks to manage your sources

RefWorks is a bibliographic database management software package, which is supported by the University of Malta. You may access and use it through the Library page in the UoM website (RefWorks, 2014). You are encouraged to make use of automated reference management systems of the type mentioned above.

You are also encouraged to attend the University Library workshops to make your learning curve more efficient. (<https://www.um.edu.mt/library/workshops>)

You are encouraged to make use of automated reference management systems of the type mentioned above.

The adoption of a particular style for a dissertation should also be discussed between you and your supervisors. The choice of style should reflect the field of study to which the dissertation pertains.

4 Research Ethics

4.1 Introduction

Your research may have ethical implications, which may not necessarily be obvious to you at the outset. Issues of confidentiality, data protection, intellectual property rights of others, and the possibility that your research may in some way be cause harm or discomfort to others should be carefully examined and discussed with your supervisor at the very start of your dissertation research.

4.2 Your responsibilities

Students **MUST** seek and obtain ethical approval from the Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) and/or the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) prior to pursuing any aspect of the study, other than the literature review. All research work requires an ethics research submission.

You can find links here which take you to all the resources you may need:

FREC: <https://www.um.edu.mt/ben/students/frec>

ONLINE FORM: <https://www.um.edu.mt/research/ethics/forms>

Here is a link to the template which you required to sign and affix to your final thesis submission:

https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/254320/authenticityformpg.pdf

(Postgraduate students)

The University's Research Code of Practice provides guiding principles and standards of good practice in research across all subject disciplines and areas of study at UM. The University's Research Ethics Review Procedures lays out the procedure to be followed to review ethics in research.

The sample information/consent documents available on our website are being provided for your guidance. They reflect the requirements of the UM's Research Code of Practice on information to be provided when obtaining consent from research participants. Please see link below:

- Sample Information Letter
- Sample Consent Form
- Sample Permission Letter
- Sample Combined Information Letter and Consent Form
- Sample Questionnaire Consent - Anonymous Data Collection
- Sample Questionnaire Consent - Possible Collection of Personal Data

<https://www.um.edu.mt/research/ethics/resources/samples/>

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