



Faculty of Dental Surgery

Guidelines on the supervision of the undergraduate dissertations

This document is intended to provide guidance to supervisors and students through the dissertation, long-essays and assignments in the Faculty of Dental Surgery undergraduate courses. This guide will include details on the roles and responsibilities of the students and supervisors and is a complement to the Education Act (CAP. 324, Regulation 73), General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, the Dissertation Guidelines of the Faculty of Dental Surgery and the Guidelines for Essay Type Assignments and Dissertations of the University of Malta.

According to General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards (2019), a dissertation is *'a long piece of writing on an approved subject, written under the supervision of a tutor as a compulsory home assignment towards the end of the Course for the award of a Bachelor's degree'*. The student sitting for the degree will have a supervisor or supervisor team appointed.

As stated in the Education Act (EDUCATION ACT (CAP. 327) General Regulations for University Undergraduate Awards, 2019, Item 73), the role of the supervisor or supervisory team is to guide the student and encourage the student throughout the process of the dissertation, starting with the planning of the research project and finalizing with the submission of the dissertation and publishing of the results. Guidance shall include instruction on time-management, the research methods, as well as guiding the student into improving the quality of the written document.

The supervisor may offer ideas and guide the student to improve the quality of the dissertation which, in the end, is a work performed by the student.

The following sections provide detailed information on the role of the supervisor, the timeline and other guidelines not covered in the documents mentioned above.

Guidelines on the role of the supervisor team and the student

1. The supervisor team is not responsible for proofreading of the script. It is the responsibility of the student to use correct grammar, without spelling mistakes and

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without typos. It is also the responsibility of the student to write using proper Academic Writing. If there are inadequacies in the writing, the supervisor team will point these out the drafts of the chapters and the submission of the complete draft of the dissertation Therefore, the student should make sure of proofreading the drafts before sending it to the supervisor team.

2. As stated in the Education Act (CAP. 324, Regulation 73), the supervisor team will offer ideas, suggestions and guidance into improving the quality of the research proposal, the research methodology, presentation of results, the writing and oral communication, decision-taking and organization, and management skills.
3. The student may proceed with the project after and in view of initial discussion with the supervisor team. The supervisor team shall approve the research topic, aims and objectives.
4. Supervisors are expected to review each chapter of the student's dissertation twice, and to review a complete final draft once before the final submission.
5. The supervisor team will provide feedback in a timely manner. However, this will happen only when the work is submitted within the timeline indicated. The student should ensure that he/she submits within the timeline so as to receive feedback from the supervisor team.
6. Due to the length of the complete draft of the dissertation, the supervisor team shall have four weeks to deliver their final feedback to the student.
7. The submission of the dissertation to the Faculty office usually happens mid-May. Therefore, the final draft of the dissertation should be handed to the supervisor team at least 4-5 weeks before this date.
8. Feedback provided by the supervisor team should ideally be typed and not handwritten using a word processor program such as Microsoft Word and using track changes and side comments. It is the responsibility of the student to learn how to use these features.
9. Students should take into consideration the schedules of their supervisor team and other academic and work commitments. Some of the supervisors are part-time employees and have limited time during the week for providing feedback. Other supervisors may have other teaching, research or administrative commitments that may limit their quick feedback.
10. The student and the supervisor team may communicate as many times as needed to ensure a high quality of the dissertation. The preferred way of communicating is via email. Online meetings or face-to-face meetings will be agreed upon between the supervisor team and the student when necessary. Due to the current situation with the pandemic, face-to-face meetings may be declined. Other types of communication such as phone calls, messaging, social media or informal meetings are not recommended (unless otherwise indicated/agreed upon by all of the members of the supervisor team).

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11. The supervisor is not obliged to communicate with the student or send feedback during weekends, holidays, sick leave, vacation leave or after working hours. Therefore, the student shall not demand that this happens. This may only happen if the agreement is sought or is recommended by members of the supervisor team.

Timeline of the dissertation

The table presented below indicates the deadline for submission of the different sections of the dissertation. This indicates the deadline for submission to the supervisor team.

Section	Date of deadline	Notes
Research proposal	4th January, 2024	The final research proposal that shall be submitted for consideration to FREC/UREC. This research proposal shall have been prior accepted and discussed with the supervisor team
Complete documentation for Ethical and Data Protection Approval	4th January, 2024	This shall include all documentation required for FREC/UREC approval, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Questionnaires (English and Maltese)- Information sheet (English and Maltese)- Consent form (English and Maltese)- Research proposal- Draft FREC/UREC form (without submission to FREC/UREC)- Letters of approval from the different entities and persons responsible of approval of project (for example, CEO at MDH, Data Protection officer at MDH, Dean of the Faculty of Dental Surgery, etc)
Chapter 1. Introduction	18th January, 2024	First draft for feedback
Chapter 2. Literature review	18th January, 2024	First draft for feedback
Chapter 3. Methodology	18th January, 2024	First draft for feedback
Chapter 4. Results	1st April, 2024	First draft for feedback
Chapter 5. Discussion	1st April, 2024	First draft for feedback

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Final complete draft of dissertation	7th April, 2024	Final complete draft for feedback
Final dissertation	May TBA by the Chairperson of the study unit	Submission of the dissertation for revision

Documentation

The following documentation will guide you with more information. You can access them through the links provided and documents attached.

Education Act (CAP. 324, Regulation 73).

https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/409852/GeneralRegulationsforUniversityUndergraduateAwards,2019.pdf

Turnitin Information (UM Website): <https://www.um.edu.mt/itservices/vle/turnitin>

UREC sample information letter and consent forms (UREC):

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

Ethics form replica and regulations: <https://www.um.edu.mt/research/ethics/forms>