



Student Guidelines for Masters by Research Degrees

Compiled by the MSc by Research Board of Studies

MSc_Guidelines 1.2- 12.05.2021

Referenced Documents:

- General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards 2008 [Revision 27/02/2018]
- Late Submission of B.Eng. and M.Sc. Dissertations and Theses [Revision 18/02/16]
- Master of Science in Engineering Bye-laws [Revision 26/07/13]
- Procedures for Board of Examiners of Masters Dissertations [Revision 14/05/20]

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1 Compulsory Units

Apart from the dissertation, students are expected to follow two other compulsory units as listed in the [programme of studies](#), specifically ENR5006 and ENR5026. Students are advised to take ENR5006 during the first availability after starting the Masters by Research course whereas ENR5026 should be taken during the last availability. This is to guarantee that the students take the largest benefit out of these two study units being offered by the Faculty. Students should check the unit availability with Faculty office.

2 Semester Reports

A semester report describing the work carried out in the previous semester and the plan for the next semester has to be handed in to Faculty office by the end of January, June and September. A sample template of this report is shown in Appendix A. The latest template can be accessed from the *Current Student's* page of the Faculty of Engineering website.

3 Changing the title of the MSc dissertation

If a change in the title of the MSc dissertation is required to better represent the work that has been carried out, an application form has to be filled in and submitted to the Faculty Office at least 4 weeks before the submission of the dissertation for examination. A sample template of the application form is shown in Appendix B. The actual form can be downloaded from the *Current Student's* page of the Faculty of Engineering website.

4 Extensions of Submission Deadlines and Late Submissions

- a. The deadlines for M.Sc. dissertations are established as per the applicable University regulations for the degree programme. Students should find their specific postgraduate deadline on esims.
- b. The *request form for an extension of postgraduate studies* is shown in Appendix C and can be accessed from the [Administrative Information for Students](#) web page.
- c. Students are directed to Article 21 of the [General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards 2008](#) to obtain information on the number and duration of extensions that can be granted to full-time and part-time postgraduate students. Note that a student may request an extension of the deadline for the submission of a dissertation not later than a week before the deadline, which will be approved if the reason provided is deemed valid by the Board. The extension given may elicit a reduction in marks, provided it would not change a mark from a pass to a fail. When a student exceeds the maximum period of extensions as provided for in the General

Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards 2008, without submitting a dissertation, the Board of Examiners shall publish a fail grade.

- d. Late submissions of the dissertations may be exceptionally submitted. This may be penalized by a reduction in marks as documented in [*Late submission of B.Eng. and M.Sc. dissertations and theses.*](#)

5 Suspension of Studies

In special circumstances a student may need to suspend his/her studies, in which case the *Request Form for a Suspension of Studies* needs to be filled in and submitted to Faculty office. A sample of this form is shown in Appendix D while the actual form is accessible from the [*Administrative Information for Students*](#) web page. Students are directed to Article 22 of the [*General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards 2008*](#) to obtain information on the duration of suspension that can be granted to full-time and part-time postgraduate students.

6 Changing the Mode of Attendance

In the event that a student needs to change the mode of attendance from full-time to part-time or vice-versa, a *Request form for Change in Mode of Attendance* needs to be filled in and submitted to Faculty office. A sample of this form is shown in Appendix E while the actual form can be accessed from the [*Administrative Information for Students*](#) web page.

7 Dissertation Guidelines

7.1 Dissertation Layout

The dissertation should include the following sections, ordered as listed below:

- Title page (first page, as per Appendix F, downloadable from Faculty website)
- Copyright page (second page as in Appendix G)
- Dedication (if any)
- Abstract (Not longer than one page)
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents
- List of Figures (with the number of the page in which they are located)
- List of Tables (with the number of the page in which they are located)
- List of Abbreviations and Notation (used)
- Glossary of symbols
- Text (main body of dissertation)
- References

- Bibliography (if any)
- Index (optional)
- Appendices (if any)

7.2 Length of Dissertation

Following the [Master of Science in Engineering bye-laws](#), the overall length of the dissertation should be between 35,000 and 40,000 words, including all text in the body of the dissertation, any text in figure captions or table captions, and any text in footnotes or endnotes. Furthermore, it is recommended that the average length of the dissertation is around 130 pages and should not exceed 150 pages from the introduction to the conclusion and including appendices. References are not included in this page limit.

7.3 Page Format

Text should be printed on A4 white paper using a 12 point Times New Roman font. One-and-a-half line spacing should be used with a margin of 40mm to the left, 25mm to the right and at least 20mm for top and bottom. Page numbers are to be printed in the centre of the page footer, 10mm from the lower edge of the page.

7.4 Printing and Submission of Dissertation

The dissertation will first be submitted for examination, copies of which are here referred to as *examination copies*. Once the viva examination is over and the student carries out the changes requested by the Board of Examiners, the revised dissertation will be submitted for record keeping.

For examination purposes, copies of the dissertation are to be handed in to Faculty office together with the *Declaration of Authenticity Form* as shown in Appendix H and the *Submission of Dissertation for Examination Form* as shown in Appendix I, both of which are accessible from the [Administrative Information for Students](#) web page. The student code referred to in the Declaration of Authenticity form is the UREC code that you received when filling in the UREC form. In addition to this, a copy of the Turnitin receipt should be submitted to Faculty office.

Note that the examination is carried out by three internal examiners and a non-visiting external examiner but students are advised to contact Faculty office to determine the exact number of examination copies required and whether these should be soft or hard bound copies. Note that in the case of the latter, examination copies are to be single sided and spiral bound.

Following examination, 2 (+1 if a co-supervisor was involved in the project) hard bound copies of the revised dissertation shall be submitted together with a soft copy on CD for library records. These copies shall be bound as follows:

In black cloth with stiff boards and good quality end papers; with lettering (preferably in gold) on the front and spine showing (i) the name of the candidate; (ii) the title or short title of the dissertation; (iii) the degree for which the dissertation is submitted; and (iv) the year of submission. Maps, diagrams, graphs, printed material, CDs, etc. should be bound with the dissertation, but if this is not possible they should be presented separately in special folders or volumes and numbered. Note that printing of the final hard bound copies should be done on both sides of the paper.

8 Assessment Criteria

The following factors and percentage weightings are taken into consideration when assessing the project work and the dissertation:

Explanation, contextualization and articulation of research problem and objectives (5%):

- Is the research problem clearly specified and contextualized?
- Are the research questions and hypotheses clearly formulated?
- Does the dissertation capture the relevance, rationale and objectives of the proposed research?

Literature review and relevant background theory (20%):

- Does the dissertation include a comprehensive review and critical discussion of the relevant literature and/or technological developments?
- Is there a description on how the proposed research positions itself within the generic context of works that have been published in the area?
- Is the relevant background theory presented, discussed and explained well? Has the theory been contextualized appropriately within the framework of the research problem being investigated?
- Have the latest theoretical developments in the area been presented and described?
- Does the candidate demonstrate a systematic understanding of the relevant background theory and knowledge?

Methodology, design and implementation (30%):

- Is the adopted methodology and/or design approach clearly justified and described?
- Is the implementation well explained?
- Are there any theoretical contributions from the candidate?

- Is there a clear identification of any limitations, assumptions and constraints which may influence or condition the applied methodology, design approach and implementation?

Testing, results, analysis and evaluation (25%):

- Are the test procedures sound and objective?
- Do the proposed tests address the research problem being investigated?
- Are the test conditions, assumptions, constraints and limitations clearly identified?
- Are the results clearly presented, analyzed objectively and critically evaluated?
- Are the results and analyses discussed objectively? Do they lead to appropriate conclusions and/or fulfillment of the project aims?
- Do the analysis, evaluation and discussion of results exhibit independence of thought?

Report structure and organization of dissertation (10%):

- Is the style and structure of the dissertation logical, coherent, flowing and focused?
- Is the candidate's contribution clearly communicated to the reader?
- Does the dissertation conform to the Faculty guidelines?
- Does it make good use of language, citations, figures and tables?

Oral presentation (10%):

- Is the presentation well prepared?
- Is the candidate clear and confident in his/her delivery?
- Does the candidate's response to the presented questions show that s\he has mastered the research problem well?

The assessment of the dissertation is given according to the marking and grading table in Section 28 of the [*General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, 2008*](#).

9 Viva Examination

Once the dissertation has been submitted for examination and the examiners agree that the student shall sit for a viva examination, the Faculty office will send an email to the student specifying the set date for this examination. The student is requested to prepare a 20-minute presentation and confirm with the department secretary that any required media such as projectors are made available on the day. The dress code for this examination is smart. The duration of the viva examination is scheduled for 90 minutes.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A: Semester Report



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

MASTER OF SCIENCE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/18

SEMESTER REPORT – M.Sc. by Research

Name of Student: _____

ID. No: _____

Course: _____

Supervisor: _____

Co-Supervisor: _____

Year: _____ P/t F/t

Report Period: October-January
 February-June
 July-September

Title of Thesis: _____

Work carried out during the last semester:

Work intended to be carried out during the next semester:

Any issues which may affect progress:

The number of meetings with my supervisor are sufficient to help me progress in my work: Yes
No

In case of difficulties my supervisor is available and helpful: Yes No Mostly yes

Signature

Date

Form is to be handed to Faculty office to be reviewed by the Dean, or by the deputy Dean in the event that the Dean is also your supervisor.

Sample

10.2 Appendix B: Changing the Title of the MSc Dissertation Form



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF ENGINEERING

APPLICATION FORM TO CHANGE TITLE OF M.Sc. DISSERTATION

NAME _____ I.D. NO. _____

MOBILE NO. _____

MECHANICAL STREAM

ELECTRICAL STREAM

TITLE OF THESIS:

TITLE TO BE CHANGED TO:

Signature

Date

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: _____

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR: _____

10.3 Appendix C: Request Form for an Extension of Studies



Office of the Registrar

REQUEST FORM FOR AN EXTENSION OF STUDIES (FOR POSTGRADUATE MASTER COURSES)

To be submitted to Home Faculty/Institute/Centre/School at least one month prior to the end date.

Student Details

Full Name: _____
Last First Student I.D / I.D Card No.
Course and Year of Intake: _____
Date: _____ Signature: _____

Details of Request

Reason for requesting an extension: *(Please attach any relevant documentation, if applicable)*

- First extension (up to six months) - Faculty/Institute/Centre/School board approval required; no fees apply.
 Further extension (maximum up to two years) – Board and Senate approvals required; fees applicable**.

Supervisor Details (if applicable)

Full Title and Name: _____

Recommendation by Supervisor: _____

Please forward a recent progress report to the Faculty/Institute/Centre/School Office

Date: _____ Signature: _____

For Office Use ONLY

Extension: Approved Rejected by Faculty Board Date: _____

Period approved: _____

Referred to Students' Request Committee (if applicable) Date: _____

Approved Rejected by Students' Request Committee Date: _____

Comments: _____

Extension start date*: _____ Extension end date*: _____

*Please indicate the first day of the month and year only.

** Please check fees payable at: https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/198374/SubsidiaryLegislation.pdf

cc. SIMS Office
cc. Billing Office

10.4 Appendix D: Request Form for a Suspension of Studies



Office of the Registrar

REQUEST FORM FOR A SUSPENSION OF STUDIES (FOR UNDERGRADUATE & POSTGRADUATE COURSES)

To be submitted to Home Faculty/Institute/Centre/School.

Student Details

Full Name: _____
Last First Student I.D./I.D Card No.
Course and Year of Intake: _____
Date: _____ Signature: _____

Details of Request

Reason for requesting a suspension:

Suspension start date*: _____ Suspension end date*: _____

Students are allowed a suspension of studies for a maximum of 12 months once only during the course.

For Office Use ONLY

Suspension: Approved Rejected Date: _____

Comments: _____

Suspension start date*: _____ Suspension end date*: _____

*Please indicate the first day of the month and year only.

cc. SIMS Office
cc. Billing Office

10.5 Appendix E: Request Form for Change in Mode of Attendance



Office of the Registrar

REQUEST FORM FOR CHANGE IN MODE OF ATTENDANCE (FOR UNDERGRADUATE & POSTGRADUATE COURSES)

To be submitted to Home Faculty/Institute/Centre/School.

Student Details

Full Name: _____
Last *First* *Student I.D / I.D Card No*

Course and Year of Intake: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Details of Request

Reason for requesting a change in mode of attendance: *(Please attach any relevant documentation, if applicable)*

Change in Mode of Attendance start date: _____

For Office Use ONLY

Change in mode of Attendance: Approved Rejected By Faculty Board Date: _____

Comments: _____

Start date of new mode of Attendance*: _____

**Please indicate the first day of the month and year only.*

cc. SIMS Office
cc. Billing Office

10.6 Appendix F: Title Page Template



UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ENGINEERING DISSERTATION

<Project title goes here>

STUDENT NAME AND SURNAME

Supervised by:

SUPERVISOR NAME AND SURNAME (INCL. DR/PROF./ING. AS APPLICABLE)

Co-supervised by:

CO-SUPERVISOR NAME AND SURNAME (INCL. DR/PROF./ING. AS APPLICABLE)

*A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in Engineering*

by the

Faculty of Engineering

<Month spelled out in full><space>20XX

Copyright Notice

- 1) Copyright in text of this dissertation rests with the Author. Copies (by any process) either in full, or of extracts may be made only in accordance with regulations held by the Library of the University of Malta. Details may be obtained from the Librarian. This page must form part of any such copies made. Further copies (by any process) made in accordance with such instructions may not be made without the permission (in writing) of the Author.
- 2) Ownership of the right over any original intellectual property which may be contained in or derived from this dissertation is vested in the University of Malta and may not be made available for use by third parties without the written permission of the University, which will prescribe the terms and conditions of any such agreement.
- 3) Publication rights over the academic and/or research results presented in this dissertation are vested jointly in both the Author and his/her academic Supervisor(s), and unless such rights are explicitly waived in writing, both parties must be listed among the authors in any academic publication that is derived substantially from this work. Furthermore, any other public communication / disclosure of any form that focuses on the project must acknowledge that this work has been carried out by the Author and the Supervisor(s) (named explicitly) through the University of Malta.

10.8 Appendix H: Declaration of Authenticity Form



FACULTY/INSTITUTE/CENTRE/SCHOOL _____

DECLARATIONS BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Student's Code _____

Student's Name & Surname _____

Course _____

Title of Dissertation

(a) Authenticity of Dissertation

I hereby declare that I am the legitimate author of this Dissertation and that it is my original work.

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institution of higher education.

I hold the University of Malta harmless against any third party claims with regard to copyright violation, breach of confidentiality, defamation and any other third party right infringement.

(b) Research Code of Practice and Ethics Review Procedures

I declare that I have abided by the University's Research Ethics Review Procedures. Research Ethics & Data Protection form code _____.

As a Master's student, as per Regulation 58 of the General Regulations for University Postgraduate Awards, I accept that should my dissertation be awarded a Grade A, it will be made publicly available on the University of Malta Institutional Repository.

Signature of Student

Name of Student (in Caps)

Date

30.01.2020

10.9 Appendix I: Submission of Dissertation for Examination Form



FACULTY/INSTITUTE/CENTRE/SCHOOL _____

Student's I.D. /Code _____

Student's Name & Surname _____

Course _____

Title of Dissertation/Thesis _____

I am hereby submitting my dissertation/thesis for examination by the Board of Examiners.

Signature of Student

Name of Student (in Caps)

Date

Submission noted.

Principal Supervisor
(in Caps)

Signature

Date