APTIME Intellectual Output 7 - Dissertation

Postgraduate Dissertation Guide

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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

This document offers guidance to all students undertaking a master's level 60-credit dissertation project in the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE). It is intended as a first point of reference but should also be read in conjunction with the module guide (see appendix) and specific direction/guidance furnished by the student's dissertation supervisor throughout the entire period of dissertation study.

The dissertation is a master's level 'project' module worth 60 credits. It is required to be satisfactorily completed before a student can qualify for a master's award. As such, the dissertation represents a substantial piece of work requiring initiative and commitment on the part of the student (in full collaboration with the student's supervisor). Therefore, the dissertation should not be underestimated in terms of level of commitment and effort required by the student, to achieve satisfactory completion. The dissertation is characterized by students having to identify for themselves:

- A problem or issue that derives from, or is related to, their programme of study.
- The methodology, skills and resources required to solve the (chosen) problem or explore the (chosen) issue.
- The form and style of product that is most suitable for the presentation of their hypothesis or research question(s), findings and conclusions (within the limits of e.g. time available).
- How to work (on the selected problem/issue) over an extended period with limited supervision.

In view of the above, the chosen dissertation topic should allow a student to demonstrate an appropriate range of skills including, but not limited to, analytical; critical; evaluative; and synthesising skills. Further advice on topic choice is given later in this guide.

From an assessment perspective, dissertations provide an opportunity to examine your competence in the following areas (Weaver, 2003):

- Application and adaptation of core tools and techniques to a complex problem, in a situation that is not as artificially constrained as an examination or essay, where solutions are of necessity free from ambiguity.
- Investigation and analysis of the problem, its context, and methods for solving it.
- Development and/or evaluation of potential solutions.
- Implementation and demonstration of the solution.
- Scope and time management.
- Independent learning and ability to think for yourself.
- Evaluation of your solution and the work you undertook to deliver it.
- Depth of understanding of the problem context and of the theory applied to its solution.

Your dissertation must address some topic that meets the learning outcomes of the 7ET023 MSc Dissertation Module. The topic should ideally be chosen to complement your other module choices. You **should not** undertake a dissertation in an area that you do not have the necessary pre-requisite knowledge. You **should also not** undertake a dissertation in an area that requires more time than you have available.

2. OVERVIEW OF DISSERTATION REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Module Description

As stated in the module guide, the MSc Dissertation module allows you to undertake scholarly and practical work that further develops an aspect of the taught material and thereby contributes to your personal development and training towards professional practice. It culminates in you producing a substantial output which is an exemplar of professional practice in an area directly linked to your subject area and interests. This module evidences your transformation from undergraduate to master's level achievement through the process and production of a recognised research output in your subject area.

2.2 Learning Outcomes

Full details of learning outcomes can be found in the module guide, but in summary the intended learning outcomes of the module are that by the completion of the module, the student should be able to:

1. Formulate a research question and apply appropriate research methodologies that result in interpretable data enabling research route decisions to be made.
2. Critically analyse, synthesise, and apply information and ideas from both relevant sources of information and your own studies to support research decisions appertaining to the relevant professional body, where appropriate.
3. Take responsibility for and organise own learning through self-management and independent research at master's level. Advance and extend subject knowledge and understanding and develop research and practical skills relevant to subject area.
4. Define, organise and report on a project of considerable duration with outcomes that are uncertain at the outset. Achieve this with the professional approach required in that subject area.

2.3 Learning and Teaching Approach

The module is designed as a piece of individual independent study, supported through meetings with academic supervisor(s). Formal contact time with supervisors should be arranged to ensure satisfactory progression of the students.

2.4 Deliverables

As evidence that the learning outcomes have been satisfied, the student is expected to complete two. (2) components of assessment as follows:

- **Assessment 1: Proposal 10% –** Prepare a *dissertation proposal.*

- **Assessment 2: Portfolio 80% -** Prepare a *project report* and attend *a Viva-voce & presentation* on the project (10%).

Key Deliverables and Milestones

The following schedule lists the key milestones and deliverables for 7ET023. In addition, you will need to meet regularly with your supervisor throughout the duration of your dissertation.

Milestones and deliverables	Deadline Dates
Allocation of Supervisors	-
Assessment 1: Submit **Proposal** + Complete **Ethical** and **Risk Approval** Forms: **10%**	- **via CANVAS Portal**
Assessment 2: Portfolio – **80%** comprising:	
Project Report	- **via CANVAS Portal**
Attend Viva-voce & Presentation (**10%**)	**W/C –** **Physical (room tba)**

3. RESEARCH PROPOSAL FORMAT/PRESENTATION

Assessment 1 is worth 15% of the total mark for this module and is an **individual** piece of work. During the first few weeks of the module, you will need to provide further information on your proposed subject area, for its suitability to be assessed and verified. This part of the assessment will be conducted with the module team and may result in some refinements and adjustments to your topic. Assessment 1 is to be submitted via CANVAS.

The ultimate purpose of the Dissertation Proposal is to provide information so that the supervision team can make sure that you have:

- Chosen a topic which is broadly acceptable as a dissertation in the award beingundertaken.
- Made sure that the chosen area will meet the learning outcomes specified in the module guide.
- Chosen a subject which will be appropriate given the programme of studies taken at master's. level.
- Determined the overall aim – which is a statement of its overall purpose.
- Formalised your Research Questions – formalise an overall research question.
- Identified the objectives to be pursued.
- Specified the deliverables.
- Declared the ethical issues involved with the dissertation.

Ethical and Safety considerations: **ALL** students need to consider the ethical and safety aspects of what is being studied and the data being collected. If you are in any doubt about what should be included, please talk to your supervisor in the first instance and then the Dissertation Module Leader.

A copy of the ethics and risk forms and approval process is attached in Appendix 3 (and is also available on CANVAS).

Your Proposal, when submitted, may follow the format and order below. Please use this guideline, taking into consideration that you are studying for a master's Degree – you will need to gain mastery in an area of specialisation – and as such your proposal should reflect this level of complexity. A template for the proposal can be found on CANVAS.

- **Title Page:** Student Name, Number, Module Code and Name, Course Name, Assessment 1 – Dissertation Proposal (Draft/Final) and Dissertation Title.
- **Dissertation Title:** The title should clearly explain what the dissertation is about.
- **Introduction:** Brief introduction as to what this project is all about. Explain the background to the research: definition of research area/boundaries; subject area context.
- **Background:** This section should focus on the background to your dissertation as to how it came about and what you intend to do. Why do you want to research this area? Give the rationale or reasons for undertaking this study. This may (or may not) lead in some instances to a set of research questions to be answered by the study. *Note that the requirement here is for sound academic/scientific reasons for researching this area, not personal reasons.
- **Aim:** A single clear statement of what you are hoping to achieve.
- **Objectives:** There should be a set of five or six measurable objectives that set out what you will need to achieve to satisfy the overall aim of the study. It should be very clear how the objectives feed into the aim.
- **Proposed methodology:** An outline of the proposed research methodology: nature of data required, collection method[s] and form[s] of analysis linked to your research objectives, together with an explanation and justification for your choice(s).
- **Expected outcomes or Deliverables:** Statement of the anticipated outcome(s) of the study. What will you produce as a result of doing the research? For example, a software; a solution to a problem; a framework; model; toolkit; etc.
- **Indicative Reading List:** This should be a listing of the work you have read to help you determine your research questions and/or aim – this should be *not less* than twenty (20) references, comprising a suitable mix of journal and conference articles, reports, books and other appropriate sources, properly referenced using the **Harvard Referencing system.**
- **Appendices**
    - **Project Plan:** This should be a detailed schedule of how you plan to carry out your research. It is expected that it will change, but it needs to be carefully thought through and presented. A Gantt chart may be more appropriate. You could use MS Project to do this – showing start and finish dates with all the principal activities and the milestones.

- **Resources needed**: Should you require anything unusual, this must be indicated. This section will be particularly relevant for those conducting laboratory experiments.
- **Supervisor (if known):**

- **Ethical Approval Status:** Statement confirming that you have completed the Ethics approval form.

Word count must not exceed 3000 words (excludingappendices).

4. PROJECT REPORT FORMAT/PRESENTATION

4.1 Assessment 2: Project Report

Assessment 2 is 85% of the total mark for the module and is an individual piece of work to be submitted by the prescribed deadline. The **Project Report** should be a maximum of 30,000 words excluding Appendices and References. The report must be entirely your own work and must be original in so far as it applies established techniques in new settings or devises new methods for old problems and so on. The report provides all the evidence upon which the academic paper is based and is the document in which your literature review, findings, analysis, evaluation, and any appropriate supporting data appear in full.

The final Project Report should be submitted electronically via the MSc Dissertation CANVAS COURSE. Cover pages for this document can be obtained from the module leader, your supervisor or on canvas. The report must comply with the guidelines given and the details specified in this handbook.

The report should contain as a minimum the followingareas:

1. *Title page:* This should include your name, course, and title of dissertation (template on CANVAS).

2. *Declaration page:* This must contain a signed declaration to the effect that all the work described in the dissertation (except where otherwise stated) is the work of the student. The dates between which, and the places where, the work was carried out should also be included in the declaration. Use templates in CANVAS.

3. Acknowledgements page: On this page you may acknowledge anybody who helped you in a material way with the research, e.g. your employer, supervisor, family or members of the course team and classmates.

4. Abstract page: This should be a summary, not exceeding 300 words in length, of the research carried out and its findings. Ideally, the abstract should give the reader a fair summary of all aspects of the dissertation (theory, test, conclusions).

5. Table of Contents: This section must be sufficiently detailed to allow anybody who has read the abstract to find any relevant section of the thesis without difficulty. Figures, tables, and appendices should be listed separately.

6. Chapter 1: This is a very important part of the dissertation. On completion of this chapter the reader will have acquired a fairly accurate overview of the work carried out including the research context, aim and objectives, the methodology, restraints/limitations, and the structure of the dissertation.

7. Chapter 2 and Subsequent Chapters: This will contain the appropriate descriptive materials, such as findings of literature reviews, a detailed description of the main methodology used for data collection, analysis and discussion of findings.

8. Final chapter: This chapter contains the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the research. On writing this chapter you should bear in mind that everything in it should be extracted from earlier chapters, i.e. a summary of the matters discussed in earlier chapters. The chapter should therefore not produce any new material or concepts and should evidence how the research objectives/hypotheses have, or have not, been satisfied.

Note: When writing each chapter, it is a good idea to have an 'introduction' section at the beginning which 'sets the scene' for the reader about what they are about to read in the chapter. Also have a 'summary' section at the end of each chapter which acts as a 'mini conclusions' section, containing the key issues emerging from the chapter. If someone were to read only the 'introductions' and 'summaries' for each chapter, they should get a clear idea of what the dissertation was about.

9. References: This section contains references to books; articles and other publications cited in the research.

10. Appendices: This is the section for raw data collected by the research. Any software developed as part of the research must be described here. One of your appendices must be a reflective commentary on the process you went through in your dissertation work, including the key challenges encountered and how they were tackled. The appendices are normally numbered alphabetically or numerically.

It must be reinforced that the above model is dynamic and prone to variation depending on, for example, chosen dissertation subject and research method used. That is, certain chapters may be omitted whilst others may have to be incorporated to accurately reflect the research. Alternatively, several chapters may be merged into one. Assessment 2 is to be submitted via CANVAS.

4.2 Assessment 2: Viva-voce/Presentation

Assessment 2 also requires the student to attend a *viva-voce* examination (or presentation), normally between 10- 20 minutes in length and may be attended by the external examiner, the two internal examiners, and colleagues. At this examination the student will be expected to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of the subject area of their dissertation, including activities and writings of other researchers/commentators in the subject area. He/she will also be expected to demonstrate appreciation of the significance of the results and findings in their research. The student will have to justify and explain why the methodology used has been adopted and why it was useful. Some commentary on how any issues which may have arisen have been overcome will also be expected.

This will be followed by questions from the audience where they may be seeking clarification, or question why a certain approach has been selected and why alternative approaches were not considered when solving problems for example. Assessment 2 viva presentation slides to be submitted via CANVAS prior to delivery.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

It should be noted that ***a good dissertation emphasises quality, not quantity*** and in this context, ***quality is predominantly a function of originality.*** A good dissertation should develop the theme of the research in a logical and consistent manner. It should ***'tell the story 'Of*** the research to the reader, taking them through each step and explaining **what** has been done, **how** and **why**. In some cases, a dissertation may well bear little relation to the order in which the research was carried out. This means that a proportion of the writing up will be done after the completion of the research activities. It is, therefore, important that you ensure that your planning makes a realistic allowance for this part of the research.

5. UNDERTAKING THE DISSERTATION

5.1 Selection of a Topic

There is no definitive method of topic choice, but rather, the student is directed to the following considerations; each being briefly discussed in turn. The list is not exhaustive; other considerations may impact the selection decision depending on the setting:

1. Area of student ability/study

It is sensible that the chosen topic is within the student's ability or more specifically, that it falls within the domain of the subject that has been studied at postgraduate level. To choose a subject that lies beyond the remit of your own 'specialism' introduces an (unnecessary) extra element of difficulty. Where the proposed subject is clearly beyond the scope of the student's award, then they will be required to change to a more appropriate field of study.

2. Area of interest

The topic should appeal to the student so that enthusiasm can be maintained. You must be interested in your dissertation subject. Correlation exists between things that we are good at and things we enjoy doing.

3. Availability of information

There is little sense in choosing a topic for which very little information exists, or, for which information is quite inaccessible. Such a dissertation will duly grind to a halt. Similarly, a lack of tangible information only makes for a text of very little substance. If in doubt, make preliminary enquiries as to the availability of information for the potential topic, then carefully assess the proposal with your supervisor(s).

4. Amount of research required

What amount of research will need to be undertaken as to enable a student to adequately pursue their chosen topic (and thus produce a meaningful piece of work)? Most importantly, is this volume of research realistically possible within the allotted time scale? If you feel that the required volume (method) of research is unmanageable, choose another topic.

5. Method of data collection required.

What method of data or information collection will be required? For example, a laboratory experiment that will only yield data at two-monthly intervals is of little real use to a student with only a few months available to complete their dissertation.

6. Degree of objectivity required.

How quantitative (e.g. statistical) does the approach to, and analysis of, your chosen topic need to be? Subject data that require extensive, advanced statistical analysis techniques are of little use to a student whose numeric ability leaf something to be desired. At postgraduate level, many topics can be investigated using either a quantitative or qualitative approach.

7. Employers

In the case of an employed part-time student; has your present employer expressed a preference for your dissertation subject or perhaps requested an input to it? (You will earn more support from your employer if the subject is of interest or potential benefit to them - consider inviting ideas). If you are a full-time student, then will the subject enhance your future employment prospects?

8. Collaboration

Will the topic require industrial or commercial collaboration? (e.g. for survey or case study purposes). If this is so, be sure such collaborating organisations can be identified, and more importantly, are willing to participate in your project. Be sure to confirm this before you start!

9. Supervisor(s)

Is there a suitable supervisor for the proposed topic e.g. qualified in the subject area? Alternatively, will the chosen topic mean that the most suitable supervisor is one with whom you have a personality clash? Do not overlook that successful dissertations rely in part, on a good student/supervisor relationship.

The above list of considerations regarding topic choice is **indicative only**: as with so many other aspects of dissertation study such considerations are a function of individual circumstances. However, if used as a basis for thought the list will help direct a student towards a sensible subject choice.

Do not try and be too specific regarding topic at the outset. That is, until the literature search is well under way, you cannot be entirely certain as to which direction the research will *need* to go. The tip is: initially select a 'broad' subject area and aim to concentrate on one specific aspect of that subject as the literature search, and hence your thinking on the subject, progresses.

5.2 The Need for Originality and Methodology Selection

There is no substitute for originality in a good dissertation. This will be achieved via your own 'research.' The following is intended to help you select a suitable research methodology for your topic:

Methodology is defined in the Collins English Dictionary as: *a system of methods and principles used in a particular discipline; a branch of philosophy concerned with the science of method*.

In the context of dissertation research, methodology may be perceived as the overall process employed to achieve the aim of the investigation. Choice will primarily evolve from the specific (i.e. dissertation) research objective(s) and hence, you cannot totally choose your methodology until your objectives are properly confirmed. To help appropriate methodology selection you should consider the dissertation topic and your research objective(s), with respect to several characteristics. These include:

- Industrial/academic bias.
- Conceptual/empirical requirements.
- Qualitative/quantitative bias.
- Pure/applied bias.

Each is now briefly discussed in turn.

Industrial/academic bias

Research is sometimes conducted to placate a purely industrial or commercial objective, being driven by a specific corporate aim. For example, to gauge consumer opinion with regard a new range of products. This form of research has little or no academic bias and is beyond the remit of this guide. For discrete academic research, methodology will primarily be a function of which (i.e. at what level) degree is being pursued.

Conceptual/empirical requirements

If the aim of the work is to cultivate a concept, then this will normally involve process observation, and subsequent formulation of an abstract idea based typically on qualitative information. Conceptual research need not rely on experiment or experience. It can be described as having a 'theoretical' bias. There is nothing wrong with a student theorising in their dissertation; so long as such is logically presented and argued.

In contrast, empirical research draws conclusions from more tangible, often numerical data or analysis. Empiricism is the opposite of subjectivity and is closely allied to objectivity. In this context, the research may analyse data from e.g. structured survey. Alternatively, experimentation may be used to yield empirical data. Here it should be pointed out that experimentation is not necessarily a physical activity: for example, construction management research is in many ways a social science where experimentation will often be in symbolic or mathematical form. Either way, experimentation requires quantitative methodologies.

Qualitative/quantitative bias

In research terms, a qualitative approach (methodology) means to utilize subjective methods very often based on personal opinion, perception, or feeling (i.e. quality). Unstructured interviews and open question surveys (see below) are synonymous with qualitative methods. Quantitative methodologies involve consideration of size and magnitude and may be perceived as being more analytical in nature than qualitative methods. Structured interviews, structured survey, symbolic models and physical experimentation, are all synonymous with quantitative methods.

Pure/applied bias.

Pure research will tend to:

- be associated with conceptual issues; and
- rely more on qualitative methodologies, although quantitative studies are not excluded.

Applied research will tend to:

- have a leaning toward some industrial / commercial application or bias.
- be empirical in nature; and
- utilize quantitative methodologies, although qualitative studies are not excluded.

Having decided upon your dissertation objective you then need to identify the best methods to satisfy the objective. An overview of some common research methods now follows.

Process observation

Any hypothesised alternative or improvement to existing practice or knowledge cannot be properly considered, until the existing condition(s) and problems surrounding it, are fully understood. Much of this understanding will emanate from the literature search, but this in isolation will rarely suffice. A first and most simple complement to the literature search is observation. Observation alone may be considered as a qualitative methodology, yielding some understanding of the way a process or condition is conducted, or exists at present. In this context, process observation is most often recorded as a narrative (*vis-à-vis* numeric data).

Process measurement

This can take an inordinate number of forms but essentially is an extension of the latter method by the introduction of a measurement regime. For example, in the context of productivity then process measurement could involve time study; this being the recording of times taken to perform a task(s), so that an output standard may be established.

Open question survey

Many aspects of advanced technology research utilise questionnaire surveys. The most straightforward of these is the open question survey; which employs a questionnaire inviting any form of written reply to the question posed. For example: "What is your opinion of the IMechE's recommendations with respect to its proposals for the future of engineering education "Big ideas: the future of engineering in schools"? – might be a typical open question. As can be appreciated, the biggest drawback with this approach is that theoretically there can be as many different responses as there are respondents! Hence, such qualitative research data are more difficult to (objectively) analyse, albeit there are ways to achieve this such as word counts (how many times did respondents use a key word) or, the grouping of 'like' answers.

Structured survey

Structured questionnaire survey is, expressed conveniently, as the quantitative version of an open question survey. An effectively structured questionnaire requires meticulous planning, not least to anticipate:

- the potential range of responses to questions (for the purpose of designing response/scoring categories); and
- the necessary forms of data analysis to responses (must be considered in advance of such analyses being performed).

If designed properly, a structured survey is a very effective means of performing quantitative research.

Unstructured interview

This can be perceived as the oral equivalent of process observation. Essentially, being unstructured (i.e. no preconceived format) it is a means of abstracting qualitative information; for example, qualitative attitude measurement. The former question about IMechE's recommendations (refer open questionnaire above) could be a suitable example of starting an unstructured interview. Thereafter, the interview might take any direction; depending primarily upon the knowledge, strength of opinions, and character of the interviewee (and interviewer for that matter!).

Structured interview

Here, the interview follows prior arrangement in terms of direction. It involves the interviewer using a predetermined structure of questions and direction of discussion. The process should emphasise objectivity, uniform treatment of interviewees, and avoidance of any other possible external influences. That way, interviews may be analysed on a 'like-for-like' basis and therefore, the method may be perceived as being more objective than the unstructured technique.

Symbolic experiments

These are performed using symbolic models. That is, models which represent or typify something. Symbolic models take many forms e.g. a verbal symbolic model could be a specification or other 'binding' or 'controlling' document. However, in this context symbolic models are those, which represent a situation or sequence of events but not in a physical form. (The latter are physical experiments). Typically, symbolic experiments use a system of mathematical equations.

Physical experiments

These are the 'tangible' equivalent of symbolic experiments and tend to represent, model, or test physical phenomena. A perfect example would be the construction of a scale model bridge, to test a new or alternative design, or alternative materials. Note that physical experiments require time to design, construct, perform, record data and analyse outputs.

Mathematical models

These may be considered for a postgraduate dissertation. An example may be a Finite Element model for Stress Analysis of a component or Computational Fluid Dynamics to simulate flow in a virtual wind tunnel experiment.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You must not conduct any collection of data without making an application for ethics and/or safety approval and having received approval from the Ethics or Safety Committee. Before you apply for ethics and/or safety approval you must discuss your methods with your supervisor and get the supervisor to approve it. A copy of the ethics application form and approval process is attached in Appendix 3 (and is also available on CANVAS).

If you carry out your research without obtaining such approval, School policy is that the Research Methods element of the assessment will be given a FAIL mark.

6. POSTGRADUATE DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT

Refer to appendix for detailed assessment criteria.

Two internal examiners, one of whom will be the dissertation supervisor, will examine the dissertation. The internal examiners will mark the dissertation independently, and their comments and agreed mark will be transmitted to the external examiner. In case of any dispute about assessment of the dissertation, the judgement of the Award Board will be final.

Compared to an undergraduate dissertation a master's level dissertation should:

- Deal with a more complex subject.
- Demonstrate an extensive global literature search using suitable search methods and featuring a significant number of academic journal papers.
- Demonstrate 'state of the art' knowledge of the subject through presentation of a critical review of the literature.
- Understanding previous related research.
- Use appropriate methodology (including case studies, structured interviews, simulation or experimentation) to demonstrate originality.
- Demonstrate a more rigorous collection of data founded on a sound theoretical grounding.
- Demonstrate depth and objective discussion.
- Demonstrate a thorough analysis of the findings using appropriate statistical methods, including justification for their use.
- Demonstrate high quality written work, presented in a professional format, using appropriate software.
- Use the Harvard system of citation to give largely accurate and complete references (see the University Harvard Referencing Guide).
- Be expressed in a style suitable for an academic professional piece of work, and use unambiguous language, and largely correct grammar and spelling.
- Have the potential to be published.
- Be disseminated via formal presentation to an internal/external audience.

Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that you are correctly registered on this module. If you are not registered, you cannot be assessed!

IMPORTANT NOTE: Any requests for extension of time to the submission date must be made via the FSE Student Support Officer or via e: vision.

Note that the Appendix contains copies of the assessment sheets. You should be familiar with and attempt to satisfy all aspects of the marking criteria. Also refer to the student/supervisor checklist (Appendix 6) which is intended to offer an idea of the points you should consider before handing-in your finished dissertation.

As a master's level module, you are expected to be fully conversant with the risks associated with plagiarism. Be sure to fully reference your work using the Harvard method. The University Skills for Learning Centre has an excellent (Free!) guide in this respect. This can be accessed through the following link:

Retrieval of failed projects

A student awarded a mark **between 40-49%** has failed the dissertation module but will be entitled to retrieve at the next opportunity (provided this is within their maximum registration period). A student seeking to retrieve failure may submit an amended version of the dissertation (discuss with supervisor) for reassessment by the referral deadline (check the University calendar). **The maximum mark that can be awarded for a resubmitted dissertation is 50%**.

A student who is awarded a mark **below 40%** has failed the dissertation module. The student must then re-take the entire module to retrieve failure. A re-taken dissertation must either: a) be a completely different project with different aims and outcomes; or b) demonstrate a substantially different methodology and/or use of data collection instruments and/or academic content from the original dissertation. The re-taken dissertation must be submitted for assessment within one year of the student's submission (provided this is within their maximum registration period). If you are awarded a mark below 50%, it is your responsibility to contact the Student registry and confirm your intention to 'recover' the module.

7. THE SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

You may be allocated a supervisor by the module leader based mainly on your research proposal. Student (supervisor) preference will be considered where possible but no 'guarantee' that you will be assigned the supervisor of your own choice can be given.

You have a right to expect some supervisor contact and feedback on your work. To enjoy this right, you must:

- maintain regular contact with your supervisor (note that it is the student's responsibility to arrange and keep appointments). We recommend the SAMS appointment system for this;
- regularly submit work to your supervisor (do not wait until the last minute to send you work to your supervisor);
- send work in advance of meetings so that feedback can be provided at the meeting.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There is a formal feedback pro-forma (see Appendix 5) for recording your (student/supervisor) meetings (and any other prudent feedback). Please take relevant notes during your meetings and keep these feedback sheets safe as a record of the interface with your supervisor and for guidance purposes.

You do not have the right to:

- Expect the supervisor to read the entire project word-for-word prior to assessment (i.e. a pre-assessment, assessment).
- Expect a likely mark to be indicated before the final assessment has takenplace.

See Appendix 4 for further information on the relationship with your supervisor

8. READING LIST

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APPENDIX 1: MARKING SCHEMES

Since September 2013 the University has operated a percentage scheme for MSc marks. The assessment and the marking of the Dissertation are based on this scheme as shown below:

Generic Dissertation Criteria

University Performance Descriptors: Level 7 (September 2013 onwards) The

minimum pass mark at levels 7 = **50%.**

	L7 (Masters Level)
90-100% **Outstanding**	This work is outstanding and is of a standard which could be submitted for publication in a professional journal. The work demonstrates engagement in a focused academic debate, which presents a range of evidence underpinning a deep understanding of all the issues studied and a totally justified position. The work demonstrates a high level of originality with challenges to current theory and/or practice and specific, focused examples of contestability. There is evidence of a high level of synthesis of theoretical exemplars, underpinning principles and practical interpretation. No obvious errors in referencing, grammar or syntax, as appropriate.
80-89% **Excellent**	The work is of an excellent standard and has the potential for publication in a professional context. The work demonstrates engagement in an academic debate, which presents clear evidence of a considered understanding of the professional issues studied, the approach adopted, and the position taken. The work enhances current theory and/or practice and displays a range of examples of contestability. There is evidence of clear synthesis of theoretical issues and practice. A critical analysis of theoretical models and/or practical applications has resulted in a distinct level of originality. Very few errors in referencing, grammar or syntax, as appropriate.
70-79% **Very good**	There is evidence of analysis and critique of concepts, models of key authors, rival theories, and major debates together with some evidence of synthesis. The work fully considers the complexity of the context in which it is situated and the impinging external factors; it takes cognisance of differing perspectives and interpretations and recognizes dilemmas. Ideas are presented in a succinct manner and conclusions are well reasoned. The work shows an ability to critique the underlying assumptions upon which current views are based and to challenge received opinion. Few errors in referencing, grammar or syntax, as appropriate.
60-69% **Good**	The work demonstrates a capacity to express views based on sound argument and solid evidence in an articulate and concise way, and, where relevant, to put forward and make use of criteria for the judgement of theories and issues. There is evidence of effective engagement in a critical dialogue relating to professional practice, a clearly presented overview of an area of concern, and a comparative review of key authors, rival theories and major debates. The work demonstrates a willingness to question and to explore issues and to synthesize theoretical perspectives and practical application within a given professional context. Some small repeated errors in referencing, grammar or syntax, as appropriate.
50-59% **Competent**	The structure and focus are evident and relevant to the assignment task. There is evidence of engagement with pertinent issues. Key authors and major debates are clearly presented and there is evidence of suitable basic reading. The work explores and analyses issues but is not strong on presenting synthesis or evaluations. The work is mainly descriptive but has achieved all the learning outcomes. Some repeated errors in referencing, grammar or syntax, as appropriate.

40-49% **Retrievable fail**	Whilst some of the characteristics of a pass have been demonstrated, the work does not address each of the outcomes for the specified assessment task. There may be little evidence of an ability to apply the principles of the module to a wider context. The work may be an overly descriptive account demonstrating only minimal interpretation, and very limited evidence of analysis, synthesis or evaluation. No counterarguments or alternative frames of reference are generated or considered. There is evidence of sufficient grasp of the module's learning outcomes to suggest that the participant will be able to retrieve the module onresubmission.
30-39%	The work has failed to address the outcomes of the module. There are fundamental misconceptions of the basis of the module. The work is mainly descriptive and shows little or no understanding of relevant theory. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the author will be able to retrieve the assignment without retaking the module.
20-29%	This work shows little or no understanding of relevant theory. There is little reference to appropriate literature and no evidence of independent thought or criticality. Overall the work is unduly descriptive and presents only a superficial grasp of the essential issues.
10-19%	This work is not coherent and shows severe faults in referencing, grammar or syntax. It includes unsubstantiated statements or assertions. It is unstructured and extremely badly presented. It is totally descriptive and lacks any attempt at analysis.
0-9%	No real attempt to address assignment brief or learning outcomes.

Assessment 1 Dissertation Proposal Marking Criteria (10%)

Student name/number: **Supervisor name:** **Assessor 2 name:**

TASK	100 – 80%	79 – 70%	69 – 60%	59 – 50%	49 – 40%	39 – 0%
Working title for research (5%)	Title reflects fully the intent of the research.	Title is a good indication of what the research intends.	Title indicates the intended research.	Title only alludes to the research area.	Title does not reflect the intended research area.	No sensible title submitted
Introduction and back-ground (25%)	Introduces the reader to the area of research succinctly and with insight.	Introduces the reader to the area of research succinctly and knowledgeably.	Introduces the reader to the area of research in a sufficient manner.	Introduces the reader to the area of research.	A poor description of the area of research.	A very poor description of the area of research
A statement of the aim (10%)	Aim is academic, excellently presented shows clarity of purpose. Clearly understands the meaning of Aim.	Aim is academic, well presented but some very minor changes required. Meaning of Aim clearly understood.	Aim is somewhat well-presented and academic, but some changes required. Shows some understanding of what Aim is.	Aim is somewhat academic the changes required to make the project workable. Meaning of Aim not fully understood.	Meaning of Aim is mis-understood the aim is unclear or unworkable in this context.	Meaning of Aim is misunderstood and badly written. It is unclear and unrealistic or unworkable in this context.
Research objectives (10%)	A clear, measurable, appropriate scope and 'do-able' within timescale; postgraduate level in all aspects.	Clear measurable appropriate in scope and 'do-able' within timescale, but some very minor changes required.	Research propose is at an acceptable level; but some changes will be required.	Research proposed is below optimum level; some significant changes will be required.	Research is either too ambitious or lacks ambition. They need to revisit, and scope aims and deliverables.	Either confused, impractical, or well below postgraduate expectation.
Proposed methodology (20%)	Well considered methodology, excellently described and justified. Understands research methodology.	Well considered methodology, well described and justified. Understands research methodology.	Limited discussion on research strategy/ methodology. Describes methods well but does not provide robust justification for use.	Some discussion on methodology and methods provided, but with weak justification.	Inadequate consideration of methodology and methods. Clearly lacks understanding of research design.	No methodology provided, or unacceptable or unsuitable methods proposed. **No Ethics form submitted!**
Deliverables (10%)	Deliverables of the project are clear, well-defined, achievable and well presented.	Deliverables of the project are clear, well- defined, and achievable, but some very minor changes required.	Deliverables proposed at acceptable level, but some changes will be required.	Deliverables proposed below an optimum level, some significant changes will be required.	Deliverables proposed unacceptable but recoverable, significant changes will be required.	Deliverables proposed unacceptable. Significant changes will be required.
Reading list for initial research (10%)	Reading list is fully inclusive for the subject area and will aid the research.	Reading list is comprehensive for the subject area and will aid research.	Reading list is good for the subject area and will aid research.	Reading list will aid research but needs more sources.	Reading list is poor for the subject area and will not aid research.	No appropriate reading list

Project Plan (10%)	The project plan is totally realistic and achievable in the proposed time.	The project plan is mainly realistic and achievable in the proposed time.	The project plan is realistic and achievable in the proposed time.	The project plan is somewhat realistic and possibly achievable in the proposed time.	The project plan is not realistic and may not be achievable in the proposed time.	No project plan included
Ethical Approval Form included	Please circle: YES NO					
OVERALL MARK: *Marks are subject to academic judgement of supervisors and reader*						

Additional Comments

Assessment 2 Project Report Marking Criteria +Viva (80%)

Student name/number: **Supervisor name:** **Assessor 2 name:**

TASK	100–80%	79–70%	69–60%	59–50%	49–40%	39–0%
Literature review (10%)	An excellent discussion which introduces key players in the research area and enhances the readers understanding of the subject.	A very good discussion, which introduces key players in the research area and aids the readers understanding of the subject.	A good discussion, which introduces some of key players in the research area but does not always help the readers understanding of the subject.	A reasonable discussion, which introduces some of key players in the research area but does not help the readers understanding of the subject.	A poor discussion, which introduces very few of key players in the research area and does not help the readers understanding of the subject.	A poor discussion, which introduces very few of key players in the research area and does not help the readers understanding of the subject.
Research methodology (15%)	Research methodology is highly appropriate for the research, justified and implemented appropriately.	Research methodology is appropriate for the research, justified and implemented appropriately.	Research methodology is mainly appropriate for the research, partially justified and implemented appropriately.	Research methodology is appropriate for the research and implemented and/or justified appropriately.	Research methodology is explained but not justified or implemented appropriately.	Research methodology not addressed correctly or absent.
Supporting Evidence in chapters (20%)	Supporting evidence is excellent and enhances the readers understanding.	Supporting evidence is mainly appropriate and specific and enhances the readers understanding.	Supporting evidence is not always appropriate and specific and somewhat enhances the readers understanding.	Supporting evidence is barely appropriate and attempts to enhance the readers understanding.	Supporting evidence is not always appropriate and does not enhance the readers understanding.	Very little supporting evidence and not all appropriate.
Critical Evaluation (20%)	Critical evaluation is thorough and shows a full understanding of the research carried out. It covers both product and process.	Critical evaluation is thorough and shows a good understanding of the research carried out. It covers both product and process.	Critical evaluation is very good and shows a good understanding of the research carried out. It covers both product and process.	Critical evaluation is good and shows an understanding of the research carried out. It covers both product and process.	Critical evaluation is shallow and shows some understanding of the research carried out. It covers either product or process.	Critical evaluation is absent or inadequate
References and Bibliography (10%)	Evidence of wide reading, correctly cited and referenced including recent research findings.	Evidence of wide reading appropriately cited and referenced including some recent research findings.	Evidence of sufficient background reading appropriately cited and referenced.	Some evidence of reading appropriately cited and referenced.	Some evidence of reading that is inaccurately cited and referenced.	Very few (if any), references; inappropriately cited and referenced.
Written Presentation/ Organisation (5%)	Excellently presented. All deliverables completed to a very high standard.	Work is articulate and well presented. Major deliverables completed to a high standard.	Work is generally structured and presented well. Major deliverables completed satisfactorily.	Work is presented in an appropriate manner. Main deliverables of the project are clearly identified.	Work is presented in a poorly organized manner. Some of the main deliverables are either missing or incomplete.	Poor report layout and style. The major deliverables are poorly attempted or missing.

Project Planning (5%) Assessed by reference to reflective commentary	Evidence of very well thought out project plan, including quality standards and risk scenarios. Excellent reflective commentary.	Evidence of well thought out and mostly complete project plan that needs minor adjustments to quality standards and risk scenarios. Very good reflective commentary.	Good project planning that needs some adjustments to quality standards and risk scenarios. Good reflective commentary.	Adequate project planning that needs some significant adjustments to quality standards and risk scenarios. Fair reflective commentary.	Weak project planning that needs some major adjustments to quality standards and risk scenarios. Poor reflective commentary.	Weak or missing project planning that needs complete readjustments to quality standards and risk scenarios. No reflective commentary.
Oral Presentation (Viva-Voce) 15% - *Date to be arranged by Student and Supervisor*.	Excellent slides that illustrate and support the presentation to a high standard and communicate the project topic very well. Excellent engagement and confident with an authoritative style. Excellent ability to answer questions and pose new ones.	Very good slides that illustrate and support the presentation, they are professional looking. Very good engagement, convincing and business-like. Can answer questions clearly and fully. Strong in-depth knowledge of project topic. Very good ability to answer questions.	Good slides that cover the presentation and have good use of graphics. Good engagement, maybe a little fast/slow but friendly and informed. Good coverage of the project and some supporting detail given as required. Can answer most questions related and in subject area.	Slides cover the project topic and use graphics to an acceptable level. Adequate coverage of the project and some supporting detail given. Can answer a fair number of questions directly related to the project topic.	Minimal slides that barely cover the project topic. Poor understanding of content and struggles to answer even simple questions. Limited ability to answer questions.	Unsatisfactory slides which do not support the presentation or are muddled. No/Poor understanding of content and struggles to answer even simple questions.
OVERALL MARK: *Marks are subject to academic judgement of supervisors and reader.*						

Additional Feedback Comments

MARK SUMMARY

Criterion	Mark Awarded (G)	Criterion Weight (W)	Weighted Mark (GxW)
Project Proposal		X 0.10 =	
Project Portfolio Dissertation		X 0.80 =	
Viva		X 0.10 =	
TOTAL		**1.00**	

Assessor's Signature	Date

OVERALL MARK (Supervisor to complete the appropriate table[s])

- In cases where the two assessors' marks fall **within 10%** of each other the student will receive the mean of the two marks (e.g. 60% and 52% = 56%)

Supervisor/Assessor 1 Mark	Assessor 2 Mark	Mean Mark

- In cases where the two assessors' marks are **10% or more apart** (e.g. 60% and 50%) they will meet to review their marks and, if possible, agree upon a mark. The student will receive the agreed mark.

Supervisor/Assessor 1 Signature	Assessor 2 Signature	Agreed Mark

- If the two assessors fail to agree upon a mark (having completed the above review) then a third person will conduct a further assessment and provide a mark. The **two closest marks** will then be averaged with the student receiving the mean mark
  (e.g. 60%, 50%, 52% => mean of two closest marks = 51%).

Supervisor/Assessor 1 Mark	Assessor 2 Mark	Assessor 3 Mark	Mean of two closest marks

Overall Comments:

• Nature and appropriateness of the selected problem (difficulty and challenge)? • Factors influencing the assessment and distribution of marks? • Has the mark been depressed because of a lack of evidence of ethics/safety approval? • Any other comments?

APPENDIX 3: GUIDANCE ON ETHICS

Ethics is a topic that covers questions relating to what kinds of lives we should lead, what counts as a good society, what actions are right and wrong, what qualities of character we should develop and what responsibilities humans have for each other and the ecosystem. In the context of research, ethics as a subject area traditionally covers topics such as the overall harms and benefits of research, the rights of participants to information, privacy, anonymity, and the responsibilities of researchers to act with integrity.

An 'ethical principle' is a general standard or norm that promotes what is regarded as worthy or valuable for the flourishing of humans and/ or the whole ecosystem. Ethical principles may relate to right/wrong conduct, good/bad qualities of character and responsibilities attached to relationships. A principle does not tell us how to act in each situation we encounter, but is broad in scope, and needs interpreting in the light of particular circumstances.

All research raises questions about ethics: about the rigor, responsibility and respect of the practices of researchers.

The University has developed a Handbook for Ethical Approval & Practice Procedures (PDF 1,071K, Downloads file)

The procedures for ethical approval and practice in this handbook have been designed to assist in the application and assessment of ethical approval requests, implementation of good conduct in research, and in the prevention of misconduct. This is to ensure that researchers conduct research of the highest quality.

The handbook is written for staff and students of the University who are planning to carry out a research project, and staff involved in assessing applications for ethical approval. It may be used as a reference in the preparation of bid for grant funding.

A copy of the ETHICS and RISK ASSESSMENT forms will be uploaded on to the CANVAS topic. Please fill out the form electronically and upload to CANVAS along with your proposal, once completed, by the deadline specified in the Milestones and Deliverables section.

DISSERTATION AND PROJECT WORK, ETHICS AND SAFETY APPROVAL FORM

READ ALL THE QUESTIONS

UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT DISSERTATION AND PROJECT WORK, ETHICS APPROVAL

Section 1			
Student Name:		Academic Year:	**2021/2**
Student Number:		Contact telephone number:	
Course:		Email address:	
Supervisor's Name:			
Project Title:			
Section 2			
Aim and Objectives:			
Brief Explanation and Justification of Methodology: (This must clearly and succinctly identify what you are planning to do; for each objective explain why and how you will conduct the work). (Max 250 words)			

Section 3			
Please tick (✓) aspects relevant to your investigation and detail overleaf:		**If ticked, respond Yes/No to the following, give details in Section 4:**	
Ethics:			
Production of videos / audio-tapes, etc		Has permission of participants been obtained? (see note 2)	
Working with minors		Are consents/assents and CRB approval in place? (see note 1)	
Working with vulnerable groups within the community (e.g. the disabled, the sick, pensioners)		Has permission of participants been obtained? (see note 2)	
Observation of human subjects		Has permission of participants been obtained? (see note 2)	
Telephone contact with other individuals or organisations		Has permission of participants been obtained? (see note 2)	
Interviews		Has supervisor approval been obtained? (see note 4)	
Questionnaires		Has supervisor approval been obtained? (see note 4)	
Confidential information		Are measures in place to ensure continued confidentiality? (see note 5)	
General:			
Is any of your work likely to bring the University of Wolverhampton into disrepute on ethical, safety or legal grounds?		Are measures in place to prevent this happening?	
Are measures in place to ensure confidential disposal of data?			

Section 4.
Give further details justifying issues from Section 3. **NOTE**, even if there are no ticks in the above boxes **confirm, in this box,** that you have read the above and that **none** of the categories apply to your project.

Notes:

1. If you intend to work with minors, you will need to obtain a parental consent form, a child assent form, and to engage in the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB)* process and complete the self-declaration form. If you have not received your CRB check prior to testing you need to refer in your method to the individual who has been CRB checked who will be present when you are completing your data collection.

2. Participants have been fully informed of the risks and benefits of the procedures and of their right to refuse participation or withdraw from the research at any time.

3. The confidentiality and anonymity of all participants in the work specified must be maintained during collection, analysis, dissemination and subsequent storage, and disposal, in line with the Data Protection Act (1998).

4. Final versions of questionnaires and interview questions to be submitted to supervisor for confirmation of '*fitness for purpose*' BEFORE any data is collected.

5. Has a risk assessment been completed and can you comply with it? (Append documents).

Research Ethics – Project Categorisation

CATEGORY 0 & CATEGORY A

Category 0 projects are non-hazardous, do not employ participants and use only existing material publicly and legally available in the UK and overseas. They do not meet the criteria for Category A or B.

*Category A projects usually involve the participation of people, rather than secondary data sources such as published memoirs etc., but are not deemed hazardous to the physical or psychological welfare of the participant or the investigator. They do not employ vulnerable individuals, in the context of the specific research, or investigate issues likely to give grounds for offence. If a project appears to be a borderline case of category B it should be deemed to be category B in the first instance. A school ethics committee may subsequently determine it to be category A and set precedent for future usage. Category A projects may be carried out by undergraduates and students, with appropriate training, on other courses below degree level but a first degree in an appropriate subject, or other relevant professional recognition, is a minimum requirement for carrying out category B projects.

CATEGORY B projects involve any of the following

*Any research involving covert procedures.

*****The use of any procedure that may be considered likely to be physically or psychologically harmful unless the procedure is widely used in practice and potential hazards have been minimized. For example, blood sampling and collection of other bodily fluids may be category A procedures provided there is strict adherence to established safety protocols and appropriate supervision.

*****Research that may be offensive, for example, research into pornography, drug abuse etc. Also, research that is contentious in the sense that it may bring the university into disrepute. For example, investigations into some racial differences will need to be shown to be ethically defensible.

*****Research that requires access to, or creates, data about individuals of a highly confidential nature.

*****Research involving participants who, within the context of the study to be undertaken, are considered to be vulnerable. Projects with vulnerable individuals may be designated category A if it is clear that the vulnerability of the individual is likely to be unaffected by participation in the study.

*****Research that requires the administration of substances (legal or otherwise).

*****Research that requires the approval of another ethics committee, for example an LREC, will usually be designated category B. Similarly, research requiring data collection abroad, especially if the supervisor remains in the UK, will usually require scrutiny by a school ethics committee.

Student Declaration:

I confirm that the information I have provided is complete and accurate, and that in the case where any concerns arise which require ethical approval, or over which doubt exists, then work will be halted immediately and clarification sought from an Ethics Committee representative.

Signed:

Date:

Supervisor Declaration:

I am satisfied that the planned research procedures as discussed with me and as outlined in the attached proposal are appropriate for consideration by the Ethics and Safety Committee.

Signed:

Date

Decision of Safety and Ethics Committee			
	✓	Signature (Chair of Ethics and Safety Committee)	Date
Approved			
Approved with comments			
Approved with conditions			
Deferred			
Comments:			

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Location …… Environment/Activity/Equipment .....Sheet 1 of 1

Hazard Identification Reference

(a) Confined Spaces	(b) Falls from Height	(c) Striking by mobile platform	(d) Trip or Slip	(e) Collapse	(f) Manual Handling	(g) Electrical	(h) Hazardous Substances	(i) Radiation	(j) Noise & Vibration	(k) Fire	(l) Explosion	(m) Others

Severity (S)	**Likelihood (L)**	**Risk Factor (R)**	**S x L= R**
1 Negligible - all in a day's work	1 Improbable	<4 Risk may need to be controlled	LOW
2 Minor - minor injury with short term effect	2 Remote - unlikely	4-6 Risk must be controlled	MEDIUM
3 Severe - major injury/disability (reportable)	3 Possible - may or could well occur	7-9 Hazard must be controlled	HIGH
4 Extreme – fatal	4 Probable - expected to occur, several times	>9 Hazard must be avoided	VERY HIGH

Hazard Ref.	**Hazard Description**	**People at risk**	**Initial Assessment**			**Control Measures**	**Residual Risk**			**Action/Comments**
			S	**L**	**R**		**S**	**L**	**R**	

Completed by …… Date …… Copies to ……

Reviewed by …….. Review Date (s) ……..

APPENDIX 4: DO'S AND DON'TS GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS AND STUDENTS

Introduction

There are a number of publications which consider research supervision, but this often focuses on the research degrees, such as MPhil and PhD. The literature used for this guide is drawn from across subject disciplines and has also drawn on articles on research supervision where it has seemed appropriate and relevant. It is intended that the range of sources provided will present various ways of considering the issues around supervision and enable practitioners to use the guide as they deem appropriate.

As more students are involved in the process of formal research and of writing a dissertation as part of their University qualifications, the role of supervision is becoming vital to the process. The aim of this resource guide is to signpost supervisors to some specific responsibilities and also to provide a handy guide of hints and tips for successful supervision.

Project Supervision Hints and Tips.

The primary function of the MSc Supervisor is to provide overall, general guidance of the project and to provide a critical and rational sounding board for student ideas. This requires clarity of responsibilities for both the supervisor and the student. Both parties must take responsibility for ensuring that satisfactory progress is being achieved throughout the entire duration of the project.

It is therefore important to maintain records of all supervisory input/support by staff and students. This information is particularly significant, for example, where there is a student appeal. Staff and Students need to record meetings with date, time, discussion points and agreed next course of action for the student. This should be completed after each meeting in view of the student. This will enable a colleague and/or the project coordinator to access this information should the need arise. Students should also write up, in an agreed format, the outcomes of any supervisory contact, this can then be used as part of the evaluation process.

A supervisor will be appointed for each student and later in the process a reader will also be appointed who will be involved in the marking. It may also be possible on occasions to engage with another subject expert, although this will be at the discretion of that expert and the initial contact should be made through the supervisor. The subject experts input will be recorded also by the student.

The following is not exhaustive or prescriptive, but identifies key functions expected of the supervisor and student and should be adapted, as appropriate.

Responsibilities of Dissertation Supervisors

The role of supervisors is to guide students towards the production of their dissertation by discussing each part of the process. They will advise on relevant areas of literature, help a student to develop

their thoughts on their topic, give guidance on the development of chapters and on the conventions of dissertation writing. They **will not act as proof-reader** of the student's work. The responsibilities of the dissertation supervisor include:

1. Students may expect their supervisors to give advice about the nature of the dissertation (title, viability, methodology, university regulations), literature and other sources (including electronic sources), appropriate techniques and methods (thematic analysis, textual analysis, case study, interview etc.), the planning of the dissertation (organization into chapters, sections etc.), and the standard of work expected (without prejudging the final mark).
2. To discuss the agreed project plan and to give advice on completion dates of successive stages of the work.
3. To encourage students to acquire and maintain familiarity with relevant developments in their subject.
4. To give advice about requisite techniques and arrange for instruction where necessary, and if appropriate to advise students to undertake instruction in written/spoken English.
5. To maintain contact through dissertation meetings in accordance with University policy and in the light of any agreement reached with the student. The frequency and nature of these sessions will vary depending on the characteristics of the topic and the requirements of the discipline.
6. To be accessible to the student at appropriate and reasonable times when advice may beneeded.
7. To ensure that the student is made aware if the standard of work is below that expected.
8. To advise the Module Leader and the student, as soon as it is recognised that there is a problem, if in his or her opinion, there is significant likelihood that the student is likely to fail the dissertation. *Dissertation supervisors are not required to indicate the standard of the work in progress as it is only the final submission which is formally assessed.*
9. To give advice on the preparation of the dissertation and advise the student if the standard of English is inadequate.
10. To read a draft section of the student's dissertation once only. Further readings are at the discretion of the dissertation supervisor. The dissertation supervisor is not, however, expected to undertake substantial editing or revision of a draft:

- Dissertation supervisors/tutors would normally comment on the structure of the dissertation, the balance of the sections and the content of various sections.
- The dissertation supervisor/tutor will take the opportunity to read through and annotate (with comments), where the student needs to make changes.
- Dissertation supervisors/tutors are not responsible for the in-depth checking and criticism of dissertations.

Responsibilities of Students

The prime responsibility for the management of the dissertation lies with the student who must maintain dialogue between him/herself and the supervisor. The responsibility for the work submitted is entirely that of the student. Whatever the circumstances, students may NOT expect their supervisors to provide detailed feedback on drafts of each chapter. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of students to arrange meetings with supervisors (taking account of any periods of holiday or work-related absence over summer) and attend them, discuss with supervisors the type of guidance and comments which they find most helpful, and maintain progress and meet deadlines.

Students should also take the initiative in raising problems and ensure that submitted work is their own (i.e. avoid plagiarism). It is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative throughout the dissertation writing process: raising problems or difficulties, discussing issues arising from feedback, taking appropriate action, and maintaining the progress of work as agreed with the supervisor.

Students should note that they are responsible for choosing their dissertation topic, carrying out the research and submitting on time. The role of the dissertation supervisor is to provide guidance and advice; they are not responsible for the quality of the submitted work.

The student will:

1. Manage the relationship with his/her supervisor, keeping in regular contact with him/her.
2. Discuss with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment that s/he finds most helpful.
3. Agree a schedule of meetings with the supervisor for reports/briefing on progress, ensuring the agreed schedule is adhered to and any deadlines met.
4. Take the initiative in discussing any problems with the project work and/or its supervision so that these can be resolved as soon as possible.
5. Keep a diary of work conducted related to the project. This would include: notes on discussions/correspondence with supervisor(s) and any other internal/external specialists; literature read and comments; ideas/designs; copies of data collated; results of data analysis; etc.
6. Submit the dissertation in the specified format, on time and according to the School's mechanism for handing-in project work and submit for any other assessments as required by courseregulation.

APPENDIX 5: RECORD OF SUPERVISOR/STUDENT DISSERTATION MEETING

Name of student _____

Name of Supervisor _____ **Other(s) present?** _____

Date of meeting _____

Reason for meeting (e.g. progress report)

_____

_____

_____

Material referred to in meeting (e.g. sample chapter)

_____

_____

_____

Summary of points discussed

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Feedback to / Action points for, student

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed _____ **Student**

Signed _____ **Supervisor**

Date of next meeting (if agreed) _____

APPENDIX 6: STUDENT/SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST FOR PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION

Note that this is an indicative prompt list; it is not necessarilyexhaustive.

	YES		NO	
General				
1. Was the study adequately planned at theoutset?				
2. Was the plan used by the student (e.g. modified to take account of progress)?				
3. Did the student liaise frequently and regularly with thesupervisor(s)?				
4. Does the dissertation abstract clearly summarize thework?				
Aim & Objectives				
1. Was a suitable dissertation aim identified?				
2. Was the aim made explicit early in thedissertation?				
3. Are the objectives of the study clear?				
Literature				
1. Was sufficient literature (i.e. pertinent to the subject) identified?				
2. Was the literature used to substantiate arguments and standpoints?				
3. Was the literature review written-up as acritique?				
4. Are all references correctly cited (e.g. Harvardsystem)?				
5. Are all bibliographic listings complete?				
Research				
1. Has a suitable research methodology been used (i.e. to satisfy objectives)?				
2. Was the research well designed (e.g. sample, questionnaire, experiment)?				
3. Were appropriate analyses applied to the accrueddata?				
Findings				
1. Are the findings of any analysis clearlypresented?				
2. Does the dissertation highlight any significantfindings?				
3. Are the findings correct?				
4. Are any findings suitably presented and easy to understand?				
Conclusion				
1. Are the student's dissertation aim and objectivessatisfied?				
2. Does the conclusion adequately summarize thework?				
3. Are sufficient conclusions given?				
4. If applicable, are recommendations given?				
Presentation				
1. Are the preliminary pages complete?				
2. Are sections and subsections presentedlogically?				
3. Is a suitable hierarchy of titles used?				
4. Is the narrative easy to follow/understand?				
5. Are grammar, syntax and spelling correct?				
6. Are the figures and tables suitable and easy tounderstand?				
7. Is the overall structure (beginning, middle, and end) appropriate?				

8. Is the paper clear, concise, correct andcomplete?				
9. Is the paper well formatted?				
Supporting evidence				
1. Is supporting report provided?				
2. Is it presented in appropriate chapters?				
3. Does it include a detailed critique of the extantliterature?				
4. Is the research methodology fully described andjustified?				
5. Has a reflective commentary beenincluded?				
6. Has the research proposal been included?				
7. Is there evidence of ethics approval?				
8. Have you included records of meetings with the supervisory team?				
9. …				
*Are you, the student, proud of your dissertation?				
*Is your supervisor proud of your dissertation?				