



Department of History

Guidelines for the MA Dissertation

All MA students in the History Department are required to write a dissertation in their final year. The work, including research and writing, will extend over the third and fourth semesters. The dissertation must be a student's own independent work and must be based on a critical reading of primary and secondary sources. A successful dissertation is one that is primarily driven by primary sources. The purpose of the dissertation is for students to demonstrate the skills they have acquired through their courses and apply them to producing original research of their own.

All students are mandated to take serious note of the following points concerning their important commitment to engaging in honest academic practice:

- The Department of History follows a zero tolerance policy towards plagiarism.
- If any student is in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, they must consult with a member of the department's faculty.
- Broadly put, plagiarism consists of any practice that involves passing off someone else's words or ideas as one's own.
- Any instance of plagiarism, including presenting work at the draft stage, will immediately garner a failing mark for the entire exercise. There will be no option for review.

Word limit and format for the dissertation

- The length of the dissertation must be of a minimum of 25,000 and a maximum of 30,000 words, NOT including footnotes, the bibliography, the glossary, a list of abbreviations used, and all appendices.
- Please make a note, at the end of the dissertation, of the precise word count of the document you submit.
- The dissertation should comprise at least three chapters, not including the Introduction and Conclusion.
- All citations should be included as footnotes, not as in-text or endnote citations.
- The footnotes and bibliography should follow the rules of the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- A list of abbreviations used in the dissertation, the glossary and list of maps/images/tables (if any) must be provided at the beginning with page breaks between each of these.
- The main body of your dissertation (and all previous written assignments) must be type-written, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 point size font, with appropriate margins (usually the default in most word processing programmes) and with page numbers included.

- The footnotes must be single-spaced in Times New Roman 10 point size font, with appropriate margins (usually the default in most word processing programmes) and with page numbers included.
- Please note that your dissertation must be submitted in TWO separate formats.
 - First, you must hand in three printed hard copies with spiral binding. No handwritten copy of the dissertation will be accepted during the final submission.
 - Second, in addition to the hard copies, you must also present a soft (electronic) copy to your supervisor(s) as an emailed attachment. The deadline for submission of both formats is the same and is indicated below.
- Images, if used in the dissertation, may be inserted either in the body of the text or as plates in the appendix. All images must be numbered and the corresponding number must be entered in the main body of the text. All images should be captioned clearly, indicating their source. Videos/moving images, if used, should be submitted on a CD, separate from the disc on which you submit your dissertation. Please ensure that this CD carries your name, title of dissertation, your registration number and your roll number.
- The order of the various sections of the dissertation is as follows:
 - (A) Title/ cover Page
 - (B) Certificate Pages
 - (C) Abstract of dissertation in not more than 250 words
 - (D) Content Page
 - (E) List of Abbreviations
 - (F) Glossary
 - (G) List of Maps/ Images/ Tables (if any)
 - (H) Acknowledgement
 - (I) Introduction
 - (J) Chapters
 - (K) Conclusion/ Postscript
 - (L) Images/ Maps/ Tables (if used and not inserted in main body of text)
 - (M) Bibliography (Primary materials, Secondary Readings, English and Vernacular sources have to be listed separately)
- Sample cover pages of the dissertation and of certificates will be emailed to students before the deadline for final submission.

Choosing topics and the process of supervisor assignment

- Early in the PG, 3rd semester, students will be asked to submit a list of two proposed subjects of research in order of preference.
- These must be on two separate subjects of examination, sufficiently differentiated from each other. While every effort will be made to accommodate your first choice, this cannot be guaranteed, as the effort of the department is to distribute supervision evenly among faculty.
- When submitting your list of proposed topics of research, please ensure the subjects are defined with sufficient clarity and that the two proposed topics are accompanied by a brief description of the primary and secondary sources you will propose consulting.
- **Please note that you are to indicate preferred topics of research, NOT to choose supervisors.**
- As soon as possible after the submission of the choices of research topics, the department will announce a list of the supervisors assigned to each student.

- In some cases, if deemed either appropriate or necessary, student projects may be assigned joint supervisors.
- No switching of supervisors will be permitted barring exceptional circumstances and then only with the express permission of the department's MA Dissertation Co-ordinator.
- Please note that the supervisor's role is to serve as a guide; the dissertation is a student's own independent project. This means that it is the student who must frame her/his own hypotheses, research the subject accordingly, craft their own argument, and posit it in writing.
- Students must, however, consult their respective dissertation supervisors regularly.
- Please note that in the fourth semester, while your supervisor will be reading drafts of your chapters, there will be only one reading of each of these. It is your responsibility to incorporate the suggestions made by your supervisor. There will be no second reading of drafts.

Marking dissertations

- As this is a year-long undertaking, there will be a final mark at the end of third semester and another at the end of the fourth semester. Both these marks will be out of a total of 50 each.
- The supervisor(s) alone will mark the literature review due at the end of the third semester.
- The final dissertation due at the end of the fourth semester, however, will be marked according to the following process:
 - The supervisor(s), i.e. the first examiner(s), will give the first mark.
 - The Dissertation Co-ordinator will also assign the dissertation to a different member of faculty of the department of History as the second examiner. She/he will mark the dissertation individually, without prior reference to the first examiner's mark.
 - The first and second examiners will consult with each other to confirm an agreed mark for the dissertation.
 - Please note that as with all internal and sessional assignments there is no provision for students to appeal for review.
 - In case of disagreement between the first and second examiners, the dissertation will be referred to an external examiner selected from the department's Board of Studies. That mark will be final and beyond appeal.

Timetable for dissertation

Third semester

The exact due dates will be announced before the start of the third semester.

Last week of July

Students must submit two proposed topics of research in type-written form in the Department of History's office.

First week of August

List of supervisors assigned to be posted by the department.

Third week of November

Submission of an essay that critically surveys the secondary and primary literature on the subject of research. This essay will form the basis of assessment for the third semester. The word limits for the essay are a minimum of 4000 and a maximum of 5000 words.

To be submitted to the Department of History's office.

*All assignments—including the ones that follow in the next semester—must be submitted to the Department of History's office by 1:30 pm on the dates on which they are due.

Note: During the break between the third and fourth semesters, students should utilize their time productively to do primary research since the latter semester will be devoted to crafting draft chapters.

Fourth semester

*Note: The due dates that follow may change as the university's holiday calendar is not yet available.

Friday, 7 January 2019, by no later than 1:30 pm

Students must submit a hypothesis, a working bibliography of sources (primary and secondary) consulted so far and a detailed chapter outline. They should anticipate having to modify both the bibliography and the outline as they continue to progress through research and writing.

Thursday, 31 January 2019, by no later than 1:30 pm

Submission of a draft of the first chapter written.

- This does not mean this has to be the first chapter of the dissertation. Students may choose to begin writing their chapters in any order they wish.

Thursday, 28 February 2019, by no later than 1:30 pm

Submission of a draft of the second chapter.

Friday, 29 March 2019, by no later than 1:30 pm

Submission of a draft of the third chapter.

Friday, 12 April 2019, by no later than 1:30 pm

Submission of a draft of the Introduction and Conclusion.

Friday, 26 April 2019, by no later than 1:30

Submission of a final copy of the dissertation both in hard copy and in soft copy, as indicated above to the Department of History's office.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- The department reiterates that any dissertation with plagiarized content will be invalidated and marked FAIL without any option of a review.
- Any dissertations that do not follow the format outlined above—such as footnoting conventions, font, margins etc. —will be penalized by half a mark for each instance of the error.
- Every dissertation must adhere to the word limit.
- Unless a valid excuse is supported by documentation, the failure to submit dissertations by the deadline will result in a penalty of 2 marks for every 24 hours it is late.