



MA Dissertation Preparation

APRIL 2019

What is the dissertation?

- ▶ 15,000 words for MA students
- ▶ 30,000 words for MRes students
- ▶ Your own research on a topic of your choice that is appropriate for the level you are studying.
- ▶ Your topic/title will be vetted by the Programme Director. You might be asked to change your topic if it is inappropriate for the level of study, or you cannot demonstrate that you are able to do the appropriate research (ex. Lack of appropriate language knowledge).

Dates and Deadlines

- ▶ If you are finishing Part 1 (i.e. the taught part of the degree) in May 2019 or September 2019, then you need to submit your dissertation proposal by 30 June 2019.
- ▶ You will then be appointed a supervisor, and you will need to start the supervision process.
- ▶ If you are expecting to finish Part 1 later, then your proposal submission deadline will be in January 2020 – specific information TBC.
- ▶ You will be sent a Proposal Form after this seminar.



Supervision Basics

READ THE SUPERVISION POLICY: UWTSD AQH GA30

The supervisor's role

- ▶ The supervisor will:
- ▶ Provide appropriate advice and guidance in all aspects of the production of the dissertation
- ▶ Agree a timetable with the student for the submission of work and the scheduling of regular meetings
- ▶ Ensure draft work is returned according to specified deadlines and accompanied by constructive comment
- ▶ Ensure dissertations are not accepted for assessment unless they have undergone a process of tutorial supervision

The supervisee's role

- ▶ The supervisee will:
- ▶ Ensure the dissertation produced is first and foremost his/her own work, albeit achieved with benefit of advice and guidance from the supervisor
- ▶ complete the work within the agreed framework, with any problems relating to late or unsatisfactory submission being brought to the supervisor's attention
- ▶ agree a timetable with the supervisor for the submission of work and the scheduling of regular meetings
- ▶ summarise the outcomes and action points of each meeting on the Postgraduate Taught Dissertation Supervision Record Form (Appendix GA19), and submitting it to the supervisor
- ▶ ensure that his/her work is appropriately edited, particularly with reference to accuracy of grammar and spelling

Working with your supervisor: Tips

1. It is your job to initiate and maintain contact with your supervisor.
2. If you send an email and your supervisor does not answer within 1 week, then do send a reminder.
3. Arrange with your supervisor in advance when they will see drafts of your work.
4. Inform your supervisor about your “busy” periods, and discuss theirs.



Titles & Subjects

Help with finding a subject/title

- ▶ Identify the area that you wish to explore.
- ▶ Narrow down to a specific question/issue.
- ▶ Be specific in your aims and objectives for your research.
- ▶ The topic must be analytical, rather than descriptive.
- ▶ Remember to stay inside your degree topic.

Some example titles from current students

- ▶ Comparing the Lives and Rights of the Hebrew and Greek concubine
- ▶ Exploring collective and individual religious identities in Africa Proconsularis from Augustus to the Severans
- ▶ Did Antiochus III's relationship with the Eastern regions of his Empire, mirror that of his relationship with the Western Cities of Asia Minor?
- ▶ The Iconography of combat: A comparative study of medieval and ancient Greek swordsmanship

Some example titles from current students

- ▶ The Decian 'persecution': an analysis
- ▶ An evaluation of the cult of Antinous
- ▶ The Ambiguous Nature of Gender Relations in Attic Vase Painting
- ▶ Being and Non-being: The Self, Society, and Sympathetic Magic and the Execration Texts of Ancient Egypt.
- ▶ The Greeks in Central Asia: Religious Interactions in the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, 331 B.C. – 125 B.C.

The Proposal

What is an abstract?

- ▶ An abstract is a **short** summary of your **proposed** research.
- ▶ It does not have to be fancy... just tell the reader what your work is about and what your main argument is.
- ▶ You may also want to use the abstract to place yourself in the relevant scholarship, i.e. explain where you are coming from.

What is a good abstract?

- ▶ An abstract that is of professional quality and correctly and clearly summarises the proposed research with a clear and nuanced presentation of the main argument and relevance to scholarship

And what exactly should I do?

1. Write a brief summary of your proposed research.
2. Make sure that you include your main argument (or what you expect your main argument to be)
3. You might want to include your position in scholarship on the subject of your research.
4. It should not be more than **500 words long**. (we have used 61 words on this slide...)

The Methodology Section

1. Choose and consider the appropriate theories/methodologies for your argument/topic.
 1. DO NOT just write generally on any theory that comes to mind. This needs to be specific to your topic.
2. What is your chosen theoretical standpoint/methodology?
 1. Why is it better than rival theories/methodologies?
3. What methodologies has scholarship used? How is your chosen theory/methodology viewed by the relevant scholarship?
4. Be specific, and provide examples that are specific and relevant to your topic/argument.

What is a bibliography?

- ▶ A bibliography submitted at the beginning of a period of research is a bibliography of the materials (primary and secondary) that you **expect** to use.
- ▶ It **will** change over the course of your work.
- ▶ It's there to show that you have done the necessary **preparation** to proceed with your project.

What is a good bibliography?

- ▶ A bibliography that covers all of the ancient sources and evidence and the majority of the essential modern scholarship relevant to the proposed research, presented in strict accordance to the referencing guidelines.

But how do I know what I am going to use?

- ▶ What are the primary sources (literary, epigraphical, papyrological, iconographical, archaeological) that you have already identified?
- ▶ What are the main pieces of scholarship that you have already read or identified as necessary reading?

So what do I put in?

- ▶ You need to divide your bibliography into two sections: one for primary sources and one for scholarship.
- ▶ Remember to include translation details if you know them.
- ▶ How long your bibliography is depends on your specific subject. What matters is that you include all that you can.
- ▶ Remember to use the L'Annee Philologique

How should a bibliography look?

- ▶ Follow the guidelines given in the referencing guidance.
- ▶ You will use the Handbook on Harvard in the LRC pages, and the Classics supplement. If you do not have access to the Classics supplement, do tell us and we will email you a copy. You should have access to it through any one of the modules you are taking in Classics.