

MA Dissertation Guidelines

Word count: 15000 words

Remember – this should be an original piece of work rather than simply a synthesis of previous studies.

Presentation of Dissertation:

- 1.5 or double spaced text
- 12 pt font
- Don't forget to number your pages

Structure of Dissertation:

a) Introductory elements (by convention these are numbered i, ii, iii etc.)

The following must be included in the order shown

Title Page (centre justified)

- Title
- Name
- Student number
- Dissertation submitted to the University of Wales Trinity Saint David for the degree of MA
- Date

Abstract

- around 300 words
- The purpose of the abstract is to summarise the main findings of your research. It should be clear, concise and consist of a piece of connected prose. Please avoid abbreviations

Signed declaration

Acknowledgements

- Remember everyone who has helped you!

Table of contents

- List of chapters and major subsections
- List of figures/plates
- List of Tables
- Appendices
- Page numbers should be given for each item listed

b) Main Text (by convention these are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc)

The precise structure will vary according to subject matter. Please discuss with your supervisor. A typical arrangement of chapters would be:

Introduction: This first chapter should outline your research question, aims and objectives. It should provide relevant background to the study and how this will be covered in the subsequent chapters.

Literature Review: This provides a background to present scholarship in your research area. You need to synthesise this into a cohesive summary of current knowledge in your field, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and in particular where there are significant gaps. This lays the ground work for you to develop your own arguments on the topic – demonstrating how your research is original.

Context of Study: This may be included in the introduction (briefly). However, you might require a separate chapter to contextualise your own research. This should be discussed with your supervisor. Alternatively you might have a chapter where you present your data (archaeological, textual, iconographic etc.).

Methodology: This chapter is where you explain your research design and why you have chosen this specific approach. For example you should highlight whether your research has included any hands-on study of primary data or if it is largely a desk-top survey. What research techniques (qualitative or quantitative) you are using; justification of case studies etc. You should also consider your theoretical underpinnings and justify these.

Discussion, Analysis and Interpretation of your Results: You need to present and describe your material and results before these are analysed. Analysis and interpretation might also include the application of any theoretical approaches and evaluation of the material. Also consider these in relation to previously published work on the subject. You should highlight any shortcomings that have become apparent in your research. The dissertation is a learning process, part of which is being reflexive and self-critical. Being aware of limitations in your research design and how these can be addressed in future research is all part of the research process and will strengthen your overall dissertation.

Conclusions: This final (shorter) chapter should summarise your main findings (not reiterate your arguments!) and reflect upon how/whether these have helped you answer your research question and achieve your goals (aims and objectives) as set out in the introduction. You should consider the significance of your findings and might also make suggestions for future research.

Bibliography/Reference List: All references cited in the main text should be listed alphabetically (and by year). Note for references, you should choose either Harvard or Footnotes and use consistently throughout the dissertation. There are various tools, such as Zotero, Refworks etc. to help you organise your references.

Appendices: These might not be necessary but are a very good way of including important (but potentially lengthy) information (archaeological data, key ancient sources etc.) without using up your word count.