MSc Health Data Science Dissertation Handbook 23/24

Description



MSc Health Data Science

Dissertation Handbook

IIDS67650

Academic Year

2023-2024

This handbook has been written for those of you embarking on the dissertation leading to an MSc in Health Data Science. It does not include details about the taught part of the programme and does not replace the Programme Guidelines issued at the start of the course and should be used in conjunction with them. The information here supplements (and in some cases repeats) that presented in the original Programme Guidelines and applies to your MSc only.

Contents

Overview

Your dissertation is an extremely important piece of work. In contrast to the rest of the course, you are also expected to work more independently on your dissertation. Thus providing an opportunity to draw on your research skills and expertise developed through earlier course units.

The handbook is not an authoritative guide on writing a dissertation but sets out your options and requirements. Where possible, we aim to be flexible to help meet the needs of the student alongside the University regulations. For some of you, this is likely to be your first experience of research related activity, and we hope it becomes a positive experience. But donâ??t worryâ?¦.. we wonâ??t leave you

on your own! All students are paired up with a dissertation supervisor. Information on completing a dissertation is also presented in the online course unit Dissertation Skills, found in Blackboard. This unit is not assessed, but it is vital that you work through the materials.

The University provides guidance on language skills directly relevant to writing a dissertation (see link below). This includes information and guidance on:

- writing a dissertation,
- referencing, and
- avoiding plagiarism.

Please note that we routinely screen all dissertations for plagiarism and your supervisor may request screening of your drafts.

What is a dissertation?

A dissertation is a detailed piece of writing to further develop a studentâ??s knowledge and expertise in their area of study. A dissertation often involves examining a particular topic/question in depth, with evidence of an ability to undertake sustained critical analysis. It provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their research/project skills and produce an important piece of written work. The skills to be developed include:

- Cognitive skills (analysing, synthesising, critical thinking, evaluating and problem solving)
- Creativity (intellectual insight and argument construction)
- Knowledge (about subject area and research methods)
- Personal skills (perseverance, self-reflection, responsibility)
- Self-management (preparation, commitment, time management)
- Professional conduct (ethics, confidentiality, appropriate practices)
- Research management (project planning and delivery)
- Communication (written and oral dissemination)

At a Masters level, the dissertation needs to demonstrate that the student can understand how existing evidence/information relates to a particular question, and how their own work adds to this. Independent thinking is required with an ability to critique oneâ??s own work and that of others. Students need to be aware of the implications of their work and defend the findings presented in the dissertation.

It is achieved by completing a supervised dissertation in an area related to your programme.

The research project is an opportunity for you to consolidate much of your previous learning and to pursue a specialist area of interest that is relevant to your professional life. This overarching aim can be broken down into a number of objectives:

- Conduct a critical review of the literature on the topic of your project
- Identify a gap in current knowledge on this topic and define (or refine) a clearly justified research question
- Design an experiment that will answer this research question and obtain ethical approval
- Collect the data (after piloting) using carefully designed methodology

- Document the data and analyse them using appropriate statistical methods
- Interpret and critically consider the results of the analysis with published work
- Draw (and justify) conclusions of the findings
- Recommend further research questions that lead on from your findings
- Present your findings in the format of a manuscript to be submitted to a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

At its best, the dissertation will provide you with the opportunity to focus closely on a research question or issue that interests or excites you. It allows you to focus exclusively on your chosen topic and increase your knowledge and understanding of it as well as developing new skills required by researchers. At this level you are not expected to be able to contribute original thought to the field and any research you undertake, by definition, will have to be small scale; however, there have been many examples of excellent small research dissertations that have been significant for practice and a growing number are being presented at professional conferences and published in academic journals.

The dissertation represents a third of your postgraduate degree (that is equivalent to four units, a total of 60 credits) MSc Health Data Science (blended learning).

Students are not necessarily expected to carry out primary research and collect new data. Studies requiring their own ethical approval are usually outside the scope of the MSc within the expected timescale, and additional support for ethical approval is not given. The following dissertation options are available (see Appendix A for further details):

1. Systematic Review
2. Quantitative Research Report (usually using existing data or joining an existing research project)
3. A Qualitative Study

When can I start?

Students must have their dissertation proposal approved by the Programme Director before starting any substantive work on their dissertation as described later.

- Part time students have one academic year (September to September) to complete their dissertation once they have registered for the dissertation year. This is a university regulation. Part time students can only submit their dissertation proposal once they have successfully completed eight units.
- Full time students will submit their dissertation proposal alongside their taught units, with a view to getting a Supervisor allocated before the end of Semester 2 teaching finishes.

When must I finish?

The University regulation states that students must submit their dissertation within the academic year of registering for the dissertation unit:

Students must submit their dissertation within the academic year of starting the course.

The final submission date is usually the first week in September. This year, the submission date is Monday 2nd September 2024.

You can hand in your completed dissertation at any time during the academic year and it will then be marked. However, this does not necessarily mean you will receive formal notification or your qualification any earlier.

In very *exceptional* circumstances, students may be granted an interruption lasting several months. Any application for interruption must be supported by supporting evidence. However, this is rarely approved by the university. You should consider your clinical workload before registering for the dissertation because the competing demand of clinical workload is not considered a justification for interruption. Please contact the Programme Administrator as soon as possible if you have any serious concerns about meeting deadlines because of exceptional circumstances.

Your responsibility as a student

As a student, your key responsibility is to take a proactive approach to your dissertation. You should agree the best methods of getting in contact with your supervisor. You must ensure that your dissertation supervisor is kept fully informed on your progress or any difficulties that you are experiencing. You will not be â??chasedâ?• by your supervisor so please make sure that you arrange contact. You should never expect immediate responses, there will be periods when your supervisor is not available due to other teaching commitments or annual leave. 7 Your specific responsibilities include:

- Being aware of relevant School/Faculty/University dissertation regulations and policies;
- Remaining in Manchester for the duration of your work on your dissertation (unless there are explicit instructions from government/university), except with the prior written agreement of your supervisor which should be copied to the programme administrator;
- Establishing as soon as possible that your chosen dissertation topic is feasible. For example, you should be able to make sure that the project is practicable in the time available and that you will be able to submit a completed dissertation on time;
- Preparing for and attending scheduled dissertation meetings with your supervisor;
- Maintaining written records of supervision meetings;
- Maintaining the progress of your work as agreed with your supervisor;
- Completing relevant documents (e.g. draft literature review, ethics form etc.) to an appropriate standard and submitting them by the deadlines specified;
- Ensuring that the dissertation is written in accordance with requirements relating to appropriate academic writing style, formatting, presentation etc.;
- Submitting the completed dissertation to the appropriate office by the submission date;
- Taking the initiative in raising with your supervisor difficulties you encounter (e.g. practical problems, ethical dilemmas) or any circumstances that are affecting your work.

After each supervision meeting, you may be asked to complete a Dissertation Supervision Meeting Report form summarising the issues discussed and the actions agreed (see Appendix for form). This should be signed by you and your supervisor and both of you should keep a copy. After each meeting, students should send their report to the supervisor via email.

Dissertation milestones

Successful completion of a dissertation requires attention to planning and time management. It is important that you plan ahead and work towards agreed milestones with your supervisor. There are some key times that require input from your supervisor â?? you must plan ahead with your supervisor to ensure that they are available and have time, particularly when you are preparing the final draft of the dissertation.

Successful completion represents your academic abilities AND practical skills including time management and planning. Use the following very rough guide to assist your work:

Full time students:

Project call for supervisors: November-January

Student project selection: May

Meeting with supervisor: May/June

Student to do background reading and plan work with supervisor: May/June

Student to commence work: beginning of June

Submit â?? Monday 2nd September 2024

Part time students:

Project call for supervisors: September

Student project selection: October

Meeting with supervisor: November/December

Student to do background reading and plan work with supervisor: December/January

Submit â?? Monday 2nd September 2024

The above dates are the recommended deadlines (except the submission deadline). Extensions to the dissertation submission deadline will not be permitted on the following grounds:

- Registering for the dissertation late
- Starting your dissertation earlier/later than recommended
- Illness without evidence (e.g doctors note)
- Issues related to being off campus (unless mitigating circumstances)
- Not completed the work or write-up

All good plans need a contingency plan! Please remember that: not all dissertation proposals are accepted straight away, with some requiring additional background work from the student; that we

cannot guarantee they will be reviewed at the beginning of every month; and that it can take time to find a supervisor suitable for your work. You also need to appreciate the time it can take to get ethical and other regulatory approval.

How do I choose a project?

Students will choose from a selection of projects suggested by a range of supervisors at The University of Manchester, but you can also discuss ideas with potential supervisors, who may be able to shape something you are particularly interested in. However, please note, these projects are often more difficult to approve and require additional documentation that often delay the process. It can also be helpful to discuss projects with colleagues and other students.

Regulatory issues

Students are responsible for ensuring that all University and external, organisational and legal requirements are followed relevant to their dissertation.

Students are not required to carry out primary data collection for their dissertation. However, in many cases students will carry out a project involving collection of primary (new) data. Therefore ethical approval, for example from the University of Manchester (and in some cases the NHS), will be required. This is a time-consuming process and students must plan adequately for the impact of this on their dissertation.

Dissertation commencement

Supervisors from across the University and in the wider field will have proposed a number of projects and these will sit in the â??project poolâ??. They will be a clear statement of the work and the background/skills they will develop/require.

The Programme Director will review projects in January and these will then be advertised to you and an email (from programme administrator) for you to select by the end of March (full-time students) and October (Part-time students).

A number of factors will have been considered when reviewing the projects before you select them. These include:

1. The relevance of the project to health data science
2. Demonstration of an academic approach
3. Fit of topic at this stage of the programme
4. The suitability of the chosen research methods and skills
5. The ability of your proposal to demonstrate your understanding of critical research methods
6. The scope and time scales of the study.

Writing a plan with your supervisor

Once you have chosen the project, your first task will be to write a brief project plan of how you are to complete the project. In this document you should include the following headings. The subheadings are an example and for illustration but will depend on individual projects:

- Name
- Supervisor
- Title
- Background
    - Literature overview
    - Rationale for study
- Hypotheses / Aims
- Method
    - Overall design
    - Sample description, inclusion and exclusion criteria
    - Control group
    - Sample size, power calculation
    - Assessment, instruments, etc.
    - Data analysis proposed
- Time plan (very important)
- Any anticipated problems
- Ethical issues (if any)
- References

Final version of protocol: 1000-2000 words excluding references.

Supervision

All students will be offered guidance from a dissertation supervisor. Supervisors are usually either academics from the University of Manchester or external organisations with appropriate research experience and a postgraduate university degree. We aim that students find a supervisor who has particular experience in the chosen area to guide students through the dissertation process. However, students need to be mindful that the role of the supervisor is limited, and the dissertation is to be the students own work. Some students might also have a local project supervisor, to assist with day to day queries about their work and project management. Supervisors are not responsible in any way for the final work that you submit.

It is important that you start **regular** contact with your supervisor. Please discuss any concerns with your supervisor about your dissertation, the progress of your work and the support you require. Appendix B contains further guidance. Please contact the Programme Director if you experience any problems with your supervision.

Students and supervisors need to develop a working relationship for the dissertation process over the academic year. This is another reason for you to start work on your dissertation earlier rather than later.

The responsibilities of the academic supervisor and student are outlined in Appendix B.

You should typically arrange to meet with your main supervisor for 30-60 minutes at least every four weeks (but this can be flexible depending on how you are undertaking your research). The initiative for requesting supervision meetings lies entirely with you.

The supervisorâ??s role is to give advice and help on the nature and standard of the work, and direct you to useful literature and appropriate methodology. But remember, the ultimate responsibility remains yours. Use the time wisely with your supervisor: listen carefully and follow the advice offered. It is not their responsibility if you fail to attend meetings or miss deadlines. This is part of your training in project management and managing the â??research processâ??. Your supervisor will guide you through the research process and will suggest deadlines for submitting draft work. Make sure you do not miss these deadlines and take heed of the feedback since your supervisor will not be in a position to read multiple re-drafts of your work. There will be periods when your supervisor is not available due to other commitments. Therefore, if you wish to see your supervisor, you should make an appointment. Agree methods of getting in contact with your supervisor: email is usually the best way. Your supervisor will almost certainly be involved with a variety of other projects; therefore, you should not assume that they will immediately recall the last discussion you had together about your project. Supervision meetings always need to be prearranged: never expect on-the-spot discussions. Make sure that you and your supervisor are aware of each otherâ??s periods of absence.

Summary of good practice points between you and your supervisor

Prepare a checklist in advance of your first contact.

Â· Record the content of all meetings or contact with your supervisor for both of you to be able to access.

Â· Prepare a timeline for the dissertation with clear milestones so that all parties are able to agree a way forward.

Â· It is good practice to declare at this point if you have a disability that your supervisor needs to be aware of, if they are not already aware.

Â· If you are going to be co-supervised during the project, you need to make sure that everyoneâ??s roles and responsibilities have been agreed as part of any pre-contact activity. In other words you need to agree the ways in which you are all going to work together and you all need to identify any support issues that might be encountered. This discussion and contract should include what the first and second supervisors will mark/give you feedback on plus how each party plans to divide their respective activities related to the supervision process.

Â· Ensure that you comply with any local Health and Safety requirements.

Â· Ensure that you are aware of any policies and regulations relating to the conduct of research, including research ethics if appropriate.

Â· Agree a project plan with your supervisor, which will lead up to the submission deadline. This will include the number and timing of contacts. If an agreed contact cannot take place, you should be

offered an alternative contact date, or an opportunity for a telephone discussion or email exchange.

Â· Make sure you are familiar with PGT degree regulations and the requirement for you to submit your dissertation on time.

http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=29208

Â· If you have chosen the project, you will need to discuss the suitability of the project, whether it is achievable within the timeframe or whether any amendments are necessary with your supervisor at the outset.

Â· Be aware of the Universityâ??s plagiarism policy and guidelines. All work for the dissertation will be your own, see link. http://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/guidance-to-students-on-plagiarism-and-other-forms-of-academic-malpractice/

Â· Your supervisor should provide you with guidance on the nature of research and the standard expected.

Â· Your work-based or academic advisor should direct you to examples of good practice dissertations submitted in previous years of the programme

Reporting problems

It is important that any problems encountered during the supervision process are reported to the Programme Director (or dissertation lead) and Teaching & Learning Administrator as soon as possible and a note of the nature of the problem and date of occurrence will be kept in your student file.

If you make your supervisor aware of any mitigating circumstances, s/he should inform the programme director and the Teaching & Learning Administrator who will advise on the correct protocol to follow.

Please contact your academic advisor or the Programme Director if you experience any problems with your supervision.

Monitoring

Students and supervisors are required to complete three joint monitoring forms: one at the beginning of the dissertation project, one in the middle of the dissertation, and one before writing up. This is an important part of the student-supervisor relationship and a requirement of the University. The monitoring forms aims to highlight any problems/concerns with the studentâ??s progress that may have been overlooked. It helps you keep your supervisor and the Programme Director updated about your progress. The monitoring form will be used to inform any grievances relating to the student-supervisor relationship. The monitoring form is accessed in the Dissertation Unit on Blackboard. Students are responsible for completing this form with their supervisor.

Recording progress

It is good practice to keep a dissertation diary, or at least a record of your progress and a record of feedback from your supervisor. This can also help us if we need to find you another supervisor mid-way through your work, in case of sickness for example. Students will be expected to keep track of their own

progress and to initiate contact/support from their supervisor.

Submitting your dissertation

You must submit your dissertation **on or before** the submission deadline of **Monday 2nd September 2023.**

Late Submission Penalty

Work submitted after the deadline without prior approval will be subject to a late penalty in accordance with the University Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes. The penalty applied is 10% of available marks deducted per day/24 hours (from the time of the original or extended deadline), until the assignment is submitted or no marks remain.

Penalties for late submission relate to 24 hours/calendar days, so include weekends and weekdays, as well as bank holidays and University closure days.

The mark awarded for the piece of work will be reduced by:

10% of the available marks deducted if up to 24 hours (1 day) late
20% of the available marks deducted if up to 48 hours (2 days) late
30% of the available marks deducted if up to 72 hours (3 days) late
40% of the available marks deducted if up to 96 hours (4 days) late
50% of the available marks deducted if up to 120 hours (5 days) late
60% of the available marks deducted if up to 144 hours (6 days) late
70% of the available marks deducted if up to 168 hours (7 days) late
80% of the available marks deducted if up to 192 hours (8 days) late
90% of the available marks deducted if up to 216 hours (9 days) late
100% of the available marks deducted if up to 240 hours (10 days) late

If the assessment is submitted within 10 days of the deadline the assessment should be marked and feedback to the student provided. If this mark before the penalty is applied reaches the appropriate pass mark but the applied penalty results in a fail of the assessment, the student should not be required to resit the assessment as the original mark can be taken as the resit mark. Further information and examples can be found in the Policy and associated Guidance documents.

For work submitted more than 10 days late, it is regarded as a non-submission and need not be marked. In this case a mark of zero will be awarded and normal resit regulations will apply.

The sliding scale should only be applied to first-sit submissions. For all referred (resit) assessment, any late submission will automatically receive a mark of zero.

For further information:

Guidance on Late Submission

Policy on the Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes

Interruptions and extensions

It is the expectation of the University that postgraduate taught students pursue their studies on a continuous basis for the stipulated duration of their programme. However, it is recognised that students may encounter personal difficulties or situations which may seriously disrupt or delay their studies. In some cases, an interruption or extension to your programme of study may be the most sensible option.

Students who wish to interrupt the programme or extend to write up the dissertation should initially discuss their plans and reasons with the Student Hub, Programme Director or their Dissertation Supervisor (if requesting an extension to their dissertation deadline).

Students must also provide documentary evidence when appropriate, for example, doctorâ??s letter, sick note etc.

An application must be submitted to the Student Hub, which will be sent to the programme director for consideration. The form will then be submitted for final consideration to the School.

The forms required for formal application are available from the Student Hub.

Dissertation extension requests

Students should fill in a Programme Amendment Form to request an extension to their dissertation submission deadline. Students should also create a revised time plan for completing their dissertation, in conjunction with their dissertation supervisor. Students should also ask their dissertation supervisors to supply a short supporting statement. Students must also provide documentary evidence when appropriate, for example, a doctorâ??s letter, sick note, etc.

The form, revised time plan, supervisorâ??s supporting statement and any evidence should then be sent to the Programme Administrator, who will submit it to the Programme Director for consideration. The Postgraduate Programme Manager will then make the final decision.

The forms required for formal application are available from your Programme Administrator.

Mitigating circumstances

Mitigation describes the process when a studentâ??s assessment performance has been affected, or when they are not able to complete an exam/assessment, as a consequence of unforeseen or unpreventable circumstances. Mitigation can be submitted for any assessments that have been completed but have been adversely affected, or for exams/assessments that a student has been unable to complete.

A student must submit a request for mitigation to the Student Hub, **in advance** of their assessment submission deadline or exam, together with supporting 3rd party evidence. Please contact **shs.mitcircs@manchester.ac.uk** program with the Mitigating Circumstances form to complete.

Retrospective mitigation requests will only be considered, if presented at least 2 weeks prior to the exam board and there are compelling reasons as to why the circumstances could not be made known or presented prior to the assessment submission deadline/exam. See programme space in Blackboard for Exam board dates.

Any requests for mitigation will be considered confidentially by a mitigating circumstances panel. This will include a nominated School contact and will meet the quoracy guidelines of the University regulations. Where a request for mitigation is supported, a recommendation will be made to the exam board for them to decide on the best course of action for the student.

Students are also advised to consult the following guidance, which directs them to seek advice and support before and whilst submitting a request for mitigation.

A Basic Guide to Mitigating Circumstances

Attendance and engagement monitoring during the research component

Until your dissertation is complete, your research supervisor will remain in contact with you but the onus is on **you**, the student, to maintain communication. We suggest you get in touch with your research supervisor by post, telephone, email or in person on a regular basis (e.g. every four to six weeks) to give a brief progress report â?? or at any time if you are experiencing difficulties.

All students are required to be on campus for the dissertation unit. Only when approval has been granted by the dissertation unit lead, or programme director, can a student work remotely.

The Programme Director and supervisor will monitor the work and attendance of students on the programme. This is for your benefit and helps to ensure you are coping with the work. Regular or a pattern of non-attendance and/or engagement will result in you being contacted by the School to meet with your programme director. Following this, further action will be taken if there isnâ??t a significant improvement in attendance.

Examination Boards can refuse any assessment, including referred assessment of the dissertation, on the grounds of poor academic performance and/or lack of attendance/engagement. A series of warnings (informal and formal) would be issues to any students failing to meet the engagement requirements during the dissertation unit.

Informal non-engagement trigger in the dissertation year â?? If a student reaches any of the following trigger points, they will be contacted via email by a member of the admin team. An example of this is where a student is not regularly engaging with their Supervisor within the expected guidelines* (see full details below in Engagement monitoring in the Research component)

Formal non-engagement triggers in the dissertation year â?? If a student reaches any of the following formal trigger points, then they will be issued a formal warning resulting in a skype/telephone review meeting with one of the Academic Student Support Advisors. If the student does not attend the review meeting, or hits a further formal trigger, the student will then receive a formal written warning. Further failure to comply with engagement may lead to student being refused permission to continue with their programme. For example, where a student is consistently not engaging with their supervisor within the expected guidelines*

If there is no significant improvement, or the criteria set out in the formal warning are not met, then further action will be taken and may result in withdrawal from the programme.

*Expected guidelines for engagement within the dissertation year can be found below

Engagement Monitoring for Full-time PGT Students during the Research Component

The following guidance outlines the requirements of the School in relation to the monitoring of attendance and engagement for full-time PGT students during the research component of a Masters level degree. This is in accordance with the Universityâ??s expectations in monitoring attendance (Regulation XX, http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=1895).

1. Full-time PGT students are required to maintain weekly contact with their dissertation supervisor throughout the research component of their degree.
2. The Schoolâ??s expectation is that the meetings are conducted face-to-face. In exceptional circumstances[1] or for Distance Learning students this meeting may be conducted via telephone or Skype and on occasions via email.
3. The attendance and engagement of PGT students must be recorded by the main supervisor.
4. The Programme Administrator will request confirmation from the main supervisor on a monthly basis that the PGT student has attended/engaged each week and participated in all required meetings.
5. Where a student fails to attend/engage on two consecutive weeks or where a pattern of non-attendance/engagement becomes apparent it is the main supervisorâ??s responsibility to notify the Programme Director and Programme Administrator immediately.
6. Where students are identified as meeting one of the above trigger points, the process as outlined in section 4 of the Universityâ??s â??Policy on Recording and Monitoring Attendanceâ?? **(** http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20846) will be employed.

Engagement Monitoring for Part-time PGT Students during the Research Component

The following guidance outlines the requirements of the School in relation to the monitoring of attendance and engagement for part-time PGT students during the research component of a Masters level degree. This is in accordance with the Universityâ??s expectations in monitoring attendance (Regulation XX, http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=1895).

1. Part-time PGT students are required to maintain regular contact with their dissertation supervisor throughout the research component of their degree.
2. The Schoolâ??s expectation is that there is a minimum of one contact point per month. This can be via email, telephone, Skype, face-to-face etc.
3. The attendance/engagement of PGT students must be recorded by the main supervisor.

4. The Programme Administrator will request confirmation from the main supervisor on a monthly basis that the PGT student has adhered to the required attendance/engagement points.
5. Where a student fails to attend/engage on two consecutive months or where a pattern of non-attendance/engagement becomes apparent it is the main supervisorâ??s responsibility to notify the Programme Director and Programme Administrator immediately.
6. Where students are identified as meeting one of the above trigger points, the process as outlined in section 4 of the Universityâ??s â??Policy on Recording and Monitoring Attendanceâ?? **(** http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20846) will be employed.

Exceptional circumstances are recognised as:

when a student has been permitted to return home to complete the writing up of their dissertation

when all attempts to arrange a face-to-face meeting have been exhausted

UKVI Attendance Monitoring during the Research component

The University operates attendance monitoring within the academic year, including the dissertation period. This is to confirm the attendance of students holding a Tier 4 Student Visa and to ensure the University meets the UKVI statutory requirements as a sponsor of Tier 4 students and its responsibilities in accordance with its Highly Trusted Sponsor status.

If you are a Tier 4 visa holder, you must attend these attendance monitoring census points, in addition to complying with your programmeâ??s attendance requirements. Please refer to the main programme handbook for further information.

Guidance to students on plagiarism and academic malpractice

Academic malpractice is any activity â?? intentional or otherwise â?? that is likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. It includes **plagiarism, collusion, fabrication** or falsification of results, and anything else that could result in unearned or undeserved credit for those committing it.

Academic malpractice can result from a deliberate act of cheating or may be committed unintentionally. Whether intended or not, all incidents of academic malpractice will be treated seriously by the University.

The procedures and penalties for dealing with academic malpractice are covered by the same regulation as apply to Conduct and Discipline of Students (Regulation XVII): http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=6530.

You are responsible for ensuring that you understand what academic malpractice is, and how to avoid committing it. If you are unsure, ask your lecturer or academic adviser.

As further support for students, the Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health has developed a module entitled â??Understanding Academic Malpracticeâ?• (see Appendix C for further details of the ***Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health PGT Online Skills Training Resource***). This unit should be completed by all postgraduate taught students and will allow you to test your understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and academic malpractice. You can access the resource via Blackboard. Log in to My Manchester and click on the Blackboard tab. The online skills training resource will be listed under the My Communities heading (below your course units). The module should be completed as soon as possible after you begin your programme, but must be completed before you submit your first piece of academic writing for assessment.

Guidance for students on plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice can be found at:

http://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/guidance-to-students-on-plagiarism-and-other-forms-of-academic-malpractice/

Academic Malpractice: Procedure for the Handling of Cases can be found at:
http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=639

As a student, you are expected to cooperate in the learning process throughout your programme of study by completing assignments of various kinds that are the product of your own study or research. For most students this does not present a problem, but occasionally, whether unwittingly or otherwise, a student may commit what is known as plagiarism or some other form of academic malpractice when carrying out an assignment. This may come about because students have been use to different conventions in their prior educational experience or through general ignorance of what is expected of them.

This guidance is designed to help you understand what we regard as academic malpractice and hence to help you to avoid committing it. You should read it carefully, because academic malpractice is regarded as a serious offence and students found to have committed it will be penalised. At the very *least* a mark of only 30% would be awarded for the piece of work in question, but it could be worse; you could be awarded zero (with or without loss of credits), fail the whole unit, be demoted to a lower class of degree, or be excluded from the programme.

Academic malpractice includes ***plagiarism, collusion, fabrication*** or ***falsification*** of results and anything else intended by those committing it to achieve credit that they do not properly deserve. In addition to the advice that follows, your programme will give you advice on how to avoid academic malpractice in the context of your discipline. It will also design assessments so as to help you avoid the temptation to commit academic malpractice. Finally, you should take note that work you submit may be screened electronically to check against other material on the web and in other submitted work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting the ideas, work or words of other people without proper, clear and unambiguous acknowledgement. It also includes â??self-plagiarismâ?? (which occurs where, for example, you submit work that you have presented for assessment on a previous occasion) and the submission of material from â??essay banksâ?? (even if the authors of such material appear to be

giving you permission to use it in this way). Obviously, the most blatant example of plagiarism would be to copy another studentâ??s work. Hence it is essential to make clear in your assignments the distinction between:

â?¢ The ideas and work of other people that you may have quite legitimately exploited and developed, and

â?¢ The ideas or material that you have personally contributed.

Also, chatGPT (and other similar tools) can be useful and could, for example be helpful to plan your dissertation outline/structure. However, under no circumstances should information be verbatim from chatGPT, or any other such tool. To this end, chatGPT does not have a true representation of the real world and often gets things incorrect and can make up results or statements. For example, chatGPT currently makes up references.

To assist you, here are a few important dos and donâ??ts:

â?¢ ***Do*** get lots of background information on subjects you are writing about to help you shape your own view of the subject. The information could be from electronic journals, technical reports, unpublished dissertations, etc. Make a note of the source of every piece of information at the time you record it, even if it is just one sentence.

â?¢ ***Donâ??t*** construct a piece of work by cutting and pasting or copying material written by other people, or by you for any other purpose, into something you are submitting as your own work. Sometimes you may need to quote someone elseâ??s exact form of words in order to analyse or criticise them, in which case the quotation must be enclosed in quotation marks to show that it is a direct quote and it must have the source properly acknowledged at this point. Any omissions from a quotation must be indicated by an ellipsis (â?¦) and any additions for clarity must be enclosed in square brackets, e.g. â??[These] results suggestâ?¦ that the hypothesis is correct.â?• It may also be appropriate to reproduce a diagram from someone elseâ??s work, but again the source must be explicitly and fully acknowledged there. However, constructing large chunks of documents from a string of quotes, even if they are acknowledged, is another form of plagiarism.

â?¢ ***Do*** attribute all ideas to their original authors. Written â??ideasâ?? are the product that authors produce. You would not appreciate it if other people passed off your ideas as their own and that is what plagiarism rules are intended to prevent. A good rule of thumb is that each idea or statement that you write should be attributed to a source *unless* it is your personal idea *or* it is common knowledge. (If you are unsure if something is common knowledge, ask other students: if they donâ??t know what you are talking about, then it is not common knowledge!)

As you can see, it is most important that you understand what is expected of you when you prepare and produce assignments and that you always observe proper academic conventions for referencing and acknowledgement, whether working by yourself or as part of a team. In practice, there are a number of acceptable styles of referencing depending, for example, on the particular discipline you are studying, so if you are not certain what is appropriate, *ask your tutor or the programme coordinator for advice!* This should ensure that you do not lay yourself open to a charge of plagiarism inadvertently, or through ignorance of what is expected. It is also important to remember that you do not absolve yourself from a charge of plagiarism simply by including a reference to a source in a bibliography that

you have included with your assignment; you should always be scrupulous about indicating precisely *where* and *to what extent* you have made use of such a source.

So far, plagiarism has been described as using the words or work of someone else (without proper attribution), but it could also include a close paraphrase of their words, or a minimally adapted version of a computer program, a diagram, a graph, an illustration, etc. taken from a variety of sources without proper acknowledgement. These could be lectures, printed material, the Internet or other electronic/AV sources.

Remember: no matter what pressure you may be under to complete an assignment, you should *never* succumb to the temptation to take a â??short cutâ?? and use someone elseâ??s material inappropriately. No amount of mitigating circumstances will get you off the hook, and if you persuade other students to let you copy their work, they risk being disciplined as well (see below).

The University does not permit plagiarism or other forms of academic malpractice under any circumstances, and individuals found to have committed such an incident can expect a harsh penalty, which in some cases results in exclusion from the University. To ensure that you are fully informed about University expectations and understand your responsibilities with regard to academic malpractice please ensure you have read the guidance provided by the University to students on this topic.

Collusion

Collusion is any agreement to hide someone elseâ??s individual input to collaborative work with the intention of securing a mark higher than either you or another student might deserve. Where proved, it will be subject to penalties similar to those for plagiarism. Similarly, it is also collusion to allow someone to copy your work when you know that they intend to submit it as though it were their own and that will lay both you and the other student open to a charge of academic malpractice.

On the other hand, collaboration is a perfectly legitimate academic activity in which students are required to work in groups as part of their programme of research or in the preparation of projects and similar assignments. If you are asked to carry out such group work and to collaborate in specified activities, it will always be made clear how your individual input to the joint work is to be assessed and graded. Sometimes, for example, all members of a team may receive the same mark for a joint piece of work, whereas, on other occasions, team members will receive individual marks that reflect their individual input. If it is not clear on what basis your work is to be assessed, to avoid any risk of unwitting collusion you should always ask for clarification *before* submitting any assignment.

Fabrication or falsification of results

For many students, a major part of their studies involves laboratory or other forms of practical work, and they often find themselves undertaking such activity without close academic supervision. If you are in this situation, you are expected to behave in a responsible manner, as in other aspects of your academic life, and to show proper integrity in the reporting of results or other data. Hence you should ensure that you always document clearly and fully any research programme or survey that you undertake, whether working by yourself or as part of a group. Results or data that you or your group submit must be capable of verification, so that those assessing the work can follow the processes by which you obtained them. Under no circumstances should you seek to present results or data that were not properly obtained and documented as part of your practical learning experience, otherwise, you lay

yourself open to the charge of **fabrication** or **falsification** of results.

TurnitinUK

The University uses electronic systems for the purposes of detecting plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice and for marking. Such systems include TurnitinUK, the plagiarism detection service used by the University.

As part of the formative and/or summative assessment process, you may be asked to submit electronic versions of your work to TurnitinUK and/or other electronic systems used by the University (this requirement may be in addition to a requirement to submit a paper copy of your work). If you are asked to do this, you must do so within the required timescales.

The School also reserves the right to submit work handed in by you for formative or summative assessment to TurnitinUK and/or other electronic systems used by the University.

Please note that when work is submitted to the relevant electronic systems, it may be copied and then stored in a database to allow appropriate checks to be made.â?•

All typed summative assessment, including dissertations, should be submitted online and subjected to plagiarism detection software.

Finallyâ?¦

If you commit any form of academic malpractice, teaching staff will not be able to assess your individual abilities objectively or accurately. Any short-term gain you might have hoped to achieve will be cancelled out by the loss of proper feedback you might have received, and in the long run such behaviour is likely to damage your overall intellectual development, to say nothing of your self-esteem. You are the one who loses.

Students are therefore advised to carefully study the Universityâ??s Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Malpractice. Please refer to Section 18 of this handbook â?? Guidance to Students on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Malpractice.

How do I hand in my dissertation

You are required to submit one electronic copy of your dissertation. Students are no longer required to submit physical bound copies of their dissertations.

You need to submit an electronic copy on or before the final submission date of 12noon on Monday 2nd September 2023, in Word or as a pdf to Blackboard in the Dissertation Unit IIDS67650.

Information on accessing the Intent to Submit forms and the process for submitting your completed dissertation will be sent to students during the academic year.

All dissertations are routinely screened for plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offence and can result in students failing the overall degree. This does happen occasionally so please make sure you understand this topic. Further information is available at: http://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/guidance-to-students-on-plagiarism-and-other-forms-of-academic-malpractice/

Further information on University regulations for dissertations at Masters level can be found at:

Guidance for the presentation of taught dissertations

Learning resources

IT Services Support Centre online

Details can be found at: http://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/help/

Login to the Support Centre online to log a request, book an appointment for an IT visit, or search the Knowledge Base.

- Telephone: +44 (0)161 306 5544 (or extension 65544). Telephone support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- In person: Walk-up help and support is available at the Joule Library, Main Library or Alan Gilbert Learning Commons:

Technical Help with My Blackboard course

If your Blackboard course unit is not behaving as you expect, you can:

- Contact your Unit Co-ordinator by email to get help with content issues (missing notes, etc).
- Contact the eLearning team for technical bugs using the eLearning Enquiry button.

Library and information support

During your dissertation year, we will be very pleased to give you any help or support with Library or Information facilities. This includes obtaining relevant journal articles or books, chasing references, helping out with computer software problems, literature searches and attempting to find answers to any relevant questions. The University of Manchester Library is located on the Main campus in Manchester and has its own website.

Your University central username and password are provided by the University of Manchester and are used for network access, Blackboard, e-mail and other IT services. They are also used to access many electronic library resources, such as e-journals, e-books and databases. Further information can be found at the Library website.

Another useful link provides access to the British Libraryâ??s EThOS; a service providing full text of theses and dissertations in electronic format from certain institutions.

The University of Manchester VPN service

The VPN service, provided by IT Services, makes it possible to gain full network access from off-campus. When connected, your computer is assigned a University IP address and you will be able to access IP authenticated services as if on campus.

P Drives

You are provided with an allocation of networked file storage space which you can access as the P: drive through the Internet with most browsers. This storage space â?? located on a fileserver â?? is secure and regularly backed up, and is the recommended place to store your data files, or backups of files you have saved elsewhere. You can access your P drive from any pc with Internet access â?? you will be required to sign in using your IT username and password.

Other facilities

As a registered student with the University of Manchester, you are still entitled to use all the University facilities, e.g. library, sports facilities, either when visiting Manchester or on a more regular basis if you live locally. Remember to bring your student/ library card with you.

As a continuing Distance Learning Course student, you will receive any updates, revisions of teaching units, etc. issued during your third year. We will also send you topics and programmes for seminar days, which you are welcome to attend.

Writing the dissertation

You should familiarise yourself with the Universityâ??s Presentation of Dissertations Policy.

Guidance for the presentation of taught dissertations

To summarise:

- All dissertations must be written in English, although quotations may be given in the language in which they were written.
- Title page is required.
- Font size for main text is 12.
- Dissertations are submitted electronically but students can produce bound versions for their own purposes if they prefer. The University of Manchester Library is an agent for the commercial online binding service called Hollingworth and Moss Ltd. Other companies are available and some will print, bind and post the dissertation on your behalf. Services in the UK can be found using an advertising directory such as Yell.Com. The University is **not responsible** for any aspects of printing, binding and submitting your dissertation, nor any costs incurred.
- Students must ensure that material they use in their dissertation that is authored by a third-party is free of any copyright restrictions and/or they have obtained a license or permission to use these materials

Word count (for dissertations)

Guidance for the word count for the dissertation is 8,000 to 12,000. Dissertations should not exceed 12,000 words but can be under the guidance of 8,000. Marking is based upon quality and not quantity, but we advise students to please discuss word count if concerned.

In accordance with the University Policy on Marking:

Each written assignment has a word limit which you must state at the top of your first page. It is acceptable, without penalty, for you to submit an assignment within a range that is plus 10% of this limit. If you present an assignment with a word count exceeding the specified limit+10%, the assignment will be marked but 1% will be deducted from this mark for every 100 words over the limit given.

For an original word limit that is 1000 words and an assignment that is marked out of 100. If a submission is made that is 1101 words then it exceeded the 10% leeway, and is more than 100 words over the original limit and should receive a 1 mark deduction.

In accordance with accepted academic practice, when submitting any written assignment for summative assessment, the notion of a word count includes the following without exception:

Â· All titles or headings that form part of the actual text. This does not include the fly page or reference list.
Â· All words that form the actual essay (excluding the abstract and appendices).
Â· All words forming the titles for figures, tables and boxes, are included but this does not include boxes or tables or figures themselves.
Â· All in-text (that is bracketed) references.
Â· All directly quoted material.

Certain assessments may require different penalties for word limits to be applied. For example, if part of the requirement for the assessment is conciseness of presentation of facts and arguments. In such cases it may be that no 10% leeway is allowed and penalties applied may be stricter than described above. In such cases the rules for word count limits and the penalties to be applied will be clearly stated in the assessment brief and in the submission details for that assessment.

Marking process and criteria for awards

After submission, your dissertation will be read by 2 internal University examiners who will make an independent judgement of the suitability of your work for the award of MSc.

This stage of the examination process usually takes up to 12 weeks (allowing for administration and marking). If you wish to check the progress at any stage you should email the MSc Postgraduate Administrator.

Your dissertation may also be seen by the External Examiner (this is always the case if the internal examiners disagree, or if the work is judged as fail/ borderline/ worthy of distinction).

Students will have successfully completed the taught component (120 credits) at Masters Level before they can progress to the dissertation.

All dissertations are assessed using a formal marking system. Examiners will mark dissertations using the following four criteria and allocate a percentage to each of these:

- Introduction/Literature Review (15%)
- Case/Hypothesis/Aims/Objectives (15%)
- Design of Study or Method (20%)
- Results (20%)
- Discussion (20%)
- Presentation and Referencing (10%)

Grade	Achievement
90% â?? 100%	**EXCELLENT**â?? allows award of Distinction. Exceptional work, nearly or wholly faultless for that expected at Masters level. Perfect presentation.
80% â?? 89%	**EXCELLENT** â?? allows award of Distinction. Work of excellent quality throughout. Excellent presentation.
70% â?? 79%	**EXCELLENT** â?? allows award of Distinction. Work of very high to excellent quality showing originality, high accuracy, thorough understanding, and critical appraisal. Shows a wide and thorough understanding of the material studied, and the relevant literature, and the ability to apply the theory and methods learned to solve unfamiliar problems. Very good presentation.
60% â?? 69%	**GOOD PASS**. Work of good to high quality showing evidence of understanding of the research topic, good accuracy, good structure and relevant conclusions. Shows a good knowledge of the material studied and the relevant literature and some ability to tackle unfamiliar problems. Good presentation.
50% â?? 59%	**PASS**. Work shows a clear grasp of relevant facts and issues and reveals an attempt to create a coherent whole. It comprises reasonably clear and attainable objectives, adequate literature review and some originality. Presentation is acceptable, minor corrections allowed.
40% â?? 49%	**Referral** for Masters or allow Diploma Pass for 90 credit dissertations. Work shows a satisfactory understanding of the research topic and basic knowledge of the relevant literature but with little or no originality and limited accuracy. Shows clear but limited objectives and does not always reach a conclusion. Presentation adequate but requires correction.
30% â?? 39%	**Masters fail** or allow referral for Diploma (90 credits only). Work shows some understanding of the main elements of the research topic and some knowledge of the relevant literature. Shows a limited level of accuracy with little analysis of data or attempt to discuss its significance. Presentation poor, substantial corrections required.
0% â?? 29%	**FAIL**. Little relevant material presented. Little or no evidence of understanding of research topic. Unclear or unsubstantial arguments with very poor accuracy and understanding. Presentation completely unacceptable.

Postgraduate Taught Degree Regulations

Postgraduate Taught degrees at the University of Manchester are based on the National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). This framework requires students to achieve credit at mastersâ?? level in order to get an award. For a standard postgraduate taught Masters programme this will normally mean passing 180 credits. A standard postgraduate diploma will normally have 120 credits and a postgraduate certificate 60 credits. The way in which you study these credits will be defined later in the programme handbook and the programme specification.

The University sets standards relating to your performance on every unit (including the dissertation), but also on your progression through the programme.

Please find below the link to the degree regulations:

http://www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/postgraduate-degree-regulations/

The following guidance should be read in conjunction with the regulations policy document (above). **Further details about the regulations of the taught element of the programme, are included in the original student handbook that you received at the start of your programme.**

Criteria for Award of *Masterâ??s Degree*

The award of Master degree is based upon credit accumulation using a pass mark of 50%.

Distinction

Exceptional achievements over the course of the Programme according to the taught masters marking scheme will be rewarded with the degree of MSc with Distinction. To obtain a Distinction, students must have:

- accrued 180 credits;
- have passed all units with no compensations or referrals;
- have achieved an overall weighted average of 70% or more across the programme;

Students who have compensated or have been referred in any course units are not eligible for the award of Distinction.

Merit

To obtain a Merit, students must have:

- accrued 180 credits
- have achieved an overall weighted average of 60% or more across the programme, including any provision made for compensated or referred units.

Pass

To obtain a pass, students must have accrued 180 credits including any provision made for compensated or referred units.

Exit Awards

Exit awards are available for students who do not satisfy the criteria for the programme they are registered on or who needs to exit the programme early due to unforeseen circumstances.

- To be considered for a PG Diploma (120 credits; exit point) students must have accrued 120 credits across the programme, including any provision made for compensated or referred units.
- To be considered for a PG Certificate (60 credits; exit point) students must have accrued 60 credits across the programme, including any provision made for compensated or referred units.

Please note the pass mark for course units making up the Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate exit awards is 40%, including any provision made for compensated or referred units.

Reassessment of the dissertation

Reassessment of a dissertation as a result of a fail is known as a â??referralâ?•. At the recommendation of the Board of Examiners, students will normally be allowed one resubmission of a failed dissertation. However, students commencing their programme from September 2016 onwards will only be eligible for a referral opportunity if the failed dissertation mark is a minimum of 30 or above. The Board of Examiners, in agreement with the External Examiner may, exceptionally, decide not to allow resubmission. Where students are given an opportunity to resubmit their dissertation, they will be given a maximum of six months from the date of the publication of the original result.

Action following your mark:

50%+	Well done, youâ??ve passed your dissertation
30-49%	Unfortunately, your work is not **yet** at the required standard to pass your dissertation. **We will contact you** and offer you up to **four** months to resubmit a revised dissertation. It is essential that you maximise opportunities for support from your supervisor. The resubmission will assess the extent that you have completed the required changes reported from the first submission. If you choose not to resubmit you will exit the programme with a Postgraduate Diploma (PG Dip)
<30%	Unfortunately your work is not at the required standard to pass, and because of the significant weaknesses shown in your dissertation, you **will not** be offered a chance to resubmit.

Students must abide under the Universityâ??s ordinance and regulations which applied at the time of entry to their programme of study (see above).

The pass mark for a reassessed dissertation is the same as the first attempt (i.e. 50% for masters). When a reassessment is passed, the mark is capped at the lowest compensatable fail mark (i.e. 40R for Masters), unless the previous mark was within the Universityâ??s compensation zone, in which case the original mark will stand with a suffix â??Râ??. This mark is used in the weighted average/total mark for the final award.

External Examiner

External Examiners are individuals from another institution or organisation who monitor the assessment processes of The University to ensure fairness and academic standards. They ensure that assessment and examination procedures have been fairly and properly implemented and that decisions have been made after appropriate deliberation. They also ensure that standards of awards and levels of student performance are at least comparable with those in equivalent higher education institutions.

External Examinersâ?? reports

External Examinersâ?? reports relating to this programme will be shared with student representatives at the Advisory Committee Meeting, where details of any actions carried out by the programme team/School in response to the External Examinersâ?? comments will be discussed. Students should contact their student representatives if they require any further information about External Examinersâ?? reports or the process for considering them.

The External Examiner for this programme is Prof Colin McCowan. Please note that this is for information only and it is inappropriate for students to make direct contact with External Examiners under any circumstances, in particular with regards to a studentâ??s individual performance in assessments. Other appropriate mechanisms are available for students, including the Universityâ??s appeals or complaints procedures and the UMSU Advice Centre. In cases where a student *does* contact an External Examiner directly, External Examiners have been requested not to respond to direct queries. Instead, External Examiners should report the matter to their School contact who will then contact the student to remind them of the other methods available for students. If students have any queries concerning this, they should contact their Programme Administrator.

Academic appeals

Students have a right of appeal against a final decision of an Examination Board, or a progress committee, or a graduate committee or equivalent body which affects their academic status or progress in the University. Students thinking of appealing should first discuss the matter informally with an appropriate member of staff, in order to better understand the reason for the result or decision.

Should you wish to proceed to a formal appeal, this must be submitted within the timeframe outlined in the Academic Appeals Procedure to the Faculty Appeals and Complaints Team, Room 3.21, Simon Building, University of Manchester, M13 9PL (e-mail: FBMHappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk).

The Academic Appeals Procedure (Regulation XIX) and associated documents, including the form on which formal appeals should be submitted, can be found at www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/academic

Student complaints

The Universityâ??s Student Complaints Procedure (Regulation XVIII) and associated documents, including a complaints form, can be found at www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/academic

University has separate procedures to address complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination and/or victimisation â?? see https://www.reportandsupport.manchester.ac.uk/

Students thinking of submitting a formal complaint should, in most instances, attempt informal resolution first (see the procedure). Formal complaints should be submitted on the relevant form to Faculty Appeals and Complaints Team, Room 3.21, Simon Building, University of Manchester, M13 9PL (e-mail: FBMHappealsandcomplaints@manchester.ac.uk)

Conduct and discipline of students

General University information on the Conduct and Discipline of Students can be found at www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/appeals-complaints/conductanddisciplineofstudents/.

Faculty policies for students on Communication and Dress Code, Social Networking and Drugs & Alcohol can be found at:

- http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=29038 (Communication and Dress Code)
- http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=29039 (Drugs & Alcohol)
- http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=29040 (Social Networking

Fitness to Practise

Information on Fitness to Practise should be included in handbooks for programmes which require the student to undertake practical training in a quasi-professional role in relation to patients, clients or service-users; where the qualification provides a direct license to practise; and where the students on the programme are registered healthcare professionals undertaking further study to enhance their current profession or which will allow them to practise an additional duty.

Information on Fitness to Practise related matters can be found at:

http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/bmh/teaching/teaching-activity/fitness-to-practise/

Sharing Information

The university may share appropriate information relating to your health and/or conduct with external organisations such as your professional employer(s) (for example, relevant NHS Trust), placement and training providers and/or regulator (such as GMC, FOM, BOHS, NMC, GDC etc.). This may occur where concerns in relation to your health and/or conduct arise and the University considers it necessary for them to be disclosed to one or more of the above organisations.

The Universityâ??s Privacy Notice for Registered Students (which is accessible via this link: www.regulations.manchester.ac.uk/data-collection-notice) includes further information about how the university may use and process your personal data, including the legal basis and conditions which may be relevant to such processing (see section 6 of the Privacy Notice). The university will only disclose special category data (such as data relating to your health) to a third party organisation where one of the additional conditions are satisfied (see section 9 of the Privacy Notice), including where processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

Graduation

Dissertation students who submit their dissertation in September and then pass will be presented at the November Examination Board and will be invited to join the December graduation ceremony. The Universityâ??s Graduation Team will release the Graduation Ceremony information as soon as it is made available, usually late April/October. The standard email sent by the Universityâ??s Graduation Team is sent to ALL potential graduands. Therefore, please do not book flights or hotels until you have received your award/degree result following the Exam Board meeting in November.

The School will write to you confirming your award and the details for graduation. Further information about graduation can be found at: http://www.graduation.manchester.ac.uk/.

Graduands will have access to both Course and Organisation spaces until the end of their Graduation period; end of July/end of December.

Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS)

The University of Manchester welcomes students with a disability or specific learning difficulties. The University has a Disability Advisory and Support Service, who can supply further information, and DASS advisors will be pleased to meet you to discuss your needs. DASS will liaise with your School through the Disability Coordinator to make the necessary arrangements for your support during your time in Manchester.

The office can also provide a copy of the Universityâ??s Disability Statement, â??Opportunities for Students with Additional Support Needs at the University of Manchesterâ?? which sets out the policy and provision for students with a disability.

DASS Contact Details:-

Location: SHS Student Hub, Jean McFarlane Building

Contact Details: shs.dc@manchester.ac.uk

Appendix A: Dissertation Options

1. Systematic review

Systematic reviews provide an opportunity for students to develop their skills in systematically collating, assessing and summarising existing sources of evidence. The amount of work involved can be influenced by the number of studies that could be included in the review. For the purposes of this dissertation, students can limit the number of studies in their review (see below). Generally, a minimum of between five and ten studies needs to be included in the main part of the review to demonstrate your skills and understanding to the examiner. However, a good review can still be completed even if no eligible studies can be found (see below).

A systematic review need not be limited to randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and you are not expected to complete a meta-analysis for the dissertation. Students will need to include in the dissertation the rationale for the types of study designs included in the review. You are encouraged to use a recognised framework for conducting systematic reviews that is appropriate to your research question.

The content of the actual review will vary depending on the research question and the approach taken. You are expected to highlight how your work is relevant to forensic mental health. Generally, it is likely to include:

Introduction/background

Study design/methods including:

Definition of intervention

Criteria for inclusion/exclusion criteria

Study populations

Primary and secondary outcomes of the review

Methods of analysis/summarising data

Methods for assessing study quality

Search strategy & sources including grey/unpublished literature

Results including:

Flow chart of search process/included & excluded studies

Summary of data extraction sheets

Summary of included studies

Assessment of methodological quality

Summary of treatment effects

Discussion including a critique of the review itself

Conclusion

References

Appendices

Dealing with too many or too few studies

Good quality search strategies for some research questions can identify hundreds, sometimes thousands of potentially eligible studies to be reviewed. Students are unlikely to have sufficient time (and indeed support from a second reviewer) to suitably deal with this. Therefore, it is possible to limit the number of studies for the dissertation. This could be done for example, by limiting the years of publication in the search strategy, or only including UK studies (or for that matter non UK studies), or limiting studies by population such as just women, or by a specific age group. If you use one of these approaches then it needs to be clearly stated in the methods, results and discussion section.

In some cases, you might find less than a handful of potentially eligible studies for your review or none at all. This does not rule out conducting a systematic review for your dissertation. You will still be able to complete all of the sections outlined above until the results section. You could then explore possible strengths and weaknesses of your search strategy, or inclusion/exclusion criteria for example, before providing a more narrative review of some of the â??weakerâ?? forms of evidence that did not pass your criteria. It is unlikely that nothing has been published on your research question at all. You could then conclude with recommendations about what research was needed, what form this might take, and why it was important. These are just ideas and students taking this option will be able to enter wider thinking with their supervisor.

2. Quantitative research report

This option takes the format of a standard quantitative research project. It needs to include the following main sections:

Introduction & background

Critical review of existing literature

Study design

Analysis

Results

Discussion

Conclusion

Possible sources of data include:

Use of an existing data set which the student has permission to use. This could include analyses from one of the large national research databases or surveys or a more local data set.

Analysis of a previous or current research project which the student has been involved with. Supervisors cannot support primary data collection.

3. Qualitative study

Students might choose a topic of interest carry out their own data collection or draw upon available patient narratives as well as other relevant published research in critically addressing a health issue of



Appendix B: Introduction to Dissertation Supervision

Here we outline some of the key roles for student and supervisor. Supervision needs to be flexible to help meet the needs of the student and to account for the other roles of your supervisor. Therefore different supervisors may do things in different ways. This usually works out to the advantage of the student. It is important that supervisors and students clarify ways of working, in particular, methods of communication, at the start.

What is supervision?

At a postgraduate level, a dissertation supervisor aims to guide you or point you in the right directions. Supervisors are not expected, nor should they be doing work directly on your dissertation. A supervisor helps you plan your dissertation and to guide you through a period of learning associated with the topic area. They aim to help you complete a dissertation to the standard that you are capable of. Supervisors are not always â??expertsâ?? in the topic of your dissertation but have experience of research and dissertation writing and support, usually in related areas. Supervisors are not expected to do statistical analysis, proof reading, or reference checking!

At a postgraduate level, a key to learning is to be able to identify oneâ??s own learning and support needs. Therefore students are encouraged to discuss these with their supervisor. The supervisor can then work to meet those needs directly or suggest someone else for you to contact, or other ways of meeting your needs. This can include self-directed learning, reference to particular text books, or a suggestion to contact a topic expert. Further support materials can be found on the Dissertation Skills unit in Blackboard.

Keeping track

Students and supervisors complete interim monitoring reports every three months from the supervisor been allocated. The form is downloaded from Blackboard and completed jointly between the student and supervisor, before returning to HealthDataSciences@manchester.ac.uk

The University allocates around ten to twelve hours of supervision to each student. At first, this might not seem enough, but is usually sufficient to meet the needs of most students. Communicating electronically certainly makes efficient use of time as does highlighting any problems or concerns in advance.

Good ideas

1. Send your supervisor an email to introduce yourself, with a copy of your approved dissertation proposal, a time plan, and any immediate concerns / support needs;
2. Confirm how often to contact your supervisor and how;
3. Be clear about how your supervisor prefers to work and to make most efficient use of their time;
4. When sending supervisors work to comment on, identify any specific queries or questions you might have;
5. Do clarify with your supervisor how much time they need to comment on substantive pieces of work;
6. Do let your supervisor know of any personal circumstances that are or are likely to interfere with your progress;
7. Do mention any concerns you have about the supervision process with your supervisor.
8. Plan the time schedule to complete your dissertation carefully with your supervisor. You donâ??t want to find yourself asking your supervisor to review your dissertation two weeks before submission, only to discover that they have just left for two weeks holiday!

Not such good ideas

1. Donâ??t send your supervisor constant emails about relatively minor things;
2. Donâ??t expect your supervisor to respond immediately;
3. Donâ??t expect your supervisor to know the answer to everything â?? their role is to guide and support you;
4. Donâ??t expect your supervisor to edit your dissertation;
5. Donâ??t ignore your supervisorâ??s advice without at least discussing it with them. Itâ??s unlikely you will want to do everything your supervisor might suggest, but it is helpful for you both to acknowledge your reasons for this.
6. Donâ??t expect to keep your supervisor if you do not contact them for many months or you go past the completion date without having had this agreed in advance.

What do you do if you have concerns about your supervision?

Most students have a positive experience of working with their supervisor. It is uncommon for significant problems to arise. If students and supervisors are clear about their roles and responsibilities from the beginning then this can usually be avoided. Similarly, it is important that you raise any concerns with your supervisor before they develop into a bigger problem.

If you do have any concerns about your supervision which have not been addressed adequately by your supervisor then you need to contact the Programme Director.

Roles and Responsibilities of Supervisors

The responsibilities of Supervisors include:

1. giving guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the planning of the research programme, literature and sources, attendance at taught classes where, appropriate and about requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary);
2. maintaining contact through regular meetings (the frequency of meetings being appropriate to the research being undertaken and agreed in advance);
3. being accessible to the student at other appropriate times for advice and responding to

difficulties raised by the student;

1. giving detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the thesis may be submitted within the agreed timescale;
2. requesting written work or reports as appropriate and returning written material with

constructive criticism and in reasonable time;

1. ensuring that for degrees where an oral examination is required the student is adequately prepared by arranging for the student to present his or her work to staff and graduate seminars;
2. ensuring that the student is made aware when progress is not satisfactory and facilitating improvement with advice and guidance;
3. establishing at an early stage the Supervisorâ??s responsibilities in relation to the studentâ??s

written work, including the nature of the guidance and comments to be offered as the work proceeds and on the draft of the thesis before it is submitted. It must be made clear to the student that research for a higher degree is undertaken within the general principle that a thesis must be the studentâ??s own work;

1. making students aware of other researchers and research work in the department and

Graduate School;

1. encouraging the student to publish the research;
2. providing pastoral support and advising students, where appropriate, of University support services;
3. bringing to the attention of the students the health and safety regulations and academic

rules, regulations and codes of practice of the University. More detailed guidance on Health and Safety is available in the Universityâ??s Health and Safety Policy Notice UMHSP 33, available from Health and Safety Services, which interprets and applies the CVCP Note of Guidance N/93/111, â??Health and Safety Responsibilities of Supervisors towards Graduate and Undergraduate studentsâ?•. Guidance on specific situations is available from the staff of Health and Safety Services.

1. to recommend examiners for the studentâ??s thesis after discussion with the student to ensure that the proposed examiners have not had a significant input into the project, a significant personal, financial or professional relationship with the student, or that there is not other good reason to doubt the suitability of the recommendation.

Responsibilities of the Student

The responsibilities of the student include:

1. pursuing the programme with a positive commitment, taking full advantage of the resources and facilities offered by the academic environment and, in particular, contact with the Supervisor, other staff and research students;
2. discussing with the Supervisor the type of guidance and comment believed to be most helpful, and agreeing a schedule of meetings;
3. ensuring that he/she is aware of the health and safety regulations and academic rules and regulations and codes of practice of the University;
4. successfully completing any training programme arranged within the prescribed time period;
5. taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem, bearing in mind that prompt discussion and resolution of problems can prevent difficulties and disagreements at a later stage;
6. maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the

Supervisor, including in particular the presentation of written material as required, in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage. Where possible, students will be given details of the work programme for the academic year at the beginning of the year;

1. agreeing with the Supervisor the amount of time to be devoted to the research and the timing and duration of holiday periods;
2. deciding when to submit the thesis. The student should take due account of the Supervisorâ??s opinion but must recognise that it is only Advisory. The student must ensure that appropriate notice of intent to submit a thesis is given, in accordance with the published University procedures;
3. checking the completeness and accuracy of the text of the thesis submitted; failure to check the thesis carefully may result in the thesis being failed or cause a delay in the award of a degree.
4. to disclose, in discussion with Supervisors concerning potential examiners for the thesis, any information that could significantly affect the suitability of the proposed examiner (s). Such information may concern a significant input from the examiner(s) into the project or a significant personal, financial or professional relationship they may have had, with the student.
5. [2]**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Title	**Dissertation (Research Project)**
Unit code	IIDS67650
Credit rating	60 credits
Level	7
Contact hours	20
Pre-requisite units	Must have completed taught units of programme

Co-requisite units	None
School responsible	Medicine
Member of staff responsible	Prof Tjeerd van Staa
ECT[3]	30
Notional hours of Learning[4]	*600*

1. **AIMS**

The overall aim of this unit is for the student to undertake a research project that shows originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in health data science. The aims of the dissertation are five-fold:

- To support the student in pursuing independent research on a specified topic
- To support the student in developing research skills, planning and conducting independent research, evaluating, analysing data and communicating findings and outcomes appropriately.
- To support the student in undertaking a concentrated review of literature in a chosen subject area
- To support the student in applying knowledge and expertise gained during the taught element of the course
- To enable the student to demonstrate a mastery of a specific area of the subject

1. **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIT**

The dissertation is an opportunity for students to explore and conduct research in a specific area of health data science in more detail Research projects should be designed to take into account the key skills of health data science and focus either around the management, analysis or interpretation of data or issues working with health data in the health domain. Students must consider the impact the research has on healthcare delivery and wider field.

1. **INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Category of outcome	*Students should be able to:*
A. Knowledge and understanding	LO1 Demonstrate a critical understanding of research methodologies and techniques
	LO2 Evaluate other perspectives in relation to their chosen topic

	LO3 Evaluate critically the strengths and limitations of their own and others research
	LO4 Draw (and justify) conclusions from the results
B. Intellectual skills	LO5 Understand the impact of the research and recommend future direction of the research
	LO6 Show critical thinking capacity, including abstraction, analysis and critical judgement
	LO7 Produce an extended piece of writing with a clear structure in an appropriate style and uses a conventional system of full and accurate referencing
	LO8 Plan and undertake a research project that focuses on a specific area in health data science
C. Practical skills	LO9 Conduct a critical review of the literature and the current status of research in the chosen field
	LO10 Document data, analyse using appropriate methods (e.g., statistical methods; data manipulation methods)
	LO11 Engage in academic and professional communication with others
	LO12 Show initiative and self-direction in academic and professional development
D. Transferable skills and personal qualities	LO13 Undertake independent study and manage time appropriately
	LO14 Use appropriate software for presentation of a professional academic report
	LO15 Behave in a professional manner and follow professional conduct guidelines.

1. **LEARNING AND TEACHING PROCESSES (INCLUDING THE USE OF E-LEARNING)**

Students will have support and guidance from their supervisors to achieve the project goals. Dissertation supervisors will have a minimum of six meetings with the student. This will be delivered face-to-face or via appropriate online tools such as skype. Online space will be available for discussion between students. Supervisors will follow the FMHS Teaching and Support Guidance for dissertations.

The dissertation output would be expected to contain the following sections: Introduction, Background including literature review; Methods; Analysis and Results; and a Discussion including conclusion.

1. **FURTHER BREAKDOWN OF LEARNING/TEACHING HOURS**

Activity	**Hours allocated**
Supervisor Support	24
Independent study including assignment preparation	576
Total Hours	**600**

1. **ASSESSMENT (INCLUDING THE USE OF E-LEARNING)**

Assessment task	**Description**	**Length**	**Weighting in unit**	**Learning Objectives**
Summative assessment	An individual report detailing research work including an abstract and an impact statement	10,000-12,000 words	100%	LO1- LO15
Written report	Students will have regular formative feedback. Students will be expected to provide regular progress reports throughout the dissertation.			
Formative assessment				

BSITES ETC

Appendix C: Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health PGT Online Skills Training Resource

Skills units and other teaching resources developed for the Faculty Graduate School

The Faculty has developed a skills training resource to support you through your postgraduate taught programme. This online material should supplement the assessed learning material and activities undertaken in your taught programme.

Accessing the online skills resource

You can access Blackboard through the My Manchester portal. The skills training resource is available in an academic community space available to all registered PGT students in the Faculty through Blackboard.

If you cannot see these units in Blackboard please contact your Teaching & Learning Administrator on shs.programmes@manchester.ac.uk

Content

Full details of all these resources can be found in the introduction to each unit. These resources have been designed to give you formative feedback on your progress through them. If you experience any problems and would like to talk to someone please contact your Programme Director. If you have questions about referencing and how it applies to your own work, please contact your Programme Director or dissertation supervisor.

Academic Writing	This is an excellent resource that supports you to write your assignments and dissertation. It is split into units that focus on key areas that previous students have found difficult and aims to enhance your academic writing style.
Understanding Academic Malpractice	Good academic writing is underpinned by evidence, and this must be correctly referenced. This resource explains good referencing practice and also enables you to test your understanding of the Universityâ??s plagiarism policy. The Academic Malpractice driving test should be completed as soon as possible after you begin your programme, but must be completed before you submit your first piece of academic writing for assessment.
Statistics: Key concepts*	The course provides a valuable foundation for understanding and interpreting biostatistics. It aims to provide you with the fundamentals of quantitative analysis.
Research Methods*	This course is spilt into 3 units that cover introductions to study design, statistics and dissertation skills. It has a number of online quizzes where you can test your knowledge.
Research Presentation Skills	This short interactive unit is designed to help you to enhance your presentation skills. Regardless of whether you are presenting in public, preparing for conferences, vivas or more informal settings this unit will give you the tops tips to improve your delivery.
Qualitative Research Methods*	This unit has been designed to give you an introduction to Qualitative Research.
SPSS*	This is an introduction to statistics, using SPSS, a popular and comprehensive data analysis software package containing a multitude of features designed to facilitate the execution of a wide range of statistical analyses.
Intellectual Property Awareness Resource	This Intellectual Property (IP) awareness resource has been created in order to improve your understanding of IP. Topics include: Types of intellectual property â?¢ Copyright and IP clearance â?¢ University policy on IP â?¢ IP commercialisation â?¢ IP in research or consultancy â?¢ IP issues to be aware when dealing with academic materials

* NOTE: the material in this online resource is for reference and formative learning purposes only. In some of your taught programme you may be required to undertake assessed course units for Research Methods, Qualitative Research or Statistics. If your programme involves taught units then you should refer to the Blackboard material relating to that course unit. Please contact the Programme Administrator if you are unsure which material relates to your assessed work. You will still be able to refer to the online skills resource in later years.

1. Exceptional circumstances are recognised as:when a student has been permitted to return home to complete the writing up of their dissertation

   when all attempts to arrange a face-to-face meeting have been exhausted â??

2. This unit outline is based on the FMHS Student Supervision and Dissertation Guidance Document (January 2014) â??
3. ECT (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System): There are 2 UK credits for every 1 ECT credit, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA). Therefore if a unit is worth 30 UK credits, this will equate to 15 ECT. â??
4. Notional hours of learning: The number of hours, which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level. It is expected that there will be 10 hours of notional study associated with every 1 credit achieved. Therefore if a unit is worth 30 credits, this will equate to 300 notional study hours, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA). â??