



Guidance on the completion of MA dissertations in light of Covid-19

Social Sciences

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Introduction

The following guidance is designed to support you to complete your MA dissertation in light of the changed circumstances arising from Covid-19. It does not replace the materials provided through the Research Methods module and other existing guidance including the Dissertation Handbook <http://www.dit.ie/lss/resources/socialsciences/> and should be read in tandem with these resources.

Sourcing materials through the TU Dublin library for your dissertation

While students are unlikely to have access to a physical library for the foreseeable future and this will be taken into consideration in the assessment of dissertations, it is also important to remind students of the requirements for Level 9 (MA) awards. Key requirements include that students' use a wide range of credible academic sources and that they critically engage with these sources in reading and writing their dissertation.

The library team has put together a guide to 'Online Library Services available during the University Closure': <https://tudublin.libguides.com/libraryclosureservices>

There are very useful tips on searching resources and accessing support from the library staff on the left-hand panel. From this page, you can link out to additional online resources provided by publishers to libraries during the Covid-19 period (please note some of these resources are only available until the end of May 2020 or June 2020 so we would encourage you to explore them in the coming weeks, even if you are not in a position to engage with them at the present time): <http://www.dit.ie/library/aboutus/news/newsarticles/additionalon-lineresources.html> (for some of the most relevant to students' discipline areas in Social Sciences, see Appendix 1).

The page also links out to the Library Support page <http://www.dit.ie/library/support/> where subject specific guides with links to journals and databases in your area are available:

Social Sciences: https://tudublin.libguides.com/Social_Sciences

Criminology: <https://tudublin.libguides.com/Criminology>

Law: <https://tudublin.libguides.com/c.php?g=674184>

You are encouraged to search widely for literature for your dissertation. It is often the case that a relevant article on your topic will be found outside of your subject area e.g. there may be much theorizing and research undertaken in certain disciplines on the subject of occupational stress, but perhaps not in your discipline area. While we caution against searching too broadly, it is important to be creative where necessary and to enhance the quality of your arguments by adopting a cross-disciplinary perspective as appropriate. There is extensive information available through the library's collection of databases. Many of them are publisher databases so they search across a range of journals. To access the full alphabetical list of library databases <http://www.dit.ie/library/search/databases/>. This list also includes a brief description of the information to be found in each database.

What to do if you cannot find the material you need through the TU Dublin library?

It may seem obvious, but make sure you are signed in using your TU Dublin student number to access the full range of resources including full text materials. Check that you are using the links on the TU Dublin Library website.

When connecting to a resource you will be asked for your TU Dublin login. This is the same username and password you use to access your TU Dublin email. You may also be asked for a Library PIN for dissertations or eBooks. Click on the link here to create a pin if you have not already done so: <https://www.dit.ie/library/search/oldcontent/librarya-z/pin/>

When accessing some eBooks off campus check that you have pre-registered with the eBook platforms (e.g. EBSCO, Science Direct or Proquest). If you have access issues, please email your library and staff will respond to you as soon as possible. Please include the following:

- What e-resource is causing difficulty;
- Your TU Dublin status (i.e. undergraduate/postgraduate/alumni/staff);
- Screenshots of issues where possible.

Review your search technique: Good search technique is essential to finding what you need in the library especially at the present time when you are relying solely on electronic resources. While ‘Search All’ is adequate for basic searching, it does not always successfully mine what you need. We recommend that ‘Search All’ is a first step only and that you also use database, ejournal, ebook searches and within those use the ‘Advanced Search’ feature when you are seeking a particular text. E-copies of the guides ‘Looking for Journal Articles’ and ‘Keyword and Advanced Keyword Searches) are included at the end of this guide to refresh students on the techniques required (see Appendix 2 and 3).

Open Access Repositories: Academics and others are increasingly permitted to post their work on open access repositories and other platforms so if you cannot find an article or book chapter through the library, it is worthwhile completing an online search of the vast and growing repository of open access academic resources available online. You may already be familiar with ‘rian.ie’, the Irish national repository of research publications, which contains approximately 115,000 open access publications from Irish colleges and research agencies. On a much larger scale, see <https://zenodo.org>, the repository operated by Openaire, which contains 37 million open access research and scholarly items from repositories across Europe. As noted on their website “OpenAIRE’s mission is closely linked to the mission of the European Commission: to provide unlimited, barrier free, open access to research outputs financed by public funding in Europe.”

The TU Dublin link to open access repositories is included below:

<https://library.itb.ie/collections/research-repositories/>

Contact the Academic Liaison Librarian: If you cannot find resources, please check with the librarian. They will be able to help you. The full list of Academic Liaison Librarians is below:

<https://www.dit.ie/library/aboutus/academicliaisonlibrarians/>

Susan Chambers is the Academic Liaison Librarian for Social Sciences and Criminology. Her address is susan.chambers@tudublin.ie. If Susan is not available, another library staff member will help you – email library.gg@tudublin.ie

Please also see notice below from the library about the provision of support to students.

If you require assistance with finding information for an assignment or your dissertation, we can organise a 1-1 consultation that suits you. We can also help with referencing queries. These sessions are available by appointment 10am-4pm, Monday-Friday. To book an appointment, please email your Academic Liaison Librarian with:

- *Your research subject*
- *Your availability*

We will then get in touch to arrange a consultation that can take place by phone, by video call, or whatever communication method is available to you and the librarians. We are always available via email for any queries 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday.

Contact the author: If you cannot access an academic's publication after searching extensively, email him/her and ask for a copy. There is a strong culture of sharing and generosity among academic researchers, and most will respond positively to your request.

Critical engagement with the literature

A core requirement of the MA dissertation is that it includes evidence of a wide range of reading and critical engagement with the selected readings. Students are encouraged to review their lecture notes and resources from the Research Methods module on critical thinking, reading and writing. The following resources may also be helpful:

<https://tudublin.libguides.com/c.php?g=679803&p=4845687>

<https://tudublin.libguides.com/c.php?g=679803&p=4845689>

https://tudublin.libguides.com/Literature_Review (Guide to developing a literature review)

At a time when students are increasingly using the internet as a platform to gather materials, we reiterate the advice to remain cautious about the credibility of some sources. This article on 'Evaluating Information' by Julie de Foubert may be helpful in this regard:

<https://tudublin.libguides.com/evaluatinginformation>

Sourcing materials online for your research methods chapter

We encourage you to check out the available e-book resources on research methods when writing your methods chapter. See link here:

<http://www.dit.ie/library/search/searchebooks/#d.en.167065>

Some of the e-books are available through the TU Dublin library, while others have been made available by the publishers to the library until the end of June 2020. Some are fully downloadable, while others are restricted to the number of pages that can be downloaded. Examples include:

Fielding, N., Lee, R.M., & Blank, G. (eds.) (2017). *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications (2017 e-copy is available through TU Dublin library)

This book contains a wide range of topics from digital text analysis, to online surveys, online survey design, online interviews, and online focus groups.

McSweeney, F. & Williams, D. (2019). *Designing and Conducting Research in Social Science, Health and Social Care*. New York: Routledge.

This book provides ‘real world’ accounts of social researchers’ experiences and learning through conducting research in a variety of fields and will be relevant to the types of research undertaken by MA students. (2019 e-copy is available through TU Dublin library).

Woodfield, K. (2018). *The Ethics of Online Research*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing.

(This book has been ordered for the TU Dublin library in e-book format and will be available shortly. In the meantime, you can access it using the following pathway: Click <http://www.dit.ie/library/search/searchebooks/#d.en.167065>. Go to EBSCO Academic eBook Collection - Free Trial until 24th June 2020. Type in details of book title.)

This book contains interesting material on such topics as getting informed consent in online research to the changing role of researchers and participants in online environments. A short reflection on the process and dynamics of changing your original research plans to an online platform and its potential impact on your study is a good way of including some applied detail to your methods chapter.

James, N. & Busher, H. (2009). *Online Interviewing*. London: Sage Publications.

This book covers topics such as engaging with participants online, developing online research strategies, constructing credibility and authenticity and issues of inequality and power relations. (E-copy is available through TU Dublin library).

In addition to sourcing e-book materials, students should refer to the journal articles recommended as part of their Research Methods module. Furthermore, a number of full text e-journals, applicable to all of the MA programmes are available through TU Dublin library. Examples include:

International Journal of Social Research Methodology (18 month embargo on articles)

International Journal of Qualitative Methods

Suggestions for changing your approach to data collection in light of Covid-19 restrictions

We reiterate TU Dublin advice issued to students and staff to fully comply with public health guidance in the course of our work and studies. Your safety and the safety of your research participants is paramount and should be the primary consideration in your plans for fieldwork. Adjustments to your original data collection plans may be required. You may need to move from face to face interviews to telephone or online interviews. You may decide to switch from gathering primary data to analysing secondary data in an existing data set, using the enormous amount of data which is freely available in, for example, the ‘Growing up in Ireland’ data base, or the ‘European Social Survey’. Alternatively, a desk-based policy analysis or media analysis may be a suitable strategy (the TU Dublin library contains extensive online newspaper resources allowing comparison on topics and discourse between newspaper publication types and over time – contact the librarian for support on search strategies if required).

The links below also contain suggestions to conduct your research in light of current and ongoing restrictions. We are providing them to give you some ideas, however if you decide to pursue a specific method, please revert to TU Dublin library resources for referenced materials when writing up your methods chapter. You should discuss your plans with your allocated dissertation supervisor, who will be able to assist you to adjust your plans.

<https://www.methodspace.com/new-resource-doing-fieldwork-in-a-pandemic/> - This link contains a resource ‘Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic’ – it is a crowd sourced document initiated by Professor Deborah Lupton, University of New South Wales and contains suggestions for transferring research methods from face to face to more distant approaches.

<https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/research-and-consultancy/documents/COVID-19-Alternative-Research-Strategies-Advice-for-Students.pdf> [page 3 of this document provides some questions to help you decide if you need to change your approach to data collection; see also page 10-11 for alternative research strategies in social sciences and health research; pages 14-17 for suggestions for using policy or media documentation as the basis for data analysis; page 18 onwards for action research from a distance].

<https://www.socialsciencespace.com/2020/03/the-best-laid-plans-qualitative-research-design-during-covid-19/> This piece gives some examples of the changes researchers have made to their research plans in light of Covid-19 – it may provide some inspiration.

Advice on conducting online research

1. Best practice principles for conducting face-to-face and online research are largely the same however students should be mindful that some adjustments will be required for the online environment.
2. It is important that your project information letter and consent form for participants is adjusted to reflect any changes to your research approach and any changes in how the information will be stored and managed. Participants must be clear in advance on the requirements of their involvement in your research and have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarifications.
3. When undertaking any form of online research, students should establish that their participants are comfortable to proceed and to advise them that they may stop the conversation at any point. Unlike face-to-face interactions, you are unlikely to have sight of the participant's background environment and/or circumstances.
4. Equally, your research participants will only see your headshot on their computer screen and therefore do not have the benefit of knowing you are in a private location where they will not be overheard. The onus is on you to inform and assure your participants of their anonymity and confidentiality.
5. Allow plenty of time to set up your technology and to familiarize yourself with the platform you choose for your fieldwork. It is also advised that you plan for issues such as technical problems and agree a protocol with your participant in advance e.g. is the participant willing to speak to you on the telephone and/or at another time and do you have the necessary arrangements in place to make a secure recording (see below section on security).
6. A reminder that TU Dublin students must adhere to the TU Dublin Data Protection and Privacy Policy. The current Data Protection and Privacy Policy is available at:

<https://www.dit.ie/media/instituteofsecretary/dataprotection/Data-Protection-and-Privacy-Policy-v1.pdf>

An update version will be available in the near future:

<https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/gdpr/data-protection-policy/>

Full information is available at: <https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/gdpr/>

7. The need to focus on data security when conducting research is always a priority, but especially at the present time when we are spending increased amounts of time on online activity. We strongly advise you to reflect on the following security tips and to take measures to protect yourself and your data:

<https://www.dit.ie/aadlt/ictservices/security/securitytips/>

ICT Support for Students

The link below provides information on ICT Services for students of TU Dublin

<https://www.dit.ie/aadlt/ictservices/student/>

Click on the link below for information on software which may be useful for your research:

<https://www.dit.ie/aadlt/ictservices/student/getsoftware/>

Dissertation FAQ

What is required for a Level 9 MA dissertation?

1. Examples of other dissertations are an excellent way to get a sense of what is required. We have produced three volumes of abstracts of taught MA programmes which scored in the high 2.1 or 1st class honours category. Each entry contains a link to the full text of the dissertation, archived in Arrow, the University's open access repository.

You can find these sources at:

[Booklet of Selected Theses from the MA in Criminology, MA in Law, and MA in Child, Family and Community Studies 2007- 2009.](#)

[Booklet of Selected Theses from the MA in Criminology, MA in Law, MA in Child, Family and Community Studies, and the International Masters in Early Childhood Education, 2010-2012](#)

[New Irish Research in Criminology, Law, Childhood, Family and the Community](#), 2016

Taken together, there are links to over 50 highly marked dissertations, which provide examples of a wide range of research methodologies across all the taught MA programmes in the Department.

A smaller selection of more recent examples of full-text dissertations can also be found through the links below:

MA Social Care Leadership and Management Dissertations: <https://tinyurl.com/ydfpauy2>

MA Criminology Dissertations: <https://tinyurl.com/y9mm56ww>

MA Child, Family and Community Dissertations: <https://tinyurl.com/y9m4u7rt>

2. The Department's Dissertation Handbook <http://www.dit.ie/llss/resources/socialsciences/> contains detailed information on the presentation layout and referencing format of the dissertation as well as details on submitting the dissertation (see sections 1.9 and 5.1.2).
3. The marking scheme for MA dissertations provides further insight into the requirements (see Appendix 4).

What is the word count for the dissertation?

The word count for the MA Child, Family and Community and MA in Social Care Leadership and Management is 14,000 words (+/-10%) and the MA Criminology is 12 to 15,000 words. Written assignments that exceed the stated word length by more than 10% will be penalised by deduction of marks using a graduated system. Students are required to include the word count of their assignments on the cover sheet (word count excludes bibliography and appendices). If the word limit is exceeded by more than 10% the student will lose 10 marks. If the student exceeds the word count by more than 20%, the assignment will not be graded.

As a general guide, your introduction should make up 10% of the word count, literature review 30%, research methodology 20% and findings, discussion/analysis and conclusions 40%. This will vary between disciplines and will depend on the research design; you are therefore advised to take direction from your supervisor.

Appendix 1

Academic Complete – Trial until 30th June 2020. Academic Complete offers libraries an affordable, critical mass of ~150,000 multidisciplinary ebooks with unlimited, multi-user access, powerful research tools and DRM-free chapter downloads. Access to this exclusive content is available through Proquest’s Ebook Central’s regular site.

Academic Search Ultimate - Trial until 20th June 2020 Developed to meet the increasing demands of scholarly research, Academic Search Ultimate offers students an unprecedented collection of peer-reviewed, full-text journals, including many journals indexed in leading citation indexes.

Academic Video Online - Trial until 30th June 2020 Academic Video Online is the most comprehensive video subscription available to libraries. It delivers more than 62,000 titles spanning the widest range of subject areas including anthropology, business, counselling, film, health, history, music, and more. Curated for the educational experience, the massive depth of content and breadth of content-types (such as documentaries, films, demonstrations, etc.) in Academic Video Online makes it a useful resource for all types of patrons, giving libraries a high return on investment. Subjects Covered: General Reference

Proquest Central - Trial until 30th June 2020 ProQuest Central is the largest single periodical resource available, bringing together complete databases across all major subject areas, including Business, Health and Medical, Language and Literature, Social Sciences, Education, Science and Technology, as well as core titles in the Performing and Visual Arts, History, Religion, Philosophy, and includes thousands of full-text newspapers from around the world.

Proquest Dissertations & Theses Global - Trial until 30th June 2020 ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (PQDT) Global is the world's most comprehensive collection of dissertations and theses from around the world, offering millions of works from thousands of universities. Each year hundreds of thousands of works are added. Full-text coverage spans from 1743 to the present, with citation coverage dating back to 1637. Subjects Covered: Dissertations & Theses.

Bloomsbury Collections: Bloomsbury Collections delivers instant access to quality research and provides libraries with a flexible way to build eBook collections across the humanities and social sciences. It contains over 6,000 titles, featuring content from Bloomsbury’s latest research publications as well as a 100+ year legacy including Continuum, T&T Clark, Bristol Classical Press, Berg, The Arden Shakespeare and Hart Publishing.

Bloomsbury Education and Childhood Studies: Combined with existing eBooks, articles, and helpful research tools, students can study and build an understanding of education systems, policies, and the nature of childhood and youth experience in different countries throughout the world.

EBSCO EBSCO has given TU Dublin complimentary temporary access to the Ebsco Academic eBook Collection. The complimentary access will run till 24/6/20. This will appear in our TU Dublin resources on our EBSCO platform.

JSTOR JSTOR have released 26 archive journals in Public Health, which are openly available to everyone through June 30th.

ProQuestProQuest Ebook Central customers impacted by COVID-19 will get automatic upgrades to unlimited concurrent access (from single user or 3U) to all owned Elsevier titles through mid-June. ProQuest has partnered with more than 75 publishers to support libraries in providing unlimited access to Ebook Central holdings for all patrons – at no extra charge. <https://www.proquest.com/blog/pqblog/2020/Coronavirus-Impacted-Libraries-Get-Unlimited-Access-to-Ebook-Central.html>

Sage Publishing - Free Trial until 30th June 2020 SAGE Video is a series of online collections developed in partnership with leading academics, societies and practitioners, including many of SAGE's own authors and academic partners, to deliver cutting-edge pedagogical collections mapped to disciplinary curricular needs within the social sciences. SAGE Research Methods Video includes hours of tutorials, interviews, video case studies, and mini-documentaries covering the entire research process. Find videos made with expert researchers from leading research institutions, your favorite SAGE authors, great teachers, and more.

Appendix 2

Looking for Journal Articles

N.B.: Magazines are called *Journals, Periodicals* or *Serials* in a library!

There are a number of places that you would look at when searching for journals & journal articles:

- **OPAC (Library Catalogue)**
- **Google**
- **E-journals**
- **Databases**
- **Journal shelves**

Don't rely on any one option as no one source of information is completely comprehensive in any given subject, and you will be missing out on possibly useful information by just sticking to the catalogue/one single database.

Articles on a Particular Topic

If you are looking for articles on a particular subject or person/company, there are three main areas to look at:

- **Online databases**
- **Print journals in the library**
- **Electronic Journals page**

Online Databases-

Search the database using a keyword or phrase. Get list of articles for that topic. If the database has the full-text of the article, print it out/save it/email it to yourself.

If not, check **OPAC** to see if the library subscribes to the journal. If it is available as an e-journal on the library website, click on the full-text link on the e-journal page. Then, click on the relevant year and then the link to the issue the article is in, and see whether it is available as full-text. If it is, you can download it/print it out.

However, if the journal available in print format, go down to the journal shelves and photocopy the article in the library.

If we do not hold the particular journal (and article) you are looking for at all, it is possible that another library e.g. TCD, UCD, DCU has it. You will need a letter of introduction from your home library in order to be allowed access to another university library. Ask the librarian for help.

In addition to searching other library catalogues for your journal, you might also find the article you are looking for on either Google or Google Scholar using the article title in quotes.

Print/Paper Journals-

It is possible that journals held solely in the library in paper copy (they are **not** listed on the online databases) have articles on your chosen subject.

To look for journals on a particular topic, go to the ***Criminology Subject Gateway*** and then click on the ***'Print Journals'*** bar. You will then see links to lists of print journals on a range of criminology topics.

Alternatively, go to the OPAC homepage. Click on the ***Advanced (Keyword) Search*** button.

Type in the topic you are interested in., e.g. ***"Criminology"*** or ***"Crim*"*** (which looks for all words starting with "Crim-". Limit ***Location*** to ***"Grangeegorman"***.

Then limit ***Material Type*** to ***"Journal"***. Click on the ***Submit*** button.

The results screen will show a list of journals on your topic of interest.

Other publications such as annuals/yearbooks could be included in that list as they are considered 'serial publications'.

Having obtained a list of suitable periodicals/journals from the **OPAC** which are held in the library, go down to the shelves.

Browse through the table of contents of the past few issues/years, depending on how far back you need to go.

N.B.: browsing is still a very useful and necessary part of looking for information in addition to using online resources. It builds up expertise at using journals and knowledge of individual titles. It can also prove to be an unexpected source of inspiration.

Looking for a Particular Journal/Journal Article

Go to the OPAC homepage.

Do a **Journal Search** for your journal title.

If our subscription is to the paper version, check the journal record on OPAC for what year we started subscribing to it (**LIB HAS**), whether we are still subscribing to it, whether we received the particular issue(s) you are interested in (the '**Latest Received**' link), etc.

Go down to shelves and find the particular issue you want or browse through the issues available.

N.B.: Current issues for the last few months/a year, and older issues (usually bound together each year) are held on separate shelves. Both are shelved in alphabetical order.

If the journal is available as an **e-journal**, click on the full-text link on the e-journal page. You can browse through the years that are available.

If you are looking for a particular article, click on the relevant year and then the issue the article is in, and see whether it is available as full-text. If it is, you can download it/print it out.

E-journals Page on Library Website

There is an e-journals page on the library website where you can browse through thousands of e-journals covering various subjects.

Please ask the librarian for help at any time.

Appendix 3

Keyword and Advanced Keyword Searching on the OPAC/Databases

Doing research in the Library

If you want to find out what books (and other material) we hold in the library on a particular topic, the best way to search the Library Catalogue (OPAC) for them is to do a **Keyword** or **Advanced Keyword** Search. (See the OPAC homepage for these options). The same techniques work on online databases when searching for journal articles.

Keyword Search

Go to the OPAC homepage at library.dit.ie. In the middle of the screen is a window with the main options for searching the catalogue. The default option is '**Keyword**'.

If another search option is displayed in the window, click on the down arrow beside it, and choose '**Keyword**'.

To the right, you will see a box for entering your search term or terms, i.e. the word(s) used to describe the subject you are researching. If you have a single term to describe your topic, type it into the box and press return/click on the '**Submit**' button.

The OPAC will then display a list of records which contain the word you used. It will search for this word in several places within the record, and not just within the title or author fields.

If you want to describe your topic with more than one word, you will need to combine them using the Boolean operators explained below. These are '**AND**', '**OR**' and '**NOT**'/'**AND NOT**'.

Phrases: If your search term contains more than one word, i.e. is a phrase, like "**social exclusion**", put double inverted commas around the phrase to ensure that the OPAC searches for that phrase rather than the individual words separately in different places.

Boolean Operators

AND: *prisons AND Ireland* – this will produce a list of records that have both the words '*prisons*' AND '*Ireland*' in them.

OR: *delinquency OR deviance* – in this case, you will get a list of records with either the word '*delinquency*' OR the word '*deviance*'.

AND NOT: '*crime*' **AND NOT** '*victims*' – here, the OPAC will display a list of records that have the word '*crime*' in them, but NOT the word '*victims*'.

Tip: some OPAC's and databases will use '**NOT**' instead of '**AND NOT**'.

Truncation

The asterisk '*' is used as a truncation or wildcard symbol, in that it can stand for anything, i.e. no letters/1 or more letters.

So for example, if you want to search for records of books on the topic '*Crime*', you can save time by typing in '*crim**' instead of "*crime OR criminal OR criminals OR criminology OR crimes OR.....*".

Using the wildcard symbol '*' saves a lot of time!

Advanced Keyword Search

When you are comfortable with using the **Keyword** Search function, and want to do more complex keyword searches, or need to be more refined in your searching, then the **Advanced Keyword** Search is a good option.

Near the top righthand corner of the screen is an option for '**More Searches**' Click on the down arrow and choose '**Advanced Keyword**' and then click on the arrow to the right of the options window.

On this page, you are given four boxes in which to enter your search terms or keywords. You can also search within **different fields**, e.g. author, title or subject, or all of the fields, and are given the option of combining the terms in the four boxes with any of the three Boolean operators, **AND**, **OR** and **AND NOT**.

In addition to these features, you can limit your search by choosing a **particular TU Dublin Library, material type**, e.g. theses or e-book, **year of publication** (or range of years) and **language**.

It is important to remember that the OPAC contains details of not just books but also **e-books, theses, dvd's and journals/electronic journals**, amongst others.

Lastly, you can also decide how you want your results sorted for display.

When you have entered your search terms, chosen how or whether to limit the search, and chosen your preferred sorting option, click on the Submit button and the **OPAC** will complete your search according to your specifications.

If you have any difficulty, please ask a Librarian.

Appendix 4: Dissertation Marking Scheme								
	Title and Abstract	Introduction, Aims, Objectives, Background & Rationale	Literature Review	Methods	Presentation of Findings	Discussion of Results	Conclusions & Recommendations*	Presentation
1 st 80+ Additional requirements for outstanding work			Evidence of innovative and original use of learning resources	High level of methodological rigour		High critical judgement and confident grasp of complex issues	Originality of argument	
70+	<p><u>Title:</u> Provides very concise title that accurately reflects the focus of the study.</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Clear and engaging overview of the research aim and objectives, theoretical framework, overview of the research</p>	Aims and objectives of the study are clearly stated in a way that their achievability through the research is evident. Research is very strongly integrated within an appropriate theoretical, policy and/or practice context. Key terms are explicitly defined. Overview of thesis is very clearly and concisely outlined.	Use of an extensive range of relevant texts and journals. Literature critically examined & relevance to the topic explicitly stated. Sections introduced, summarised and interlinked.	Methodological framework clearly explained and limitations identified. Research instruments defended in relation to research question and type of data required to address question(s). Pilot testing used if appropriate and changes made discussed. Gatekeeping/access issues explained. Specific participant/case details provided and method of sampling explained & justified. Method of analysis thoroughly explained. Understanding of the role and influence of	Results presented in format appropriate to type of data. Results clearly presented and reflecting systematic and thorough data analysis within the context of the research question(s)...	Clear and coherent discussion of key findings within theoretical framework. Connections between findings and research questions and literature made explicit. Relevance of findings to understanding of issue; contribution of findings to field/sector.	Brief summary of research aim and objectives. Research findings succinctly concluded & related back to research question(s). Implications of findings in relation to area of study clearly reiterated. Recommendations (where appropriate) should fit clearly with findings of the study and are feasible.	Sources consistently referenced using appropriate format. Structure & style coherent so that argument can be logically followed. Appropriate use of tables & diagrams. No grammatical, spelling or typographical errors. Clear table of contents.

	design, main findings of the study and detailed statement on study implications.	Very strong rationale for the study is presented and explained.		<p>the researcher evident (where applicable).</p> <p>Limitations of study including critique of approach, research instruments and procedure explained.</p> <p><u>Ethical approach to study:</u> Strong demonstrated awareness of ethical principles. Clear details regarding protection & rights of participants. Ethical responsibilities to profession. Protection of researcher. Relevant supporting documents.</p>				
2:1 60-69	<p><u>Title:</u> Provides title that accurately reflects the focus of the study.</p> <p><u>Abstract:</u> Clear outline of</p>	Aims and objectives of the study are clearly articulated. Research is grounded in a theoretical, policy and/or practice context. Key terms are defined. Clear	Use of a wide range of appropriate & relevant texts and journals. Critical evaluation and reflection evident. Relevance to the research topic mainly explicit.	Methodological framework clearly explained. Awareness of limitations evident. Research instruments described and defended in relation to research question(s). Pilot testing used if appropriate. Gatekeeping/access issues described.	Results presented in format appropriate to type of data. Clear presentation of findings and evidence of appropriate data analysis within the context of the research question(s).	Clear and comprehensive description of key findings. Connections between findings and research questions and literature evident. Relevance of findings	Brief summary of research aim and objectives. Research findings concluded but not fully related back to the research question(s). Recommendation	Sources consistently referenced using appropriate format. Structure & style mainly coherent so that argument can be logically followed. Appropriate use

	<p>the research aim and objectives, Relevant theoretical framework, overview of the research design, main findings of the study and statement on study implications.</p>	<p>and concise overview of thesis is outlined.</p> <p>Strong rationale for the study presented and explained.</p>		<p>Relevant participant/case details provided and method of sampling explained. Method of analysis discussed.</p> <p>Limitations of study including critique of approach, research instruments and procedure outlined.</p> <p><u>Ethics:</u> Demonstrated awareness of ethical principles. Clear details regarding protection & rights of participants. Ethical responsibilities to profession. Protection of researcher. Relevant supporting documents.</p>		<p>discussed. Contribution of findings to field/sector explained.</p>	<p>ns (where appropriate) should follow logically from findings.</p>	<p>of tables & diagrams. No grammatical, or typographical errors. Table of contents given.</p>
<p>2:2 50-59</p>	<p><u>Title:</u> Provides title that broadly reflects the focus of the study.</p>	<p>Aims and objectives of the study are stated. Research is located in a theoretical, policy or practice context. Key</p>	<p>Use of some appropriate & relevant texts and journals. Relevance to the research topic evident.</p>	<p>Methodological framework mentioned. Research instruments described. Relevant participant/case details provided and method of sampling mentioned.</p>	<p>Results presented in appropriate format using appropriate data analysis. Findings not always explicitly clear. Some attempt to integrate</p>	<p>Some discussion of key findings within theoretical framework outlined. Some attempt to link findings, research questions and</p>	<p>Research findings concluded but not adequately related to the research question(s). Recommendation</p>	<p>Sources referenced using appropriate format. Structure & style mainly coherent so that argument can be logically</p>

	<p><u>Abstract:</u> Details of the research aim and objectives, theoretical framework, overview of the research design, main findings of the study and brief statement on study implications.</p>	<p>terms are reasonably well defined. Overview of thesis is outlined. Some information on the rationale presented e.g. to fill a specified gap in knowledge, to pursue a line of enquiry etc.</p>		<p>Method of analysis mentioned. Some reference to the limitations of the study. <u>Ethics:</u> Some demonstrated awareness of ethical principles. Some details regarding protection & rights of participants discussed.</p>	<p>with research question(s).</p>	<p>literature. Some attempt to explain relevance of the findings and contribution to the sector/field.</p>	<p>ns (where appropriate) mainly follow logically from findings.</p>	<p>followed. Appropriate use of tables & diagrams. Infrequent grammatical, spelling or typographical errors. Table of contents given.</p>
<p>D Pass 40-49</p>	<p>Some details missing in title and/or abstract</p>	<p>Aims of the study are unclear or incomplete. Overview of dissertation given. Key terms may not be defined.</p>	<p>Insufficient use of texts and journals. Relevance to the research topic implicit rather than clearly indicated Absence of critical evaluation of existing literature.</p>	<p>Research instruments not adequately described. Some details of participants/cases given. Method of analysis poorly explained mentioned. Limited information about the shortcomings of the study.</p>	<p>Findings presented but not always clear. Link between findings and analysis insufficient with little attempt to integrate with research question(s)</p>	<p>Inadequate discussion of findings in relation to literature. Insufficient discussion of relevance of findings and contribution to the field/sector.</p>	<p>Some attempt evident at concluding findings. Some relationship between recommendations (where appropriate) and findings.</p>	<p>Weak structure which makes argument difficult to follow. Some inconsistencies or absence of references, table of contents given.</p>

				<u>Ethics:</u> Limited awareness of the ethical principles and practices pertaining to the study. Details regarding protection & rights of participants poorly articulated.				
Fail <40	Main details of title and abstract missing, or abstract not given.	Aims and objectives of the study are unclear/absent. Research is not related to the field of criminology. Overview of dissertation not given. Key terms not defined.	Insufficient and inadequate use of literature. Not clearly related to the research topic.	Research instruments not clearly explained nor defended. Incomplete details of participants provided. Method of analysis not discussed. <u>Ethics:</u> Discussion of ethical issues absent or breach of ethical guidelines evident.	Findings not clearly presented. Insufficient or no evidence of data analysis. No reference to research question(s)	Findings not clearly presented. Findings not discussed in relation to existing research.	Findings not concluded. Relationship between findings and recommendations not clear.	Inconsistent or absent references. Frequent grammatical & typographical errors. Poor structure. Table of contents, page nos. etc. missing.

*Recommendations tend to arise from studies that seek to inform policy and/or practice. They may not be relevant in all cases. Please discuss with your thesis supervisor.