Mundus Dissertations Guidelines for Students

The Four-Stage Dissertation process:
1. Semester 1: Choosing a topic
2. Semester 2: The S2 Dissertation Stage or Dissertation Report
3. Semester 3: The S3 Dissertation Stage or Dissertation Progress
4. Semester 4: The Final Dissertation
   4.1. Submission and Assessment
   4.2. General Presentation
   4.3. Checking your work

1. Semester 1: Choosing a topic

You need to give careful thought to what interests and inspires you. While you are free to draw on a subject pursued during your first degree in your own country, try to think forward and not simply backwards to what you have studied already. What would help you move towards a PhD or your chosen career?

Towards the middle of your semester at university A you must begin to focus on a preliminary subject for your dissertation and you should check the expertise available at your “home” university (university B) for a potential supervisor. You must send this information to the Local Coordinator in university B by 10th December.

2. Semester 2: The S2 Dissertation Stage or Dissertation Report

This is worth 10 ECTS for the full version, or 5 ECTS for the shorter version in conjunction with the Internship or Work-Related Project which is also worth 5 ECTS. To be assessed throughout the Consortium via an Oral Presentation plus, in the full version, a 2,500-word literature review (see 2.1 below), with the following exceptions: at St Andrews students must hand in a 5,000-word sample of work (including the literature review of 2,500 words) achieved during the semester and base their Oral Presentation on that work; at UNTREF students must hand in a 5,000-word sample of work achieved (including the literature review of 2,500 words), but they will not make an oral presentation. At both St Andrews and UNTREF, the sample of work is 2,500 words for the shorter version of the Dissertation Report (with about 1,250 words for the literature review).

You will discuss the project with the Local Coordinator and the potential supervisor(s) within two weeks of arriving at your home university (university B). The process may take a little time to reach fruition but you should have a clear notion of what you mean to do within a few weeks.

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1 Each university may have a local name for the first two stages (S2 and S3) of the dissertation.
2.1. The S2 Dissertation stage or Dissertation Report is the first exploration of the topic of the dissertation, involving the following aspects:

- **Research Questions (no more than three or four):** what issues will you be seeking to explore? And which precise aspects of the issue?
- **Corpus:** which precise set of texts (e.g. novels, poetry collections, stories, films, plays, etc., or other relevant corpus from a different field) will you be studying and applying the Research Questions to? You must justify your choice.
- **Methodology:** which approach and theories will you be using to help you answer the Research Questions in relation to your corpus?
- **Literature review of secondary sources.** This is a critical and analytical account of your reading. Again, you should ensure that the number of studies is sufficient— a rule of thumb is around ten key articles, chapters or books dealing with your topic. This should be around 2,500 words.

2.2. Your oral presentation at the end of the module (which in St Andrews will be a summary of the 5,000-word piece required; or 2,500 in the shorter version) should provide a reasoned account of the above aspects into a coherent argument, ending with a preliminary hypothesis of what your dissertation is to pursue. You should include provisional chapter headings and brief description of contents for each. You will deliver it in front of your tutors and possibly your peers, and it will be an opportunity to test your ideas and gain feedback from your audience. NB: there is no oral presentation in UNTREF, but you must hand in a written piece of 5,000 words, or 2,500 for the short Dissertation Report.

2.3. Over the course of the second semester, you will meet with your supervisor four or five times to discuss how your dissertation project is progressing. You will normally complete a supervision form— attached at the end of these guidelines — for each of these meetings.

2.4. From the outset, please follow the style guidelines for the Final Dissertation at 4.2. below.

3. Semester 3: The S3 Dissertation Stage or Dissertation Progress. Outcome is a work of 10,000 words.

This module builds on the work of the previous semester in order to a) lay out a detailed plan of the dissertation thesis (about 2,000 to 3,000 words) and b) present a first draft of a single chapter, or shorter versions of two or more (about 7,000 to 8,000 words), which you will be allowed to carry forward to the 20 ECTS dissertation, although you are likely to amend the material after further research.

3.1. This work must be written up in an agreed format (see section 4.2 below on presentation), complete with bibliography.
3.2. As in Semester 2, you will be expected to meet your supervisor four or five times this semester. You should always submit well-prepared work in advance of any agreed meeting or email exchange. (Don’t forget your supervision form.)

3.3. Your supervisor will see specific aspects or sections of your S3 Dissertation Stage or Dissertation Progress during its preparation, but will not normally see drafts of the whole work before its final submission.

3.4. The submission deadline for the S3 Dissertation Progress is **10th December**.

3.5. Candidates must submit their Dissertation Progress and the Dissertation Progress Assessment Form by email to their supervisor (with copy to the Local Coordinator of Semester 3).

3.6. Only in very exceptional circumstances may an extension of up to one month be granted by the Consortium’s General Dissertations Coordinator in St Andrews, after consultation with the supervisor.

3.7. Your work will be assessed by your main supervisor and, in some institutions, a second examiner and they will then complete and return the assessment form to you and to the Semester 3 Local Coordinator by 10th January. **NB: It is your responsibility to show this assessment form to your second supervisor at university C when you meet them at the beginning of Semester 4.**

3.8. Layout and Presentation – please remember the guidelines for the Final Dissertation at 4.2. below.

**4. Semester 4: The Final Dissertation**

The Mundus Masters Dissertation is a substantial piece of scholarly research of approximately 20,000 words, which follows on from the work done in Semesters 2 and 3.

Students will be supervised by two supervisors: a principal supervisor in their Home university (university B) and a second supervisor in the university where the dissertation is written (university C).

Students should meet their local supervisor 4 to 5 times during the semester. Please remember that if you need to complete supervision forms in university C, with your second supervisor, you must send copies to your main supervisor in university B.

**4.1. Submission and Assessment.** The Final Dissertation will be jointly assessed by the main supervisor (semesters 2 and 3) and the second supervisor (semester 4).
4.1.1. The **deadline** for the submission of the Mundus Masters Final Dissertation is **10th June**. Only in very exceptional circumstances may an extension of up to one month be granted by the Consortium's General Dissertations Coordinator in St Andrews, after consultation with both supervisors.

4.1.2. In some universities of the Consortium the Mundus Masters Dissertation may, in addition, be the subject of an oral presentation and discussion or Viva. This element will not be assessed separately from the written Dissertation and will not affect the grade awarded, but it is an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they have developed their ability to discuss a substantial piece of independent work.

4.1.3. Your final university (university C) supervisor will return the assessment form to you once your two supervisors have agreed on a mark and feedback. Please note that this mark is only provisional until it is confirmed by the Academic Council held in September.

4.1.4. The 20,000-word length includes text, notes and appendices, but excludes the bibliography.

4.1.5. The dissertation should be in one of the languages of the Consortium, word-processed in 1.5 or double line spacing. The left-hand margin should be at least 30 mm.

4.1.6. On the cover page should appear the name of the author, the names of the supervisors, the title of the Dissertation and the year and place of the submission.

4.1.7. A declaration should be included at the beginning as follows:

“I, ... (your name), hereby certify that this dissertation, which is ..... words in length, has been written by me, that it is a record of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All sentences or passages quoted in this dissertation from other people's work (with or without trivial changes) have been placed within quotation marks, and specifically acknowledged by reference to author, work and page. I understand that plagiarism – the unacknowledged use of such passages – will be considered grounds for failure in this dissertation and, if serious, in the degree programme as a whole. I also affirm that, with the exception of the specific acknowledgements, the contents of this dissertation are entirely my own work.”

Signature of candidate....................

4.1.8. A Contents page should list chapters or sections and give page numbers.

4.1.9. An abstract of no more than 300 words should give a summary of the subject and argument of the dissertation.
4.1.10. The Dissertation should be submitted in electronic form, unless your supervisor requires you to submit it in printed form as well, in which case please print on one side only.

4.2. General Presentation
Make sure that you follow academic conventions from the beginning, to save time making alterations at a later stage. Allow plenty of time for final corrections and improvements. Always remember that the purpose of your text and any illustrations is to convey your argument accurately and convincingly.

4.2.1. Writing Style
You must follow a recognised academic style in consultation with your supervisors.

4.2.2 Acknowledgment and Academic Fraud
Academic Fraud as defined by the Consortium means deception in an academic context. Plagiarism is the act of taking another’s ideas and representing them as one’s own. Where you wish to reproduce material you have read, you can either paraphrase it in your own words, or quote it directly (using quotation marks - see below). In either case, you must acknowledge your use of it by indicating the source of the information. Failure to acknowledge someone else’s words or ideas is plagiarism, whether this omission is accidental or deliberate. In order to be sure you are never guilty of plagiarism, even by accident, you need to be aware of the potential problem when you are taking notes, and make it clear to yourself where you have summarised material and where you have directly copied text.

The laws of copyright, particularly where they concern illustrative and manuscript material, may be relevant to your dissertation. In every case you should ensure you have the permission to reproduce such material. Do not forget to acknowledge formally any help you have received from others, or any permission granted to make use of copyright material in your thesis.

4.3. Checking your work
This vital process will almost certainly take more time than you expect. A dissertation should go through several drafts, each improving both the tightness and flow of the argument and its presentation. Do leave enough time for this crucial work at the end.

Good luck with your dissertation and we hope you enjoy the work!

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Master Mundus Crossways in Cultural Narratives

Mundus Dissertation Supervision Form

To be filled by the student after each supervision meeting and sent to the supervisor for signing. The student must attach all dissertation supervision forms with the dissertation at the end of the module.

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<td>Planned Next Steps for Reading and Research (if applicable)</td>
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