Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

NEWBOLD COLLEGE
OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MA DISSERTATION HANDBOOK

2025/2026

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INTRODUCTION

The dissertation component of your curriculum is an important and substantial piece of work for your Master's degree. This handbook is de-publica signed to help you, so that the experience is enjoyable and rewarding. The dissertation module will provide you with the opportunity to engage in an in-depth study of a topic that you find interesting and worth investigating. It will also give you an insight into the research process in a way that simply reading about it cannot achieve. An important aspect of writing a dissertation is the investigation of a focused research question in a systematic and rigorous way.

The dissertation module is a compulsory module worth a total of 60 credits at M level. You will have one semester to undertake and complete the dissertation (full time students), or 2 semesters (part-time students). The final submission date or **the Expected End Date** is the last day of your matriculation (check with Newbold College Registrar's Office). The module will give you the opportunity to use the learning gained through your Undergraduate curriculum and the taught components of your MA.

Particular constraints may exist for some students, usually due to their mode of study (part-time or full-time). If you are in doubt about your options please discuss this with the Dissertation Module Leader as soon as possible. You will have a supervisor for the duration of the module. There is no specific programme of attendance or online learning for the dissertation module.

Disclaimer: Please note the Handbook is subject to change if/when University of Wales publishes or updates their academic policies in the *Handbook of Academic Quality 2025–26*.

SECTION ONE: GENERAL INFORMATION

Relationship with Other Modules:

Pre-requisites:	Successful completion of all taught modules (MA Part I)
Credit:	60 credits

MODULE LEADER

Name: Dr Ivan Milanov
Office: SH 15A
Phone: (0)1344 407 480
Email: imilanov@newbold.ac.uk

AIMS

- To provide an opportunity for students to undertake a major and sustained critical and evaluative research project on a topic germane to their particular programme of study.
- To equip the student with the essential skills necessary to undertake a more advanced research degree.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of this module, a student will be expected to be able to:

- select an appropriate topic area and develop appropriate questions for in depth study or original research;
- identify and design appropriate research methodology to answer their research questions;
- critically evaluate the research methods used within their dissertation and their appropriateness in the context of their research;
- critically review and evaluate relevant literature and research;
- identify and evaluate any ethical issues inherent in their research context;
- clearly present their research findings and critically evaluate in context of other research and literature evidence thus making a significant contribution to the knowledge of the research field;
- present a professional research dissertation document within the agreed timescale and to the agreed standards;
- Identify potential applications or implications of the research findings

ASSESSMENT

Dissertation project - 100% of assessment

The dissertation is a 15,000-word piece of research excluding references, bibliography, figures, tables, indexes, and appendices. The 15,000-word limit is not to be exceeded.

Each dissertation will be assessed by an internal examiner (the dissertation supervisor) and will be second marked by a member of the programme team. All dissertations will be seen by the external examiner.

Size and presentation of the dissertation

Assessment plays a key role in ensuring that you develop and demonstrate the required knowledge and skills to successfully complete your programme.

- The dissertation must be typed on A4 size paper (210 mm x 297 mm) with a 1,5 spacing, a 25mm margin on the left, and a 40mm margin on the right.
- A certified font (e.g. Cambria or Times) size 12 is preferred
- For the Hebrew and Greek alphabets, use the SBL Unicode fonts

General sections

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Declaration/Statements
- Acknowledgements (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if necessary)
- List of Figures (if necessary)
- List of Symbols (if necessary)
- Introduction, Body & Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Appendix or Appendices (if necessary)
- Word count

Content

The dissertation will normally contain the following elements:

- An abstract;
- An introduction which will:
    - set the scene and explain the relevance of the study to your masters course
    - indicate your methodology

    - state your research question and aim(s)
- A critical review of the background research literature
- An analysis section (main part of the dissertation)
- A conclusion in which the answers to the research question are proposed
- A full list of references (bibliography), using the SBL system;
- Appendices, indexes are permissible. However, all information essential to the coherence of the dissertation needs to be located within the main body;
- Acknowledgements, if any, should be made after the title page

Title page

- The title page of the project should give the title of the dissertation, the student's first name, surname and, at the bottom of the page, the following sentence:

Submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Theology offered by Newbold College

of Higher Education in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Date of Submission

Word count

Submission Information

You have to submit your dissertation in both hard and electronic copies.

Hard copies

Three comb-bound or spiral-bound copies of the Dissertation need to be submitted. The copy for the library may come with a better presentation (hard cover).

The three copies are to be submitted to Mrs Ivana Godina, the Academic Programmes Administrator (office in Salisbury Hall, 16C), within two weeks after the submission date on Turnitin.

Each copy should include after the cover page a Declaration/Statement page, signed by the student. A template is available online and at Mrs Godina's office (Salisbury Hall, 16C).

Copying and binding could be done via CMM. Please contact Mrs Godina for more information.

Electronic copy (Turnitin)

Student must submit themselves their dissertation electronically to Turnitin so that their work can be checked for its authenticity. This is compulsory. No staff can be involved in this process.

After the assignment has been submitted, Turnitin will display a digital receipt on the screen. It is important that students retain a copy of this receipt as proof of submission. Without seeing a receipt, it means that the assignment has not been successfully submitted.

Students will submit their dissertation in a PDF format only.

CALENDAR OF SUBMISSION AND ASSESSMENT

Please note that it takes several weeks before the Exam Board to get an MA dissertation marked internally and externally and the marks processed. It is important to allow proper time for these processes.

The final grades are ratified at the External Exam Board after dissertations have been assessed by external examiners. Marks will be then posted on e-vision.

MA dissertation writing bootcamp: **Thursday, 6 Nov 2025 from 09.00–17.30 (Zoom)**

Submission date for students continuing towards the PGCert in the spring: 14 January 2026

Submission date for graduating students: **6 May 2026**

External Exam Board: **Early to Mid-June 2026**

Graduation at Lampeter: **10 July 2026**

Award ceremony at Newbold College: **12 July 2026**

LATE SUBMISSION

A late submission of the dissertation (after 6 May 2026) will not allow the student to graduate in July 2025. Graduation will therefore automatically be postponed until the next summer graduation ceremony (July 2027).

In any case, the dissertation must be submitted before the **Expected End Date** (check with Newbold registry).

SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barber, Cyril J. *Introduction to Theological Research* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1982)

Bazylinski, Stanislaw. *A Guide to Biblical Research* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2006)

Berry, Ralph. *The Research Project: How to write it* (London: Routledge, 2005)

Cottrell, Stella*. Dissertations and Project Reports: A Step by Step Guide* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

_____. *The Study Skills Handbook* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

Creswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative Approaches* (London: Sage, 2003[2])

Greenfield, Anthony. *Research Methods: Guidance for Postgraduates* (London: Arnold, 1996)

Joyner, Randy L. *Writing the Winning Thesis or Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2013)

McMillan, Kathleen. *How to Write Dissertations & Projects Reports* (Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2011)

Osmer, Richard Robert. *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008)

Preece, Roy. *Starting Research: An Introduction to Academic Research and Dissertation Writing* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1992)

The Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014)

Sogaard, Viggo, *Research in Church and Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996)

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean, and Terry Dwain Robertson. *Your Guide to Writing Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014)

MARKING CRITERIA

The pass mark for the dissertation module is 50%, according to the following criteria (for more details regarding the criteria please see **GA36d form**, which is accessible via https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/):

100% - 70% (Distinction)

- An outstanding piece of work in every regard which demonstrates:
  - a thorough and wide-ranging knowledge of the subject
  - a thorough and insightful understanding of the issues involved
  - an ability to analyse critical contributions on the subject
  - an ability to independently research and bring together material to support an argument
  - an ability to express an original, reasoned argument in a lucid manner
  - an ability to make valid generalisations in moving from the empirical to the abstract
  - excellent research competencies in terms of presentation, language and referencing.

69% – 60% (Merit)

- A very good piece of work which demonstrates
  - a detailed knowledge of the subject
  - a well developed knowledge of the critical contributions on the subject
  - an ability to use and organise research material in a focused manner
  - good analytical skills combined with careful, systematic coverage of the topic
  - detailed research in terms of presentation, language and referencing
  - an ability to make appropriate connections and distinctions and present a clear, convincing argument.

59% - 50% (Pass)

- A good piece of work which demonstrates:
    - a sound to reasonable understanding of the subject and the issues involved
    - a good knowledge to general familiarity of the critical contributions on the subject
    - an ability to use and organise research material to support ideas and arguments
    - sound analytical skills combined with competent coverage of the topic
    - good to competent research competencies in terms of presentation, language and referencing
    - at the upper end of the scale, students may also demonstrate an ability to make appropriate connections and distinctions and present a clear, convincing argument.

49% - 0% (Fail)

- a general, but incomplete understanding of the subject
- some knowledge of the literature on the subject
- some ability to develop and support an argument
- a tendency to express ideas through description and anecdote rather than analysis
- difficulties with presentation, language and referencing. Work at the lower end of this scale which will be unsatisfactory and demonstrates little understanding of the subject and its implications
- a limited amount of reading and poor knowledge of the previous contributions on the subject
- limited ability to formulate and sustain a clear argument
- poor presentation skills and serious problems with language and referencing

A student who fails the dissertation may be permitted to re-submit on one occasion only, not more than 12 months from the original deadline. A fee shall be payable for the examination of such a re-submission and the mark will be capped at 50%.

In order to qualify for a Master's degree with Distinction, a student has to achieve a final rounded mark of not less than 60% in Part I and a final mark of no less than 70% in Part II.

SECTION TWO: ACADEMIC INFORMATION

The purpose of this section is that you should gain the technical expertise needed to produce academic work comparable to the professional standard for your discipline, and apply these standards to your dissertation.

For some people, postgraduate study is a fundamentally lonely experience when compared with the sociability and group learning of undergraduate days. On the other hand, the opportunity to examine material in greater depth than occurs in undergraduate programmes can prove an adequate compensation, and a taught master's programme gives you the foundation for further, higher level research.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

MANAGE YOUR TIME

As far as time management is concerned, a great deal obviously depends on your personal circumstances.

If you can, setting aside blocks of time on a regular basis for uninterrupted study is highly desirable. Short, concentrated, regular bursts are probably best. Your domestic/work situation will govern this.

It is important at the outset of post-graduate study to be realistic about the demands that you make on yourself. It is better to plan sensibly what you can achieve, and the length of time that your studies are likely to take, rather than having over-ambitious plans, and being racked with guilt every time you collapse exhausted in front of the television in the evening. When you are studying largely on your own, it is important to devise strategies that prevent you from becoming demoralised.

But the degree will not do itself. If you are to complete it successfully, it is important that you set your own goals, and try to stick to sensible deadlines that you determine for yourself. The sooner you start, the better. Don't allow useless commitments to slow you down. You have your all life to serve the church and the world. But you have only one semester to complete your dissertation.

BE EFFECTIVE

Once you do get some peace and quiet, you need to ensure that you make the best use of your study time.

The art is to find shortcuts without cutting corners. Herewith some tips:

- Make photocopies of key material, and highlight and annotate them
- Make concise notes, either on paper or on a computer
- Avoid the temptation to write everything down
- Provide your own brief summaries of the author's argument, and the factual content of the material
- Accurately transcribe quotations that illustrate central points
- Make sure to note the full title and publication details of the source, together with the page references for all the material that you note. This is indispensable for when it comes to making your own footnotes for your dissertation. There is nothing more frustrating than hunting through a

large book for hours, in search of the page reference for that 'perfect' quote that you know is in there somewhere.
- Use small 'Post-it Notes' for marking passages in books; they can be written on and don't fall out or damage the book.
- Keep in mind *why* you are reading a particular book or article, and what you hope to gain from it
- Start on some writing at an early stage, even if you suspect that what you have written is not quite right, and will need to be revised later.

BE CRITICAL

'You need to show more analysis in your work…'

'Your account is too descriptive…'

'You need to be more critical…'

This kind of feedback appears regularly in comments of markers and examiners. Being critical is probably among the most difficult challenges for students.

What is the meaning of the word 'critical'? According to the Collins English Dictionary 'critical' could mean:

1. Very important or dangerous: *a critical moment in life*

2. To be in danger of dying: *he is in a critical condition*

3. Fault-finding: *the professor was critical of many of the students*

4. Examining and judging analytically and without bias: *he submitted the plans to critical examination.*

For a student in higher education, being critical means selecting sources of information carefully, and being thoughtful, questioning, probing, and not taking things (readings, experiences, comments, etc.) at face value.

A critical student needs to weigh up the strengths and limitations, the values or merits of what he reads, sees, and hears, and critically engage with different points of view. He needs to justify his conclusions.

Six strategic questions to trigger critical thinking

Where…?	What…?
How…?	Who…?
When…?	Why…?

Where did you find the information?	**What** is it and **What** are the key messages or results/findings?

Did you just 'come across' it? Or did you access it through a systematic search?	Is it a research student, a discussion, a professional/pastoral opinion, or other?
How has the author/writer come to their conclusions? Is their line of reasoning logical and understandable? Was the research well carried out? Are the conclusions sound?	**Who** has written this? Is the author/writer an individual or an organisation? What is their level of expertise? Could they have any bias? How do you know?
When was this written? Older key information/sources may still be valid, but you need to check if there has been more recent work	**Why** has this been written? Who is the information aimed at – scholars, theologians, laity, students? What is the aim of the information?

HOW AND WHEN TO START

Originality or?

For a Master's level dissertation, originality is not the crucial issue that it is for doctoral students. Obviously, the work must be your own, and you would normally expect that a dissertation would make use of primary sources, but if someone, somewhere in the world has written a thesis on something similar, it doesn't much matter. The important thing is for you to identify a topic suitable for treatment at this level, and produce a coherent and well-presented piece of work, giving you scope to work to the best of your ability.

You should have spoken with the Dissertation Module Leader about your topic as soon as possible, preferably the semester **before** you plan to start the dissertation, or as early as possible in the semester you start.

Decide on the topic – Dissertation proposal

The topic of your dissertation must be relevant to your programme of study. From this, you need to develop the research question which your dissertation will answer. This must be specific and very well defined. This can take some time to settle on, and is often one of the most difficult stages of the work. Choose a topic that is manageable in scope, realistic in terms of the time you have, has material that is reasonably available and is challenging and interesting. Discuss your ideas with others, for example, peers, and personal tutor. You need to discuss your topic with at least two lecturers (particularly those in your chosen pathway) – it will help you to clarify and focus your ideas. Having decided upon a research area, the specific question will be finalised between you and those two lecturers following a preliminary search of the relevant literature. This is essential in order to select a valid question that is a genuine gap in understanding in that area – not just one that interests you.

You should attempt a very brief literature review of secondary sources, that is, of recent scholarly work. This could be along the lines of 'This subject has been discussed in the work of A and B, and most recently by C. D has concentrated on X and E has focussed on Y. This dissertation will consider the following…' The literature review immediately signals that you have identified the academic discourse in to which your proposed dissertation could fit, and that you are familiar (or will become familiar) with the work of those scholars who already work in this field. It shows that you are ready to consider the topic you have chosen.

The two lecturers will give you feedback and tell you whether they think that it is viable as it stands, or needs further refinement. If they support your topic, then fill the Proposal form (see Appendix A) and give it to the Course leader. You should not embark on detailed work on the dissertation until you have obtained the approval of the MA Course Board, and have been officially appointed a supervisor. Technically, the Course Board appoints the supervisor.

Step 1: Choose your area of research among the following:

- Biblical studies (OT/Second Temple Literature/NT)
- Biblical Theology
- Systematic theology
- Historical theology
- Pastoral theology
- Adventist theology/EG White

Step 2: Consider a topic within your chosen area of research

Step 3: Read at least four recent academic references (2 books and 2 articles), dealing precisely with your topic. Write a short literature review

Step 4: Draft a proposal and discuss it with two lecturers who could support your topic

Please use the template (see Appendix A)

Step 5: Send your proposal to the Dissertation Module Leader who will submit it to the Course board for approval.

Step 6: The Course board will vote your proposal, and choose your dissertation supervisor.

WORKING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

(Supervision code of good practice)

FOR SUPERVISORS

Supervisors will endeavour to:

- Be available for supervision for up to ten hours of supervisory help for the total duration of the dissertation module. Note that the supervisor's availability pertains to semester time only
  - Advise the student of their typical availability for dissertation supervision during the first supervision meeting. It is recommended that a joint agreement be made between supervisor and student to either, a) plan a series of contacts throughout the duration of the student's dissertation programme or, b) arrange a subsequent supervision meeting at the end of each supervisory session

  - Make it clear during the first supervision meeting with a student how they can be contacted and jointly agree with a student the preferred method of contact. Supervisor and student should exchange phone contacts, email addresses, and any other details facilitating contact

  - Maintain a written record of all contacts with student. This record should include notes relating to the content of each session and the date/time of the meeting

  - Negotiate in the first meeting what their expectations are regarding how students should prepare for supervision

  - Assist students to agree a manageable timetable for the completion of the dissertation, which is regularly reviewed and updated

  - Direct promptly the student to additional specialist resource/academic staff if required

  - Help the student to identify their specific learning needs which will need to be met if the student is to benefit from the dissertation experience and complete it to an acceptable standard

  - Negotiate early on the arrangements for reading drafts of the student's work

  - Support students in proceeding through the arrangements for obtaining ethical approval through the Department's Ethics Committee, should ethical approval be required

  - Keep students mindful of the assessment criteria which will be employed during marking

  - Allow students to explore their own intellectual interests and decision-making as much as possible, but at the same time to explore with the student any key difficulties which may arise from the choices they are making

  - Avoid cancelling supervision sessions unless absolutely necessary and if no alternative but to do this, then communicating this to students in advance of the session. Also, arrange an alternative date as soon as is mutually convenient

- Alert students to the pitfalls of not arranging supervision sessions, should the student choose not to do so

- Discuss dissemination and publication of research, and provide support and collaboration when appropriate.

All supervision sessions will be recorded on the *Postgraduate Dissertation Supervision record.*

FOR STUDENTS

Students will endeavour to:

- Meet with their supervisor within three weeks of commencing their dissertation and agree both student and supervisor commitment

- Use their supervision time wisely, through effective advance preparation, as negotiated with their supervisor

- Commence their dissertation with a clear idea of their chosen research question and methods to be used to answer it

- Avoid proceeding hurriedly without discussion with their supervisor

- Confirm with their supervisor how many days in advance of a supervisory meeting they need to receive draft material

- Communicate to their supervisor early on, how and when they wish to be contacted

- Take the lead in the identifying their learning needs for the dissertation module, in discussion with their supervisor

- Operate within the time allocation for supervision, as arranged, and adhere to the negotiated arrangements for submitting drafts to supervisors. Note that supervision is not normally available outside the semester

- Take the initiative to arrange regular supervision, should this be desired, and agree jointly and early on, with the supervisor, a timetable of activity that is regularly reviewed and updated

- Avoid canceling supervision sessions unless absolutely necessary. If a session has to be cancelled then communicate this to the supervisor in advance of the session. Also, where appropriate arrange an alternative date

- Avoid discussion with specialist resource people or other academic staff without initial discussion with their supervisor. The supervisor will guide or direct the student to a resource person within CMM should statistical help be required.

- Inform their supervisor at the earliest possible time of any particular difficulties or concerns which are significantly impinging on their ability to benefit from this learning experience

- Provide clearly word-processed draft material, delivered by mail, email or by hand. Draft should be written in good English. Supervisors are not editors.

- Discuss with their supervisor plans for disseminating and publishing their research, if appropriate.

USING THE LIBRARY

The Roy Graham Library has a large collection of books and e-resources and expert librarians to assist with research.

Bookmark the Roy Graham Library homepage, https://www.newbold.ac.uk/library/ so you always know the library opening hours and have links to all the library resources you need.

Validate your student card at the Library Information Desk. The student card is used for all library transactions including printing and for checking out books either at the Desk or using the kiosk.

Even if you have done all your taught work at Newbold College, make an appointment with Nevena Borcsok (nborcsok@newbold.ac.uk) for a physical tour of the building so you know where to find things. She will also show you all the electronic resources and how to get them when you are not on campus.

At the Library Information Desk you can request your own study desk and locker.

There are computers and a networked printer in the library, and has Wi-Fi access.

Off campus students should arrange a conversation (phone, email) with Nevena Borcsok (nborcsok@newbold.ac.uk) as soon as they are enrolled, to be fully registred at the library (password; MyAthens account).

EXPECTED SUPERVISION CONTACT

This module requires a total of 600 hours of student effort of which 10 hours is in the form of supervision; this includes the time taken by your supervisor in reading draft work and giving feedback. This indicates that you should use this time wisely, sending draft work in good time for constructive feedback to be part of the meeting and ensuring that you are both well-prepared for meetings and use the feedback, suggestions and outcomes to your advantage.

The remaining hours of the total are yours to use for the whole research process and thus, you should begin your dissertation year with a clear, realistic and agreed plan of how you will mark the progress and completion of the project.as there are no taught

sessions for this module and contact time with your supervisor is so limited, you will need to be highly self-directed and motivated.

To summarise, you have:

Supervision: meetings, phone, email, reading drafts	10	Hours
Personal study:	590	Hours
TOTAL	**600**	**Hours**

RESEARCH REQUIRING ETHICAL APPROVAL – RESEARCH ETHICS POLICY

Some topics require a specific ethical approval if they involve human participants (use of questionnaires, surveys, etc.).

You should include an application for ethics approval with your proposal and allow time for obtaining an answer in the planning of your dissertation. Please use the template (Appendix B). Specifically, you need to ensure that you discuss with your supervisor the proposed timing of your ethics submission and how it fits into your research timetable.

Initially, you should work with your supervisor to produce a coherent argument (proposal) for your study, indicating why it is essential for your study to involve human participants. Do not submit your proposal before fully discussing the research ethics of your dissertation with your supervisor.

READING OF SOURCES

In postgraduate dissertations, you will typically be attempting to answer a question. In order to make a case for the answer that you are proposing, you will need to refer to sources.

RECORD YOUR SOURCES

You are advised to give consideration to how you will record, store and code the information you gather while undertaking your study in order to aid its retrieval later in your study. You will also need to keep a full and accurate record of all your sources for the purposes of referencing these accurately. It is not acceptable at this stage of your course to reference inaccurately. One way to store references is to use word processor index systems or reference management software (e.g.: Zotero, Endnote, Nota Bene). These systems can save you time in the long run – the principle being that you only record the reference once and for all. Ensure you record all the bibliographic details necessary to reproduce an accurate bibliographic reference, using the SBL system of referencing.

See *The Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style: for Biblical Studies and related Disciplines* (Atlanta, GA.; SBL Press, 2014), available at the Library desk.

An important aspect of dissertation work is that you demonstrate your ability to extract the main points and arguments from the literature, analyse and critically review them and present your findings in a logical and coherent piece of work.

TYPES OF LITERATURE

For the most part you are looking for literature that has been published by recognised academic publishers. Academic publication happens in a peer environment. This means a community of scholars has looked at the work, and even if they, or some of them, disagree with the arguments put forward, they consider the book or article a contribution to the debate in a particular area. As a scholar yourself, you need to become familiar with the academic book and journal publishers in your field. Sometimes students coming to academic study with a strong interest in their field have read a great deal of non-academic literature, which although quite possibly worthy in itself, is not at all relevant to Masters level study. Doing a Masters degree at university is about navigating and participating in a recognised academic field. For example, Wikipedia is NOT an academic source worth quoting in a dissertation.

ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

The modern encyclopaedia emerged at the end of the nineteenth century as a work which was an overview of current information on any particular topic, using a retrieval system. The simplest retrieval system is an alphabetical list of topics. In most works this is reinforced by a cross-referencing system – how well and how completely this is done is a key measure of the quality of an encyclopaedia. Since many modern encyclopaedias also exist in electronic format, information retrieval is now based on using a built-in search-engine to look for words or phrases. In many encyclopaedias there are indices of words or topics which back-up the cross-reference system. In many encyclopaedias there are also study guides where articles are listed in such a way as to provide the newcomer to an area with a collection of distinct entries which can, taken together, provide an introductory course on a topic. In actual research, you will often be building just such a study guide of your own.

Encyclopaedias differ in many ways. As a general rule the title ‘encyclopaedia’ is now used for the most detailed level of research reference works, yet there are many exceptions. For example, in the area of the study of the Christian scriptures one of the most detailed encyclopaedic work at present is the Anchor Bible Dictionary (New York 1992), but the following is a basic set of categories:

- General single-volume works:
- General multi-volume works (e.g. *Encyclopaedia Britannica; Encyclopaedia of Judaism*).
- Single-volume subject specific works (e.g. any of the volumes in the *Oxford Dictionary of* ... or *Oxford Companion to* ... series).
- Multi-volume subject specific works (e.g. Hastings’ *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics; Religion in Past and Present*)
- *Dictionary of ...*
- *Companion to ...*
- *Lexicon to ....*
- *Key to ...*

PRIMARY SOURCES

Broadly speaking, primary sources are those that can supply evidence that has a bearing on the case you are trying to make. Depending on your field of study, this evidence could come in various forms, including:

- The sacred texts or foundational documents of a faith tradition, such as the Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Talmud, the Koran;
- Published texts by authors whom you are studying — for example, if you are writing on some aspect of Thomas Aquinas' theology, the *Summa Theologiae* is likely to be a major primary source;
- Unpublished documents, such as correspondence, records and other archival material that contains historical information and evidence: for example an archive of letters;
- Data from your own or others' empirical research, such as the transcripts of interviews, notes from ethnographic fieldwork or the returns from (your own) survey questionnaires.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Secondary sources are works by other scholars that offer critical interpretations of your source material or of your field of study more generally. They might offer answers to the same questions that you are trying to answer, and you might agree or disagree with their answers, but their opinions do not constitute direct evidence either for or against the case that you are trying to make. It is important to refer to secondary sources for at least two reasons: first, because the opinions of other scholars can help you get to know the field and develop your own judgements; second, because almost any piece of academic research is a contribution to an ongoing conversation or debate, and you will need to show that you are acquainted with earlier contributions to that conversation or debate.

The distinction between primary and secondary sources seems clearer in some fields than others. In biblical studies, for example, a biblical text would be a primary source, while a commentary on that text would be a secondary source. It is worth noting that a secondary source in one field might be a primary source in another: if you are a New Testament scholar, Karl Barth's commentary on the Epistle to the Romans might be a secondary source, but if you are working on the early theology of Barth, it will be a primary source.

MONOGRAPHS

A monograph is a book written on one central topic. Unlike a textbook/general book it is essentially an original critical exploration of a problem or question. Monographs are the closest form of book to a dissertation – indeed many monographs were originally dissertations, rewritten slightly. The style of writing in a monograph is more the model which you will need to follow.

ARTICLES

The real debates in scholarship most often happen in the journals. Journal articles present a particular argument rather than surveying a field, and they are published much more quickly. As such, a student working at an advanced level really needs to be familiar with the journals in their field. An article is essentially the same thing as an

dissertation. Typically problem-oriented, the article usually has a central question. It does not usually aim to provide a basic narrative introduction to a period or to an area of study. It is intended to be read as an example of an approach to a particular question. It is also comparable to a dissertation in that an academic who writes an article for a major journal (e.g. *New Testament Studies*, not *Hello!* magazine) would not have it accepted unless it was passed by anonymous peer-reviewers. If there is any role model which you should follow for a dissertation it is therefore a journal article. Since articles are published much quicker than a book they will tend to have more recent up-to-date bibliographies on the subject under question. This can be a useful first port of call for your literature search to get a feel for who has written about what, the most recent texts and the seminal texts on the subject.

SUB-ACADEMIC WRITING

Professional scholars will often write textbooks and popular books to promote their subjects themselves and their bank balances! Some other books are written by enthusiasts or professional writers and may be of occasionally very good, but often of very poor quality in terms of their knowledge of research in the field. How do you know what is good reading and what is not? Well, you can ask your supervisor, but also it is good to develop a 'nose' for what is likely to be good. Book reviews are another genre of sub-academic writing, often found in the back of major journals, which are a useful guide to the criteria of good writing.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Sites on the Internet such as Wikipedia and sites run by individuals come with an academic health warning! Whilst some are well written and argued, many lack the essential peer-review process which is necessary for literature referred to by the student pursuing 'M' level studies. Give preference to Online Resources issued by renowned universities (Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard, etc.).

QUOTING THE SOURCES

At postgraduate level, though depending somewhat on your discipline, you will be expected to get more of your material from primary sources. If you don't have access to such sources directly, you will at least need to be aware of what are primary data.

QUOTING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES

One of the ways to keep the distinction between primary and secondary sources clear is to observe that professional academics quote much more from primary sources than from secondary. Primary sources are worth quoting because they are evidence, for example like a witness statement in court. Secondary sources are opinion and there is no need to quote them if you are only saying something you could say in your own words. Hence there would be no point in writing out a quotation from a recent article which read: 'in 1059, the papacy embarked on a scheme to remove secular control over elections'. It is an opinion and if you were to cite it, you would say 'Davies has argued that the decree of 1059 was chiefly an attempt to remove secular control over elections' with a reference (e.g. Davies, 1979, 89). If you get an idea from reading it is important to reference the secondary work from which the idea comes, but if it isn't primary evidence there is little need to quote it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the current literature on the subject is an important component of almost all dissertations. In most dissertations it is appropriate to have a formal section entitled 'Literature Review'. In others the review of literature may simply comprise part of the flow of the dissertation, and literature review itself (engaging with what has already been written) may take place throughout the whole dissertation. In the latter case, however, it is often advisable to devote a few paragraphs early on in the dissertation to summarising the scholarly work that has been done in the field to date.

Part of what a piece of academic writing attempts to demonstrate is that the writer has a grasp of the scholarly work done in a particular field of study. Reading and reacting to the scholarly work around a subject area is absolutely crucial. The work of other scholars must inform the writer's understanding, both of the topic area, and their approach to it. Quite often, discussing what scholars have said about an issue can be as important as discussing the issue itself.

Often, the literature search might serve to highlight gaps in the research. Identify the gaps. This may help to establish your reason for addressing your research question.

Focusing

When reviewing the literature in a field it is important to achieve focus. Your essay or dissertation may fit neatly into a discipline, or, more likely, it may cross the boundaries of two or more disciplines. You should not attempt to review ALL the literature in the relevant disciplines. You will need to make decisions about which items are relevant to your dissertation. It is sometimes helpful to mention the names of key scholars or seminal, defining, works in certain areas, because these works have spawned traditions of thought or approach. For example if the subject of your dissertation was contemporary approaches in the psychology of religion, you might mention Sigmund Freud or Carl Jung, and some of the titles of their relevant major works. You might perhaps make a short assessment of their contribution and comment on how their thought has influenced later theories. However, you would not spend a great many words on this, because this is not where your focus is located. You would spend your words on analysing the work of contemporary scholars, who may well have been influenced in one way or another by Freud and Jung, but whose own work is the focus of your dissertation.

Charting and mapping relationships

Not only will you need to find what has been written on the topic of your dissertation, you will need to find what has been written on 'approaches' to the topic of your dissertation. In assembling the material for your literature review you need to give thought to showing this diversity, and in writing you need to 'map' the agreements and disagreements. In other words, tell your reader who agrees with whom, who has been influenced by whom, who is at odds with whom, and why.

When studying religion, whether from within the discipline of Theology or of Religious Studies, it is often tempting to base your dissertation on your own already–formed opinions about the topic in question. You need to 'step back' and become aware of the different methodological approaches that are possible, and what their strengths and limitations are. A literature review enables you to show that scholarship has a variety of perspectives on any issue. Scholars from different disciplines (or even from within

the same discipline) will disagree with each other, different conclusions issuing from different assumptions, points of departure and approaches.

WRITING

The main purpose of writing a dissertation is usually to express an opinion or put forward an argument, which must then be substantiated by providing evidence. A dissertation is usually developed in three stages. It starts out with an introduction (which serves as a statement of intent), goes on to the middle section (which provides evidence to support the main argument), and ends with a conclusion (which usually draws the threads together and sums up the main ideas).

THE INTRODUCTION

The introduction to the dissertation provides the reader with a clear statement of the aims of the dissertation. It tells the reader what it intends to argue, which sources it will call upon to support the argument and what it hopes to demonstrate. In other words, the introduction explains unambiguously the author's position on the chosen topic, and tells the reader what precisely to expect from the dissertation. Ideally introductions should not only provide a clear indication of the writer's central argument, but also show a firm grasp of the central issues or debates that lie behind the dissertation question or title.

It is of course important that the introduction is presented in such a way that it grabs the reader's attention. Some writers avoid the potential problem of dull and formulaic introductions by, for instance, starting their dissertation with an arresting quotation or a challenging statement. Others start with a short description of an example or theme central to the topic under discussion and use this to indicate the questions to be addressed in the work that follows. Even when using such devices, however, it is important to make sure that the introductory paragraphs have succeeded in providing the reader with a clear and unambiguous idea of what is to follow.

THE MIDDLE SECTION

In the body of the dissertation, the author develops the argument. In doing so, rather than presume that one is alone in reflecting on the topic, one must consider what other people have had to say about it. It is vital therefore to engage with the works of other scholars who have written about the topic at hand. By engaging with previous scholarship the writer is able to decide whether or not s/he is in agreement with particular scholars. The writer is also able to determine why it is that s/he agrees with some and not with others. The ability to demonstrate an understanding of competing positions or arguments, and to identify the main strengths and weaknesses of each, is an important skill in dissertation writing. This is the ability to be 'critical'. Being critical does not mean being negative about everything. It means standing outside the competing positions and looking for their limitations as well as their strengths.

The writer's own argument, however, is likely to derive from a particular perspective, such that s/he takes a side in an intellectual debate. To take sides does not mean of course that the writer then refers only to that literature or scholarship that suits his/her preconceived standpoint. It means instead that the writer takes an informed position on the basis of reasoned academic judgement while acknowledging the potential weaknesses of his/her own arguments. Since choosing between competing arguments involves making a value judgement, it is good practice to make explicit the orientation

that underpins one's work rather than pretend that it is entirely 'objective'. This will alert readers to possible bias in the argument and help them make up their own minds about the merits of the writer's position.

It is important to support the arguments in the dissertation with appropriate examples and evidence. These examples will usually be drawn from primary and/or secondary sources. Using evidence to support the arguments in the dissertation requires more than just reproducing or describing research findings. The writer also needs to explain exactly how these findings support his/her arguments. It is good practice to highlight evidence that has the most significant implications, to use more than one example, and to select evidence from a range of sources.

It must be clear from the preceding paragraphs that there are in fact three things we do in the course of writing a dissertation. Firstly, we present an argument. We take a position on the topic and argue for it, rather than engage in a purely descriptive exercise. Secondly, in putting forward the argument, we take into account the works of previous scholars who have commented on the subject, and engage with their scholarship. Thirdly, we present evidence in support of the argument. In providing evidence, we need to explain where the evidence came from, and why it is important for our argument. When we encounter convincing counterarguments to our claims, we do not simply ignore these but instead acknowledge them and explain why it is that we differ from them.

THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the dissertation is usually retrospective in character. Here the writer gathers together the ideas developed in the course of the dissertation, weighs up the main arguments developed in the discussion, and provides the reader with a quick recap of what the dissertation was about, drawing the key points into focus one last time. This kind of conclusion is often referred to as a summary conclusion. This however is not the only type of conclusion that can be used in a dissertation. Another type of conclusion which can often be used to great effect is the discursive conclusion. Here the writer continues to develop the main ideas till the last line or word. This type of conclusion allows scope for inventiveness and originality, and it is often tempting to sign off with a grand flourish, usually with a bold statement which kindles the reader's imagination and forces him/her to think beyond the scope of the dissertation.

SOME TIPS ON GOOD ESSAY WRITING

Grammar, visual presentation, and style

It is important, when writing, to re-read and revise drafts before making a final submission. The most obvious things to check for, while reading drafts, are spelling mistakes, typos and grammatical errors. We strongly recommend the use of a native English-speaking editor for students whose mother tongue is not English. However, it must be borne in mind that visual perspicuity in a dissertation is just as important as grammatical perspicuity. It is always a good idea to present your dissertation in a font and type size that is easy to read, with plenty of room along the margins, and adequate spacing between lines. It is also important to break overly long sentences into shorter sentences, and to break up large unwieldy blocks of text into neat paragraphs. It is useful to divide the entire dissertation into sections, and to head each section with a self-explanatory title so that the reader can understand, at a glance, the dissertation's contents and arrangement.

It is also useful to pay attention to issues of style in academic writing. For example, non-English words should always appear in italics. The same is true for book titles. Long quotations should appear as a separate paragraph (as a rule of thumb anything 4 lines and over in length) and should be indented and without the addition of quotation marks.

Structuring the dissertation

Just as important as grammatical clarity, visual appeal, and style, is the logical structuring of your arguments and ideas. Dissertations must ideally demonstrate a clear progression or sequential development of thoughts such that one sentence or section leads smoothly into the next without giving the impression of being disjointed or unconnected. Titles and subtitles are useful but not sufficient. The structure of the dissertation must show a clear hierarchy between the main ideas and arguments and secondary considerations and developments. But don't use more than three hierarchical levels in a given section of your dissertation. Herewith, two different possible presentations:

1. Paradigmatic assumptions

    1.1. The Christian literature

        1.1.1. The 1940s onwards

Or

1. Philippians 2 in context

    a) Context of the book and the passage

        i) Within the Pauline corpus

Often it is helpful, prior to writing the dissertation, to draw up a scheme or map of the arguments and supporting evidence, in order to work out the best ordering or sequence for presenting these. Similarly, after writing a draft of the dissertation, it is helpful to go over it carefully, rearranging sentences and sections to improve the clarity of your argument and make the dissertation far more intelligible and coherent to the reader.

Using quotations

When citing from the works of other authors, it is of utmost importance to be judicious in the use of quotations. Quotations should ideally be used only when the other author has expressed an idea in a particularly appealing way. It is important to be economical with quotations and not let the dissertation end up looking like a string of quotations with little by way of your own commentary. Long quotations (more than 8 lines) should be avoided. **In total, all quotations should not account more than 10% of the dissertation.** Where the idea in a quotation can readily be paraphrased and retold in one's own language, this would be the preferred option. While doing this, of course, it is important to indicate the source from where the idea was derived. Quotations should not be left to stand alone but should always be introduced to the reader, and their

significance explained. All quotations should be supported by a reference. When quoting from the works of other authors, it is important to make sure that these quotations work to support, not replace, your argument.

Transition statements and summaries

In most dissertations, the overall argument is comprised of a series of smaller arguments. While these may be self-contained, addressing different points or themes, they all work together to establish the overall argument. If the smaller arguments or sub-arguments are not linked up properly together, the result can be an ungainly whole, with awkward transitions between sections, leaving the reader to negotiate what is, at best, a bumpy ride through the dissertation. The problem is not the sub-arguments, but the gaps between these. What is required is for you to build bridges between sub-sections so that the argument will not appear disjointed. These are referred to as transition statements. Often providing a recap of a section just completed and indicating where the dissertation is about to go next, serves as a useful bridging or transition device.

Signposts (or summaries) are another helpful device for ensuring the smooth flow of the dissertation. Signposts are phrases or paragraphs which keep the reader informed about what is happening or about to happen, in terms of the overall argument and organisation of your dissertation. Signposts are particularly useful when we are about to change direction in the course of your dissertation. By means of signposts, you can tell the readers that you are about to change course. If you have not yet given them a chance to explore all the implications of what you have just been arguing, you can reassure them that you will return to this discussion in a while. Signposts can go a long way towards integrating the dissertation and polishing up the presentation.

Checking for relevance and avoiding repetition

It is also always useful to check that every section of the dissertation is directly relevant to the topic or question. It is a mistake to treat the dissertation writing exercise as a means for demonstrating how much you know outside the topic when in fact none of this knowledge is of relevance to the main argument. Going over the dissertation with a fine toothcomb, and paring down to that which is directly relevant, is vital to developing good writing skills. Like the relevance test, the redundancy test too is an indispensable means for ensuring that a dissertation remains focused and to-the-point. An odd sentence or paragraph may contain ideas that have been expressed before, in which case it is entirely repetitive and does not add anything to the substance of the dissertation. It is always advisable to eliminate all such repetitive and redundant material and stay on course right till the end.

Understanding the marking criteria

It is particularly useful to spend some time going through the marking criteria in order to get a good sense of what it is that markers look for in dissertations (for more details see **GA36d** form accessible via https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/). You will notice that the bare minimum required of any dissertation of passable standard is that it presents an argument that addresses the dissertation question or title, engages with the works of other scholars, synthesises material, and shows an understanding of standard referencing conventions. The best dissertations show much more sophistication in the way they present their argument. They are extremely clear, demonstrate breadth and depth of research and good comprehension of the subject matter, demonstrate the ability for insightful critical analysis, show

considerable originality in the way they present and substantiate their arguments, provide a logical progression of ideas, and use the standard referencing system accurately. It is important to bear in mind that all these are skills that you can develop through application. There is no better way to develop these skills than to engage in the dissertation writing process and keep at it till you begin to gain mastery over it. Supervisors are always at hand should you feel there are areas where you require help.

THE CRITICAL APPARATUS

In constructing an argument in answer to your research question, you will need to refer to:

- Primary sources, to provide evidence that supports your case and to show how you account for any evidence that seems to undermine it;
- Secondary sources, to show where you agree and where you disagree with the judgements of other scholars in the field, and to explain why you agree or disagree.

It becomes clear why footnotes and references are so important. Critical apparatus is designed to show your readers what your primary and secondary sources are, so that they can assess the evidence for the claims that you are making and can see how you are positioning yourself in relation to the opinions of scholars in your field. To make this possible, it is vital:

- That you acknowledge all your primary and secondary sources;
- That you supply enough information for your readers to identify those sources, and reconstruct for themselves the route by which you have come to form your judgements;
- That you supply that information in a format that your readers can readily understand, which in practice means conforming to one of the standard conventions for referencing sources.

This is why you are expected to be careful about the presentation of footnotes and references in your assessed work, and why you will lose marks if you are not. This is not just pedantry on the part of examiners. The value of any piece of academic writing depends to a significant extent on the quality of its referencing. It is worth pointing out that professional academics are subject to the same discipline: other things being equal, a poorly-referenced article is much less likely to be accepted for publication in a learned journal than a carefully-referenced one.

WHEN SHOULD FOOTNOTES BE USED?

You should include a reference:

- Whenever you are directly quoting from a primary or secondary source, in which case you must make it clear that you are quoting, either by using quotation marks or by presenting the quotation as a separate indented paragraph (a ‘block quote’), depending on its length;
- Whenever you are making, in your own words, a claim that depends on evidence from a primary source — for example, the claim ‘Aquinas held that

human beings have three groups of natural ends or goals' would require a reference to *Summa Theologiae* I-II.94.3 to back it up;
- Whenever you are presenting, in your own words, an idea that you have taken from a secondary source.

Since the purpose of references is to make your sources clear to the reader, you should make them as precise as possible. If you are citing an idea that is developed on pp. 147–51 of a 300-page book, it will be much more helpful to your readers if you cite those five pages specifically than if you simply cite the entire book.

Footnotes can also be used to insert incidental comments that are peripheral to the main argument, and points of clarification that would interrupt the flow of the argument if they were included in the main text. However, footnotes of these kinds should be used sparingly, and it is always worth asking yourself whether a comment that you are putting in a footnote could be included in the main text.

FORMATTING OF FOOTNOTES

As already noted, it is important to follow one of the standard conventions for referencing. Learning to do this accurately and consistently is an important academic skill. This is fairly mechanistic: it is a matter of getting to know the rules and then following them. But it is surprising how many students — and even some established scholars! — fail to do this, so it is worth spending a little time and effort learning the skill.

References are given in footnotes.

FOOTNOTES

In SBL format, a number in the text after a quotation or citation (normally in superscript) directs the reader to a footnote at the bottom of the page. Most word-processing packages have a function for inserting footnotes. The note should contain all the information necessary for the reader to trace the quotation or citation: the author(s), title and publication details of the source, and where applicable, the page number(s) from which the quotation, information or idea has been taken. The information should be laid out according to the SBL system of referencing. Generally speaking, you need to be consistent in the way you are quoting.

APPENDICES

There are three important things to note about appendices:

- They are generally not marked.
- They should not be used as a way to 'get around' the word count (if something is important put it in the main body of your text).
- Appendices should only be used to include data that is important to your study but is not absolutely vital to it.

Thus, for example, if you have included a questionnaire as part of your methodology and primary data collection, you should analyse the results from the questionnaire within the main body of your work but could include a blank copy of the questionnaire within an appendix. Similarly, if your work has been on the US Constitution and the extent to which 'free speech' is absolute, you will discuss the issues in the main body of your text but could include a copy of the Constitution in an appendix.

'Appendix' is the singular form, and 'appendices' the plural. Accordingly, you should title different documents within the appendices as Appendix One, Appendix Two, and so on, and the collection thereof as the section titled Appendices. If you have only one document, simply title it Appendix.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic misconduct principles and rules are defined by *The Academic Misconduct Policy* of the University of Wales. For fuller explanation of the rules and their application please refer to the policy. Below is a summary of key principles students should keep in mind when it comes to conducting your research with academic honesty.

As well as enabling your readers to assess your arguments, it is important as a matter of both honesty and courtesy to give due credit to those authors who have informed your arguments and helped you to develop them. Some kinds of failure to do so can constitute *plagiarism*, which is in effect a form of academic theft. Plagiarism can be defined as *intentionally or unintentionally presenting the work of others as if it were your own.* Academics are experienced at detecting it, and because it undermines the very nature of the academic enterprise, it attracts severe penalties. Students in this department have in the past failed modules, and in the most severe cases been deprived of their degrees, on the grounds of plagiarism. (Remember once again that professional academics are subject to the same discipline: it has not been unknown for academics to lose their reputations and even their jobs when caught plagiarising.)

Plagiarism occurs, for example:

- When part or all of a dissertation is copied without acknowledgement from another source, such as a book or a website;
- When a student attempts to pass off as his or her own a dissertation, published or not, written in whole or in part by someone else;
- When words written by another author (whether published or unpublished) are presented as if they were the student's own;
- When a student presents an idea taken from another source as if it were his or her own, without acknowledging the source.

There is no excuse for deliberate plagiarism, and as already noted, it attracts severe sanctions. It is possible to plagiarise unintentionally, and some students get very anxious about this. There is no need for undue anxiety; the most effective way of avoiding unintentional plagiarism is to develop habits of good scholarly practice, such as the following:

- *Never* use another author's exact words without presenting them as a quotation (in inverted commas, or for longer quotations, as a block quote) and identifying the source;
- When you have gleaned a significant idea, opinion or piece of information from another source, cite the source;
- Avoid excessive quotation — try as far as possible to assimilate ideas from your sources and express them in your own words;
- Develop good note-taking habits — for example, rather than spending hours writing very lengthy notes on sources, it is often more effective to photocopy the extracts you need (when this is permitted), highlight or underline key passages

in the photocopy (NOT the original!) and note key arguments briefly in your own words;

- Avoid undue dependence on one or a few secondary sources — if the entire structure and substance of your argument are dependent on one book (even if you cite that book), your dissertation is likely in any case to receive a poor mark, and you will also increase your risk of unintentionally plagiarising words or ideas.

USING A THIRD-PARTY PROOFREADING SERVICE

Please note, the *Academic Misconduct Policy* of the University of Wales in section 30, defines the main principles for using a third-party proofreading service. Here is the section reproduced for your convenience.

- Third-party proofreading is allowed for any piece of academic writing unless stated otherwise. If proofreading is not permitted, information about this will be included in the module handbook.
- A proofreader may check for, identify and suggest corrections for errors in the text. In no circumstances should a proofreader edit a student's writing (for example, amend ideas, arguments or structure) as this will compromise the authorship of the work.
- A third-party proofreader may:
    - Identify punctuation, spelling and typographical errors
    - Identify grammatical and syntactical errors and anomalies
    - Identify formatting and layout errors and inconsistencies (e.g. page numbers, font size, line spacing, headers and footers)
    - Identify errors in labelling of diagrams, charts or figures
    - Highlight overly-long or complex sentences or paragraphs, especially where meaning is ambiguous
    - Draw attention to repeated phrases or omitted words
    - Draw attention to inaccurate or inconsistent referencing
- A proofreader may not:
    - Add content in any way
    - Rewrite passages of text to clarify the meaning
    - Rearrange or re-order paragraphs to enhance structure or argument
    - Change any words or figures, except to correct spelling
    - Check or correct facts, data, calculations, formulae, equations or computer code
    - Implement or alter the referencing system
    - Re-label diagrams, charts or figures
    - Reduce content so as to comply with a specified word limit
    - Make grammatical, syntactical or stylistic corrections
    - Translate any part of the work into English
- Failure to adhere to the above requirements may result in an investigation under the Academic Misconduct Policy.
- Students have overall responsibility for their work. The third-party proofreader shall give advice by means of tracked changes on an electronic copy or handwritten annotations on a paper copy or other similar devices. The student must take responsibility for choosing what advice to accept, and must make the changes to the master copy of the work him/herself.

- Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to prove that a proofreader has adhered to these third party proofreading guidelines. Students are therefore advised to keep the original copy of their written work as well as the copy they have submitted for assessment.

Please remember that your dissertation must be submitted to Turnitin in order to insure its originality.

Turnitin may be used as part of an investigation into an alleged case of plagiarism. Refer to the *Academic Honesty Policy* available at: http://www.newbold.ac.uk (current students/Academic Policies). You can locate the Wales's *Academic Misconduct Policy* at: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/academic-quality-handbook/.

APPENDIX A

PRIFYSGOL CYMRU
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
UNIVERSITY OF WALES
Trinity Saint David

MA Dissertation Approval Form

Student Name	
Degree Scheme	
Start date	

I have completed/ about to complete* Part 1 of my degree.
*Please delete as appropriate.

Working Title of Dissertation:
Aims and Objectives:
Abstract (approximately 500 words): 1. The research question (WHAT) 2. The significance of the study 3. The methodology

Introductory Bibliography (20 references):
Proposed Supervisor:

Please indicate whether ethical approval for project is needed – YES/NO

Please indicate whether sufficient resources are available for the project – YES/NO

The above topic, proposal, and supervisor have been agreed:

Signed : ……..Programme Director

Date:…….

Please return this form to the Module leader.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH ETHICS APPLICATION

FORM NAME OF STUDENT

TITLE OF PROJECT

ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH

(Provide a summary of the main points of your study)

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

(Explain what contribution to knowledge or practice your research will make)

SCHEDULE

(Illustrate the time frame for the research and the data collection)

FUNDING

(If appropriate, provide details of funding bodies)

METHODS TO BE USED IN THE RESEARCH

(List the methods you are going to use in your study)

INVESTIGATOR/S

(Give name/s of the people involved in the collection and handling of the data)

LOCATION OF THE PROJECT

(Explain where and when the data will be collected and indicate if approval for access has been obtained)

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

(In the event of research projects involving public or private institutions – including the Seventh-day Adventist Church – please provide written evidence of any necessary permission)

RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

(Describe how you will identify and involve potential participants)

RISK ASSESSMENT

(Detail any foreseen risks to participants and how you will minimise them. If you plan to involve children or other vulnerable groups, specify details of your Criminal Records Bureau [CRB/DBS] disclosure)

ETHICAL GUIDELINES

(Indicate if appropriate, what complementary ethical guidelines you will follow)

INFORMED CONSENT AND FEEDBACK

(Explain what procedures you will put in place to ensure informed consent and feedback from participants)

DECEPTION/COVERT RESEARCH

(Specify if the research will use any form of deception or covert observation and justify the adoption of this strategy)

INDUCEMENTS

(Indicate if participants will receive any recompense other than expenses)

CONFIDENTIALITY

(Explain what procedures you will put in place to ensure confidentiality)

STORAGE OF DATA

(Explain how the data will be protected and stored)

CONTACT DETAILS

NAME STUDENT ID ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER E-MAIL

_____ _____
_____ _____
_____ _____

I declare that the information provided in this application is truthful, accurate and correct and that my research will conform to the statement of ethical practice.

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____