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**DISSERTATION LEARNING CONTRACT**

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| **Name** | **Student ID** | **Date** |
| **Email**  **Mobile** | **Study Mode:**  **FT / PT** | **Dissertation start date** |
| **Programme** | **Personal Tutor** | |
| **Dissertation Supervisor** | **Dissertation Coordinator** | |
| **Topic and Working Title** | | |

The dissertation is distinguished from earlier assessed work by the greater depth of knowledge, understanding and critique demonstrated. The dissertation may vary in the breadth of coverage. It must:

* have a clearfocus;
* Have defined objective(s), research question(s) and scope;
* be achievable within the required period of registration and word limitation;
* be realistic and feasible given the resources available.

**ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISSERTATION SUPERVISOR**

* Guide the student in focusing the study and in drawing up a plan and outline for the dissertation to ensure that a feasible piece of work is proposed.
* Advise the student on relevant literature and methodology.
* Monitor progress against an agreed plan and timetable for the dissertation study.
* Read and comment on at least some if not all of the draft chapters of the dissertation. It is generally preferable that this be done in stages with the supervisor seeing at least two draft chapters before the half-way point in the dissertation registration period, so that the student can incorporate any feedback into subsequent writing.
* Where relevant, advise on ethical and safety implications of the work.
* Respond promptly and appropriately, by making constructive suggestions both at the planning stage and in response to the material submitted.
* Give appropriate technical advice and also assist the student in planning and refining the dissertation and working towards agreed targets during the period of work.
* Ensure that their students are fully aware of their being away for any extended periods such as in annual leave during the summer, and make back-up supervisory arrangements at crucial times, such as when draft chapters are being written or submitted.
* Write a formal progress report for any student who applies for a formal extension to the standard period of dissertation study registration.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT**

* You are responsible for meeting with your supervisor regularly and to hand in material at the agreed times
* Responsibility for the academic quality of the dissertation is ultimately yours alone.
* You must observe the importance of acknowledging the work of others and avoid plagiarism. It is your responsibility to ensure that the work is entirely your own and that all services used are correctly cited and referenced. Please seek advice from the Doctoral Training Centre should you need help.
* It is essential that draft chapters are submitted to your supervisor in enough time for him/her to provide feedback and for you to then revise your plans and research work accordingly.
* It is expected that you will arrange weekly meetings/discussions with your supervisor in the first two months of your project, but the frequency of these meetings may decrease as the project progresses and as you become more independent.
* If your dissertation research faces obstacles or setbacks, it is vital that you identify and discuss them as soon as possible so that appropriate courses of action can be taken.

**EXPECTATIONS**

* Regular weekly or fortnightly meetings with supervisor(s) according to identified needs and progress of the dissertation research.
* Knowledge of when the principal dissertation supervisor will be away for an extended period during the dissertation registration period.
* You have the right to submit your dissertation whenever you want to. However, you are strongly advised to consult with your Dissertation Supervisor and obtain relevant advice and suggestions before its formal submission to the University Library.

**REQUIREMENTS**

A schedule should be devised with supervisors to meet at mutually convenient times and suiting other diary commitments. Students do not have the right to demand a meeting at their own convenience. An initial statement of these meetings should be given in this learning contract.

Students must produce two documents, which are to be completed only after receiving recommendations and advice from the Dissertation Supervisor. These documents must be submitted to the Dissertation Supervisor and the Dissertation Coordinator at the outset of the dissertation period:

1. A short formal proposal indicating the aims, purpose and scope of the dissertation, stating specific research question(s), identifying potential literature and relevant empirical work to be addressed, as well as specifying a provisional outline of the chapter titles and envisaged contents.
2. A brief plan and timetable indicating how the dissertation research will be undertaken. It will state deadlines and identify the critical milestones when the Dissertation Supervisor and student should meet to plan and review progress. While the details of the study plan will vary, it is self-evident that draft chapters must be submitted to the Dissertation Supervisor in sufficient time for him/her to provide feedback, which is normally a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 weeks.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as your own, without acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

* using the work of someone else, or changing some words and keeping the same structure and the same meaning, without noting the sources(s) and submitting it as your own work;
* taking text from many other sources and putting the pieces together into one document and submitting it as your own work, without noting the sources(s);
* downloading information, pictures or charts, from the internet and inserting that material into your own document and submitting it as your own work, without noting the source(s);
* buying or otherwise obtaining assignments from the internet or another person;
* submitting your own coursework which has been submitted earlier to another module or to another institute (self-plagiarism).

When submitting an academic paper or assessment, students must include in the bibliography every source that has been consulted or used for the paper or assignment. Students must note whether that source is a book, article, television programme, website, or an interview with another individual. Students may seek advice from the Doctoral Training Centre.

When working together or collaborating with other students on assignments, projects or dissertations, students must indicate clearly on the assignment, project or dissertation, those portions which are not their own work.

Students should seek the assistance of their Dissertation Supervisor or Personal Tutor before handing in the draft chapter or completed dissertation if they need help in properly acknowledging the sources used. Students facing particular difficulties with referencing work may be referred to the Doctoral Training Centre.

The University uses software in order to detect cases of plagiarism. The student may request analysis from this software performed on draft chapters at the half-way point of their dissertation research (2 months for full time study mode and 4 months for part time study mode).

**DEADLINES**

The formal deadline for submission of your dissertation is**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.** *(Note: This deadline includes the time for proof-reading process that takes two weeks, i.e., you will be required to submit the work to the DTC after supervisor approval two weeks in advance of this stated deadline).*

If you submit your dissertation after this deadline, then the standard University penalties for late submission of assessed work will be applied as are stated in the Student Handbook.

You are required to ensure that the dissertation is ready for submission before you formally submit it to the University Library. This includes observing the University’s recommended format, style guidelines and specified enclosures.

Please note that your dissertation should be submitted to the University Library (three hardcopies and a softcopy) which will log the submission and then ensure that it is forwarded on to the relevant academic staff for assessment.

You may submit your dissertation before this date, and indeed you are encouraged to do so. If you plan to submit prior to the deadline date then please ensure that you have consulted with your supervisor and received a reply saying that the work appears to be ready to submit. Please note that a ‘ready to submit’ indication from the supervisor does not mean that you will necessarily achieve a passing grade for the dissertation. It will be assessed by an internal second marker, reviewed by the external examiner and discussed by the Board of Examiners before recommendation that it is either a ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ grade.

If you do not think that you will be able to submit your dissertation according to your specified deadline then you should submit an extension request as soon as you can and check that it is has been approved before the submission deadline. **Please note that extensions will only be approved for exceptional circumstances. Work pressures will not normally be accepted as sufficient reason for the University granting an extension.** For any dissertation extension to be approved the progress report written by your Dissertation Supervisor has to be accepted by the Head of Programme and Dean.

If you have been unable to work on your dissertation due to medical or serious personal issues you should inform your personal tutor and the Dissertation Supervisor and provide supporting evidence (e.g. letter from your doctor or a counsellor). Students who are given an extension to their deadline will be charged the appropriate continuation fee. For further details on the process and procedures for dissertation extension, please contact Student Services.

**PROOF-READING**

You are required to get your work proof-read as stipulated by the Proof-reading policy. You will be required to submit an intent to submit form at least two weeks in advance of your deadline. You also need to acknowledge that you paid the stipulated amount against this service. Your dissertation should be submitted to the DTC for proof-reading two weeks prior to your submission deadline.

**SUPERVISOR’S CONTACT AND AVAILABILITY DETAILS:**

**SCHEDULES AND MILESTONES (in consultation with supervisor)**

You are advised to contact your supervisor in the first week of commencement of the dissertation and produce the required schedule of meetings and research milestones within the first two weeks.

**ANTICIPATED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

Start date:

Submission date:

**RESEARCH MILESTONES**

**DECLARATION**

I hereby confirm that I understand the terms and conditions stated above and that all the required timetable and milestones have been provided.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Date

**APPROVALS**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Supervisor Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dissertation Coordinator Date

**Original to student file**

**Copy to: Student □ Dissertation Supervisor □ Dissertation Coordinator □**

**Personal Tutor □**