



UCL

BASc Dissertation Handbook

2018-19



General Guidance Notes

Students decide on a dissertation research topic that may well draw on any one or more of their current or previous pathway modules (including core modules). The dissertation will, in most instances, take the form of a short research project written up as a dissertation of 9-10,000 words.

Although the dissertation project need not be explicitly interdisciplinary in order to pass the module satisfactorily, good interdisciplinary work will be rewarded and the highest marks will only be achievable for the best interdisciplinary projects.

Students choosing to deviate from the standard dissertation format (9-10,000 written piece of work), e.g. a creative practice-based project, must first gain the permission of the BASC0024 Module Convenors and BASc Head of Department (HoD) before being able to confirm their research topic and proceed to working with a supervisor.

Creative practice-based projects are likely to require a greater amount of time and effort to complete as students are required, alongside the creative output, to produce a substantial piece of written work. As such, you must have confirmed your research topic, supervisor and obtained permission from the BASC0024 Convenors and BASc HoD **before Friday 2nd November 2018** in order to proceed with this route. No creative-based dissertations will be approved by the BASc department once this deadline has passed.

Students will produce a draft of their title or idea by the middle of June in the year preceding their final year so that they can identify supervisors and have the topic of their dissertation confirmed by their BAsC personal tutor – all students are required to present a brief outline of their dissertation idea as part of their Final Year Module Choice Form.

It is highly recommended that students begin to look for an appropriate supervisor as early on as possible – in essence, as soon as you have an understanding of the area of research you wish to focus your dissertation on.

You can begin your search using the twin resources of [IRIS](#) and the previous *BAsC Dissertation Title/Supervisor lists* (all years available from the Moodle page) which list previous dissertation topics of BAsC students and the UCL academic who supervised particular research areas.

Supervisors should be identified and approached by students, following the guidelines provided in the first Dissertation Briefing Session (May 2018).

It is expected that most students will have supervisors confirmed during the start of the academic year in which this module is being taken. **Should students be without a confirmed supervisor by Monday 17th December 2018 the BAsC Department will allocate a supervisor without consultation of the student.**

Method of Delivery and Work Schedule

Students will be required to:

- 1.** Attend three plenary briefing sessions with the BAsC Module Convenors. Dissertation briefing sessions cover the requirements of the module as well as providing practical guidance on such areas as deciding on a research topic/question, dissertation structure and presentation.
- 2.** Locate a potential supervisor from within UCL's academic community who has the requisite expertise and knowledge relating to the dissertation topic(s). Once an academic has agreed to act as supervisor, the Module Convenors **must be informed** so that the Supervisory Guidelines can be passed on. A supervisor **will not be confirmed** in place until the Module Convenors have been notified and agreed to this supervision match.
- 3.** Attend individual meetings/engage with their supervisor(s). The number of meetings/contact time should be as appropriate but are expected to total no more than 5 hours per supervisor.
- 4.** Provide the BAsC Module Convenors with updates on dissertation progress and ensure up to date information on student supervisor(s) and a student's research topic and title is communicated in a timely manner to the Convenors.

5. Submit a detailed dissertation plan at the end of term 1 of the student's final year (i.e. **4pm, Monday 17th December 2018**) on which they will receive feedback from their supervisor within 1 month. The detailed plan should comprise of a preliminary bibliography, chapter headings and summaries, and include any relevant information on methodology, methods and ethical issues pertaining to the dissertation's research focus. **This piece of work is worth 10% of the overall dissertation mark.**

6. Take on board feedback and advice provided by supervisors. It is advised that any feedback provided at a later stage of the dissertation process (term 2 onwards) should be received by the student in the first week in April, in order to allow the student enough time to incorporate the feedback into the dissertation editing process – **we request that supervisors do not provide any further major feedback to students on any dissertation drafts provided to them beyond the 2nd week of April.**

7. Submit their final version of the dissertation in electronic copy via *the BASC0024 Moodle page* and two, bound physical copies to the BASc Departmental Administrator in the BASc Office on the first day of the third UCL term of the student's final year (i.e. **4pm, Tuesday 23rd April 2019**), along with a submission sheet (available from the Moodle page to download and sign).

What do we mean by ‘Good Interdisciplinary Work’?

1. Interdisciplinary study (or research) is study (or research) which combines the methods and knowledge of two or more existing disciplines in order to create a synthesis which solves a problem, gives insight or produces a product that would not have been possible using only one of the disciplines.

2. Or, it is study (or research) which employs the methods and knowledge of two or more disciplines to analyse a problem from different perspectives, thus showing a deeper understanding of the problem than would be anticipated from a single disciplinary viewpoint, i.e. in this latter case a ‘synthesis’ of disciplines is not expected. While a discussion of real world issues is welcome, the rationale, analysis, literature review etc. should be situated within academic traditions and current thinking in existing disciplinary or interdisciplinary fields – remember that the dissertation is academic piece of work, and as such a simple marketing report with little theory or academically informed critical analysis, for example, would not be appropriate.

3. Dissertations which work to the above model of interdisciplinarity will be judged as good interdisciplinary work.

4. The highest marks will be awarded to projects that demonstrate not only a clear understanding of chosen disciplines, methodologies and methods, but provide an exceptional rationale for these choices and apply

originality and flair to this process.

5. However, you must remember that this is an undergraduate dissertation, so although we will reward originality and your contribution to knowledge-generation in your work, an original piece of work may just take the form of combining insights from different disciplines in a novel way and can still be rewarded with high marks.

These examples of research topics, which follow the above interdisciplinary guidelines, are for illustration only:

1. An analysis of how the role of colonialism has impacted upon engineering projects in contemporary India. (Synthesis of disciplines of history and engineering).
2. To what extent does the work of [author X] exhibit signs of [Y] theory of personality? (Synthesis of literature and psychology).
3. How does a feminist reading of economics problematise the conventional economic notion of GDP? (Provides deeper understanding of the concept of GDP by analysing it from two disciplines – economics and gender studies).
4. An analysis of categories of the sharing economy (drawing on theories from economics, psychology and sociology).

Research Ethics

An important component of conducting research is to ensure that you understand and adhere to [UCL's Research Ethics policies](#). This is of particular significance with research involving living human participants and the collection and/or study of data derived from living human participants. There are a number of ethical standards that have been accepted throughout the UK and abroad **which all researchers and ethical committees are expected to comply with**. These include, for example, ensuring that you facilitate:

Informed consent

All participants must be fully informed of the study and what is being asked of them, including the potential risks/benefits and exclusion criteria, in order to make a fully informed decision about whether or not to participate in the research.

Benefit not harm

Research involving human participants must have a benefit to society and the risks involved to participants must be balanced against the potential benefit to the overall community.

Confidentiality

All participants have the right for their participation to remain confidential in that only the researcher will be aware who has participated.

Your supervisor is well-placed to discuss these issues with you, and can help you to maintain awareness of, and adhere to, UCL's [Code of Conduct for Research](#) and UCL's [Research Ethics Framework](#) (UCL log-in may be required). Relevant further information can also be obtained from understanding UCL's [Accepted Ethical Standards](#).

Due to the interdisciplinary and wide-ranging nature of BAsC student dissertations, it is important that you discuss in detail with your supervisor(s) any and all components of your dissertation research that require you to involve living human participants and the collection and/or study of data derived from living human participants. Your supervisor will then be able to advise you whether you need to seek UCL Ethics Committee approval for this research.

Please note that research limited to the following types **DO NOT** require you to submit an application to the [UCL Research Ethics Committee](#), (REC) and are 'exempt' from having to obtain official approval:

- 1. Service evaluation**
- 2. Performance reviews**
- 3. Quality assurance/audit projects that do not involve access to or collection of private or sensitive data**
- 4. Testing within normal education requirements**
- 5. Literary or artistic criticism**

Similarly, the following types of research **DO NOT** require ethical approval through the REC unless approval is specifically required by an external funding body or other external body:

- 1. Research involving information freely available in the public domain. For example, published biographies, newspaper accounts of an individual's activities and published minutes of a meeting whilst still personal data under the Data Protection Act would not require ethics review.**
- 2. Research involving anonymised records and data sets that exist in the public domain. For example, datasets available through the Office for National Statistics or the UK Data Archive where appropriate permissions have already been obtained and it is not possible to identify individuals from the information provided.**
- 3. Studies of public behaviour that are purely observational (non-invasive and non-interactive), unless the recorded observations identify individuals (names, photographs) which could place them at risk of harm, stigma or prosecution.**
- 4. Research involving the use of non-sensitive, completely anonymous educational tests, survey and interview procedures when the participants are not defined as "vulnerable" and participation will not induce undue psychological stress or anxiety.**

5. **Research involving the use of educational tests, survey and interview procedures on human participants in the public arena (e.g. elected or appointed public officials, candidates for public office, artists).**
6. **Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, if the food consumed is:**
 - a. **wholesome without additives or**
 - b. **contains a food ingredient, agricultural, chemical or environmental contaminant, for a purpose and at a level declared safe by the relevant national food safety agency.**

Ensure that you understand whether your research fits any of these areas by reading UCL's Research Ethics [exemption](#) list for a more detailed explanation of these areas.

Note the above exemptions **do not apply** to research involving vulnerable participants, e.g. children and young people, those with a learning disability or cognitive impairment or individuals in a dependent or unequal relationship. [UCL Research Ethics Committee](#) approval **would be** required in such circumstances.

In most instances, we would expect that BAsC student dissertations **will** fall under this 'exemption' list, but due to the interdisciplinary and wide-ranging nature of BAsC student interests and potential research topics, it is possible that in some instances

dissertations may include a component of research that involves living human participants and the collection and/or study of data derived from them, and which does not come under the 'exemption' list.

In these instances, it is vital that you co-ordinate with your supervisor(s) to ensure that you follow the standards and procedures that your supervisor will have in place in their Department, to ensure that you obtain the correct and valid [UCL Research Ethics Committee](#) (REC) approval.

Note that the REC has specific meeting dates to assess research proposal applications, and you will need to ensure that you produce and submit your required documentation in a timely manner to fit within the REC meeting schedule, as you will not be able to conduct your research until you have obtained the Committee's formal approval. Find details of REC meeting dates for 2018-2019 [here](#) and full details for making an application [here](#). It is also worth noting that **not all ethics applications require a full review**, and that more straightforward cases can be decided by Chair's action outside of the regular meetings.

Ultimately, your supervisor is always going to be best-placed to advise you on the most appropriate and relevant route to take on these issues. It is your responsibility to ensure that you communicate the full details of your dissertation research to your supervisor, who will then be able to confirm whether you need to proceed along any of the routes outlined.

Data Protection

Note: exemption from approval by the UCL Ethics Committee does not imply that your research is also exempt from registration with the UCL Data Protection Officer.

Ensuring you conduct your research in an ethical manner also requires you to take responsibility for making sure that you not only obtain appropriate consent from data subjects for the research you involve them in, but that you also take steps to **ensure the ongoing confidentiality and privacy of any data you collect as part of your research.**

Put simply, this means you should also manage your research data ethically. An overview is provided [here](#) by UCL on relevant data protection elements and factors you might need to consider.

If you plan to obtain and hold any personal data (such as, for example: names, addresses, contact details etc.) **you will need to register your project in order to obtain a data protection registration number from UCL.**

For example, if you are using consent forms containing names and the contact details of participants as part of your recruitment process you will be processing personal data, even if the actual research data obtained is not identifiable. **As a result registration is still required.**

A useful overview of what constitutes personal/sensitive personal data can be found at [UCL's Research and Data Protection](#) page, while full details on UCL Data Protection can be found in [UCL's Data Protection Policy](#).

All staff and students processing personal data should ensure that the data are secure and encrypted: appropriate measures must be taken to prevent unauthorised access, disclosure and loss, for example.

Staff and students using personal data in research must:

- Understand how personal data may be used in research
- Use the minimum data necessary for the research, including, wherever possible, anonymised or pseudonymised data
- Ensure their processing complies with all the data protection principles
- Inform Data Protection Coordinators about research before processing of personal data begins
- Register all research projects involving personal data with the Records Office before processing begins
- Where relevant, inform data subjects about the purposes of the processing and ensure valid written consent is obtained
- Ensure all personal data collected are necessary for the purpose(s) of the research

- Keep the encrypted data securely
- Ensure personal data are destroyed confidentially, stored with the Records Office or otherwise disposed of in compliance with agreements with funders.

If your dissertation research requires that you collect and process personal/sensitive personal data, then, in consultation with your supervisor, you should complete a **Research Registration Form** from the [UCL Research Registration webpage](#) in order to register your research project and obtain a data protection registration number. For the purposes of completing this form, be aware that [Sara Wingate Gray](#) is currently the BASc department's *Data Protection Coordinator*. Guidance on completing this form is available [here](#).

Further information on UCL Data Protection, Guidance, Policies and Resources is available from [UCL's Data Protection and FOI](#) pages.

Finally, note that your supervisor(s) should always be your first port of call for advice on all ethical issues regards your dissertation: you will find that policies/procedures vary from department to department. It is therefore of great importance that you seek out your supervisor(s) help if your dissertation research will involve any ethical or data protection issues (as outlined above) as there is likely to be a specific set of guidelines that your supervisor(s) and their Home Department will expect you to follow, and which therefore are not possible to outline in detail here.

Referencing and Plagiarism

Referencing

When you produce a piece of academic work it is vital that you acknowledge all the information sources you have used and referred to. There are several reasons for this:

- Readers will be able to trace your sources without difficulty;
- It will show the breadth of your research;
- It demonstrates you have looked to the available literature and have considered an appropriate range and breadth of sources for your research topic;
- Failure to credit sources used constitutes plagiarism, and you could be penalised.

You will have already used a variety of referencing methods during your undergraduate studies at UCL, such as *Harvard*, *Vancouver*, *MLA*, *Chicago* or *APA*, for example. The choice of referencing style and whether you use footnotes or endnotes¹ is a decision you should

¹ **Footnote.** A note, reference, or additional piece of information printed at the bottom of a page, used to explain or comment on something in the main body of the text on the same page.

End-note. Any of a number of explanatory notes or references placed at the end of a book, article, dissertation, etc. <

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/72724?result=1&rskey=HvyUwu&>
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61863?redirectedFrom=endnote#eid5594758>>, *Oxford English Dictionary*.

consider in conversation with your supervisor, as different styles of referencing are used in different disciplines.

As BAsC dissertations are a form of interdisciplinary research, we recognise that different fields of research have differing referencing style expectations.

As such, as long as you have consulted with your supervisor and made a decision about which referencing style to incorporate into your research, we do not proscribe which referencing style you should use overall.

You should ultimately ensure that you select one style of referencing, and ensure consistency in your approach throughout your dissertation, including your bibliography.

UCL Moodle has a [number of resources](#) available on the topic of referencing, including guides to the most common styles (e.g. [Harvard](#), [Vancouver](#)), as well as guides to using bibliographic software that can help you to refer to sources and create bibliographies.

Plagiarism

UCL uses a detection system (*TurnItIn*) to scan all work for evidence of plagiarism. This system gives access to billions of sources worldwide, including websites and journals, as well as work previously submitted to the Department, UCL and other universities. Although your dissertation will be based on what you've heard, read or discussed, it must be entirely your own work. It's important that you avoid plagiarism that is the presentation of another person's words or thoughts as your own.

Plagiarism can be:

1. The unacknowledged lifting of large continuous chunks of another author's work;
2. The unacknowledged stringing together of disconnected sentences and phrases of another author's work;
3. The close paraphrasing of another author's work without referencing and acknowledgement.

Plagiarism is a serious offence akin to cheating. There is no distinction recognised between "intentional" and "unintentional" plagiarism. To ensure you avoid any plagiarism in your dissertation, your notes should record who said or wrote what and should always be clear in both your notes and the dissertation itself what work is yours and what is the work of others.

Self-Plagiarism

As well as ensuring your dissertation is your own work, you must also avoid self-plagiarism, i.e. you cannot submit the same piece of work or part thereof (either with or without stylistic variation) in order to gain credit more than once. The same criteria apply to self-plagiarism as to other forms of plagiarism and so will incur a penalty.

Note that as the dissertation plan is a separate piece of assessed work, that it is self-plagiarism to repeat in your dissertation wholesale text from the dissertation plan, other than the title, sub-headings and information concerning datasets. For further detailed information on UCL regulations and plagiarism, you should refer to [UCL's plagiarism policy](#).

Submission and Presentation of the Dissertation

Submission

You must submit by hand **two bound copies** of your dissertation to the BAsC Departmental Administrator in the BAsC Office with **one completed submission sheet** (a copy of this document is available for download from the BAsC dissertation webpages) by the module deadline of 4pm, Tuesday 23rd April 2019. Please note that the submission sheet **should not be bound in with the dissertation**, but completed and handed to the BAsC Department Administrator separately.

Please note that your dissertation does not need to be hard-bound. *Any form of binding is acceptable*: binding facilities are available at most printing retailers (such as those on Tottenham Court Road, as well as from UCLU, and in the basement of Waterstones opposite the UCL Malet Place entrance) and you can see a range of printers located near by to UCL on this map URL here: <https://goo.gl/maps/bCYTB>

In addition, you must upload your dissertation as a word document to *TurnItIn* via the BAsC Dissertation Moodle page by the same deadline.

Presentation

Due to the diverse disciplinary range of student dissertations that the BAsC degree embraces, we appreciate that different departments and disciplines have preferred ways of presenting information, and as such, beyond the basic points outlined below (1-5), you should follow the advice of your supervisor, including the choice of referencing style, when discussing the presentation of your dissertation.

[1] All dissertation submissions must include your Exam Candidate Code in the Footer of your document. ***You must *not* include your name anywhere in your dissertation – your name ONLY should be included on the Dissertation Cover Sheet which you submit to the BAsC Departmental Administrator alongside the hard copies of your dissertation.***

[2] All dissertation submissions must include a word count at the end of your work.

[3] All dissertation submissions should include an **Abstract** (300 words or less) and a **Preface** (500 words or less), both of which should be presented before the main body of your dissertation text, e.g. following the title page or contents page.

Abstract (300 words or less)

The abstract is a summary of the dissertation as a whole; it should not be used as an introduction. It should identify the main research question and the methodology adopted; describe the nature and extent of the research carried out; and briefly summarise the main findings. **The abstract is not included in the word count.**

Preface (500 words or less)

The first substantive content of your dissertation should be a preface that outlines the topic in reader-friendly terms and makes it clear how and why you came to undertake the specific interdisciplinary research in question, and what, exactly, is interdisciplinary about it as a topic of research. What motivated you to study this area and how (if at all) does it relate to your other BASc modules? Please note it is **not** a requirement that your topic relates to your previous BASc modules, but should it do so, you may want to discuss how your choice of interdisciplinary topic therefore came about. **The preface is not included in the word count.**

[4] Please note that in using footnotes and end-notes as part of your referencing, **this text is counted towards** the 10,000 word limit.

[5] Also note that **all titles/subtitles/picture captions** used in the main body of your dissertation (i.e. not the appendices) **are included in the word count.**

[6] Please note that the following (a-k) are **not included** in the 10,000 word limit:

- a. Title page
- b. Table of contents
- c. List of illustrations/figures/abbreviations
- d. Abstract
- e. Preface
- f. Appendices (e.g., participant information and consent sheets)
- g. Bibliography
- h. Acknowledgments

- i. Text in tables
- j. Graphs
- k. Headers and footers (e.g., exam candidate code and page numbers)

Documentation included as part of an appendix must be clearly appendix-relevant, i.e. material such as a research questionnaire survey document, information consent sheet etc. would be eminently suitable to include – and the appendix should not be used as an excuse to include dissertation material that should instead be in the main section but would take your work over the word limit. This goes for the above categories, which should similarly be used only to illustrate points already made in the main body of your dissertation and must not introduce any new content.

Dissertation Plan

Guidance Notes

Dissertation plans are due to be submitted just after the end of term 1 of the student's final year. The deadline for plans to be submitted in electronic copy via the [BASC0024 Moodle page](#) is **4pm, Monday 17th December 2018**.

The detailed dissertation plan is worth 10% of the overall dissertation mark.

You will receive feedback from your supervisor within 1 month of submitting your plan.

The detailed plan should, at a minimum, include:

1. Chapter headings and summaries. Chapter summaries (and their relevant chapter headings), should, at a minimum, take the form of a few paragraphs, which summarise that chapter's content. For example, your first chapter heading may well be an introduction to your research, where you outline and briefly discuss your research question(s), and provide the context for your dissertation research.

Note that you should also ensure that you have a chapter heading and summary that discusses any relevant information on **methodology, methods** and **ethical issues** pertaining to the dissertation's research focus. For example, if your research method combines some historical archive research alongside a literature review, provide some brief paragraphs on your reasoning for this

approach. Similarly, dissertations that aim to include any primary research that may have ethical implications should outline, in brief, what the ethics implications are and what steps have been/will be taken to ensure UCL research ethics procedures are followed.

2. A preliminary bibliography (i.e. a bibliography in progress, we recognise that it will likely change in the final submitted version) for texts used overall, including electronic and new media sources.

Remember that this piece of work is a plan: it is not the text of your dissertation itself. The aim of your dissertation plan is to set out how you will proceed with your dissertation research topic, and as such **it should not contain text which will feature in the dissertation itself**. You can conceive of your dissertation plan as writing about writing, that is, you are writing about how you will approach and write the dissertation itself.

Note: as the dissertation plan is a separate piece of assessed work, that it is self-plagiarism to repeat in your dissertation wholesale text from the dissertation plan, other than the title, sub-headings and information concerning datasets.

The dissertation plan **should not be more than five pages in total (excluding bibliography)**.

Penalties

Penalties for Over-Length

- For work that exceeds the specified maximum length (10,000) by less than 10%, the mark will be reduced by 5 percentage marks; but the penalised mark will not be reduced below the Pass mark, presuming that the work merited a Pass.
- For work that exceeds the specified maximum length (10,000) by 10% or more, you will receive a Pass mark (40%), presuming the work merits a Pass.
- For example, the dissertation word limit is 10,000 words, so if you write between 10,001 and 10,999 words, you will be penalised 5 percentage marks of your mark. If you submit work that is, or exceeds, 11,000 words, you will only be able to receive a Pass mark (40%).
- In the case of a dissertation that is submitted late and is also over length, the greater of the two penalties will apply.

Penalties for Late Submission

- Dissertations received up to two working days late will incur a 10 percentage point deduction in marks (but no lower than the Pass mark of 40%).
- Dissertations received more than two working days but less than 10 working days late will receive no more than the pass mark (40%).
- Dissertations will not be accepted or marked more than 10 working days after the original submission date. A mark of zero would be awarded in this case.

Please note that it is a requirement of the dissertation module that you **submit two physical copies of your dissertation as well as a digital copy (via Moodle/TurnItIn) by the specified deadline.**

Should you neglect to perform one of these submissions by the deadline you will be penalised 10 percentage marks. For example, should you hand in two physical copies of your dissertation to the BAsC Departmental Office by 4pm, Tuesday 23rd April 2019, but forget to upload your digital submission until 24 hours later, you will incur a late submission penalty of 10 percentage marks.

Summary of Important Dates

Tuesday 15th May 2018

Attend first dissertation briefing and begin to research the topic you wish to choose to focus your dissertation on. Once you have navigated towards a specific research topic or subject area(s) you should start the process of contacting UCL academics to locate a suitable supervisor.

Friday 8th June 2018

Submit as part of your module choice form your proposed dissertation topic. Once you have a topic/research focus approved by your personal tutor and the department you can begin to locate a UCL academic who has the relevant subject area/expertise to act as your supervisor for your topic.

Tuesday 9th October 2018

Attend second dissertation briefing. You should by this point have contacted UCL academics as part of your supervisor search and once you have a supervisor confirmed in place can begin to have supervisory meetings to discuss your proposed dissertation research. It is highly recommended that you have a supervisor in place by the end of October 2018, in order to benefit as much as possible from their input and advice for your proposed research.

Wednesday 17th October 2018

Attend third dissertation briefing session which will focus on enabling you to brush up on your referencing and literature searching skills, providing you with a refresher session on how to search for academic literature and locate quality sources for your dissertation requirements.

Monday 17th December 2018, 4pm

Deadline for submitting completed Dissertation Plans and confirming your supervisor. Your supervisor will provide feedback on your plan within 4 weeks. **If you have been unable to confirm a supervisor by this date the BASc Department will allocate one to you without prior consultation.**

Tuesday 19th February 2019

Attend a final Q&A dissertation briefing session, where attendees will have the opportunity to ask any further dissertation questions.

Tuesday 23rd April 2019, 4pm

Deadline for submitting completed dissertations. Ensure you **submit both your two physical copies and your electronic copy by the submission deadline.**

Monday 20th May 2019

Student dissertation presentation session. You will get the opportunity to briefly showcase your dissertation topic and key findings to your cohort.

Further Resources

Your BAsC dissertation may well be the most extensive piece of research and writing that you produce as an undergraduate at UCL. It can be very helpful to look to other academics and the wider literature for advice, whether that it is to do with the writing process itself, or the types of research methods you might want to consider for your research topic, or indeed the process of structuring and writing the dissertation itself.

You'll find below a brief list of resources, all available from UCL Library Services, to aid you in this process. This list is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive and is intended as a starting point to guide you in some initial directions – you will certainly find further literature and library resources when you start to delve into the UCL Library catalogue yourself, and once you have selected a research topic, you can start to focus your literature search around resources relevant for the subject area(s) you have picked.

Note that all these items have been added to a **BASC0024 Electronic Reading list**, which you can access from the [ReadingsLists@UCL homepage](#) or directly [here](#).

UCL Library Resources (some suggestions)

Bell, J., 1999. [Doing your research project: a guide for first time researchers in education and social science](#) Buckingham: Open University Press Third edition.

Breach, M., 2009. [Dissertation writing for engineers and scientists](#) Harlow: Prentice Hall Student edition.

Clark, R. P., 2006. [Writing tools: 50 essential strategies for every writer](#) New York; London: Little, Brown, and Co.

Cooley, L., Lewkowicz, J., c2003. [Dissertation writing in practice: turning ideas into text](#) Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Dawson, C., 2007. [A practical guide to research methods: a user-friendly manual for mastering research techniques and projects](#) Oxford : How To Books 3rd edition.

Fisher, C., Buglear, J. et al., 2004. [Researching and writing a dissertation for business students](#) Harlow: Prentice Hall/ Financial Times.

Fisher, E., Thompson, R., 2014. [Enjoy writing your science thesis or dissertation! : a step-by-step guide to planning and writing a thesis or dissertation for undergraduate and graduate science students](#) London: Imperial College Press Second edition.

Greetham, B., 2014. [How to write your undergraduate dissertation](#) London: Palgrave Second edition.

Knight, P.G., Parsons, A.J., 2015. [How to do your dissertation in geography and related disciplines](#) Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Third edition.

[How to do your dissertation in geography and related disciplines](#) (2005 edition).

[How to do your dissertation in geography and related disciplines](#) (1995 edition).

McMillan, K., Weyers, J., 2011.

[How to write dissertations & project reports](#) Harlow, England: Pearson Second edition.

[How to write dissertations & project reports](#) (2010 edition).

[How to write dissertations & project reports](#) (2007 edition).

Meloy, J.M., 1994. [Writing the qualitative dissertation: understanding by doing](#) Hillsdale, N.J: L. Erlbaum Associates.

Preece, R., 1996, c1994. [Starting research: an introduction to academic research and dissertation writing](#) London : Pinter Publishers ; New York: Distributed exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press.

Smith, K., Todd, M., Waldman, J., 2009. [Doing your undergraduate social science dissertation](#) London: Routledge.

Walliman, N. 2014 & 2004 editions.

[Your undergraduate dissertation: the essential guide for success](#) London and Los Angles: Sage.

Winstanley. C., 2009. [Writing a dissertation for dummies](#) Chichester: John Wiley.

Suggestions of new items to be added to this list are always welcome. Should you come across another resource which you find of great use and help in your dissertation research, please do email the BAsC Module Convenors the details so it can be added in here to keep these resources up to date and as relevant to all BAsC students as possible.

The BAsc Dissertation Library



The BAsc Dissertation Library consists of copies of previous years' BAsc dissertations.

These are currently available for reference and can be consulted by appointment in [B1, 33-35 Torrington Place](#)

You must complete the sign-out book should you wish to borrow a dissertation (1 week loan available only) and ensure you return the dissertation in the condition in which you received it.

The BAsc Dissertation Fund

There is a small **BAsc Dissertation Fund**, open for applications by all BAsc dissertation students currently undertaking module BASC0024. The fund operates on a first-come-first-serve basis, with each student able to apply for up to £50 (or equivalent) to help towards any dissertation research costs. Once the fund has been exhausted there will be no further awards made for this academic year.

Specifically, this fund is geared towards helping students with particular costs associated with researching their dissertations. For example, should your dissertation rely heavily on archival research, you may find that at specialist archives there is a fee payable for copying any data you wish to obtain for use in your dissertation. Alternatively, you may find that you need to travel to a specific archive as part of your dissertation research – again, this fund would be able to offer you up to £50 towards such costs. Similarly, there may well be some specialist technical procedures that are required by your dissertation research, for which a commercial company charges you a fee. In these instances, you are able to apply to the fund to obtain a maximum £50 contribution from the BAsc department towards such costs.

Please note that applications to this fund for any costs other than those specifically associated with the research process of your dissertation will automatically not be considered, i.e. you cannot use this fund towards costs associated with printing physical copies of your dissertation, for example. To access this fund, please complete the [Dissertation Fund Application Form](#) (available from the [BASC0024 Moodle page](#)).

Appendices

Rubric for marking Arts and Sciences BASc Final Year Dissertation:

Guidance for First Examiners

The dissertation in the final year of the Arts and Sciences BASc degree is the capstone project for students on the programme. To reflect one of the aims of the programme, the dissertation should be interdisciplinary in nature and assessed accordingly. The details of what this means are outlined in the rubric below, which examiners are asked to consult closely when awarding marks. **The mark awarded should be recorded as a percentage figure out of 100%.**

In particular, examiners are advised to think whether the student has achieved an integration/synthesis in subject matter due to an interdisciplinary approach **OR** a deeper problematisation of original question/aims of project due to a disagreement between disciplines, which the student should demonstrate.

While not wishing to be prescriptive with regards to marking, it should remain the case that a first class dissertation would be required to meet all the descriptors in the *1st Class* column in the marking rubric detailed below. Whilst using the rubric, examiners are of course encouraged to produce a holistic mark which is representative of the work as a whole. Examiners are also advised to consider rewarding well-executed projects of a more radical interdisciplinary nature which may span disciplines usually regarded as less cognate.

Although original work is not expected at this level, examiners are also encouraged to reward well-executed original research.

BASC0024 Dissertation Marking Rubric

Category	1 st Class (100% - 70%)	2.1 (69-60%)	2.2 (59-50%)	3 rd (49-40%) – pass mark: 40%	Fail (39% or below)
Framing of the research question/purpose of project in an interdisciplinary light	Research question/project framed clearly and comprehensively to reveal motivation for interdisciplinary approach and outlines of how question/project will be tackled.	Research question/project well framed to reveal motivation for interdisciplinary approach but some vagueness or lack of clarity apparent.	Importance or relevance of interdisciplinary approach to research question/project not well framed or explained.	Importance or relevance of interdisciplinary approach to research question/project poor-very poorly framed or explained.	Little to no framing of the research question/project in an interdisciplinary light.
Disciplinary grounding	Top marks for excellent awareness of epistemological and methodological stances of two (or more) disciplines in relation to the subject matter. Insightful detail and excellent grasp of more general points.	Solid awareness of epistemological and methodological differences though some lack of detail or too many generalities.	Mediocre understanding of epistemological and methodological differences between the disciplines. Rank generalisations or incorrect detail.	Poor-very poor understanding of epistemological and methodological differences between the disciplines. Rank generalisations or incorrect detail.	Very little to no attempt at disciplinary grounding.

Category	1 st Class (100% - 70%)	2.1 (69-60%)	2.2 (59-50%)	3 rd (49-40%) – pass mark: 40%	Fail (39% or below)
General academic qualities: logic of writing; coherent structure; correct referencing; originality; mastery etc.	Top marks in this category for original and successful work (including original research) OR mastery of interdisciplinary subject matter married to truly excellent writing, perfect referencing etc.	Good to solid writing and overall presentation. Several signs of subject matter well-addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective. Maybe some original research but not excellently realised.	Solid to weak writing and overall presentation. Degree of insufficient number of signs of subject matter well-addressed from an interdisciplinary perspective. If any original research, then poorly realised.	Weak writing and overall presentation.	Very poor academic writing, lack of structure, difficult to follow.
Integration/ synthesis in subject matter due to interdisciplinary approach OR problematisation of original question/aims of project due to disagreement between disciplines	Top marks for excellent integration/synthesis of disciplines either as original insight or evidenced by deep appreciation of existing interdisciplinary synthesis OR excellent evidence that disciplines remain in disagreement over the subject matter – an excellently characterised dissensus.	Good to solid/fair integration/synthesis of disciplines evidenced by good appreciation of existing interdisciplinary synthesis OR good to solid evidence that disciplines remain in disagreement over the subject matter – a well to fairly characterised dissensus.	Fair to poor integration/synthesis of disciplines OR fair to poor evidence that disciplines remain in disagreement over the subject matter.	Poor integration/synthesis of disciplines OR fair to poor evidence that disciplines remain in disagreement over the subject matter.	Little to no integration/ synthesis of disciplines OR little to no evidence that disciplines remain in disagreement over the subject matter.

Rubric for marking Arts and Sciences BAsc Final Year Dissertation:

Guidance for Second Marker Examiners

The dissertation in the final year of the Arts and Sciences BAsc degree is the capstone project for students on the programme. To reflect one of the aims of the programme, the dissertation should be interdisciplinary in nature and assessed accordingly.

In general, second examiners will be non-specialists and so this rubric has been developed to allow consistent assessment by different individuals.

Second markers are reminded that their role is to give a holistic mark while reading for argument rather than expert content. Their assessments should be based on the work's academic quality represented through its structure, clarity, logic, readability, evidence of research and referencing, using the following rubric table as guidance:

Category	Weighting
Framing of the research question/purpose of project in an interdisciplinary light.	10%
Structure of argument and logical progression to exploring research question, including ability to analyse literature and data critically.	50%
Readability of writing and standard and quality of presentation, including ability to design research (problem identification and definition) and ability to plan, organise and execute research as substantial piece of written work. (Inappropriate referencing (quantity, sources and style) to be penalised).	20%
Conclusion.	20%
Total marks available:	100%

The information provided in this handbook is correct at time of going to print (May 2018), however, for updates reflecting any recent changes please refer to the online version available from the [BASc Dissertation Moodle page](#).

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