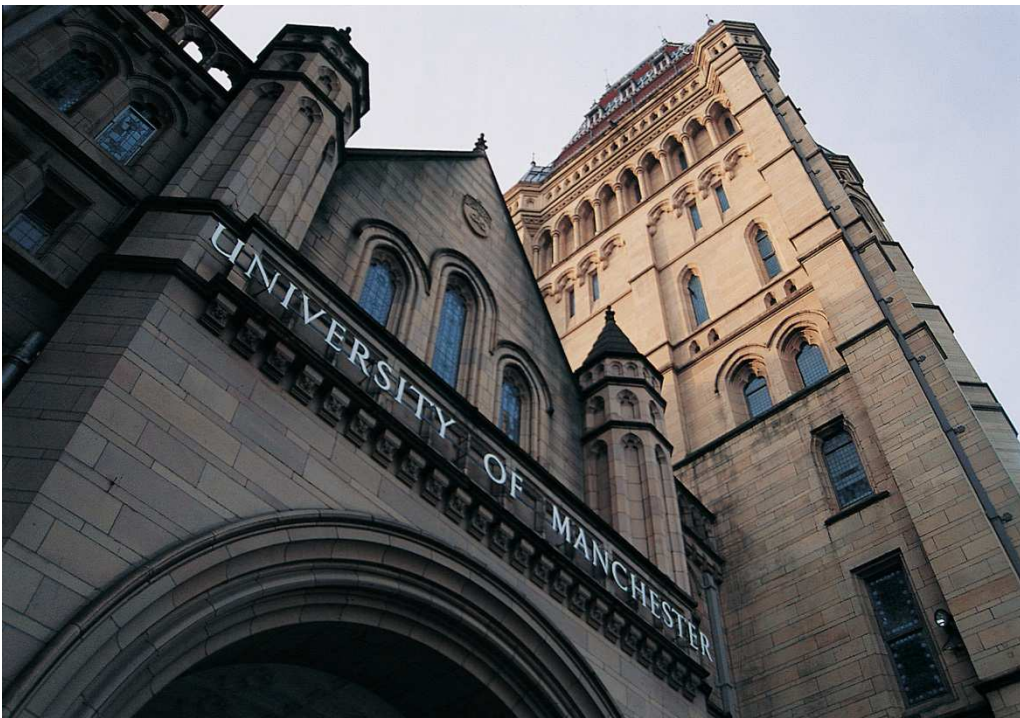



Supervising MSc dissertations



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Aim is to develop

- **Cognitive skills** (analysing, synthesising, critical thinking, evaluating and problem solving)
 - **Creativity** (intellectual insight and argument construction)
 - **Knowledge** (about subject area and research methods)
 - **Personal skills** (perseverance, self-reflection, responsibility)
 - **Self-management** (commitment, time management)
 - **Professional conduct** (ethics, confidentiality, appropriate practices)
 - **Research management** (project planning and delivery)
 - **Communication** (written and oral dissemination)
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Intended Learning Outcomes

- Conduct a critical review of the literature
- Identify a gap in current knowledge
- Define (or refine) a clearly justified research question(s)
- Design an experiment that will answer this research question
- Obtain ethical approval
- Collect document and analyse the data
- Interpret and critically consider the results of the analysis
- Draw (and justify) conclusions of the findings
- Recommend further research questions
- Present your findings

Dissertation options

Adapted systematic review	Empirical research (qualitative or quantitative)
Publication based	Full systematic review that includes data collection
Service development /professional report	Secondary data analysis (qualitative or quantitative)
Research proposal	

Hours of support

- A supervisor of a 60 credit dissertation (10,000 – 15,000 words) will normally provide **20** hours of supervision.
- A supervisor of a 90 credit dissertation (15,000 – 20,000 words) will normally provide 30 hours of supervision.
- A supervisor of a 120 credit dissertation (20,000 – 25,000 words) will normally provide 40 hours of supervision.


Suggested Contact Opportunities

- Dissertation supervisors should have a minimum of **6** supervision meetings with their supervisee.
- Supervision contact may be conducted:
 - face-to-face
 - via email
 - Skype
 - a mixture of all these methods
- It is good practice to **agree a schedule of contact times with the student at the outset** which will lead up to the submission deadline.

Role of Supervisor

- 1. Initial overview:** Supervisor(s) contact the student to discuss the proposal
- 2. Discussion of the format:** Student to submit a draft of the research proposal and receive feedback on this from the supervisor
- 3-5. Progress review:** Student undertakes the research.
- 6. Final draft:** Contact to discuss the final draft before submission of the dissertation

Good Practice for the First Contact

- prepare a checklist
 - record formally (preferably on a formal proforma)
 - agree a timeline for the dissertation with clear milestones
 - any reasonable adjustments?
 - in case of a co-supervisor, ensure that roles and responsibilities have been agreed between all parties from the outset
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Good Practice for the First Contact

- ensure that the student has complied with any local Health and Safety requirements; policies and regulations relating to the conduct of research, incl. research ethics if appropriate.
- any training needs?
- University's plagiarism policy and guidelines and that all work for the dissertation must be their own. [Academic Malpractice \(Including Plagiarism\)](#).

Ethical Approval

- **Ultimate responsibility for gaining required approvals lies with the supervisor(s) and should be in place prior to or during the early stages of the project, i.e. before any data collection has taken place**
- What type of ethical approval is required?
- The HRA has developed a number of online decision tools to help determine whether NHS REC approval is required (<http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/>)

Teaching & Support

- Ensure the student is well informed of the expectations for critical analysis
- Provide signposts to relevant literature and other sources of information
- Provide advice on the suitability of research methods and study design
- Provide advice on the structure of chapters
- Encourage students to say what they are struggling with. Students should be encouraged to identify where support is needed.

Teaching & Support

- When giving feedback, it is important to acknowledge the work done by the student but also to provide feedback that is constructive and will allow the student to make improvements to their work.
- Make the student aware of unsatisfactory progress – facilitating improvement with advice and guidance.
- Strongly encourage the student to submit their dissertation on time.
- Encourage publication where the standard of the dissertation is high.

Record Keeping

- if a student should appeal the decision of the examination board, it is imperative that records are kept of the supervision sessions that have taken place
- if supervision is conducted by email, then all emails should be retained. If supervision is conducted via Skype or telephone, an email confirming what was agreed and follow up actions required should be sent to the student and kept on file.
- keep a record of contact with the student. If the student fails to attend a pre-arranged contact event, follow this up with an email.

Problems Encountered

- If a student discloses any personal information that indicates they will be harmed by others or that they are a danger to themselves or if they disclose information relating to issues of poor practice or unprofessional practice you must inform the student that you will need to disclose this to the relevant third party even if this breaches confidentiality.
- Additionally, if you are worried about the student's safety, then you must inform the student in this way; you will need to make a judgement on whether disclosure must override confidentiality.

Problems Encountered

- If a student engages in unprofessional practice they may need to be referred to their relevant professional body or in the case of a Pre-Registration PGT Student they will be referred to the relevant Health and Conduct and/or Fitness to Practice Committee.
- Any problems encountered are reported to the programme director and programme administrator as soon as possible and a note of the nature of the problem and date of occurrence are kept on the student's file.
- If a student makes you aware of any [mitigating circumstances](#) you should inform the programme director and the programme administrator

Dissertation Submission

- Under University regulations, a student must submit their dissertation within the period of their registration on the programme. The final submission deadline is in the programme handbook.
- Students will normally submit their dissertation to their School office and this office is responsible for sending the dissertation and examiners report forms to examiners.
- The student must complete a Notice of Submission Form six weeks prior to the submission deadline. The completion of this form will ensure that accurate student contact details are held and suitable dissertation examiners can be identified.

Dissertation Submission

- The University's Presentation Guidelines can be accessed here:
<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2863>

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Submission & Marking

- **two copies of the document need to be submitted to the school for marking this should be in bound format** all dissertations will be independently marked by two internal examiners; the Supervisor(s) will act as the first marker.
- **marking scheme will be provided to the student in the programme handbook and to the examiner with the dissertation;** details will be given in the email notifying markers that the dissertation has been submitted; attached to the email will be the number of the candidate, the examiner report form and the mark sheet; markers will then confer once they have both marked the text and agree a mark.

Submission & Examination

- pass mark for a Masters dissertation is 50%; students are allowed a second opportunity to submit if they do not achieve 50% at the first opportunity.
- **if you suspect that academic malpractice**, you should continue to mark the dissertation and allocate a mark which does not reflect this. The marked dissertation should then be referred to the programme director.
- students who are permitted to resubmit their dissertation **must** be provided with a clear list of the required amendments by the examiners; there is a fee for resubmission which covers the costs of administration and marking and this is currently £150. (up to 6 months to revise and resubmit)

Submission & Examination

- Some dissertations will also be reviewed by an external examiner who will ensure that the examination process has been handled appropriately.
- All results must be ratified by an examination board before they can be given to a student.
- Students will require **minimum supervision** for their second attempt. It is the student's responsibility to engage with the corrections required by the examiner. This will normally equate to two supervision sessions.

Results & Graduation

- Official results will be posted to the address given on the notice form
- Graduation ceremonies are arranged by the Student Services Centre and there are two graduation periods each year:

July Graduation

Two weeks in early July

December Graduation

Three/four days in mid-December