



**Department of Geography
Roinn na Tíreolaíochta**

Dissertation Handbook 2011-12

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Dissertation Advisors and Research Areas	4
3. Time Management and Key Deadlines	5
4. Selection of a Topic	5
5. Dissertation Research Proposal	6
6. Oral Presentation	7
7. Structure of the Dissertation	8
8. Presentation of the Dissertation	9
9. Referencing	10
10. Plagiarism	16
11. Statement of Originality	16
12. Assessment of the Dissertation	17
13. Feedback on the Dissertation	17
Appendix A. Oral Presentation Assessment	18
Appendix B. Dissertation Marksheet	19

Valid until further notice. The Department reserves the right to change any information contained in these notes at short notice.

1. Introduction

The dissertation (**7,000 word limit in 2011-12** and worth 80% of the module assessment credit; 20% is allocated for the oral presentation element) is the single most substantive element of your education in geography. The aim is to produce an original piece of work on a clearly defined topic. Essentially it should be seen as a piece of research that is undertaken by the student, in consultation with, and under the guidance of, a member of staff. Formulation of the research objectives, the design of the research programme, execution of the field, laboratory or library work, and the writing-up of the results require the student to draw upon, and to develop, a range of practical and academic skills, many of which will be of value in future careers.

Insofar as the dissertation is the single most substantive piece of independent work in the undergraduate programme it is a significant barometer of a student's intellectual development. It is the one piece of work for which you are solely responsible and which is used to gauge your technical and analytical abilities. In accounting for 10 credits, it receives particular attention from the external examiners in evaluating a student's overall performance [as do the two essays which are the option in 2011-12]. The workload and effort that should go into the writing of the dissertation should reflect this importance, as do the structures we have designed to help you along the way.

The dissertation is the culmination of a process that involves all the compulsory elements of your geography degree. This starts with the TI251 “Theory and Practice in Geography 1” course in the first semester of second year, followed by the TI252 “Theory and Practice in Geography 2” course in the second semester of second year, continues with TI335 Research Project Design and Development in the first semester of third year, and reaches its culmination in the TI350-368 “Seminar Series” course in third year¹. The relevance of each element is summarised below:

TI251 and TI252 “Theory and Practice in Geography 1” and “Theory and Practice in Geography 2”

- x Contextualise the production of knowledge both historically and theoretically
- x Provide context for framing research topics
- x Teach the importance of methodological choices
- x Give guidance in the design of research projects and research tools
- x Lead to the drafting of a research proposal

TI335 “Research Project Design and Development”

TI350-TI366 “Seminar Series”

- x Gives hands-on help in execution of a major project
- x Leads towards the completion of the dissertation

¹ Students who are enrolled in the International BA programme will complete the third year syllabus in their fourth year

Students should familiarise themselves with the specific syllabi associated with each of the compulsory elements of the geography degree, all of which are available on the departmental homepage (www.nuigalway.ie/geography/).

The purpose of this handbook is to give you a clearer idea of what is involved in the writing of an undergraduate dissertation and to elaborate upon some of the assignments that lead towards the completion of your degree. These guidance notes should therefore be studied carefully and referred to constantly during the preparation of the dissertation.

2. Dissertation advisors and research areas

Dr. Mary Cawley (Room 117; Ext 2171; mary.cawley@nuigalway.ie): Geographies of rural, social and economic change: population change and migration; settlement and planning; tourism.

Dr. Frances Fahy (Room 104; Ext 2315; frances.fahy@nuigalway.ie): Environmental planning and sustainability; social and cultural consequences of environmental change.

Dr Maura Farrell: (Room 123a; Ext. 4118; maura.farrell@nuigalway.ie): Rural geography; sustainable agriculture; health geography; social and cultural geography; gender education.

Dr. Stephen Galvin (Room 123; Ext 4103; sgalvin@nuigalway.ie): Physical geography; environmental geography; climate change; volcanology.

Professor Séamus Grimes (Room 101; Ext 2636; seamus.grimes@nuigalway.ie): Economic geography (Ireland and China); foreign investment in Ireland and China; multinational technology companies; the internationally traded services sector.

Dr. Kieran Hickey (Room 125; Ext 2128; kieran.hickey@nuigalway.ie): Climate change; weather; historical climatology; flooding; natural disasters; environmental geography.

Dr Marie Mahon (Room 123b; Ext 2376; marie.mahon@nuigalway.ie): Health geography; social geography; urban-rural interactions.

Dr John Morrissey (Room 111; Ext 2267; john.morrissey@nuigalway.ie): Cultural and historical geography; political geography; critical geopolitics.

Professor Micheál Ó Cinnéide (Room 121; Ext 2314; micheal.ocinneide@nuigalway.ie): Sustainable regional and local development; An Ghaeltacht

Dr. Aaron Potito (Room 118; Ext 3936; aaron.potito@nuigalway.ie): Physical geography; biogeography; environmental geography; conservation; human impacts.

Dr. Kathy Reilly (Room 102; ext. 4105; email: kathy.reilly@nuigalway.ie): social and cultural geography; critical geographies of children, young people and families; geographies of education; qualitative field- based methodologies.

Dr. Chaosheng Zhang (Room 108; Ext 2375; chaosheng.zhang@nuigalway.ie):
GIS; soil pollution; environment and health; environmental sciences; physical
geography; China

3. Time management and key deadlines

In order to produce a well developed dissertation students are strongly encouraged to develop a timetable for their research, in association with their advisor.

The following deadlines should be noted:

Week of 9 January 2012: meet with advisor to discuss dissertation

Week in mid-February (date to be set by the advisor): Oral Presentation (worth 20% of the dissertation module assessment credit)

Thursday, 12 April 2012, submission of bound dissertation to Dr Siubhan Comer, Room 107 Geography, before 12:30 (7000 words, worth 80% of the dissertation module assessment)

4. Selection of a topic

Careful thought should go into the selection of a topic and you should consult books, journal articles, and search engines on the library web to help you develop your initial idea. Very general topics should be avoided, as should studies spanning a long time period or requiring a lengthy period of data collection, since it will rarely be possible to spend more than a couple of weeks on the basic survey, fieldwork and/or library work. Dissertations must not rely on a single earlier piece of work and simply reiterate its findings, although the use of a single data source is permitted, provided it is appropriate to the study and is fully acknowledged. It is important that the topic should emerge from previous research and that the findings should, in turn, be related back to that body of literature. In general, then, the following points should be kept in mind when selecting a topic and planning the dissertation:

- x The general area of investigation.
- x The specific problem, topic or issue that is to form the core of the dissertation.
- x The type of data that is going to be required.
- x The methodology that is going to be employed.
- x The time-scale of the investigation.
- x Logistics (travel, subsistence, lab requirements, availability of contacts, etc.)

Members of staff are always ready to help and advise on the choice of a topic, and it is essential that students discuss potential topics with advisors early in their third year. Please be advised that staff availability changes from year to year and that some members of staff may not be available to serve as dissertation advisors. The department reserves the right to change advisors.

For some students, the vastness of potential topics can be overwhelming and stressful. The stress can be mitigated to a large degree by meeting early and often with your advisor. It is also worth remembering that it is less the topic that determines whether you'll end up writing a good dissertation but the way in which you contextualise and complete the research associated with it.

5. Dissertation research proposal (Title, Aims and Objectives, Conceptual Framework, Methodology)

Once you have agreed a title with your supervisor, the next step is to develop the Aims and Objectives of your study which form an important basis for the development of your research programme. They will be part of the *introduction* to your dissertation. The introduction should also outline the reasons for choosing your specific study location and the time-frame that your project is situated in. This can vary depending on the theme of your project. For example, a dissertation on rural development may look at the decade 1995-2005 while a dissertation on historical geography might examine the early modern period of 1534-1690.

The purpose of the *conceptual framework* (the concepts on which the research is based) which usually incorporates a *literature review* is to weave together the arguments of key authors so that you make the reader/examiner clear as to what the major (and up-to-date) debates relating to your research area are. Aim for a clear, focused, comparative and critical discussion of the material that you have read. A good way to approach this is to: (i) summarise the points being made by each author under key themes; (ii) identify the extent to which the views/research results coincide and differ, and the extent to which authors may refer to/criticise each other's work; (iii) form your own views (e.g. relating to issues that may be excluded or neglected). Finally, write your literature review based on the notes that you have made.

A good introduction to completing a literature review can be found in:

Healey, M. (2003) 'How to conduct a literature search' in *Key Methods in Geography*, ed. N. Clifford and G. Valentine, London, Sage, pp.17-36.

The *methodology* should include a discussion of how your data will be collected and analysed in order to answer the research question posed by your project. What we will be looking for in this section is the appropriateness of the match between your research question(s) and the methods that you designate as capable of producing answers. Thus not only should you tell us which particular methods you wish to use, you should also explain why those particular methods are appropriate in the context of your specific research goals. The material covered in TI251 and 252 Theory and Practice in Geography and in TI335 Research Project Design and Development will help you greatly with this section. In addition, good general advice about carrying out research can be found in the following titles:

Clifford, N. and Valentine, G. (2003) *Key methods in geography*. London: Sage.

Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (1997) *Methods in human geography: A guide for students doing a research project*. Essex: Longman.

Goudie, A., Atkinson, B.W., Gregory, K.J., Simmons, I.G., Stoddart, D.R. and Sugden, D. (eds.) (1994) The dictionary of physical geography. Second Edition. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

Johnston, R., Gregory, D., Pratt, G. and Watts, M (eds.) (2000) The dictionary of human geography. Third Edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Kitchin, R. and Tate, N.J. (2000) Conducting research into human geography. Essex: Prentice Hall/Pearson Education Ltd.

Lindsay, J.M. (1997) Techniques in human geography. London: Routledge.

Parsons, T. and Knight, P.G. (1998) How to do your dissertation in geography and related disciplines. London: Chapman and Hall.

Robinson, G.M. (1998) Methods and techniques in human geography. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

6. The oral presentation (see Appendix A for assessment criteria)

As part of the overall dissertation experience, you will be expected to present a brief report on progress to a small group of students (less than 10) assembled by your dissertation advisor. This will take place in the second semester as part of the seminar series module. The length and details of the presentation will be confirmed by your mentor and will be followed by a short questions and answers period.

Public presentations are a common experience in virtually every work environment. Some of us dread having to speak in public, while the same exercise comes naturally to others. Regardless of your level of trepidation, please remember that you know more about your dissertation than anybody else in the room and you will not lose marks for being nervous. Here are some general guidelines that will make the experience a more rewarding one.

Be prepared

It is always a good idea to do a trial presentation to a real or imaginary audience beforehand. This will help build your confidence for the real presentation.

Structure what you have to say

Knowing the outline of your talk is a sure-fire way to reduce nerves during your presentation. You should start with your research question, provide a little background information, briefly discuss your methodology and then progress to your preliminary results. Given the shortness of the presentation a one-slide conclusion is all that will be possible.

Be selective

Given the time limit you will have to limit the amount of material you can present. Present only those aspects of your project that you feel are necessary for contextualising your preliminary results.

Keep eye contact throughout

In any oral presentation, you are addressing an audience – not your outline, paper or the

overhead projector. This can be difficult to do if you are nervous but it will ensure that the audience is involved and will make the presentation a more enjoyable experience for everyone.

Relax!

While this is easier said than done it is important to seem relaxed even if you are far from it. The more relaxed you are, the more professional you appear in the eyes of your audience. Remember to breathe while talking. It is also a good idea to know your introduction really well so that you can go on “auto-pilot” until you settle into your presentation.

7. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation should more or less follow the structure outlined below.

- x Title page
- x Preliminary pages
 - o A signed statement of originality
 - o List of Tables
 - o List of Figures
 - o List of Maps
 - o List of Acronyms (if any)
- x Table of Contents
- x Abstract
- x Acknowledgements.
- x The body of the dissertation (*see below*)
- x Appendices (if any)
- x Bibliography

The body of the dissertation

The body of the dissertation should incorporate the following elements:

Introduction

This should discuss the research question that is the basis of the project and outline the key aims and objectives of the dissertation. It should also mention how the topic has emerged from the literature and provide a plan of development for the rest of the dissertation.

The study area

This may be included in the introduction, as a separate chapter or as a section in the chapter discussing research design. You should discuss how to deal with the study area with your advisor.

Literature Review

This should provide a comprehensive discussion of the theoretical context and pertinent debates in the literature that are relevant to your research topic.

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter should explain and justify the methodology that has been employed in the research. Full details should be given of field and laboratory procedures, the use of questionnaire surveys, interviews etc. and, where necessary, an outline of the conceptual framework that underlies the research methodology.

Results and Discussion

Most physical geography dissertations will include a separate chapter for each of these elements. The results chapter should present the data that have been generated during the course of your research while the discussion chapter should discuss the findings not only in the context of the present research programme, but should show how the data can be related to previously-published work on the subject. Any shortcomings of the research design, methodology or the data should be discussed here. The dissertation will not be weakened by highlighting such limitations; rather, the dissertation will be strengthened if students are able to demonstrate that they are aware of weaknesses, for example, in the original research design or in the nature of the database. For many human geography dissertations the results and discussion are amalgamated into one chapter where a critical analysis of the evidence is used to construct the overall argument.

Conclusions

These should summarise the main findings of the dissertation and this chapter could also include suggestions for future research.

8. Presentation of the dissertation

Good presentation makes the most of good research design, data collection and argument and, although the dissertation is judged largely on its academic content, marks will also be given for good presentation. Students are advised to follow carefully the following regulations and suggestions regarding dissertation presentation.

1. The dissertation should be typed on standard A4 paper using 12 font Times or Arial font. There should be a 4 cm margin on the left-hand side of each page and a margin of approximately 2 cm on the right-hand side.
2. The dissertation must be professionally bound between hard covers in the colour that the department has designated for the year. Kenny's Book Bindery is recommended by the department (www.Kennys.ie/bookbindery).
3. The front cover must display a short title for the work and the student's name, while the first page must contain: the full title; student's name; the degree for which the dissertation is presented; the appropriate module code; the name of the advisor and departmental head and the year of presentation.
4. The main text must be preceded by a 300-word abstract of the work, and a list of contents, tables and figures.
5. The work must be properly paginated and phrases such as 'it is shown below' must have a page or section reference.

6. Sub-headings can be used to divide chapters into sections.
7. Citations for references and bibliographies must follow the Harvard referencing system (see below).
8. Acknowledgement of assistance given by the student's advisor, other staff members or other individuals and organisations must be included. This can be done either in an 'Acknowledgements' section at the beginning of the dissertation, or in the text, e.g. "Kelly, personal communication".
9. Before presentation, the text must be checked carefully to ensure that it is free from errors. Proof-reading is an important skill and is a very important part of the dissertation process.
10. Where possible, maps and diagrams should be produced using available computer-graphics facilities. If absolutely necessary, hand-drawn maps in black ink with appropriate lettering may be used. Students should NOT include hand-drawn maps or diagrams, which have been prepared using pencils or ball-point pens. A limited number of folded maps are permitted. These should be folded in one direction only.
11. All figures and tables must bear a number and title and should be placed where easiest reference can be made. Detailed statistical and other background data may be placed in appendices.

9. Referencing

It is essential to acknowledge all secondary sources that you use in your work. Whenever you directly copy the words of another author, paraphrase their ideas, reproduce graphs, tables, pictures, diagrams or use any other form of intellectual property in your work you must reference it accurately. Apart from issues relating to 'intellectual honesty', accurate referencing shows evidence of the breadth and depth of your research and supports the argument you are putting forth. It also enables the reader to locate the cited references and evaluate your interpretation of those ideas which strengthens the credibility of your work.

The geography department recommends that you use the **Harvard referencing system**. There are two parts to referencing using this system. The first is the point is where you cite the name of the author – at the point where you use the author's work in the body of your text. The second is at the end of the text where you provide the full details of the author and the work cited. This is known as the 'bibliography'.

Citing in the Text

Citing in the text generally takes the form of (*Author/agency, year, page number*). However, there are a number of variations associated with correct citations. Some examples are provided below. Please pay attention to the **punctuation** (full stops, commas, brackets) as this is an important element of citing in the text.

1 author, one source

Imrie (1996) contends that space is organized to perpetuate the dominance of 'able-bodied' people.

It is the contention that space is organized to perpetuate the dominance of 'able bodied' people (Imrie, 1996).

1 author, two sources

Many writers advocate the merits of lay discourses over academic discourses when studying experiences of the rural (Halfacree, 1993; Jones, 1995).

Two authors, one source

Wasserman and Faust (1994) describe network analysis as starting with a set of relations.

Network analysis is described as starting with a set of relations (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

Two authors, two sources

Asian American youth have a better high school completion rate compared to other minorities (Blair and Quian, 1998; Sue and Okazaki, 1990).

3 authors, one source

Caplan et al. (1992) document the educational success of Asian Americans.

The educational success of Asian Americans has been well documented (Caplan et al., 1992).

Note: 3 or more authors, from one source, are cited as 'et al.' ('and others').

3 authors, multiple sources

It has been shown that variations in neighbourhood context significantly influence educational experiences (Hagan et al., 1996; McNeal et al., 1999; Tucker et al., 1998).

Direct Quotations

According to Tilly, there is no reason to suppose that national boundaries or local community statements "mark the limits of interpersonal networks" (1984, p.23).

It is not considered that national boundaries or local community statements "mark the limits of interpersonal networks" (Tilly, 1984, p.23).

Note: When using direct quotations the exact page number must be included.

Citing the work of an author which is cited within a source

Oliver (1996, in Kitchin, 1998) has sought to demonstrate that disabled people are socially excluded.

Note: In this case, Kitchin (1998) is the source that you reference. It is generally recommended that you consult the original source and reference it directly.

Report where the author may not be stated

In 2004 there were 405 deaths and 12,200 injuries recorded in the United Kingdom from dwelling fires (ODPM, 2005)

Sourcing a table, graph, or picture

Source: Central Statistics Office, 1990

Note: This should appear as a caption under the table, graph or picture

INCORRECT use of electronic sources

There is a great deal of information available about immigrants on the Internet
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?ob=ArticleURL&udi=B6VG2-47F18C2-1&user=103680&rdoc=1&fmt=&0&userid=>

Note: The correct way to cite information from the website is to determine the author or agency from which it comes and use the conventions outlined in the examples above. In general, where it is not possible to determine the name of the author, organisation, title (e.g. report) of material being sourced, it may not be advisable to use it as a source, since it may not be accurate or reliable.

Reference List/Bibliography

The list of references, or bibliography, is placed at the end of your essay or dissertation and is organised alphabetically. The Harvard system of referencing uses the following general style for each reference:

Author's last name, author's initials². (year of publication) *Title of book* (in italics).
City of publication: Name of publisher.

The format changes slightly for different types of publication, and it is important that you use the correct one in each instance of referencing. Please note the differences in the examples below:

² If you wish, you can use the full first name of the author. However, do not use a combination of full first names in some places and initials in others – you must stick with either one or the other when completing a reference list.

Books:

Harvey, D. (1996) *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Cloke, P., Marsden, T., and Mooney, P.H. (eds) (2006) *Handbook of Rural Studies*. London: Sage.

Referencing a chapter in a book:

Halfacree, K. (2006) Rural space: constructing a three-fold architecture. In Cloke, P., Marsden, T. and Mooney, P.H. (eds.) *Handbook of Rural Studies*. London: Sage. pp. 44-62.

Brown, D.L., and Cromartie, J.B. (2004) The Nature of Rurality in Postindustrial Society. In Champion, H. and Hugo, G. (eds.) *New Forms of Urbanization*, Aldershot: Ashgate. pp. 269-284.

Note: The author listed is the person who wrote the chapter, the editor of the book is listed before the book title chapter title, and the page numbers are included.

Journal Articles:

Redmond, D. (2001) Social Housing in Ireland: Under New Management? *European Journal of Housing Policy*, 1(2), pp. 291-306.

Varley, T., and Curtin, C. (2006) The Politics of Empowerment: Power, Populism and Partnership in Rural Ireland. *The Economic and Social Review*, 37(3), pp. 423-446.

Note: The name of the journal is in italics and the volume number is included. If there is an issue number, it follows the volume number in brackets.

Two sources by the same author, in the same year:

Rosenbaum, E. (1 996a) The Influence of Race on Hispanic Housing Choices, New York City 1978-1987. *Urban Affairs Review*, 32, pp.217-43.

Rosenbaum, E. (1 996b) Racial/Ethnic Differences in Home Ownership and Housing Quality, 1991. *Social Problems*, 43, pp. 403-24.

Note: In this case, the references should be labelled additionally as a, b, etc. in order of appearance in the text.

Newspaper/magazine articles:

O'Toole, F. (2007) HSE's wasting disease. *The Irish Times*, November 6, p.16.

The Economist (2007) The new wars of religion. March 11, pp. 11-13.

Note: The date of publication is included after the name of the newspaper. If the name of the author is not available, use the name of newspaper or magazine.

Research reports:

Fahey, T., Nolan, B. and Maitre, B. (2004) *Housing, Poverty and Wealth in Ireland*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency & Institute of Public Administration.

National Disability Authority (2006) *A Review of the Operation of the Disabled Person's Grant Scheme and Recommendations for Change*. Disability Research Series No. 6. Dublin: NDA.

Note: If the author's name is not given, the name of the organisation can be used.

Official government reports:

Law Reform Commission (2006) *Consultation Paper: Multi-Unit Developments*. Dublin: Law Reform Commission.

Government of Ireland (2000) *White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector*. Dublin: Government Publications Office.

Central Statistics Office (1997) *Census 96, Vol. 1 Population Classified by Area*. Dublin: Government Publications Office.

Theses and dissertations:

Cross, M.D. (1995) *Recent forces of change on the population structure and stability of the western island communities of Ireland*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Ulster, Coleraine.

Burke, U. (1993) *The Influence of the Common Agricultural Policy on Agriculture in Ireland*. Unpublished BA dissertation, National University of Ireland, Galway.

Note: The type of document (dissertation/thesis) is listed in addition to the awarding institution.

Papers presented at conferences:

Osti, G. (2007) Are public transport systems so flexible to satisfy remote rural area needs? In Paper Presented to the XXII European Society for Rural Sociology Congress, Wageningen, The Netherlands.

Internet sites:

National Consumer Agency. (2006) *Management Fees and Service Charges Levied on Owners of Property in Multi-Unit Dwellings*. Dublin: National Consumer Agency. Available: <http://www.nca.ie/eng/ResearchZone/Reports/Property%20management%20companies.html>. [Accessed 15 November 2008].

Note: The agency, year, title, location of agency and name of agency are all listed IN ADDITION to the URL address.

Online journal articles:

Wright, A. and Cottee, P. (2000) Consumer Understanding of US and EU Nutrition Labels. *British Food Journal*, 103(8), pp. 615-629. Available: <http://www.emerald-library.com>. [Accessed 10 January 2001].

Note: The full journal reference is provided IN ADDITION to the URL address.

Film:

Rebel Without a Cause (1983) Directed by Nicholas Ray. USA: Warner Bros. [Film].

Note: The film title should be listed first, followed by the director's name, place of publication, the production company, and the medium or format of the work.

TV Programme/documentary/broadcast:

Panorama (2007) *Destination Europe*. London: BBC 1, September 10th [TV].

Dyslexic children (1999) London: Channel 4, July 29, 1900 hrs [TV].

Note: If the programme is not part of a series (e.g. Panorama), the title of the programme should be listed first instead of the series title.

Painting:

Van Gogh, V. (1888) *Sunflowers*, oil on canvas, 92.1 x 73 cm. National Gallery, London.

Map:

Mason, J. (1832) *Map of the Countries Lying Between Spain and India*, 1:8,000,000. London: Ordnance Survey.

Illustration:

Gosse, S. (1912) *The Garden, Rowlandson House*. Etching and aquatint, At: London: British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings. Register number 1915-27-41.

Newspaper cartoon:

Bell, S. (2006) The Alleged al-Qaida Threat to Los Angeles. *Guardian*. 10 February, p. 29.

Online image:

The Lunar Interior. (1999) PlanetScapes. Available :<http://www.planetscapes.com/solar/browse/moon/moonint.jpg>. [Accessed 3 March 2003]

10. Plagiarism

Plagiarism means presenting the words or ideas of another writer as if they were your own. It refers to stealing, without acknowledgement, from any other writer, including fellow students. Plagiarism may thus take two forms, both of which are equally blameworthy. Either, it may be the intention to deceive, by passing off someone else's work as your own, or it may simply reflect careless referencing, by including sections of published material with inadequate referencing. The way to avoid plagiarism is very simple: if you use the words or ideas of another writer, say so. You can then discuss the merits and weaknesses of those ideas *in your own words*.

Students should note that the National University of Ireland, Galway has a very strict policy on plagiarism, and evidence that the whole or part of your dissertation has been plagiarised may result in a reduction of your grade, degree class or further disciplinary action.

Examples of Intentional Plagiarism:

- x Using pre-written papers from the internet (e.g. buying papers).
- x Copying an article from an online source, including all citations and reference list.
- x Cutting and pasting an online article without quoting or referencing.
- x Handing in a paper that someone else wrote.

Examples of Unintentional Plagiarism:

- x Failure to include quotation marks around direct quotations.
- x Omission of occasional citations or inaccurate citations.
- x Using whole paragraphs from sources and listing one citation at the end of a section. You should paraphrase and include your own original thoughts.

How to avoid plagiarism:

- x When making notes, always use quotation marks to distinguish between your own notes and the words of the writer you're reading.
- x Always keep a record of the page number, publication details, etc.
- x Leave yourself enough time to do the work yourself.
- x When you are paraphrasing, use a statement that mentions the source. e.g. According to Ledwith (2008)...

11. Statement of Originality

The statement below should be signed by the student and included in as a separate page in the preliminary pages of the dissertation immediately following the title page.

“I hereby certify that this dissertation is entirely my own work. Neither the work nor parts thereof have been published elsewhere in either paper or electronic form unless indicated otherwise through referencing.”

12. Assessment of the dissertation (see Appendix B)

The assessment of the main body of the dissertation is based on the following criteria:

Quality of presentation:

Considerable care is required to ensure a high standard of presentation. Students should pay particular attention to the proper integration of all references, maps, diagrams, tables, photographs, etc.; the quality of maps and diagrams; pagination for cross-references; grammar and spelling; and proofreading (for typing errors).

Originality of the work:

Credit will be given for originality of thought and ideas. Where a dissertation relies heavily upon a small number of earlier pieces of work, the extent to which this is justified within the overall context of the work is taken into account.

Background reading:

The dissertation must demonstrate a full awareness of relevant literature, and the objectives of the dissertation must be placed within the context of earlier studies. The student should show how the study has emerged from the relevant literature and, equally importantly, how the findings relate back to that body of literature.

Research design and methodology:

The dissertation will be judged on the appropriateness of the research design and methodology, both of which must be fully explained in the text. Students are encouraged to include a discussion of any shortcomings of the research design or methodology. The dissertation will not be weakened by highlighting such limitations, rather, it will be strengthened if students are able to demonstrate that they are aware of weaknesses.

Analysis, interpretation and conclusions:

Assessment is made of the incisiveness of the analysis undertaken and the interpretations advanced. In the discussion and conclusion the principal findings should be highlighted and examined in the context of previous studies. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to ways in which the study might have been improved and/or could be further developed.

13. Feedback on the dissertation

The department is anxious to stress the importance of the dissertation as a 'learning experience'. A key part of this experience is feedback. Dissertation advisers will be more than happy to provide feedback on the dissertation after the Examining Board has met in June.

Valerie Ledwith, January 2009

Mary Cawley, September 2010, December 2011

APPENDIX A

Oral Presentation Assessment

TI35x: Seminar in
Supervisor:
Date:
Name of Presenter:
Topic for Presentation:

Category	Comments	Score
Supervisor discretion (Progress / Competency of Methodology employed / Preliminary results / Analysis and insight)		out of 40
Content and Relevance Coverage, comprehension and usefulness of the material used		out of 20
Presentation Audibility, articulation and use of visual aids. How well was it put together and timed?		out of 20
Question handling Ability to demonstrate assertive knowledge of the material		out of 20
Overall		%

APPENDIX B

Dissertation Marksheet 2011-2012

Name: _____

Dissertation Title: _____

Mark: _____ Moderated Mark (if any): _____

	A			B+			B-			C	D	E
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	C-Grade	D-Grade	Fail
Preparation												
Originality of research questions												
Questions well formulated												
Key objectives clearly stated												
Conscientious and diligent effort												
Theoretical Framework												
Sound understanding of relevant concepts												
Thesis reflects awareness of broader theoretical issues												
Argument is fruitfully informed by theory												
Methodological challenges are outlined												
Evidence and Interpretation												
Relevant evidence addresses key objectives												
Imaginative use of primary/secondary sources												
Quantity and quality of evidence used												
Contextualisation of evidence												
Analysis												
Analysis is logical and well-structured												
Analysis presented in a critical manner												
Sufficient level of analysis												
Conclusions follow from argument and analysis												
Communication Skills												
Work presented in fluent and suitable style												
Organisation and presentation												
Spelling / grammar / punctuation												
Referencing												
Consultation with Supervisor												
Total												

Additional comments: