



Dissertation (Economics) Course Descriptor

Course Title	Dissertation (Economics)	Faculty	Economics
Course code	NCHEC661	Course Leader	Dr Mike Peacey
Credit Points	20	Teaching Period	Michaelmas & Hilary
FHEQ Level	6	Date Approved	June 2020
Compulsory/ Optional	Optional		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	Research Design		

COURSE SUMMARY

A dissertation is intended to enable a student to deepen his or her understanding of a particular area of Economics. It gives students the opportunity to work with a supervisor to produce a work of academic research of approximately 8,000 words in length. The dissertation prepares the student for independent research and postgraduate study.

Dissertations can take a wide variety of forms. Students can opt for an empirical, theoretical, case study, or literature review approach, among others. Approaches are agreed between supervisors and students in the early stages of the dissertation process. It is not compulsory for students to use econometric techniques in a Dissertation.

This course is optional for students on the Economics Major or the PPE Economics programmes. Students are encouraged to use their knowledge, experience and ideas from their wider studies outside Economics. However, in order to be acceptable as part of the Economics Major, the dissertation topic must be deemed by the supervisor to be an economic topic, and written in a style appropriate to a piece of academic work in Economics.

The Dissertation course includes a compulsory viva voce examination at the end of the process.

COURSE AIMS

- Give students the opportunity to carry out independent research and in-depth academic analysis in an economic topic.
- Train students in writing up their findings and ideas clearly and coherently.
- Train students in presenting their own arguments competently.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1c reflect, in depth, on the body of academic knowledge in a particular specialist field of Economics
- K2c carry out critical analysis of existing research, including both concepts and methodologies; and distil this analysis into conclusions

SUBJECT SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1c tackle an independently formulated research question and produce a coherent, extended piece of research
- S2c use a competently chosen range of relevant literature, with theoretical or conceptual contributions from a core academic field of the particular topic, as well as other, related academic fields where relevant

TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1c use academic literature to build an argument and carry out sophisticated analysis of the chosen topic
- T2c present findings concisely and clearly
- T3c make meaningful conclusions on the basis of a long period of independent research

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Students will have the opportunity to engage with:

- 1 x virtual learning environment (VLE)
- 2.25 x tutorial hours (individual tutorial)
- Weekly office hours

Students are required to attend and participate in all timetabled sessions for this course and, with the ongoing support available, to manage their directed learning and independent study.

Total study hours for this course are: 200.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- The Dissertation requires self-driven research, which is helpful for preparing the student for independent tasks at work, and getting the student used to light-touch supervision.
- The Viva component is intended to deepen the student's understanding of his or her work, develop their skills for presenting their own work, and enable students to practise a high-pressure situation in preparation for future careers.

- The Viva component typically involves an element of reflection, where students are invited to consider the strengths and weaknesses of their own work and working practices, which will help in adapting to a workplace.

ASSESSMENT

FORMATIVE

Formative assessment on this course consists of a supervisor’s feedback on a student’s research progress, as well as discussion between the student and supervisor about ideas relevant to the dissertation. This should occur mainly in timetabled Dissertation supervision meetings.

SUMMATIVE

Assessment will be in two forms:

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Dissertation	80%	Yes	N/A	8,000 words
2	Oral assessment (Viva Voce)	20%	N/A	50 minutes	N/A

FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in timetabled Dissertation supervision meetings. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, at the end of Michaelmas and Hilary terms in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their term’s performance.

Students may request supervisors for one read-through of a Dissertation draft before submission.

INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

Although supervisors might provide readings for a given topic, generally the student is expected to learn how to identify important readings in the process. Readings should include a variety of types of sources, including but not limited to academic journal articles.

BOOKS

Students are recommended to consult one of the many books in the market about writing a successful dissertation, such as one of the following:

Walliman, N. (2004), *Your Undergraduate Dissertation: The Essential Guide for Success*, London: Sage.

Swetnam, D. (2001), *Writing Your Dissertation: How to Plan, Prepare and Present Your Work Successfully*, Begbroke: How To Books Ltd.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Students are encouraged to consult relevant websites on the dissertation writing process, for example: <http://www.studyingeconomics.ac.uk/dissertation/>

INDICATIVE TOPICS

Students might study topics such as the following:

- Is there a relationship between a country's external debt and its growth rate?
 - An empirical analysis of returns to university education for UK graduates
 - An economic theory of Internet piracy, and why it should (not) be outlawed
 - Does institutional development lead to better healthcare outcomes?
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Approved by: Academic Board					
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2.0	June 2021	June 2021	Marianna Koli	1 Academic Handbook > Course Descriptors 2 VLE	April 2025
1.0	June 2020	June 2020	Marianna Koli	1 Academic Handbook > Course Descriptors 2 VLE	April 2025
Modifications (As per AQF4)					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Modification (including category number)		
2.0	June 2021	June 2021	Category 2: Change to 'Teaching and Learning Strategy'		