The University of Hong Kong
Department of Psychology

An Overview of Dissertation in Psychology (PSYC7308)

Students of the Master of Social Sciences (Psychology) programme are required to write a dissertation in their final year of study to complete their programme.

Course Description

PSYC7308 Dissertation in Psychology (12 credits)

A student should conduct an independent empirical investigation of a psychological problem under the supervision of a faculty member. A successful dissertation should represent the result of the candidate's research which displays some originality and demonstrates a sound understanding of the field of study and the appropriate research methods. The dissertation should be about 8,000 - 10,000 words in length (excluding tables, figures, bibliographies, and appendices).

Overview

The dissertation will be an integration of everything the students have learned regarding psychological research. Each dissertation project will be supervised individually by a faculty member. The dissertation should include Title Page, Table of Contents, Abstract, Acknowledgement (if needed), Introduction, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusion and Reference. The grading criteria will be based on: Knowledge of the research topic, Critical analysis, Novelty and significance, Design of study, Data analysis and presentation, Writing and organization.

Students should enrol this course at the beginning of their final year of study. They should complete an online Supervisor Preference Form by early October, which will be sent to the faculty members for consideration in order of their preferences. Students will be informed of the results by email in November.

Ethics Application

All dissertation projects are required to undergo ethics review by reviewers assigned by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee. Applications should be submitted on or before 15th February. For a dissertation project that starts in the second semester, the application deadline is 30th April. Late submission will be penalized. Students can fail the course for not submitting an ethics application. Please see details of the ethics application on the departmental webpage: https://psychology.hku.hk/useful-information-to-current-students/

Presentation on Research Proposal

Around the end of January, each student has to present his/her research proposal to a small group of fellow students and two faculty members. Each presentation and discussion will last for about 20 minutes. This offers each student an opportunity to receive more inputs on his/her project before finalizing the research design for data collection.

Submission of Dissertation

1. Please submit your thesis to Moodle (course: PSYC7308 Dissertation in Psychology) before the deadline.
   a) Please submit in one single file in PDF format including all the chapters.
   b) All covering pages, pictures, tables and charts must be included in appropriate position of the file.
   c) There is no need to submit SPSS, Excel or other files separately.

2. The deadline of submission is **23:59 on 30th June**. For a dissertation project that starts in the second semester, the submission deadline is **23:59 on 15th September**.

3. The penalty for late submission is 2 marks for each calendar day, including Saturday, Sunday and public holidays providing that the student has informed his/her supervisor(s) regarding the late submission of thesis report at least 24 hours prior to the original submission deadline. If the student fails to inform his/her supervisor(s) about the late submission 24 hours prior to the original deadline but submits the thesis after the deadline, the late submission will result in an "F" grade.

4. Requests for deadline extension will not be permitted, except for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances, students should submit a formal application for an extension of the thesis report submission deadline, with strong justifications supplemented by supporting document(s), to the supervisor(s) and the Chief Examiner for consideration and approval.

5. Students should give due acknowledgement when referring or quoting from literature, books, webpages, essays or any other information sources.

6. The soft copy will be checked for plagiarism against a database of articles, books, webpages, and essays submitted by students at HKU and other universities. No credit will be given if the work contains plagiarized materials. Further penalties will also be applied, including a zero mark for the course. Plagiarism record will be kept at the Department for consideration of possible disciplinary action. Please be sure to read the website to know more about how to avoid plagiarism: https://tl.hku.hk/plagiarism/how-to-avoid-plagiarism/

7. All raw data and research materials must be retained. The department may invite you for an oral examination in addition to the submission.

Standard Timeline for PSYC7308

Early October	▪ Students to submit online **Supervisor Preference Form** for the Department to proceed supervisor assignment.
Early November	▪ Department to announce the results of supervisor assignment to students via email.
Late January	▪ Students to present his/her research project proposal.
Before 15th February	▪ Students to submit **ethics application**
Before 31st March	▪ Department to submit Dissertation titles to the Faculty
23:59, 30th June	▪ **Theses submission deadline**

September 2025