



**Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences
Department of Social & Policy Sciences**

MSc International Development

MSc International Development with Economics

MSc International Development with Conflict and Humanitarian Action

MSc International Development, Social Justice and Sustainability

Programme Handbook 2020/21

This Handbook is available online or in alternative formats. Please contact [sps-pg-admin@bath.ac.uk](mailto:sps-<u>pg-admin</u>@bath.ac.uk) if required.

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ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This is the 2020-21 Handbook for the Department of Social and Policy Sciences for students on the MSc International Development programmes.

The contents of this Handbook are accurate at the time of publication 12thOctober, but information contained within may sometimes be subject to change after this Handbook has been issued.

The Important Links and Information section of this Handbook includes links to information online about both the topics covered in this Handbook and other key topics. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the online information as well as the contents of this Handbook.

In August 2020 we wrote to you to explain how your programme has been adapted in response to COVID-19 safety measures and our 'Bath Blend' approach to learning and teaching for academic year 2020/21.

Information about the structure of your programme (which units you take when, which units are compulsory etc), as well as key unit information (including learning outcomes, synopsis and assessment), for the upcoming academic year can be found online in the Unit and Programme Catalogues (see **Unit and Programme Catalogues** in this Handbook and www.bath.ac.uk/catalogues). You will also receive details about unit content and assessment via the University's online learning environment, Moodle.

You will be informed, normally by your Director of Studies or Unit Convenor, of any further changes that will affect your programme or a unit. See also **Unit and programme changes 2020/21** in this Handbook.

You will be informed via announcements if any services offered by the University will need to be changed as a result of changing circumstances during 2020/21.

While this Handbook signposts information about regulations for students, it does not have regulatory status itself, and the Regulations available online (Regulations for Students: <http://go.bath.ac.uk/regulations> and Assessment Regulations: www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/new-framework-for-assessment) are the most up-to-date and take precedence over the contents of this Handbook. It is your responsibility to take the time to familiarise yourself with the Regulations.

If in doubt about what applies to you, or if your circumstances change, please contact your Director of Studies Dr Oliver Walton (oew20@bath.ac.uk) for advice.

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION ONLINE

This Handbook is an accompaniment to important information available to all students on the University's website. It is expected that you will familiarise yourself with the online information signposted below.

If you cannot find the information you are looking for in this Handbook or on the web please contact Catherine Adams or Sandra Swaby in the first instance



SUPPORTING YOU

Student Support Services

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/student-services/>

SU Advice and Support Service

www.thesubath.com/advice

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>

Advice for specific groups of students:

International students

www.bath.ac.uk/topics/visas

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-immigration-appointments-and-drop-in-sessions

www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/studying-at-bath-as-an-erasmus-exchange-or-visiting-student

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/academic-engagement-monitoring-for-tier-4-students

Care-leavers

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-leaving-care/>

Estranged students

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-estranged-students/>

Refugees

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-refugees/>

Students with caring responsibilities

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/publications/university-and-young-adult-carers/>

CORE UNIVERSITY/SERVICES INFORMATION

Dissatisfaction with a University service or facility (Complaints)

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-complaints-policy-and-procedure

Health and Safety

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/student-health-and-safety

Be Safe on Campus information (COVID-19)

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/be-safe-on-campus-and-in-bath-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

Library and Study Spaces

https://library.bath.ac.uk/home

www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/where-you-can-study-on-campus-and-in-the-city

Skills Support and Development

<http://go.bath.ac.uk/my-skills>

www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/get-ahead-with-skills-at-bath

Learning Technologies & IT Support

www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/digital-data-and-technology/

Careers Service

www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/careers-service

Data Protection

www.bath.ac.uk/guides/data-protection-guidance

Pregnancy and maternity https://www.bath.ac.uk/guides/getting-advice-if-you-are-pregnant-while-studying-or-have-a-young-child/	Bullying, harassment and victimisation https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/report-and-support/
Disabilities, long-term illness, and specific learning difficulties http://go.bath.ac.uk/disability-service	SU Code of Practice and membership www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/code-of-practice-for-the-students-union-su
Your Learning www.bath.ac.uk/guides/your-learning <i>Bath Blend</i> <i>Glossary</i> <i>Year Dates and Timetables</i>	Assessment www.bath.ac.uk/guides/assessment-guidance-for-students <i>Assessment processes</i> <i>Understanding your results</i> <i>External examiners</i> <i>Supplementary assessment</i>
Regulations for students http://go.bath.ac.uk/regulations	Academic Integrity www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/academic-integrity-training-and-test
Registration www.bath.ac.uk/guides/registering-with-the-university	Assessment Regulations www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/new-framework-for-assessment <i>Definitions of assessment terms</i>
Withdrawing from or suspending your studies www.bath.ac.uk/guides/suspending-your-studies-or-leaving-the-university	Individual Mitigating Circumstances www.bath.ac.uk/guides/reporting-individual-mitigating-circumstances-to-the-university
Placements http://go.bath.ac.uk/placements-information-for-students	Academic Appeals www.bath.ac.uk/guides/appealing-against-an-academic-decision
Personal Tutoring www.bath.ac.uk/guides/personal-tutoring	
Units and Programmes www.bath.ac.uk/guides/about-units-and-programmes <i>Catalogues</i> <i>Option choices</i> <i>How your programme is reviewed and monitored</i>	
Student Representation and Engagement www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/student-engagement-shape-your-university	

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT WELCOME 2020/21

So, there will be quite significant changes in the way we study, teach, and interact. We have reorganized the personal tutor and the dissertation supervision systems, , set up smaller group learning, and arranged online opportunities for those who might not be able to come on to campus this year. Besides proving a quality education, we have worked hard to make sure all of you receive equal support in your learning and we hope the changes will achieve this.

You have chosen to study a subject that really matters and can make a difference in our world. We are all convinced that the social sciences can shed important light on issues that are important in our lives such as gender, race, poverty, climate change, criminal justice, welfare and social care. The pandemic is another global challenge that has led to major upheavals in all aspects of our lives. Our social sciences expertise is needed more than ever!

You are a member of one of the strongest social sciences department in the country. You are here because you deserve to be, and you should be proud of your achievements so far. We are certainly proud of you all and we hope that the year ahead helps you to grow as learners and as people.

In making plans for the new academic year, our priority has always been safety. We will continue to keep this as a priority throughout the year. This means that we need to look out for each other, keep in contact with each other, and care for each other. I would therefore encourage you all to stay in touch with staff in the department – we want to know that you are safe.

Finally, we have planned for different scenarios for the year ahead. Things may change or need to be changed so it is important that we work together to make the year a success.

2020-2021 will open new opportunities and challenges for us all. Let's work together to face those challenges and take advantage of the opportunities that come our way.

Professor Joe Devine (Head of Department)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "joe devine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "joe" on the top line and "devine" on the bottom line.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT 2020/21

The Department of Social and Policy Sciences includes staff from the disciplines of social policy, sociology, social work and international development. All academic staff are active in research, both in collaboration with each other and with colleagues from other universities and research centres. This provides an opportunity for work around common interests in the application of social sciences to the understanding of substantive policy issues and the policy process itself, both in the UK and in other countries.

Internal messages are usually sent by **email** and you should make a point of checking your university email account every day. **You must ensure that your email inbox does not become full otherwise emails cannot be sent to you and you therefore run the risk of missing important information.**

The best way to **contact staff** is by email.

Should you have any **queries or problems** (that you have not been able to resolve using the various sources of information in this handbook and elsewhere) we strongly recommend you talk to us. Any issues relating to your work then please contact either the lecturer concerned or your Director of Studies.

Our Taught Programmes Team is responsible for all aspects of administrative support for all taught programmes in the Faculty, ensuring that services are efficient, effective and adapt to changing circumstances. They provide students with support and advice from registration to graduation and work alongside academic teaching staff in our departments.

Duties include:

- managing administrative processes of the Faculty's taught programmes
- acting as a central point of contact for staff and students seeking advice
- offering programme-related operational support for academic teaching staff in departments

It is important that you get to know the administrators who look after your particular programme, as they can often provide invaluable guidance on various aspects of the programme. If your administrator is unavailable then please contact any other of our other administrators listed on our wiki page [here](#), all of whom will be very happy to help you. If you have any problems then please contact one of the Programmes Officers or Managers.

Emails are managed via shared mailboxes to deal with enquiries from students and academic staff and these are regularly monitored by designated members of the team.

In 2020/1, we will combine live online interactive (LOIL) sessions with in-person teaching (IPT). All IPT sessions will take place on campus on Wednesday afternoons 2.45-6.45pm. You will be informed of your group and your room on the Monday before the Wednesday session by email.

For students who are unable to study on campus, we will arrange alternative online sessions. If you have to switch to online study (e.g. if you are ill or need to self-isolate) it is very important that you

inform us that you would like to join the online group. Please give as much notice as possible for this.

Communications about programme matters will be via email or Moodle, so please check both regularly.

KEY CONTACTS/STAFF LIST

Contact	Responsibility	Room	Phone No.	Email
<u>Directors of Studies</u>				
Your Director of Studies is responsible for all aspects of your study on the programme. (Any academic queries should be directed in the first instance to the Unit Coordinator.)				
Dr Oliver Walton	MSc International Development,	3E 3.21	01225 386137	oew20@bath.ac.uk
<u>Programme Administrator(s)</u>				
Catherine Adams	Programme Administrator	3E 3.17	01225 383643	sps- admin@bath.ac.uk
Sandra Swaby	Administrative Assistant	3E 3.17	01225 386817	sps- admin@bath.ac.uk
<u>Other Academic Key Contacts</u>				
Dr Jennifer Golan	Assessments Officer	3 EAST 3.03	+44 (0) 1225 385286	sps-imc-ext@bath.ac.uk
Dr Aurelie Charles	Practicums/Dissertations Coordinator	3 EAST 3.32	+44 (0) 1225 386292	A.Charles@bath.ac.uk

ABOUT YOUR PROGRAMME

Our four MSc programmes in International Development provide a choice of flexibility and breadth, or the chance to pursue a particular interest in greater depth.

Our innovative learning approaches promote in-depth investigation of particular cases and issues. These will draw out connections and contradictions between different actors and analytical perspectives, across global, regional, national and local scales.

All students have the opportunity of a placement, leading to a work-based project, will provide hands-on experience to complement classroom-based learning.

You will leave the course with:

- a critical understanding of the concepts and approaches used in international development and humanitarian action, and their strengths and limitations
- practical skills in research, analysis and communication and an understanding of how these can be applied in work for social, economic and environmental justice in both global North and global South
- the ability to analyse the complex interaction of social, economic, political and environmental factors in shaping problems and proposed solutions
- rich experience of working with people from a wide range of disciplinary, professional and national backgrounds

PROGRAMME AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME:

The MSc International Development portfolio aims to provide interdisciplinary and employment-oriented programmes of study drawing on the social and policy sciences to address contemporary global development challenges of poverty, social injustice, environmental degradation, inequality, conflict, migration and humanitarian emergencies. All of the programmes within the portfolio (and associated stopping off points) provide students with:

- An advanced understanding of contemporary and historical development challenges from a broad range of disciplinary, policy, stakeholder, and contextual perspectives;
- An in-depth and critical understanding of how different approaches to data collection, analysis and communication inform public perception of contemporary global challenges, as well as policy response to them;
- Research and critical reflective skills to enable students to undertake a dissertation or practice-based project that develops original insights into a theoretical and/or practical problem which is international development-related.
- An advanced qualification that will prepare students for careers in public, private, commercial and civil society organisations at the international, national and local level.

In addition, each of the pathways provides students with specific knowledge and skills as follows:

The MSc in International Development generalist pathway provides students with:

- Analytical and practical skills to interpret different social sciences disciplines and critically appreciate their distinctive contributions to the understanding of a wide range of development problems.
- The ability to apply ideas drawn from the social sciences in a large array of socio-economic, cultural, political and policy contexts.

The MSc in International Development with Economics pathway provides students with:

- A critical appreciation of economic concepts, theories and tools relevant to understanding development issues, and in particular those of heterodox and social economics.

- The ability to apply them to analyse specific development problems, including through the use of appropriate statistical methods.

The MSc in International Development, Social Justice and Sustainability pathway provides students with:

- A critical appreciation of diverse approaches to conceptualising social justice, wellbeing, knowledge and sustainability in dynamic socio-political settings.
- The ability to evaluate the policy and practical implications of these diverse approaches and to apply them in a wide range of institutional contexts.

The MSc in International Development with Conflict and Humanitarian Action pathway provides students with:

- An in-depth and interdisciplinary understanding of the theories and concepts that underpin contemporary humanitarian action and conflict response, and a critical understanding of humanitarian, peacebuilding and development policy and practice.
- The ability to interpret and evaluate research information and evidence on topics related to humanitarianism, conflict and development.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the PG Certificate and PG Diploma stage of the MSc in International Development portfolio, students will be able:^{*}

- To identify, and engage critically with the literature in international development (generalist pathway); and the multi-disciplinary literature on economic growth, poverty, global political economy, inequality (economics pathway); wellbeing, social justice and sustainability (social justice and sustainability pathway); conflict, migration and humanitarianism (conflict and humanitarianism pathway).
- To understand and apply academic literature to creatively address contemporary global challenges in the subject area specific to each pathway.
- To demonstrate clarity of thought and quality of analysis and argument in addressing contemporary global challenges in the subject area specific to each pathway.

At the end of the MSc stage of the MSc in International Development portfolio, students will be able (in addition to the above):

- To select and justify the focus, scope and methodology of a research study in the subject area specific to their chosen pathway;
- To design and systematically undertake an independent research project in the subject area specific to their chosen pathway either in an academic or professional context;
- To critically review, employ, and engage with the appropriate literature on the chosen area of focus;
- To identify either quantitative or qualitative research that has been undertaken in the chosen area of focus, and interpret data appropriately;
- To draw in an original and critical manner conclusions of the research, showing its strengths and limitations, and derive practical implications of the research for policy and practice.

Teaching is via a mixture of lectures, seminars, student-led workshops, exercises, group work, and policy case studies. A key feature of the MSc in International Development portfolio is its problem-based and student-centred pedagogical approach which prioritizes active processes of inquiry over passive knowledge delivery.

** As all units are 'M-level' units, the differences between PGCert and PGDip are in terms of breadth of knowledge, whilst the differences between the PGDip and the MSc is in the ability to undertake an independent research project.*

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (inc. teaching, learning and assessment methods):

<p>➤ Knowledge and understanding:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic and thorough understanding of the multi-disciplinary field of international development, and of the key theoretical and methodological frameworks which underpin development discourse and practice; • A capacity to evaluate and apply this understanding to contemporary global challenges;
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical appreciation of quantitative and qualitative research methods and their use in international development; • Critical awareness of the contributions of the social sciences to address contemporary global challenges in a variety of cultural settings; • Systematic and thorough understanding of general or specialised areas in international development as appropriate to the chosen pathway. <p>For the MSc stage (as well as the above): Originality in the application of this knowledge in the form of an independent research project (dissertation), or in the form of a professional practice (practicum)</p>
<p>➤ Intellectual Skills</p>	<p>Ability to draw from the social sciences to deal with complex socio-economic situations in a variety of cultural and political contexts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to select and synthesise information from a number of sources; • Ability to critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research undertaken in multiple focus international development areas; • Ability to demonstrate self-direction and originality in addressing contemporary global challenges; • Ability to interrogate critically and constructively international development policy and practice. <p>For the MSc stage (as well as the above): To undertake research at a graduate level, demonstrating self-direction and some originality in formulating and answering research questions (dissertation), or to undertake a placement, demonstrating professionalism and critical reflection on a specific area of professional practice (practicum).</p>
<p>➤ Professional Practice Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical and research skills to equip students for careers in international development, in the public sector, business and civil society at the global, national and local level; • Skills to interpret, select and apply key models for development practice in the areas of humanitarianism and conflict, economics, social justice and sustainability; • Critical skills to evaluate the origins and purposes of development and humanitarian models, as well as their appropriateness and effectiveness in theory and practice; • Skills to interpret, select and apply key tools and methods for analysing development and humanitarian policy and practice, and critically evaluate their effectiveness. • Skills to communicate complex data in a clear, ethical and rigorous way in a range of formats suitable for diverse professional and policy audiences; • Inter-personal skills to engage with different social, political and cultural environments and theoretical, ideological and methodological perspectives; • Reflective skills to critically assess development discourses and policies and their own position with regard to these; • Skills to construct persuasive and critically engaged arguments in the area of development and humanitarianism for diverse professional audiences; <p>Unit assessments will be a principal channel through which the programme will build these skills (see Annex 1)</p> <p>For the practicum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills to synthesise and apply models/tools to specific in-depth cases, showing the implications of strengths and weaknesses for the specific case;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretative and critical skills to reflect on the contexts and conditions shaping development and humanitarian practice, and devise robust and creative strategic responses to them.
➤ Transferable/Key Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent learning and team working skills to prepare students for leadership; • Communication with specialist and non-specialist audiences; • Critical ability to develop original research questions; • Problem-solving skills; • Ability to select, summarise and synthesise written information from multiple sources; • Ability to develop rigorous arguments through precise use of concepts and models; • Ability to synthesise multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder perspectives on the same problems; • Ability to produce work to agreed specifications and deadlines. <p>For the MSc stage (as well as the above):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work independently, without close supervision or guidance.

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION: STRUCTURE OF YOUR PROGRAMME

The structure for your programme year for 2020/21 can be found in the 2020/21 Unit and Programme Catalogues (see below). This is where you find important information on which units you are taking in which semester and if any units are 'designated essential units' (DEUs) that you must pass.

The content of the Programme Catalogues is correct at the time of publication. Programmes and units may be subject to reasonable change (see also **Unit and programme changes 2020/21** in this Handbook).

UNIT AND PROGRAMME CATALOGUES

This is where you will find details about all years of your programme as well as details about individual units for the current academic year.

The Catalogues also provide links to the relevant areas of the University's assessment regulations, showing how these are applied to this programme of study.

For the online Catalogues, please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook. www.bath.ac.uk/catalogues See also the section in this Handbook on **Assessment**.

YOUR LEARNING

For 2020/21, the University has developed a blended learning approach called 'The Bath Blend' which combines in-person activities on campus, live interactive learning, and structured independent study.

The Bath Blend approach to programme delivery has been developed to be flexible in the face of possible changes in law, including measures on social distancing, which may occur through the course of this academic year.

Information on IT support and key software for this academic year is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

YOUR TIMETABLE

Using MyTimetable, you can access your personal timetable and download it into an electronic calendar.

Your In-Person Teaching (IPT) day and Live Online Interactive Learning (LOIL) sessions will show in your timetable. Links to LOIL sessions can also be accessed through the relevant unit page on the University's online learning environment, Moodle.

When you start your units, you will be able to access associated online material at a time that suits your schedule.

MyTimetable updates regularly, so should there be a change to your timetable, it will be reflected in MyTimetable.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

PHYSICAL STUDY SPACE – 2020/21

As in previous years, you will be able to book study space on campus and in the city for individual or group study. Information on how to book, and the COVID-19 requirements, is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

OPTION CHOICES

If your programme has option choice then information about how and when to choose your option units can be found online (please refer to **Important Links and Information**). If applicable, you will receive an email notification at the relevant point in the year when online unit selection is available and if you need to discuss option choices, please contact your Director of Studies.

PLACEMENTS

Students have the option of completing a dissertation or practicum (work-based project). The practicum involves an 8-week work placement. The process for identifying placement opportunities will be explained to students early in Semester 1. Students who opt to write a dissertation can still organise a placement. This may or may not be linked to a previously agreed dissertation topic. All placement students must have a named placement manager within the host organisation and be approved by the Director of Studies. Where placements require work that is incidental to the programme then the Director of Studies may grant an extension to the deadline for their dissertation and arrange a transfer to part-time registration.

RESEARCH ETHICS

All MSc International Development students will receive training in research ethics and will be briefed on the department's research ethics policy as they prepare for their dissertation/practicum.

UNIT AND PROGRAMME CHANGES 2020/21

All programme and unit changes are managed through formal University processes. This is to ensure that changes are academically appropriate, properly supported and are done in a way that safeguards the interests of students.

In addition to the Bath Blend approach to delivery of your programme in 2020/21, which has already been put in place, it is possible that further changes to your programme may be required. These are more likely to be part of continual development aimed at enhancing your learning experience and maintaining high academic standards and quality. Such changes could be, for example, to update content to reflect latest developments in a particular field of study, or to respond to student feedback on delivery and/or assessment. Students who would be affected by proposed changes are consulted about them, either via their Staff/Student Liaison Committee or directly, depending on the nature of the change.

As we have already experienced, it is sometimes necessary to make changes due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances. Outside of the global pandemic, this could be for reasons such as:

- the accrediting body requiring changes to be made to the course, or,
- being unable to run an option unit because too few students selected it.

When this happens, we always try to ensure that the impact on students is minimised and that those affected are informed of the changes at the earliest opportunity.

Information on how we assure the quality and standards of your programme of study is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

GIVING FEEDBACK ON YOUR PROGRAMME TO THE UNIVERSITY

The University is committed to continually improving its practice and aims to engage students as active partners in their education (Education Strategy 2016-21). The three main ways in which your feedback will be sought will be through:

- Staff / Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)
- surveys and evaluations
- the Students' Union.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ASSESSMENT

Full information is available online. For signposts to important information on many aspects of assessment, please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

Any exam-based assessment during the 2020/21 academic year will be online. More information on assessment arrangements for this year, including online assessment, will be provided via the University webpages and updated as necessary.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

You will be informed of the deadline to submit your assessment by your unit convenor, and this information will also be on the Moodle page for the unit. It is your responsibility to submit your coursework in the correct format by the deadline. You will also find your marks and feedback on the Moodle page.

See Annex 2 for Dissertation/Practicum guidelines and submission procedures.

LATE SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK

To ensure fairness to all students, you will be expected to hand in all assessed coursework and dissertations/projects by a specified date and time, and there are penalties for submitting work after the specified deadline. If there are valid circumstances preventing you from meeting a deadline, your Director of Studies may grant you an extension to the specified submission date. Forms to request an extension are available from the Department.

Please note that:

- if you submit a piece of work after the submission date, and no extension has been granted, the maximum mark possible will be the pass mark
- if you submit work more than five working days after the submission date, you will normally receive a mark of 0 (zero), unless you have been granted an extension.

It is not usually possible to mark coursework anonymously if it is submitted after the deadline.

It is important that you speak to your Director of Studies as soon as possible if you become concerned about your submission deadlines.

WORD COUNTS

Coursework tasks will normally have a word limit or word range. This, and the penalty for non-compliance, will be confirmed when you receive an assignment. This is in order to give an indication of the depth and detail of work required, and to ensure that students' submitted work is comparable. You will be required to declare the word count for your work when submitting it for assessment.

If you do not observe the given word range or limit for the coursework task, for example if you exceed the word limit, then a penalty will be applied. The penalty that would apply should be stated in writing when the assignment task is distributed. You should take note of what is included when calculating the total word count (e.g. whether or not contents pages, appendices, footnotes, bibliographies and other elements that are not part of the main text are included).

You should check with your Director of Studies if you have questions about word counts and penalties.

SPS Departmental word count policy:

It is your responsibility to find out the maximum permitted length for each piece of work. The following penalties will be incurred if the word limit is exceeded:

- The marker(s) will stop reading the work once the student has exceeded a word limit (or the upper figure of a word range) by 10%.
- For the purpose of calculating the word count, footnotes are included, whereas abstract, contents pages, executive summaries, tables, figures, appendices and reference lists/bibliographies are excluded

FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT

During your course, you will receive feedback on your assessed work. This feedback may take different forms, depending on the subject and type of assessment. You will be informed of the timing and nature of the feedback you will receive on each assessment, including whether the piece of work itself will be returned to you. For exam-type assessment, you may receive general feedback relevant to all who took the assessment rather than individual feedback. You can discuss feedback you receive on assessments alongside your performance and progress in your studies at meetings with your Personal Tutor.

The SPS Department Feedback Policy is available on the Programme Moodle page under 'Unit Assessment Information' <https://moodle.bath.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=58149>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University has a wide range of resources available to you to help you understand academic integrity and enhance your academic writing and practice.

It also has in place an Academic Integrity Test you are required to take and pass (the pass mark is 85% but you can take the test as many times as you need to). You will not be able to progress beyond the next progression point in your studies until you pass this test.

When you submit assessment, you will be expected to make a declaration that the work is your own and, where you have re-used your own work and/or used other sources of information, that you have referenced the material appropriately. The University uses a plagiarism detection service (currently Urkund), which searches the web and databases of reference material and content submitted by other students, to identify duplicated work. Where practical, all summative assessment is submitted to this service to check for similarities as an initial indicator of whether work has been plagiarised and an assessment offence committed.

Submission of your assessment to the Plagiarism Detection Service - Data Protection statement

The Plagiarism Detection Service complies with European Data Protection legislation. When you registered with the University, you gave it permission to process your personal data for a variety of legitimate purposes. This includes allowing the University to disclose such data to third parties for purposes relating to your studies. The University, at its sole discretion, may submit the work of any student to the Plagiarism Detection Service (in accordance with Regulation 15.3e) and may make, or authorise third parties to make, copies of any such work for the purposes of:

- 1) assessment of the work
- 2) comparison with databases of earlier work or previously available works to confirm the work is original
- 3) addition to databases of works used to ensure that future works submitted at this institution and others do not contain content from the work submitted.

The University will not make any more copies of your work than are necessary, and will only retain these for so long as remains necessary, for these purposes.

Please note that, if at any time the University submits any of your work to the Plagiarism Detection Service, the service will be provided with, and will retain, certain personal data relating to you – for example, your name, email address, programme details and the work submitted. Such data may be transferred by the Plagiarism Detection Service to countries worldwide (some of which may not be governed by EU data legislation) in order for the work to be checked and an originality report generated in accordance with the proper workings of the Plagiarism Detection Service. Personal data is retained indefinitely by the Plagiarism Detection Service upon submission of work. You may ask for your personal data to be removed by contacting the University's Data Protection Officer.

Assessment offences – penalties

Any student who is found to have used unfair means in an assessment procedure will be penalised. 'Unfair means' here include cheating, fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, unfair collaboration or collusion. Penalties for use of unfair means may include failure of the assessment unit or part of a degree, with no provision for reassessment or retrieval of that failure. Proven cases of plagiarism or cheating can also lead to an Inquiry Hearing or disciplinary proceedings. Claims of inadvertence or ignorance will not be accepted as a basis for mitigation of a penalty.

If you are accused of an offence, the Students' Union's welfare services are available to support you. You have the right to appeal against the outcome of the investigation.

Important information on academic integrity, the Plagiarism Detection Service, assessment offences and penalties, and support, as well as the Academic Integrity Test itself, is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

If you have any access problems, then please contact **Catherine Adams or Sandra Swaby** in the first instance.

When you have completed the training tutorial and are confident that you have understood it, you should undertake the test.

To pass the test you will need to achieve a mark of 85%. You can take the test as many times as necessary until you pass.

If you do not pass the test, you will need to re-visit the training and/or look at the other guidance available to you or as required by your Director of Studies, and then take the test again.

You will not be able to progress beyond the next progression point in your studies, irrespective of your programme marks, until you pass this test. Ultimately this means that, if you have not passed the test, you will not be able to receive your award. Your Director of Studies will be able to confirm when the next progression point occurs for your stage of your programme.

IF CIRCUMSTANCES IMPACT ON YOUR ASSESSMENT ATTEMPT

Individual Mitigating Circumstances (IMCs) are the conditions which temporarily prevent you from undertaking assessment or significantly impair your performance in assessment. As such, the measure of their severity is not about impact on you, but the impact on your affected assessment. Full information about IMCs is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook. **It is strongly advised that you become familiar with the available guidance and related regulations.**

ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Assessment and marking processes at the University are designed to ensure that assessment of your work is fair and consistent, and that academic standards are appropriate and comparable between the University and other higher education institutions. This is achieved in a number of ways.

Marking: Assessments you will complete during your programme are marked according to:

- *marking criteria (or assessment criteria)* - these are the knowledge, understanding and skills which it has been identified that students should demonstrate in the assessment and which are taken into account during marking. They are based on the learning outcomes being assessed
- *marking schemes* - these are detailed descriptions of how specific numbers of marks should be assigned against individual components of an answer within the assessment task
- *grade descriptors* - these are descriptions of the levels of achievement required in order to get a result within a given band of marks (e.g. 70% or more).

Anonymous marking: The University has adopted a principle of anonymous marking in order to protect students and staff from bias, and the perception of bias, in the marking process. It applies to all assessment where practicable. It is not possible to mark all coursework anonymously as in some types of assessment the student can be easily identified by the marker (e.g. presentations, group work, laboratory work) or it might not be practical, or in the student interest, to do so. You will be informed when your coursework is to be marked anonymously.

Moderation: Both the setting and the marking of assessments are independently checked through a process known as moderation to ensure that questions test the learning outcomes and are set at the right standard, and that marking is consistent and fair. Moderation is conducted by internal examiners and also by your External Examiner (see below).

Boards of Examiners: Assessment decision-making at the University is the responsibility of Boards of Examiners established at three levels: assessment outcomes go first to *Boards of*

Examiners for Units, then *Boards of Examiners for Programmes*, then finally to *Boards of Studies*. Boards of Studies confirm decisions relating to student progression from one stage of the programme to the next and the final award. **The assessment marks you are given initially by markers are therefore provisional up until the point when they have been confirmed by the Board of Studies for your programme.** An official release date is set when your confirmed results will be made available to you via SAMIS (the University's student records system). An academic appeal can only be made in relation to a confirmed result (see the section in this Handbook on **Academic Appeals**).

Scaling: All marks for a unit are reviewed at a meeting of a Board of Examiners for Units which will verify that the assessment process has been conducted appropriately and that the marks are an accurate reflection of the standards achieved. A Board of Examiners can decide to recommend a change to the provisional marks, based on evidence that there was a problem with the assessment which means the initial marks do not reflect the standards achieved by students. This adjustment is known as scaling and under these circumstances the marks of all affected students will be changed.

External Examiner: An External Examiner is someone from another University or professional organisation who is qualified and experienced in the field of study. At least one External Examiner is appointed for each programme or group of programmes. The role of External Examiner is an important one in assuring that assessment processes are fair, academic standards are appropriate, and supporting the development of your programme. External Examiners review draft assessment and samples of assessed work and attend Boards of Examiners. They are members of Boards of Examiners.

Once a year, the External Examiners will provide a written report. University staff, including the Head of Department and Director of Studies, will look at these reports and a response will be made to the External Examiner's comments. External Examiner reports and responses are made available to students. Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) also discuss External Examiner reports as part of routine monitoring activity.

The External Examiner for your programme is Professor Fiona Nunan, Professor of Environment and Development and Director of the International Development Department, University of Birmingham.

It is not appropriate for students to make direct contact with External Examiners. If you are dissatisfied with the process or outcome of an assessment, and are considering whether to raise this either informally or formally, the sections of this Handbook on **Academic Appeals** and **Dissatisfaction with a University Service or Facility (Complaints)** give some more information about the University's procedures for student complaints and academic appeals. The University's mechanisms for student representation are designed to enable students to engage with the quality management process through which the University considers and responds to External Examiners' comments and suggestions.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

The University's New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations: Phases 2 & 3 for postgraduate taught programmes ('NFAAR-PGT') specifies the rules governing students' progression from one stage of their programme to the next as well as for the award of degrees. The rules cover all areas of assessment, including supplementary assessment and the extent to which failure may be condoned.

If at any time you are in doubt about how NFAAR-PGT provisions apply to your work, please consult your Director of Studies.

This section highlights areas of the University's assessment framework for the type of programme you are undertaking. It explains the regulations that govern your assessment and outlines how the University makes decisions concerning your progression through your programme and award. Complete information is available in the NFAAR-PGT document.

The full NFAAR-PGT, and definitions of terms used in it, are available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

YOUR PROGRAMME AND HOW YOU ARE ASSESSED

Within a programme of study, there are *compulsory units* (i.e. those units in a programme which must be taken by every student registered on the programme), and there may also be *optional units* (i.e. those units students may choose from a range of options).

In the Programme and Unit Catalogues, there are links to the relevant appendices of the NFAAR-PGT which state exactly how the assessment rules operate for each stage of your programme.

The following points will help you to understand how the assessment rules relate to your specific programme, such as pass marks, averaging of marks and dealing with any failures:

Firstly, there are several references below to the persistent generic rules on the extent of any failures of units permitted overall. The rules are that you can only (1) fail and retrieve units, or (2) marginally fail units and have them condoned, within set limits. Breaking these rules results in failure of the programme.

- Your programme has Designated Essential Units (DEUs) which you must pass to gain the award you seek; even marginal failure in these units cannot be condoned.
- Your programme is divided into stages, but does NOT have Stage Required Units (SRUs) that must be passed before being permitted to progress to the next stage. This means that, if you are required to undertake supplementary assessment, it will only have to be completed before the end of the programme. You must also never break one of the persistent generic rules.

- Should you fail to qualify for the award of the degree of Master, you may be considered for the award of a related Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate (subject to your having met the requirements for one of those awards).

The normal pass mark for a unit is 40%. In some units, you might need to achieve a threshold mark in one or more component assessments in order to pass the unit overall. Particular rules apply to failure of units of the 'Taught type', or in the 'taught' stages. They are as follows:

- If you fail any DEUs, you will have to undertake supplementary assessment – unless you have failed so many DEUs that you fail outright or the attempted retrieval would break the rule on how much failure can be retrieved.
- If you fail any non-DEU units badly (i.e. achieve less than 35%), you will have to undertake supplementary assessment – unless you have failed so many units that you fail outright or the attempted retrieval would break the rule on how much failure can be retrieved.
- If you fail only non-DEU units marginally (i.e. achieve 35%-39%), you might be able to progress without supplementary assessment. Whether you do progress will depend on the total credit value of the failed units.

Dissertation/Project units have their own special rule on failure: only cases of marginal failure (i.e. 35%-39%) will be given permission for attempted retrieval through supplementary assessment, and any resubmission that is permitted for marginal failure must be made within a specified period. Ultimately, you must pass a Dissertation/Project unit (or have an average of at least 40% for them if there are more than one) for satisfactory completion of the requirements for Dissertation/Project elements.

Your unit results are combined as follows to make overall assessment/award decisions:

- The Taught Stage(s) Average (TSA) will be calculated by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for all units required to contribute to the taught stage(s), or by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for all units defined as of 'Taught type' required to contribute to the programme.
- The Dissertation/Project Average (DPA) will be calculated by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for the unit(s) required to contribute to the Dissertation/Project stage(s), or by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for the unit(s) defined as of 'Dissertation/Project type' required to contribute to the programme.
- The Overall Programme Average (OPA) will be calculated by taking the credit-weighted average of marks for all units required to contribute to the programme.

A Board of Examiners will decide at appropriate points whether you are continuing to meet the requirements for the programme (including not breaking persistent generic rules whereby you can only fail and retrieve, or marginally fail and have condoned, units within set limits), and/or whether you have met all the requirements for your target award or any alternative that might be available. The outcomes will depend on both your performance in individual units and your overall performance. Generally, if you pass each of your units, you will progress and, in due course, be recommended for an award.

If you fail units beyond certain credit values, or you fail some too badly, you might break one of the persistent generic rules whereby you can only fail and retrieve, or marginally fail and have condoned, units within set limits, and this will result in failure of the programme - without any opportunity for supplementary assessment. (Further information on supplementary assessment is provided below.)

The criteria for making awards with distinction or with merit are described in the relevant NFAAR-PGT rules (paras. 78-80).

Supplementary assessment

'Supplementary assessment' is the term normally used for an opportunity given to a student to retrieve failure before starting the next stage of a programme, or by the end of the programme if it is a single-stage programme or the failed units are not Stage Required Units (SRUs).

Academic year dates, including the supplementary assessment period, can be found online. See **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

Each unit's method of supplementary assessment is shown in the online Unit Catalogue.

More information on arrangements for the 2020/21 academic year will be provided via the University webpages and updated as necessary.

At supplementary assessment, students will normally have the opportunity to gain credit for units then successfully passed and to have the mark gained reported to them for feedback purposes, but a maximum mark of 40% will be awarded and used in the Overall Stage Average, the Overall Programme Average, the Taught Stage(s) Average, and any award calculation.

If you pass all your supplementary assessments, you will be able to progress onto the next stage of your programme and/or, as appropriate, be considered for an award. If you do not pass them all, the outcome will depend on your overall performance including consideration of the rules about passing particular types of units and the persistent generic rules (as set out above).

ACADEMIC APPEALS

If you wish to submit a request for an academic appeal you should refer to Regulation 17 (Conduct of Student Academic Reviews and Appeals), which outlines the process and grounds for an appeal against formal Board of Studies decisions.

You are also strongly advised to read the online guidance on Appeals provided by the Academic Registry.

Independent advice about academic appeals is offered by the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

CORE UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS FOR STUDENTS

All registered students of the University are subject to the University's Regulations for Students. The Regulations contain rules and other important information about being a student at the University of Bath, including regulations governing the payment of fees due to the University, student discipline, fitness to study and those governing attendance, conduct and progress in studies. They also form part of the formal contract between you and the University. **You are strongly advised to read them carefully as they contain a lot of important information.**

For a link to the full Regulations for Students, see **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ACCESSING UNIVERSITY EMAIL

You will need to use your University username and password to access your University email account. Your username also forms your email address (**username@bath.ac.uk**).

The University will often communicate with you about a range of important matters requiring action from you, including registration, assessment, degree ceremonies, and matters such as tuition fees, via your University email account. It is a University regulation that you access your University email account regularly, even if you are out on placement or study abroad.

You therefore have a responsibility to ensure that your University email account can receive incoming mail and that you read your email regularly.

Once you graduate or withdraw from your course, you will receive an email stating exactly when your account will be closed. The email will give at least 30 days' notice.

STUDENTS' UNION MEMBERSHIP

All students registered with the University are automatically given membership of the Students' Union; however you have the right not to be a member. Information on opting out of this membership, and the Code of Practice for the Students' Union, are available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

DATA PROTECTION

The University's Data Protection Policy and Guidelines on Data Protection may be accessed via the data protection website (see **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook).

REGISTRATION STATUS

Note that only registered students may use the University's facilities, such as email, Moodle and the Library. You will be asked to register online at the start of your programme of study and then to re-register at the start of every academic year thereafter until you have

completed your programme. It is a requirement that you register when asked to do so. Tuition fees for each academic year are payable at registration in full or in instalments. Regulation 1.1 explains the requirement to register. Regulations 2.4 and 2.10 explain the consequences of non-payment of tuition fees.

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT MONITORING FOR TIER 4 STUDENTS

Guidance and requirements on academic engagement for students who are Tier 4 visa holders, including the University's **Academic Engagement Monitoring Policy for Tier 4 visa holders**, and information on when and how to request an authorised absence, are available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook

CHANGE IN YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES

It is important to ensure that the University holds your correct, up-to-date, personal and academic details within SAMIS, the University's student records database. If you change your address – either your semester-time or home address – please update your details online (see **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook).

If you change your name, you will need to provide valid proof of the change. Please speak to your Department or Faculty/School administration, or Student Services, for advice on how to do this.

If you are considering suspending your studies, transferring from one programme to another, or withdrawing from your programme, please discuss your situation with your Director of Studies. They will be able to advise you on an appropriate course of action.

The financial implications of withdrawing from the University or suspending your studies can be significant. See **Important Links and Information in this Handbook.**

The Student Money Advice Team in Student Services and the Student Finance Office will be able to advise you on the implications for fees in your situation and on how to suspend any student funding you are receiving.

If you are an international student holding a Tier 4 visa, you should consult the advisers in the Student Immigration Service about the implications of suspending or withdrawing from your programme. See **Important Links and Information in this Handbook.**

You will need to register any change of academic circumstance, including a change of optional units, with the University. Please speak to your Department or Faculty/School administration who will advise you on how to do this.

DISSATISFACTION WITH A UNIVERSITY SERVICE OR FACILITY (COMPLAINTS)

We want to ensure that, if you have a problem concerning the University, it is resolved as quickly as possible. The University is committed to continuing review and improvement and seeks regular feedback from students. There are student representatives on the University's formal decision-making committees who can raise issues so that they can be dealt with promptly. The University is also committed to providing an environment within which students are encouraged to raise any matters of concern in an informal manner as soon as they arise. This often removes the need for formal complaints.

It is expected that most complaints can be resolved at an early stage by discussing the matter informally at a local level. If you have a problem concerning the University, you should bring the matter to the attention of an appropriate member of staff, who will aim to resolve it by informal discussion. If you have attempted to resolve matters informally but are not satisfied with the outcome, you may elect to proceed to the next stage by submitting a formal complaint. You may also submit a formal complaint if the issue involved is too complex or serious for informal resolution.

If you do need to make a complaint, there are procedures in place to deal with it, outlined in the University's **Student Complaints Procedure**. These procedures are designed to ensure that your complaint will be dealt with in good faith and that you will not be penalised for complaining.

There are separate procedures for requesting a review of progression or award classification decisions. See the section in this Handbook on **Academic Appeals**.

The University recognises that making a complaint can be stressful. Students are therefore advised to seek advice and support before making a complaint, from Student Services, or from the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre, whose advice is independent of the University.

Full information is available online. Please refer to **Important Links and Information** in this Handbook.

ANNEX 1 ASSESSMENT AND PROGRESSION REGULATIONS

All Masters Programmes are assessed under the New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulation (NFAAR), details of which can be found in '**The New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations.**' The key aspects are summarised below. Please also see the links provided below for full NFAAR guidance related to each award.

Masters degree (for full details please see: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/nfaar-pqt-appendix-11.pdf>) and also <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/registry.bho/assessment/nfa-briefing-030.pdf>

Awards

Masters degree - a student must achieve:

at least **90 credits**, at least 75 of these credits being gained at M level;
both an overall programme average (OPA) of at least 40.00% and a dissertation/project average (DPA) of at least 40.00%.

Masters degree with Merit - a student must achieve:

- (i) an overall programme average (OPA) of at least 60.00%,
- (ii) a dissertation/project average (DPA) of at least 60.00%, and
- (iii) a taught stage(s) average (TSA) of at least 50.00%.

Masters degree with Distinction - a student must achieve:

- (i) an overall programme average (OPA) of at least 70.00%,
- (ii) a dissertation/project average (DPA) of at least 70.00%, and
- (iii) a taught stage(s) average (TSA) of at least 60.00%.

Condoning

Designated Essential Units (DEU) cannot be condoned.

Marks of 35%-39% in non-DEU taught stage credits (TSC) can be condoned.

Maximum of 12 taught stage credits (TSC) (20% of the award)).

Dissertation/project credits (DPC) cannot be condoned.

Retrieval (supplementary assessment)

Taught-stage credits (TSC) – maximum of 18 credits for taught units (TSC) may be retrieved after failure by supplementary assessment.

Dissertation/project credits (DPC) - can only be retrieved if the fail mark is in the range 35%-39%. A student will be permitted **one attempt only** to retrieve a failed unit. Unit marks will be capped at 40% on retrieval.

Postgraduate Diploma (for full details please see: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/nfaar-pqt-appendix-12.pdf>)

Awards

PG Diploma - a student must achieve:

at least **60 credits**, at least 48 of these credits being gained at M level;
overall programme average (OPA) of at least 40.00%.

PG Diploma with Merit - a student must achieve:

overall programme average (OPA) of at least 60.00%.

PG Diploma with Distinction - a student must achieve:

overall programme average (OPA) of at least 70.00%.

Condoning

Designated Essential Units (DEU) cannot be condoned.

Marks of 35%-39% in non-DEU taught stage credits (TSC) can be condoned.

Maximum of 12 credits (20% of the award) can be condoned.

Retrieval (supplementary assessment)

Maximum of 18 credits for taught units (TSC) may be retrieved after failure by supplementary assessment. A student will be permitted **one attempt only** to retrieve a failed unit. Unit marks will be capped at 40% on retrieval.

Progression to Masters from Diploma**Programme Progression Requirement (PPR):**

This programme does not have a programme progression requirement

Postgraduate Certificate (for full details please see: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/nfaar-pgt-appendix-13.pdf>)**Awards**

Although normally comprising semester 1 units, units can be selected from either semester unless specific units are required under the specific programme regulations. Important: This needs to be clarified with each DoS.

PG Certificate a student must achieve:

at least **30 credits** with at least 24 of these credits being gained at M level;
overall programme average (OPA) of at least 40.00%.

PG Certificate with Merit

overall programme average (OPA) of at least 60.00%.

PG Certificate with Distinction

overall programme average (OPA) of at least 70.00%.

Condoning

Designated Essential Units (DEU) cannot be condoned.

Marks of 35%-39% in non-DEU taught stage credits (TSC) can be condoned.

Maximum of 6 credits (20% of the award) can be condoned.

Retrieval (supplementary assessment)

Maximum of 12 credits for taught units (TSC) may be retrieved after failure by supplementary assessment. A student will be permitted **one attempt only** to retrieve a failed unit. Unit marks will be capped at 40% on retrieval.

ANNEX 2 DISSERTATION AND PRACTICUM GUIDELINES

Introduction

Dissertations and the practicum report, compared to coursework that you may have produced previously, test your ability to develop a more sustained argument, as well as providing you with the opportunity to analyse a chosen question in more detail.

The dissertation/practicum accounts for one third of the whole MSc programme - being a 30-credit unit, this equates to approximately **500 hours work**.

The importance of the dissertation/practicum cannot therefore be over emphasised
given that it is worth one third of the programme, it should equate to the TOTAL amount of work undertaken in one of the taught semesters (contact time *and* private study). Students must therefore expect to be fully occupied on their dissertation/practicum report over the whole of the summer.

Specific Guidance for Dissertations

Students are advised to commence thinking about possible dissertation topics early in the programme, but to then develop these ideas as the programme develops.

A well designed dissertation should comprise a clear, original, interesting and answerable research question or problem which is:

- Focussed and clear;
- Answerable;
- Addressing one main question, not many;
- Related to a topic which has sufficient existing material i.e. a literature;
- Interesting and challenging;
- Draws from, and relates to, issues raised in the taught component of the degree programme;
- Original in the evidence brought to bear on a particular debate.

Specific Guidance for Practicum Reports

A successful MSc practicum report will, in addition to the elements listed in the Indicative Marking Criteria, include:

- Section 1 must contain an accurate, succinct and substantive summary of what the student actually did while on placement. You have the option of providing appropriate supporting material in an appendix (not included in the word count).
- In section 2, a discussion of how key themes or topics covered in the academic programme were applied or helped to understand issues encountered during the placement. This section should include some critical reflection on gaps in knowledge or skills but should not simply provide a critical review of the academic programme.
- In section 4, a clear statement of the question or problem that is to be explored; (it is anticipated that this question/problem would relate to issues raised during the taught part of the programme);

- In section 4, a critical literature review (not just a summary of the relevant literature)
- A critical awareness of the limitations of their work; (including an awareness of the methods used in preparing the report and their strengths and weaknesses);
- A discussion of the implications of their work for development policy and/or practice.
- **Please note that 75% of the final mark will be determined by section 3. The more descriptive sections (1 and 2) will constitute 25%. The fourth criteria listed in the marksheet (clarity of expression/presentation/structure) will be applied to all sections.**

Supervisors

Dissertation/Practicum Supervisors will be identified for each student. Students should consult regularly with their dissertation/practicum supervisors. It is the responsibility of the student to agree a programme of work, which should include dates of appropriate consultation with supervisors.

Whilst every effort will be made to identify a supervisor for your particular area of interest, it may not be possible to identify a supervisor if a topic is chosen that does not fall within the research interests of our academic staff. Students may therefore be asked to select another topic for which supervision can be provided.

DISSERTATION AND PRACTICUM SUPERVISION GUIDANCE

Dissertation and Practicum Supervision Guidance Department of Social and Policy Sciences



The following guidelines have been developed to provide a more uniform approach to the supervision and marking of masters-level dissertations and practicum reports across programmes, and to ensure that staff and students know what is expected of them.¹

Dissertations and practicum reports are a test of the students' ability to independently pursue a topic in some depth. Supervision must therefore be viewed as purely guidance. Generally, supervisors will discuss the following matters with the student: choice of topic, including its feasibility and disciplinary content; sources of information; outline of dissertation/practicum report; general substance and structure of argument; timetable for completion, and; writing style. They will review plans and outlines, and may read elements of the draft dissertation or practicum report.

- (i) **It is the students' responsibility to make contact with his/her supervisor, to develop a research plan and a timetable for the research and the writing up. Students are recommended to arrange an early meeting with their supervisor.**
- (ii) Supervisors will make themselves available and normally warn students ahead of time if they will be away so that arrangements for adequate supervision can be made in advance.

¹ Any specific dates mentioned assume that the student is not undertaking a placement – reasonable adjustments may be required to take into account the time spent on placement BUT any such adjustment may incur further fees and MUST be agreed with your Supervisor BEFORE embarking on your placement.

- (iii) Where a meeting involves the discussion of written work for the dissertation or practicum report, students should ensure that this work is submitted at least three days prior to the meeting to enable supervisors to read it properly, to get the most from the discussions.
- (iv) Students can only expect supervision – including reading of draft material – **up until the end of July**.
- (v) **Supervisors will not be available during August** (unless they have not been available in July). **It is therefore of the upmost importance that students start to work on their dissertation or practicum report in early June.**
- (vi) Supervisors are expected to give a maximum of five hours direct supervision (meetings, telephone, e-mails) for a single dissertation or practicum reports, and read drafts only once.

Supervisors are not responsible for the quality of the dissertation or practicum report. In other words, **the supervisor cannot 'approve' the work** (and he/she should not be asked to do so) and will not be regarded as having given any warranty or even suggestion that the work is of a particular standard. Just as it is the students' own responsibility to ensure that sufficient time is left for typing of the dissertation or practicum report, it is up to the student to ensure that they make the most effective use of their supervisor.

DON'T FORGET that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they know and understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid any plagiarism in her or his dissertation or practicum report.