

**Department of Sociology
South Asian University**

MA Dissertation Handbook

2023

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The M.A. Dissertation: A Broad Overview

The MA dissertation is worth 12 credits (4 proposal and 8 for the dissertation) and will be completed over two semesters, on a sociological topic of your choice.

You will choose a supervisor from amongst the Department's faculty (as long as they agree) to guide you in this process. You will be required to submit a dissertation proposal outlining your proposed research and a dissertation, once research is completed.

The dissertation proposal should be 5500 words. 3000 of which should be a literature review. The dissertation should be limited to 10,000-15,000 words excluding footnotes, bibliography, preliminary pages and annexes.

Included in this handbook are the MA Dissertation Style-guide and Regulations that outline all pertinent regulations, as well as elaborate on how the dissertation should be stylistically formatted.

Plagiarism - if found in either the proposal or dissertation - will be dealt with harshly. Please see the regulations.

M.A. Thesis Process:
General Deadlines and Submission by Semester

General

- 'Draft' here means the proposal or dissertation, as it should be submitted in its final form.
- Any incomplete submission shall not be entertained. Late submissions except on medical grounds as approved by the Medical Officer, SAU and under any other exceptional circumstances (approved by the Supervisor, Chairperson and the Dean/FSS) will invite a penalty of 5 marks per day.

In case of any questions, the students may contact the Research Coordinator in the Department.

PLEASE NOTE: THESE ARE GENERAL DEADLINES, SPECIFIC DEADLINES WILL BE CIRCULATED FOR EVERY SEMESTER WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK PRESENTED BELOW

Semester I: Choosing a Mentor/Supervisor

- Students should determine their possible supervisor after having discussions with different faculty members, or based on their area of their expertise. There will be an upper limit of how many students a faculty member can mentor/supervise based on equal allotment for each faculty to supervise students.
- **The students must submit the name of the faculty member with who they would like to work by mid November.** Those who do not submit by this date will be allotted supervisors alphabetically.
- A sample letter is included in this handbook, and should be turned in to the Department office. This letter must be signed by the faculty member who has agreed to work with you.
- No change of supervisor will be allowed after this.

Semester III: Submit MA Thesis Proposal

- Submission of draft dissertation proposal by **early October** via email to your supervisor and the research co-ordinator.
- **Public presentation** to the entire faculty on the draft proposal to be held in **early to mid October**. Each presenter will get 10 minutes to present.
- **Final submission of proposal along with a 1-2 page written explanation on how/why/where comments** made by the faculty during the public presentation have been included/excluded must be submitted by **early November** via email to the research coordinator and your supervisor.
- **Viva-voces** will be held **by mid November**, with the date and time being fixed by the supervisor. The dissertation has to be based on the proposal that has been cleared and graded by the Department in Semester III.

Semester IV: Submission of dissertation

- Submission of **draft dissertation** by **early March** to supervisors. The submission should be via email, sending a copy to your supervisor and the research co-ordinator.
- A **public presentation** of the dissertation's final results will be held in **early April**. Each presenter will get 10 minutes to present.
- **Final submission** of the dissertation must be done by **first week of May along with a 1-2 page document stating how you have responded to comments received during the public presentations**. This submission must be in hard copy (see below) with a soft copy being sent via email to your supervisor and the research coordinator.
- **Viva-voce** to be held before **mid-May** as per supervisor's convenience.
- **Submission of final document:**
 - a) A style guide has been provided with instructions for formatting your dissertation along with a template for the first pages in this handbook.

b) Please submit three hard copies of the MA dissertation to the Department office and email a soft copy to your supervisor and the research coordinator. Please make sure your supervisor has signed the copies as well.

Evaluation

1. The MA dissertation proposal and dissertation shall be evaluated by the student's dissertation supervisor, and an assigned faculty member. The evaluation sheet used for this is included in this handbook.
2. 40 points will be assigned for 'performance over the semester' for both semesters (proposal and thesis writing).
3. Please note the penalty for late submissions - 5 marks per day after the final deadline.

Basic Information and Stylistic Conventions Pertaining to the MA Dissertation regarding the Dissertation

The MA dissertation will be written and submitted according to the rules explained in the previous section. The remainder of this document will explain the technical details of the dissertation. As a general rule, the dissertation must be word processed and printed on single sheets of paper and bound with a hard or transparent cover. It must be submitted to the department on the due date in duplicate.

A good source for style related information, one can read the *Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press. 2003. *The Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition)* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

This document strives at answering most questions of style that may arise when writing your dissertation. The information given can be used as they are and also in combination when a specific issue might not be directly answered. If in doubt, please contact your supervisor.

Word Limit

The dissertation will be limited to 10, 000-15, 000 words excluding footnote, bibliography, preliminary pages and annexes.

Margins, Font Information and other Relevant Details

The dissertation will be word-processed using the font Calibri point 11; this will cover all texts within the dissertation except for footnotes which will be Calibri point 8.

The line spacing throughout the dissertation will be 1.5 inclusive of quotations, bibliography, footnotes etc.

Chapter headings will be Calibri point 14 bold.

Subtopics within chapters will be Calibri point 11 bold.

The margins of the dissertation will be 4.5 CM on the left to facilitate binding and 2 CM with regard to the remaining three sides.

Preliminary Pages

Preliminary pages consist of the title page, page for technical details such as date of dissertation and student declaration, acknowledgments and the table of contents. The title page will not be numbered. All other preliminary pages will be numbered in Roman numerals. Preliminary pages will follow the following sequence: blank page, title page, data and declaration page, table of contents, acknowledgements, blank page.

Chapters

There is no limit for the number and length of individual chapters. This will depend on the nature of the dissertation, its arguments and other requirements. The decision on the number of chapters will be decided by students under the guidance of their supervisors. Chapters will be numbered from the first chapter (which also could be the introduction) to the bibliography and annexes in Arabic numerals. The general chapter breakdown will follow the following sequence: chapter one (or introduction), other chapters, concluding chapter, annexes, bibliography.

Quotations

Short quotations will be inserted in the main text within quotations marks followed by reference details within brackets in the following sequence: last name of author - year of publication: page numbers. For example, (Marx 1999: 23-28). In the case of interview transcripts that might be quoted within text, information about the source might be provided in the text itself or in a footnote. In these cases, the full-stop will be followed by the last quotation mark. (Eg., "quotation mark".)

Larger quotations must be separated from the body text by 1 CM on the left and right from the body text margin and double space from the top and bottom. In such cases, there is no need to place the quotation in quotation marks. The references must be indicated in the matter outlined above. For example:

Short quotations will be inserted in the main text within quotations marks followed by reference details within brackets in the following sequence: last name of author - year of publication: page numbers. For example, (Marx 1999: 23-28). In the case of interview material that might be quoted within text, information about the source might be provided in the text itself or in a footnote (Department of Sociology 2012: 2).

Footnotes

The dissertation will use footnotes instead of endnotes within the technical details explained above. Footnotes need to be used to explain materials that are relevant for the dissertation but not necessary in the main body text. Footnotes should be minimized to a possible extent.

Tables, Charts, Maps and Images

Only tables charts, maps and images that are directly relevant to the overall arguments must be used in the dissertation. All such materials where possible must be produced within the main text where they would make most sense. When this is not possible for reasons of space, they can be produced as annexes. Reference details of all these materials must be given in brief in the text itself, followed by

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details in the bibliography. If the tables, maps or photos are generated from field work, that fact should be mentioned whenever material is presented or in the introduction itself.

Bibliography

All the complete details of materials used and referred to in the dissertation must be presented in the bibliography in terms of the conventions explained below. Please maintain a space of one line between individual references.

Reference of a Book by a single Author

The general convention adopted by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; first name or initial(s) of author; year of publication; complete title of book; city of publication; name of the press. The title of the books must be in italics. For example:

Caldeira, Teresa P. R. 2000. *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Reference of a Book by More than One Author

The general convention suggested by the department is the following sequence: last name of first author; first name or initial(s) of first author; names of the other authors [first name(s) or initials first, and surname second]; year of publication; complete title of book; city of publication; name of the press. The title of the books must be in italics. For example:

Marcus, George and Michael M.J. Fischer. 1986. *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Reference of an Essay from an Edited Volume

The general convention adopted by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; first name or initial(s) of author; year of publication; complete title of the essay within single quotation marks; name of the editor and the title of the edited book; city of publication; name of the press. The title of the edited volume must be in italics. For example:

Donninger, Christian. 1986. 'Is It Always Efficient to Be Nice? A Computer Simulation of Axelrod's Computer Tournament,' Pp. 123–34. In, A. Diekmann and P. Mitter eds., *Paradoxical Effects of Social Behavior*. Heidelberg: Physica-Werlag.

Reference of an Essay from a Scholarly Journal

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The convention suggested by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; year of publication; complete title of the essay within single quotation marks; name of the journal in italics; volume details of the journal. For example:

Kapoor, Geetha. 1993. 'When was Modernism in Indian/Third World Art?' *South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 92 (3):23-48.

The same general conventions can be adopted when presenting references for materials from newspapers or magazines.

Reference of an Essay from a Website or Other Internet Source

The convention suggested by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; first name of the author; year of publication; complete title of the essay in italics; the link to the internet source; the date last accessed within brackets). For example:

Wickrema, Ariya and Peter Colenso. 2003, March. *Respect for Diversity in Educational Publication - The Sri Lankan Experience*. [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-112170327455/1439264-1126807073059/Paper Final. Pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-112170327455/1439264-1126807073059/Paper%20Final.Pdf) (Last accessed on 10 March 2012).

Reference of an Unpublished Source with a Date

It is possible that unpublished material such as dissertations might have to be used in writing a dissertation. In such situations, the convention suggested by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; first name (s) or initial(s) of the author; year of presentation; complete title of the dissertation in italics; details of the university or other institute to which the dissertation had been submitted. For example:

Subramaniam, S.K.N. 2003. *Politics of Sacred Space in Hindu Kovils in Northern Sri Lanka: A Sociological Analysis*. PhD dissertation submitted to the Department of Sociology, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

Reference of an Unpublished Source without a Date

It is possible that unpublished material such as manuscripts written by individuals might have to be used in writing a dissertation which may also not indicate when it might have been written. In such situations, the convention suggested by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; first name (s) or initial(s) of the author; a reference to the fact that the date of writing is not available; complete title of the work in italics; a reference to the fact that the work is not published. For example:

Islam, Ahmed Farouk. No Date. *Sufi Music In Northern India*. Unpublished manuscript.

Reference of a Published Source without a Date

Sometimes books and other texts are published without any reference to publication date. It is possible that such material might have to be used in a dissertation which may also not indicate when it might have been written. In such situations, the convention suggested by the department is the following sequence: last name of author; first name (s) or initial(s) of the author; a reference to the fact that the date of publishing is not available; complete title of the work in italics; city of publication; name of the press. For example:

Samarasinghe, S Mahinda. Date of publishing unavailable. *Sinhala Verse Forms*. Kandy: Sri Ram Press.

Sometimes, in addition to the absence of publication date, the press and the city of publication might also be missing. In such cases, use the following format:

Samarasinghe, S Mahinda. Date of publishing unavailable. *Sinhala Verse Forms*. Publication information unavailable.

Reference to an Audio Track from a Published Source

When using, music, lyrics or other such material from a CD or audio tape, the same general conventions referred to above can be used. For example, to refer to a specific music track from a published CD, the following format can be used: Last name of musician/singer; first name(s) or initial(s) of musician/singer; title of the track; title of the album; publication details. For example:

Khann, Bismillah. 2011. 'Raga Kedar.' In, *Instrumentalists of India*. Mumbai: Sony Music.

DISSERTATION GUIDE

(INCLUSIVE OF RULES PERTAINING TO THE M.A. DISSERTATION AND THE
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE)

MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN SOCIOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY



This document has been formulated, compiled and published by the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, South Asian University, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021, India. It is meant to be used for internal examination purposes by students in the MA degree program in sociology.

Department Webpage:

<http://www.southasianuniversity.org/Faculties/FSS/Soc/about.html>

Departmental Official Blog:

<http://sociology-sau.blogspot.in/>

Departmental Students' Blog:

<https://sausociology.wordpress.com/>

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Rules Pertaining to the M.A. Dissertation

Research Ethics Committee (REC)

Rules Pertaining to the M.A. Dissertation

The dissertation will be spread across two semesters – one course of four credits (in Semester III) and the other course of eight credits (in Semester IV).

Choosing a Supervisor

1. Students should determine their possible supervisor after having discussions with different faculty members, or based on their area of their expertise. There will be an upper limit of how many students a faculty member can mentor/supervise based on equal allotment for each faculty to supervise students.
2. Those who do not submit a preference for a supervisor will be allotted one alphabetically. There can be no change of supervisor once a preference is expressed, or allotment made.

Submission Dates

3. The dates for submission of the dissertation and dissertation related assignments will be notified by the Department.
4. Granting of an extension for submission rests with the Head of the Department, on recommendation of the supervisor.

Dissertation Components

5. The students will be evaluated in Semester III for the following dissertation-related assignments:
 - a. Research proposal (approx. word limit 2, 500 words).
 - b. Review of literature (which will become part of the final dissertation) not exceeding more than 3, 000 words.
6. The final dissertation will be submitted in Semester IV.
7. The final dissertation will not be less than 10, 000 words and will not exceed 15, 000 words, excluding the bibliography/references (Please refer to the [Style Sheet](#) for additional details).
8. The whole dissertation will be submitted in the format prescribed by the Department.

Evaluation

11. The evaluation in Semester III will be done after a presentation of the research proposal. The

assignments will be marked by the supervisor (out of 100 marks) and an evaluator (out of 100 marks). The marking will be done along following criterion:

- a) Adequacy of literature (10 marks)
 - b) Analysis of existing literature (20 marks)
 - c) Language and Stylistic issues (10 marks)
 - d) Accuracy of bibliographic details (10 marks)
 - e) General organization of the written research proposal and oral presentations (15 marks)
 - f) Clarity of research questions (10 marks)
 - g) Overall methodological approach (information collection, techniques proposed, sampling etc) (10 marks)
 - h) Explanation of theoretical approaches (10 marks)
 - i) Potential contributions (05 marks)
11. Students will be evaluated out of a total of 200 marks in Semester IV. Out of the 200 marks 80% will be for the written dissertation to be given by the supervisor and 20% marks for the final viva-voce.
 12. In Semester IV the evaluation will done by a team of two faculty members (including the supervisor) assigned for each dissertation. The supervisor will evaluate the written submission whereas the two other faculty members would evaluate the student based on his/her viva-voce.
 13. While writing the dissertation and related assignments, in either of the two semesters, students will follow the Style Sheet provided by the Department. Evaluators will deduct marks if the Style Sheet is not followed.
 14. The dissertation should not be plagiarized. If cases of plagiarism come to light the Department will refer the case to the Research Ethics Committee of the Department. The Committee will submit its report within three days based on which the case of the student will be considered and necessary action taken.
 15. A Research Committee shall be constituted by the Head of Department, which will decide upon the best dissertations, and publish them online as Students' Working Paper Series.

Research Ethics Committee (REC)

1. The Department would constitute a Research Ethics Committee (REC) at the beginning of each academic year, and forward the information regarding the same to the Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences. Information on the constitution of the REC will also be communicated to students.
2. The Committee will be constituted by the Head of the Department for a tenure period of one year.
3. It will consist of three members – One Associate Professor/Professor and two Assistant Professors.
4. The REC will be headed by the Associate Professor/Professor.
5. The Committee will look into complaints forwarded by faculty members on student assignments and other examination related offenses. In this context, plagiarism would mean:
 - a. Using someone else's words or ideas and pass them off as one's own.
 - b. It would include using texts written by others without acknowledging the author.

Other examination offenses would include copying answers from others or retrieving information for answers via electronic resources during examinations, which includes mobile phones.

6. The complaints shall be forwarded by individual faculty members to the Head of Department along with the assignment in soft as well as hard copy; in the case of other examination offenses, a report accompanied by the examination script concerned must be forwarded to the Head of Department. The Head of Department will forward these documentation to the REC.
7. The Committee will verify if there have been issues of plagiarism or other kinds of offenses in the complaints forwarded, and would recommend necessary action. Until the complaint is investigated and a report is submitted by the REC to the Head of Department, the assignment or the examination answer script concerned will not be graded.
8. The Committee may, at its own discretion, also look into complaints of copying of one student's assignment by other students.
9. The decisions and recommendations of the Committee will be forwarded to the SAU administration for necessary action. The decisions and recommendations of the Committee are not open for review.

DISSERTATION TITLE

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Sociology, South Asian University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIOLOGY

by

STUDENT NAME

ENROLLMENT NO.



Supervisor: Name

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Social Sciences

South Asian University

New Delhi

2018

Date:

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation titled ("**ADD TITLE**") submitted by (**ADD STUDENT'S NAME**) to the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, South Asian University, New Delhi, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Sociology is an original work and is free from plagiarised materials.

Student Name

Student Signature

Date

DATE:

Letter of Recommendation

I recommend that the dissertation titled **(“ADD TITLE“)** submitted by **(ADD STUDENT’S NAME)** to the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, South Asian University, New Delhi, be forwarded to the evaluation committee.

Supervisor Name

Supervisor

Designation

Department of Sociology

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Acknowledgements

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Faculty of Social Sciences**

South Asian University - New Delhi

Masters of Art in Sociology

Dissertation Grading Details

(To be filled by the supervisor and examiner)

Total Marks: 200

Name of Student:

Title of Dissertation.....

Name of Supervisor:

Name of Examiner:

	General organization and overall presentation (10)	Adequacy, presentation, and analysis of existing literature (20)	Language, bibliography and stylistic issues (10)	Clarity of research questions and themes (10)	Clarity of methods and data analysis (15)	Potentials towards contributing new and/or critical knowledge (15)	Presentation and performance over the semester (20)	Total (100)
Supervisor's Assessment								
Examiner's Assessment								

Marks in percentage (Total Marks obtained/200*100):

Letter Grade:

Supervisor's Signature:

Examiner's Signature:

Date:

Date:

The Chairperson
Department of Sociology
South Asian University

MA Dissertation Supervisor

Dear Sir or Madam:

This is to inform you that Dr. xx has agreed to be my dissertation supervisor. My tentative topic is.....

Sincerely

Thanking you

Student Name
Signature

Supervisor's name
Supervisor's signature