



The University of Manchester

MSc in Hand Surgery

Course Manual

School of Biological Sciences,
Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health
University of Manchester
and
British Society for Surgery of the Hand

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1. Introduction

This manual provides information on the dissertation option by which you can progress from the Postgraduate Diploma in Hand Surgery to a Master's in Hand Surgery. By its nature a dissertation constitutes a more independent piece of work. The objective is to develop your research skills and expertise.

This manual is not an authoritative guide on writing a dissertation, but it sets out the various options and details the University requirements. Where possible, we aim to be flexible, helping to meet the needs of the participant alongside the University regulations. All participants will be paired with a dissertation supervisor.

Information on generic skills relevant to research endeavour known as Good Clinical Practice is available on various platform (See Appendix J) and it is recommended that you work through these modules including the integral assessments to gain the course credits. These materials will be helpful to you.

The University provides guidance on language skills directly relevant to writing a dissertation (see link below). This includes information and guidance on:

- Writing a dissertation
- Referencing
- Avoiding plagiarism.

<https://www.languagecentre.manchester.ac.uk/resources/online-resources/online-skills-development/academic-english/academic-writing/writing-dissertations/>

2. Frequently Asked Questions

Am I eligible to take the MSc?

You must have passed your Diploma.

From your Diploma exam you have 5 years to commence the Masters programme. At enrolment, you will rescind the Diploma. Then you will have two years (at part-time) to complete and be awarded the Masters or revert to Diploma.

How long does it take?

12 months full time and 24 months part time. It is advised that you register for the part time course.

It is usually started at the start of the next academic year (September) after you pass the Diploma. After the Diploma exam in October / November the rest of the academic year is spent attending the Research and Design Course (usually June), finding a tutors (personal and academic) and deciding on a project. You are then ready to register for the start of the next academic year in September.

How much does it cost?

Please email diploma@bssh.ac.uk to inquire about the present registration fee.

Is there a viva?

No, your mark is calculated on your written submission only

How much work is it?

The dissertation represents 60 credits which is a notional 600 hours of participant effort. The Postgraduate Diploma in Hand Surgery contributes 120 credits and alongside the dissertation comprises the 180 credit Masters programme. The dissertation is usually 10,000-15,000 words with additional information in the appendices.

How is the mark worked out?

Your Diploma result makes up 2/3 and the dissertation mark is 1/3 of the Masters final mark. Your Diploma mark is available on request from the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator.

How do I submit registration forms and other paperwork?

All paperwork is handled electronically via the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator.

2 years part-time may not be long enough for original research, how does this course work?

This MSc does not expect primary research. It is based on previously published evidence, previously collected (but unused) data or other types of academic study.

3. Algorithm of Dissertation Process



IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU READ APPENDIX A which details about what should be completed and when

4. What is the dissertation?

The dissertation is a detailed piece of work, presented in written format that further develops the participant's knowledge and expertise in a topic relevant to Hand Surgery.

Dissertations, in general, often involve studying a particular topic/question in depth, and should demonstrate evidence of ability to undertake sustained critical analysis. The dissertation provides an opportunity for participants to demonstrate their research/project skills and produce a useful piece of written work.

At Masters level, the dissertation needs to demonstrate that the participant can understand how existing evidence/information relates to a particular question, and how their own work adds to this. Independent thinking is required with demonstration of ability to critique one's own work and that of others. Participants need to be aware of the implications of their work and defend their findings through their written dissertation. There is no viva voce examination of the dissertation.

5. Summary of dissertation options?

The dissertation represents a third of your postgraduate Masters degree (that is equivalent to four units/modules, a total of 60 credits). [The Postgraduate Diploma in Hand Surgery represents eight modules or 120 credits].

The following dissertation options are available (see [Section 23](#) for further details):

- Systematic Review (adapted systematic review)
- Methodology Review
- Research grant proposal
- Clinical audit /Service development or evaluation study
- Clinical research (including BSSH or locally-based projects)
- Laboratory-based project (including BSSH or locally-based projects)
- Publication-based dissertation

6. Good Clinical Practice online training

Good Clinical Practice is a training course which provides the background for all clinically based research and will be a useful resource for the rest of your career. It takes you through the legal and procedural framework governing clinical research in the UK so that you will understand how to safely and effectively conduct or participate in clinical research.

The certificate once gained is current for 5 years and is held independent of the MSc Hand Surgery. You will be required to work through specific modules of the course including their integrated assessments to gain the necessary course credits to be awarded the GCP certificate.

See [Appendix J](#) for further information. It is recommended that you undertake the GCP training prior to attending the Research Design Skills course.

7. When can I start?

Participants must have their dissertation proposal approved by the BSSH Diploma & Masters Committee before starting any substantive work on their dissertation as described later.

- Participants must have successfully completed the BSSH Postgraduate Diploma in Hand Surgery.
- From award of Diploma (this is formally designated the Exam Board meeting date: usually in the January/February after the exam) the candidate has 5 years to commence the Masters programme.
- All part time participants have two academic years to complete their dissertation once they have registered (one year for full time). This is a university regulation.
- Please refer to [Appendix A](#) 'Registration Progress'.

8. When must I finish?

The University regulation states that part time participants must submit their dissertation within the 2 academic years of registering for the dissertation.

You can hand in your completed dissertation at any time during the academic year and it will then be marked. However, this does not necessarily mean you will receive formal notification or your qualification any earlier.

- Participants should, AT THE LATEST, submit their dissertation before the start of September at the end of the second academic year following registration.

Can I extend the finish time?

- In *exceptional* circumstances, participants may be granted an interruption.

- This interruption is granted prospectively. The Diploma and Masters Committee must be informed as soon as possible of the exceptional circumstance. Interruptions, resulting in extensions, will be granted on a case by case basis.

9. Dissertation milestones

The university academic year run from the start of September to end of August.

Therefore, registration for the Masters in Hand Surgery is in September.

Pre Masters year:

October/November

- Hand Diploma passed

November – June:

- Let the Diploma and Masters Committee Co-ordinator know your intention to take the Masters
- Complete Good Clinical Practice course
- Attend Research and Design skills course

July – August:

- Register with the University Via the Diploma and Masters Committee Co-ordinator
- Identify a topic, a supervisor and personal tutor

Masters Year 1

September:

- Complete and submit the 'Meeting with supervisor' and 'Dissertation Commencement' forms (hand book [Appendix D](#) & [Appendix E](#))
- Approval from MSc Lead to start
- Prepare draft and complete and submit 'Meeting with supervisor to provide feedback on First Draft' form (Appendix F)
- Complete and submit 'Form A' with personal tutor (Appendix H)

October:

- Start work on dissertation

February:

- Submit review meeting with supervisor ([Appendix G](#))

August:

- Submit review meeting with supervisor ([Appendix G](#))
- Complete and submit 'Form B' with personal tutor ([Appendix H](#))

Masters Year 2

February:

- Submit review meeting with supervisor ([Appendix G](#))

July:

- Submit 'notice of submission' form ([Appendix I](#)) – 6 weeks prior to submission

August:

- Submit dissertation
- Complete and submit 'Final form' with personal tutor ([Appendix H](#))

10. How do I choose a project?

Participants are expected to develop their own project ideas and this is your opportunity to develop an area of particular interest that will be of assistance to you in your future clinical practice. It can be helpful to discuss these with work colleagues and other members of the programme.

When choosing your project it might be helpful to think about the following:

- Classically, a good dissertation is one that examines a tightly structured problem/research question, is clearly focused, and takes a critical approach with a relevant methodology/structure.
- You will need to make appropriate use of previous work relating to the problem being studied and adopt a critical approach to the data.
- Include discussion on the relevance of your findings, the 'so what' factor, and what changes/recommendations you think would increase further knowledge and/or improve services.
- You will be expected to show how your work is relevant to the practice of hand surgery.

11. Regulatory issues

Participants are responsible for ensuring that all University and external, organisational and legal requirements are followed relevant to their dissertation.

12. Supervision

All participants will have a dissertation supervisor who can offer guidance at all stages of preparation of the dissertation. You can either choose your own supervisor or one can be allocated to you. Supervisors are experienced academics or clinicians.

The supervisor needs to be approved by the BSSH and The University of Manchester. If the supervisor is not currently registered this can be organized by the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator who will ask them to complete the relevant paperwork. A list of approved supervisors is available from the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator. Further details of the requirements to act in the supervisor's role and the application form are detailed in Appendix C.

The supervisor is confirmed / allocated before the dissertation proposal has been approved so that the proposal can be discussed with the supervisor first. Clearly participants need a supervisor who has particular experience in the chosen area. However, participants need to be mindful that the role of the supervisor is limited, and the dissertation is to be the participant's own work.

Some participants may also have a local project supervisor who is often another consultant from the specialty, to assist with day-to-day queries about their work and project management. Supervisors are not responsible in any way for the final work that you submit.

It is important that you start **regular** contact with your supervisor. Please discuss any concerns with your supervisor about your dissertation, the progress of your work and the support you require. Appendix G contains further guidance. Please contact the MSc Lead and/or your personal tutor if you experience any problems with your supervision.

Participants and supervisors need to develop a working relationship for the dissertation process over the academic year. This is another reason for you to start work on your dissertation earlier rather than later. Participants starting the dissertation process later in the academic year will, by default, receive less supervisory input.

13. Dissertation Commencement Form

Once you have formulated your ideas and discussed them with your supervisor, you should complete the form in Appendix D and submit alongside your project proposal using the Dissertation Commencement Form, Appendix E (this is different to the Notice of Submission Form).

Your proposal will then be assessed by the MSc lead on the Diploma & Masters Committee. If it is satisfactory your project will be approved.

A number of factors will be considered when reviewing your proposal. These include:

1. The relevance of your proposal to hand surgery
2. Demonstration of an academic approach
3. Your general understanding of the topic at this stage
4. The suitability of the chosen research methods & study design
5. The ability of your proposal to demonstrate your understanding of critical research methods.
6. The scope and time scales of the study.

Generally, the main reason why proposals are rejected is due to inadequate attention to points 4-6 above. Reviewers appreciate that your understanding of the topic and methods will develop as you work on your dissertation and receive guidance from a supervisor. However, from experience, we know that participants are more likely to produce a successful dissertation once they have done some initial groundwork and considered the factors listed above.

14. Personal Tutors

The role of the Personal Tutor is to discuss related issues arising whilst on the programme that are of a non-academic nature.

Your supervisor will be separate to your Personal Tutor.

You will need to fill in and submit your personal development plans at the start of the course in September, after one year (midpoint) and at completion. The forms can be found in Appendix H.

15. Monitoring

Participants and supervisors are required to complete a joint monitoring form every six months (Appendix G). The timing starts roughly 6 months after the start of the academic year in September. These forms are then submitted every 6 Months (three monthly for full time participants).

This is an important part of the participant-supervisor relationship and is in line with the processes you have already experienced whilst undertaking the Hand Diploma. The monitoring form would also highlight any problems/concerns with the participant's progress that may have been overlooked. It helps you keep your Dissertation supervisor and the Personal Tutor updated about your progress. The monitoring form will be used to inform any grievances relating to the participant-supervisor relationship. Participants are responsible for completing this form with their tutor. Completed forms are sent to:

diploma@bssh.ac.uk

16. Recording progress

It is good practice to keep a record of your progress and a record of feedback from your supervisor. This can also help us if we need to find you another supervisor midway through your work. Participants will be expected to keep track of their own progress and to initiate contact/support from their supervisor.

Remember to submit:

- Six monthly Review meeting forms ([Appendix G](#))
- Personal development plan forms ([Appendix H](#))

17. Presenting your dissertation

The intention to submit dissertation should be sent 6 weeks prior to actual submission. This allows those who are examining your dissertation to plan their workload and then give timely attention to your work when it actually arrives. The Notice of Submission Form is used for this purpose and should be sent to the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator at the BSSH office. (diploma@bssh.ac.uk)

Word Count

The word count for the dissertation should be 10-15,000 words, with a margin of around +/- 10%. The word count includes the main body of the text, headings and titles. **It excludes the first few formal pages of the dissertation (such as contents, declarations etc.) and appendices and references.** Please refer to the University's 'Guidance for the Presentation of Taught Masters Dissertations' for guide to presentation details:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2863>

Dissertation titles

It is helpful for the dissertation title to reflect the topic AND methodology.

Referencing

Correct referencing throughout your dissertation is an important part of your academic work and is considered by the examiners. A number of computer programmes are available to help with this though this is not essential. Referencing can be produced in Word for example, or manual systems can be used to help along the way. It is advised not to leave your referencing until after you have written your dissertation.

On this course we prefer participants to use the European Journal of Hand Surgery referencing system.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/pb->

[assets/cmscontent/JHS/JHSE%20submission%20guidelines%20July%202020.doc](https://journals.sagepub.com/pb-assets/cmscontent/JHS/JHSE%20submission%20guidelines%20July%202020.doc)

18. Notification of Intent to Submit

All participants must inform the University via the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator diploma@bssh.ac.uk of an intention to submit a dissertation, Appendix I. This needs to be done *at least six weeks* before the hand in date by completing a Notice of Submission Form. Counting back six weeks from the beginning of September, this means that the Notice of Submission Form *needs to be received by early-mid July*. The Society will not accept your dissertation unless this form has been submitted.

Graduation ceremonies for both the Postgraduate Diploma in Hand Surgery and the Masters in Hand Surgery are held at the BSSH Scientific Meetings.

19. How do I hand in my dissertation?

You are required to submit an electronic copy of your completed dissertation in PDF format. This needs to be sent to diploma@bssh.ac.uk

Please send this as a single complete file either in Word or as a PDF.

The email needs to contain the following statement:

“I confirm that this electronic file is an exact copy of the printed dissertation submitted for examination”

The dissertation should be prepared in line with the University of Manchester’s ‘Guidance for the Presentation of Taught Masters Dissertations’ policy:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2863>

A paper copy of your dissertation may be requested by an examiner. A soft bound copy is suitable.

Binding

On this course we accept soft and hard-bound dissertations.

20. Plagiarism

The University uses electronic systems for the purposes of detecting plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice. Such systems include Turnitin, the plagiarism detection service used by the University. Plagiarism is a serious offence and can result in participants failing the overall degree. This does happen occasionally so please make sure you understand this topic.

Further information is available at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2870>

Please note that when work is submitted to the relevant electronic systems, it may be copied and then stored in a database to allow appropriate checks to be made. In line with GDPR, please read the University's retention schedule:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=6514>

21. Use of Artificial Intelligence in the MSc

There is an increased ability for Artificial intelligence to be used to support education and document/coursework production. This resource can be used to support your learning and production of coursework material, however output from such sources must be treated as work created by another person, i.e. used critically and with permitted license, and cited and acknowledged.

Presenting work created by GenAI without suitable acknowledgement is plagiarism, and must be treated using the same principles and processes as plagiarism.

A document from the University of Manchester clarifying the use of A.I. generated information can be found at:

[https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=70286.](https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=70286)

22. Marking process

You need to allow up to two months to receive your dissertation mark. In certain cases it can be longer. There will be two examiners, normally your Dissertation Supervisor with a further Independent Examiner nominated by the MSc lead on behalf of BSSH. Both examiners assess your dissertation independently, on the basis of the written submission, then discuss the mark to be awarded. There is no viva voce examination. If the examiners fail to reach agreement on your mark, then the dissertation will be sent to an experienced third party for a further mark. A separate External Examiner oversees the quality assurance aspects of the process.

All dissertations are assessed using a formal marking system: (see also [Appendix K Full mark sheet](#))

Grade	Achievement
90-100%	EXCELLENT – allows award of DISTINCTION. Exceptional work, nearly or wholly faultless for that expected at Masters level. Perfect presentation.
80-89%	EXCELLENT – allows award of DISTINCTION. Work of excellent quality throughout. Excellent presentation.
70-79%	VERY GOOD – allows award of MERIT. Work of very high to excellent quality showing originality, high accuracy, thorough understanding, and critical appraisal. Shows a wide and thorough understanding of the material studied, and the relevant literature, and the ability to apply the theory and methods learned to solve unfamiliar problems. Very good presentation.
60-69%	GOOD PASS – allows award of MERIT. Work of good to high quality showing evidence of understanding of the research topic, good accuracy, good structure and relevant conclusions. Shows a good knowledge of the material studied and the relevant literature and some ability to tackle unfamiliar problems. Good presentation.
50-59%	PASS . Work shows a clear grasp of relevant facts and issues and reveals an attempt to create a coherent whole. It comprises reasonably clear and attainable objectives, adequate literature review and some originality. Presentation is acceptable, minor corrections allowed.
40-49%	MASTERS FAIL Work shows a satisfactory understanding of the research topic and basic knowledge of the relevant literature but with little or no originality and limited accuracy. Shows clear but limited objectives and does not always reach a conclusion. Presentation adequate but requires correction.
30-39%	MASTERS FAIL Work shows some understanding of the main elements of the research topic and some knowledge of the relevant literature. Shows a limited level of accuracy with little analysis of data or attempt to discuss its significance. Presentation poor, substantial corrections required.
20-29%	FAIL Limited relevant material presented. Little understanding of research topic. Unclear or unsubstantiated arguments with very poor accuracy and understanding. Presentation unacceptable
0-19%	FAIL Limited understanding of the research process. The topic is largely without evidence to support its exploration for research and the arguments are supported by poor sources of evidence. The thesis is disjointed and does not demonstrate logical coherent thinking with unacceptable presentation. Would require totally reworking in content and presentation if it were to be resubmitted.

Participants will normally be allowed one resubmission of a failed dissertation and this will normally be within six months of the date of the publication of the result.

The BSSH Diploma and Masters Committee, in agreement with the External Examiner may, exceptionally, decide not to allow resubmission.

The Masters will be graded taking into account the mark obtained on the Dissertation but also the mark previously obtained in the Diploma assessment. The contribution of the diploma and dissertation marks to the Masters grade reflects the course credit allocation. The Diploma accounts for 2/3 and the dissertation 1/3.

23. Publications from the dissertation

We encourage all graduates of the programme to think about having their work published in an academic journal such as the European Journal of Hand Surgery. This benefits your Curriculum Vitae/career progression/revalidation and can help share knowledge about your findings too. A publication could take the form of an editorial or scientific report.

Please discuss publication with your supervisor who might be interested in supporting you (though this is not formally part of their role). Your supervisor might also have ideas about the suitability of your work, the relevant journals, and what aspects to focus on. We also ask that you acknowledge that the work was part of a Masters in Hand Surgery of the BSSH/ University of Manchester. If you are successful, please send us the reference.

24. Dissertation Options

The following pages contain further details in respect of the individual dissertation options.

Participants are NOT expected to carry out primary research and collect new data. Studies requiring new ethical approvals are outside the scope of a Masters in Hand Surgery. However, there may be circumstances where a study may have to be reviewed by an NHS Research and Ethics Committee and further information is given in the Supervisor Guidance pages.

23.1 Full or Adapted Systematic Review

Adapted Systematic Reviews provide an opportunity for participants to develop their skills in systematically collating, assessing and summarising existing sources of evidence. The amount of work involved can be influenced by the number of studies that could be included in the review. For the purposes of this dissertation, participants can limit the number of studies in their review (see below). Generally, a minimum of between five and ten studies needs to be included in the main part of the review to demonstrate your skills and understanding to the examiner. However, a good review can still be completed even if no eligible studies can be found (see below).

You will need to develop a good question and then register your title on the Prospero database (<https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/>). You can also use this resource to check if your area of study is already being investigated by others.

An Adapted Systematic Review need not be limited to randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and you are not expected to complete a meta-analysis for the dissertation although one can be included if appropriate. Participants will need to include in the dissertation the rationale for the types of study designs included in the review. You are encouraged to use a recognised framework for conducting systematic reviews that is appropriate to your research question.

The content of the actual review will vary depending on the research question and the approach taken. You are expected to highlight how your work is relevant to Hand Surgery. Generally, it is likely to include:

Introduction/background: This is similar to the Case for Support described in the Grant Proposal option (see [Section 23.2](#)).

Study design/methods including: You need to develop a suitable review methodology appropriate to your research question. The structure of the review is then likely to include:

- i. Clearly defined research question

- ii. Definition of intervention
- iii. Criteria for inclusion/exclusion of studies
- iv. Definition of study populations
- v. Primary and secondary outcomes for the review
- vi. Methods of analysis/summarising data
- vii. Methods for assessing study quality
- viii. Search strategy & sources of literature/information

Results including:

- ix. Flow chart of search process/included & excluded studies
- x. Summary of data extraction
- xi. Summary of included studies
- xii. Assessment of methodological quality
- xiii. Summary of treatment effects

Discussion: this is likely to cover some of the areas/issues described in the dissertation option “Quantitative Research Report” (see [Section 23.3](#))

Other sections are likely to include conclusion, references, appendices etc.

Dealing with too many or too few studies

Good quality search strategies for some research questions can identify hundreds, sometimes thousands of potentially eligible studies to be reviewed. Participants are unlikely to have sufficient time (and indeed support from a second reviewer) to suitably deal with this. Therefore, it is possible to limit the number of studies for the dissertation. This could be done for example, by limiting the years of publication in the search strategy, or only including UK studies (or for that matter non UK studies), or limiting studies by population such as just women, or by a specific age group. If you use one of these approaches then it needs to be clearly stated in the methods, results and discussion section.

In some cases, you might find less than a handful of potentially eligible studies for your review or none at all. This does not rule out conducting an Adapted Systematic Review for your dissertation. You will still be able to complete all of the sections outlined above until the results section. You could then explore possible strengths and weaknesses of your search strategy, or inclusion/exclusion criteria for example, before providing a more narrative review of some of the ‘weaker’ forms of evidence that did not pass your criteria. It is unlikely that nothing has been published on your research question at all. You could then conclude with recommendations about what research was needed, what form this might take, and why it was important. These are just ideas and participants taking this option will be able to enter wider thinking with their supervisor.

23.2 Research Grant Proposal

This option is likely to appeal to participants who have identified the need for a particular area of research or those keen to develop a research project after completing their MSc in Hand Surgery. The dissertation will contain information under the headings often used by funding bodies (for example Medical Research Council) You will also need to include a detailed critical appraisal of the existing literature as part of your justification for the study. Participants are expected to demonstrate their research skills and wider understanding of some of the key concepts covered on this Masters in Hand Surgery. Simply submitting a research protocol will not be sufficient to pass your dissertation.

In this option the participant should assume the role of Principal Investigator for the purpose of the dissertation.

The dissertation can be considered in four main sections:

- 1. Case for support.** This section needs to show:
 - Why does this particular research need to be done?
 - Why should resources be dedicated to this topic and what gaps in knowledge does the research seek to address?
 - How might it lead to an improvement in a particular setting/context/population?

You will clearly formulate the problem setting it in context of scientific and/or theoretical debates. You need to show how it is relevant to trying to improve the health of a particular group of people or locality. This section will include a detailed critique of existing literature relating to the topic and bring in other information to highlight the case for support. You will acknowledge and critique existing studies or data sources and explain the problems with these – in other words, why more research is needed. It is important to reflect on the implications of the proposed research in terms of future healthcare policy/planning or interventions and how it might benefit potential users of your findings. Thus you could include at some point in the dissertation a clear dissemination policy of your findings.

- 2. Research/study methods. The detailed study design must be directly** related to your stated primary and secondary objectives and capable of answering the proposed research question. Whilst you are not asked to go on and do the actual study, the proposal must be related to current circumstances and existing evidence – it must be a study design that could actually be carried out in practice. You will give a clear rationale for the particular elements of the research project, using appropriate references to support specific parts of your study design. For example, your methods of sampling (if relevant) and evidence to support the sample size for the project need to be clearly justified. Similarly, you need to justify your choice of data collection methods/measurement tools, and what can be expected in terms of response rates. Part of the study design will include an analysis plan of your collected

data. It is not sufficient to just say that “methods suitable for continuous data will be used” for example – you need to give a detailed plan and again support your methods.

3. **A section on resources/costings** is required. Here you need to provide information on the direct costs to carry out the research project. For example, how many research staff will be needed to manage the study and how much will it cost to employ them? This section must be realistic, set in a particular context/region and where possible, supported with evidence. This will coincide with a detailed time plan which can be helpful to present as a Gantt chart.

All research needs to follow accepted ethical principles such as the Declaration of Helsinki and research governance. Whilst these may vary across different countries, remember that your final postgraduate award (if successful) is from the University of Manchester – as such you would be expected to show your understanding and application of research ethics and governance expected from research conducted in the United Kingdom and apply this as appropriate to your own setting. This will include an assessment of risks to different stakeholders and how you have tried to minimise any risks, including contingency plans, in your research design.

4. **Discussion** The discussion section is one of the most important parts of any dissertation. Here you need to reflect on the relevance/importance of your research question and of your proposed research design. This can bring in some of the wider literature/evidence to develop arguments to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of your proposed research. You can discuss and reflect on some aspects of the study design, including a critique of your methods, and show how you have tried to use rigorous methods for your research that reflect the body of existing knowledge in that area. Research rarely goes to plan and you can show how you have considered some of the potential difficulties in completing the research and how you have tried to overcome these in your proposal. Whilst you will not have any actual findings to discuss, you can postulate what these might be and the implications of a positive or null-finding from your research in terms of service delivery/health policy for example.

5. **Other sections** are likely to include references, appendices etc.

23.3 Qualitative/Theoretical Study

This form of dissertation provides an opportunity to develop skills in working with qualitative data and could include one of the following approaches to consider a topic of interest:

- Qualitative study using available data
- A theoretical/narrative review
- Policy analysis or discourse analysis/content analysis
- A critical review of a policy using framework analysis.

For example development of NICE guidelines for a hand surgery procedure would fall into this category. If the topic is a specific focus of policy strategies, then the study should include analysis of policy documents.

A qualitative research report for the dissertation is likely to include the following sections:

1. Introduction/background: This section needs to show:

- Why this particular research needs to be done? Or outline the impetus for the study.
- Why resources should be dedicated to this topic and the gaps in knowledge the research seeks to address.
- How improvements in a particular setting/context/population/policy framework might be achieved.

These actions help contextualise the study, demonstrate its relevance and build an argument for what you want to do and why. This section will include a detailed critique of existing literature and/or other information to highlight the case and generate support for your analysis of the topic. You will also need to acknowledge and critique existing studies/data sources and explain the problems that have arisen when others have used different methods to investigate the topic to discuss how previous work has shaped your own ideas.

2. Study design/methods including: You need to develop a review methodology appropriate to your research question. Structure of the review is likely to include, although it is not exclusive to, the following:

- Clearly defined research question; Statement of intent outlining what you want to achieve as part of the investigative process;
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria for the studies/texts/policy documents/data sets being analysed;
- Definition of study population;
- Methods for assessing study quality;
- Methods of analysing/summarising (secondary) data;
- Sources of data arranged into themes outlining their appropriateness ready for presentation in the results section.

Participants could choose a topic that has been previously researched via a number of published qualitative research studies and produce a metasynthesis such as a Cochrane review.

3. Results:

Generate and present themes from the data to demonstrate where ideas originated or highlight themes following analysis of the policy/theory/empirical data sources to generate alternative ways of considering the findings.

4. Discussion:

This is where you will reflect on the relevance/importance of your analysis, and quality of your conclusions set in the context of existing knowledge. You can draw on wider literature/evidence to highlight the robustness, transferability or strengths and weaknesses of your analysis; to show what value can be placed on the conclusions you derived from the generated/reanalysed data. It is important to discuss the value of existing data sources and what you would have done differently if starting again. The discussion needs to explore the implications of your findings, particularly related to health care policy and/or practice by highlighting any recommendations arising from your work. If questions remain unanswered you need to demonstrate how they might be addressed and outline the focus of any future research. It is important to reflect on the implications of the research to demonstrate what future scientific or health care policy/planning interventions or practice improvements might ensue and the benefit to patients and/or clinical staff of your findings.

5. Other sections.

A conclusion will need to draw the debate to a close by synthesising the main points highlighted by your research. This final section could also include a clear dissemination policy of your findings. Other sections will include references, appendices – which come after references – should only include supporting information not material vital to the integrity of the dissertation.

23.4 Quantitative Research Report using Secondary Data

This option takes the format of a quantitative research project. It provides an opportunity for participants to work from an existing data set to answer research questions. You need to ensure that you have legitimate access and use of the data for the purposes of your dissertation. In some cases you will be asked to provide a formal letter of access from the person/organisation responsible for the data.

Data sources could include use of an existing data set that the participant has permission to use. This could include analyses from one of the large national research databases or surveys or a more local data set. Specifically, this could potentially include access to the BSSH audit database.

Analysis of a previous or current research project that the participant has been involved with. Specifically, it may be possible to undertake a novel analysis on your own previously collected data and it will be for the Academic Panel of BSSH to take a view on whether the proposal constitutes a sufficient contribution to be allowed for these purposes. Simply recycling work that has been produced for a previous research degree or publication will not be permitted. Remember that Supervisors are not in the position to support primary data collection.

A quantitative research report for the dissertation is likely to include the following sections:

- (1) Introduction, Background & Critical Review of Existing Literature.** These sections will cover similar issues/areas to those highlighted in the Case for Support Option 2. Research Grant Proposal (see [Section 23.2](#)).
- (2) Methods & Study Design.** Here you will need to provide a detailed description of the existing data set, including how the information was obtained, over what time period, using what methods and who took part. You will also need to be clear about the aims of the main data set/research project, AND of your specific aims that you are seeking to address in the dissertation. This will be followed by your proposal to answer those questions yourself using all or part of the dataset of choice. In a way, you might be performing a sub-study nested within a much broader and larger information/research project. At some point in your dissertation you will need to give attention to the integrity of the data, and how reliable it might be.
- (3) Analysis & Results.** This will form a key part of your dissertation, along with the other sections. You will need to provide a detailed plan, and justification for your proposed methods of analysis. Before starting the analysis, you will need to familiarise yourself fully with the dataset and ensure that you understand the meaning of each variable. You will need to check that the data are free from errors and presented in a workable format for your dissertation. Do not underestimate the time involved in this 'cleaning and preparation' stage. In the analysis you will need to justify any deviances to your original plan and be clear about any assumptions that you make. In presenting your results, think about the most effective ways to present and communicate your findings. Remember that you want to capture key findings from the study in

a clear and meaningful way; otherwise the reader will find it difficult to identify what you found. But don't go overboard with the number of tables, charts and graphs. Stick to presenting what the reader needs in order to understand what you found in relation to your current study objectives. A key skill is in knowing what and how much needs to be presented by way of analysis output and results.

(4) Discussion The discussion section is one of the most important parts of any dissertation. Here you will reflect on the relevance/importance of your research question, the quality of your research findings, and set these into the current context of existing knowledge. You can bring in some of the wider literature/evidence to develop arguments to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of your research and show what value can be placed on your actual findings. It is important to discuss the value of the existing data source and to consider alternative/superior ways to answer your research question in future. The discussion section usually includes consideration of the implications of your findings, particularly to science or health policy and practice. In other words, what recommendations might arise from your work. It is not uncommon to find dissertations and academic papers finishing with the phrase “more research is required” – this obvious statement conveys little information to the reader about what you actually know about the subject. If questions remain unanswered then provide some direction in terms of how they might be answered.

(5) Other sections are likely to include references, appendices etc.

23.5 Service Development or Evaluation Study

This option is a small-scale Service Development/ Audit of Service or Evaluation Study completed in the participant's place of work. It is a small-scale piece of clinically relevant hand surgery service research. Hand surgery service research is defined as involving research into methods of care and the effectiveness and efficiency of existing services in implementing medical and scientific knowledge to improve health and health-related outcomes in hand surgery service users.

In addition, there are many other ways in which participants contribute to both the evidence base of their profession and to the development and delivery of clinical and other services in their place of work, that is, they are able to conduct a study that focuses on service development.

The small-scale Service Development or Evaluation Study option is further designed to develop the skills necessary for carrying out such work in the NHS and other health care settings.

Such studies can encompass both research work (the development of new knowledge and practice) and audit work (the assessment of practice to influence the activity of a service and identify when further research is required).

The essential feature of a Service Development or Evaluation Study is a clear research or evaluation question that arises from actual clinical or service issues. Therefore, participants will report on work that has been commissioned by an NHS organisation. The specific structure and objectives of the dissertation report will be influenced by its aims and objectives. At a masters level the dissertation will always need to contain a critical approach including critical appraisal and critical reflective thinking. All reports are likely to include a conclusion/recommendations, references and appendices.

A number of different styles of reports could be used for the dissertation. These include, and are not mutually exclusive to:

- Service development/organisational change/audit
- Evaluation of service delivery/policy
- Training or resource product

Given time and financial constraints, this option can only be selected if the participant intends either to carry out a Service Development or Evaluation Study for which ethical approval has already been obtained or intends to carry out work that does **not** require ethical approval. The latter category includes audit studies, work using extant databases and work using routinely collected clinical data

To re-assert methodological rigour, all studies should:

- Refer to an identifiable research or audit issue
- Be based around specific audit or research questions
- Make reference to an existing knowledge basis

Structure & Objectives

Introduction

This option allows participants to present a proposal for a service development or a plan to audit/evaluate an aspect of service delivery. The format for a dissertation reporting on these aspects of organisational change/evaluation will usually include a small-scale literature review, detail of the change /audit proposed and the methods which will inform its implementation. However, it is not necessary to implement the organisational change/audit for the purposes of the dissertation.

Structure & Objectives

The content of the report of the organisational change/audit will usually include the following:

1. Background, existing evidence and rationale for change/audit
 - a. To clearly identify, describe the organisational change/serviceevaluation which will be the focus of the dissertation
 - b. A review of relevant research, literature and policy related to the aspect of provision that is to be changed/audited.
 - c. To provide an evidence synthesis of the above review and a justification for the organisational change/service evaluation proposed.
2. Organisational change/audit
 - a. To set out clear aims and objectives for the proposed service development/audit. These should be drawn from and linked to the preceding literature review.
 - b. To present a clear plan (including timescale, resources and methods of evaluation) of the service development/audit and how it will be completed; informed by relevant concepts/theories (e.g. leadership management of change, service development/improvement frameworks) and rationale for the strategies proposed.
 - c. To consider the factors that is likely to facilitate/impede the development/audit.
 - d. To provide an overview of how the outcome of the proposed change/audit will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders.
3. Relevant documentation

Any relevant documentation that supports the proposal (e.g. GANTTchart, detail of protocol to be implemented, audit tool etc.)

23.6 Publication-based dissertation

Example structure

It is essential that the journal format dissertation includes detailed and critical analysis of the work and methods used, since sections formatted for publication/dissemination may not already include this level of detail. The structure of the journal format thesis should include the following:

- Context of the research which should incorporate a section defining the rationale of the investigation and the strategy employed during the research as demonstrated in the dissertation;
- Review of previous research including a section summarising and synthesising previous research in the field of investigation;
- Methodology detailing the methods employed during the research and a detailed critique analysis of those methods and the information they provide;
- Presentation of results and their analysis in a format suitable for presentation in a peer-reviewed journal;
- Summary/conclusion drawing together the various outcomes of the work into a coherent synthesis and indicating directions for future work;
- References and appendices should be included as in a peer-reviewed journal as described in Section 17.

25. Bibliography for all dissertation options

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Rutter, L. (2013) Continuing Professional Development in Social Work (London: Sage/Learning Matters).

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Wooffitt, R. (2005). *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis: A Comparative and Critical Introduction*. London. Sage.

Appendix A: Documentation at a glance

Registration Process

1. Confirm with the BSSH that you wish to proceed
2. Select and approach a dissertation supervisor. If the chosen supervisor is not already approved. The supervisor then completes and submits the 'MSc Hand Surgery Dissertation Supervisor Approval Form' (sent to University of Manchester for approval via the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator)
3. Complete and submit the University of Manchester registration form (via the MSc coordinator and make a payment of registration fee.
4. Complete and submit the 'Meeting with Supervisor to Discuss Research Proposal' form (Appendix D) (send to the Diploma and Masters Committee for approval)
5. Complete and submit the 'Dissertation Commencement Form' ([Appendix E](#)) (send to the Diploma and Masters Committee for approval)

Process Documentation

1. Prepare a draft of your full project proposal and meet with your supervisor to discuss this, record the meeting on the 'Meeting with Supervisor to Provide Feedback on First Draft of the Project Proposal' form ([Appendix F](#)) and submit to the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator
2. Formulate a Personal Development Plan (PDP) with your Personal Tutor and record this on 'Form A' ([Appendix H](#))
3. Meet with your Supervisor every 6 months (or 3 monthly for full time study), complete and submit to the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator the 'Record of Review Meetings with Dissertation Supervisor of Research Project' forms (Appendix G)
4. At appropriate stages of your project meet with your Personal Tutor to discuss your PDP ([Appendix H](#)), use 'Form A' (initial meeting), 'Form B' (midpoint) and 'Form C' (final meeting) to record these discussions

The Final Stages

1. Share the first draft of your thesis to your supervisor and ideally meet to discuss it
2. Prepare to submit your thesis and send the 'Notice of Submission Form' (Appendix I) to the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator 6 weeks before your submission date
3. Produce an electronic copy (preference for a PDF version) of your thesis to be submitted (Suitable for printing and binding – this may be requested)
4. Submit the electronic copy to the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator
5. Once any corrections completed hard bound copies can be ordered

All correspondence, submissions of documentation and submission of the thesis should be to Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator via diploma@bssh.ac.uk

Appendix B: Introduction to Dissertation Supervision

Here we outline some of the key roles for the participant and supervisor. Supervision needs to be flexible to help meet the needs of the participant and to account for the other roles of your supervisor. Therefore, different supervisors may do things in different ways. This usually works out to the advantage of the participant. It is important that supervisors and participants clarify ways of working, in particular, methods of communication, at the start.

There is a separate Supervisor's Guidance for those undertaking or contemplating the role of Supervisor. This is designed to be read in conjunction with the MSc Manual.

What is supervision?

At a postgraduate level, a dissertation supervisor aims to guide you or point you in the right directions. Supervisors are not expected, nor should they do work directly on your dissertation. A supervisor helps you plan your dissertation and to guide you through a period of learning associated with the topic area. They aim to help you complete a dissertation to the standard that you are capable of. Supervisors are not always 'experts' in the topic of your dissertation but have experience of research and dissertation writing and support, usually in related areas. Supervisors are not expected to do statistical analysis, proof reading, or reference checking!

At a postgraduate level, a key to learning is to be able to identify one's own learning and support needs. Therefore, participants are encouraged to discuss these with their supervisor. The supervisor can then work to meet those needs directly or suggest someone else for you to contact, or other ways of meeting your needs. This can include self-directed learning, reference to particular textbooks, or a suggestion to contact a topic expert.

Keeping track

Participants and supervisors complete interim monitoring reports every six months from the date of supervisor confirmation. The report will be completed jointly between the participant and supervisor, before returning to diploma@bssh.ac.uk.

The BSSH/UoM recommend around 20 hours of supervision for each participant. This is usually sufficient to meet the needs of most participants. Communicating electronically certainly makes efficient use of time as does highlighting any problems or concerns in advance.

Good ideas

1. Send your supervisor an email to introduce yourself, with a copy of your approved dissertation proposal, a time plan, and any immediate concerns /support needs
2. Confirm how often to contact your supervisor and how
3. Be clear about how your supervisor prefers to work and to make most efficient use of their time
4. When sending supervisors work to comment on, identify any specific queries or questions you might have
5. Do clarify with your supervisor how much time they need to comment on substantive pieces of work
6. Do let your supervisor know of any personal circumstances that are or are likely to interfere with your progress
7. Do mention any concerns you have about the supervision process with your supervisor

Poor practise

1. Sending your supervisor constant emails about relatively minor things
2. Relying on your supervisor responding immediately
3. Expecting your supervisor to know the answer to everything – their role is to guide and support you
4. Expecting your supervisor to edit your dissertation
5. Ignoring your supervisor's advice without at least discussing it with them. It's unlikely you will want to do everything your supervisor might suggest, but it is helpful for you both to acknowledge your reasons for this
6. Expecting to keep your supervisor if you do not contact them for many months or you go past the completion date without having had this agreed in advance

What do you do if you have concerns about your supervision?

Most participants have a positive experience of working with their supervisor. It is uncommon for significant problems to arise. If participants and supervisors are clear about their roles and responsibilities from the beginning then problems can usually be avoided. Similarly, it is important that you raise any concerns with your supervisor before they develop into a bigger problem.

However, if you do have any concerns about your supervision which have not been addressed adequately by your supervisor then you need to contact the MSc Lead via the course co-ordinator

Appendix C: Supervisor Approval Form



University of Manchester
Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences

MSc Hand Surgery Dissertation Supervisor Approval Form

Please complete this form to apply to act as a dissertation supervisor

Please also include a copy of your CV with this form.

Section 1 (Please PRINT)
Name:
Current Job Title:
Education Background:
Postdoctoral Research:
Publications in last 5 years:
Please detail any previous experience of supervising surgical research e.g. MD student (including any informal supervision):
Have you familiarised yourself with the programmes advice on acting as a 'New Supervisor'? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please detail the date undertaken: <u>DD/MM/YYYY</u>

Please provide any further information you would like to be taken in consideration.

Section 2 – BSSH Use Only

I confirm that the above person is appropriate to act as a dissertation supervisor.

Programme Director Signature:

Date:

Programme Director Name (*please print*)

Section 3 – University of Manchester Use Only

Please indicate whether the application has been granted University approval:

Approve ☐

Reject ☐

Any Additional Comments:

Signature:

Date:

Name (*please print*)



Appendix D: Meeting with Supervisor to Discuss Research Proposal

This meeting should take place during the period in which the student develops their research proposal.

- 1) What broad research questions have you identified based on the literature review?
- 2) What are your hypothesis and aims?
- 3) What experimental approaches could be used to address these aims?
- 4) What locally available resources might be useful in addressing these aims?

Declaration by student

I have discussed the research proposal with my Dissertation Supervisor.

.....
Print name of student

.....
Signature of student

Date

Declaration by Dissertation Supervisor(s)

I have met with the above named student and discussed the research proposal

.....
Print name of Dissertation
Supervisor(s)

.....
Signature of Dissertation
Supervisor(s)

Date

**This form MUST be returned to the MSc Diploma and Committee Co-ordinator,
diploma@bssh.ac.uk, and will need to be approved by the Academic Panel.**



Appendix E: Dissertation Commencement Form

Proposed Title
Student
Supervisor
Motivation for the Review
Objective
Rationale for review
Participants
Proposed project outline
Search methods
Limitations/Concerns

This form must be submitted or returned to the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator,
BSSH diploma@bssh.ac.uk



Appendix F: Meeting with Dissertation Supervisor to Provide Feedback on First Draft of the Project Proposal

Once the Academic Panel has reviewed and approved your Dissertation Proposal you will need to prepare a draft of the full proposal and meet with your supervisor to plan the project in more detail. Clearly it will be important to discuss feedback from the Academic Panel. It is recommended that your proposal includes the relevant literature review. The Dissertation supervisor will read and comment on the draft.

1) Comments to student about literature review draft:

Discussion points:

(a) Literature coverage and range of sources

(b) Overall organisation and structure

(c) Use of illustrative material

(d) Academic writing style

2) When does the student expect to complete the literature review?

3) Are there any concerns?

Declaration by candidate

I have discussed the draft project report with my Dissertation Supervisor.

.....

Print name of student Signature of student

Date

Declaration by Dissertation Supervisor(s)

I have met with the above named student and discussed the draft of first project report.

.....

Print name of Dissertation Signature of Dissertation

Supervisor(s) Supervisor(s)

Date

**This form must be submitted or returned to the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator,
BSSH diploma@bssh.ac.uk**



Appendix G: Record of Review Meetings with Dissertation Supervisor of Research Project

These meetings should take place six monthly over the course of the year. It is the student's responsibility to convene the meeting with appropriate notice. A review meeting report should be filed for each of these meetings with the Dissertation Supervisor responsible for submitting the report.

Title of project:
Aims and learning outcomes of project:
Synopsis of Research Project and experimental approaches to be taken:
Discuss generic research skills and development of same:
Are there any generic skills where you feel you need particular training and support?
Report of progress

CURRENT levels of competence (Note these are expected to improve as the project progresses)

	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Excellent
Organisational ability					
Contribution to project planning and development					
Work ethic/motivation					
Technical/experimental skills and competence					
Ability to work independently and analyse /interpret data					
Feedback on current level of competence:					
Suggested areas for development and training:					
Agreed actions and timetable:					

Declaration by Student

I have read and agree with the requirements of this unit and have discussed this with my supervisor. Where relevant I have understood local safety rules, undergone Lab Induction and been advised of any particular hazards and precautions associated with my project.

.....

Print name of student

.....

Signature of student

Date

Declaration by Dissertation Supervisor

I have met with the above named student, discussed with him/her the roles of a Dissertation Supervisor.

.....

Print name of Dissertation
Supervisor

.....

Signature of Dissertation
Supervisor

Date

This form must be submitted or returned to the Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator,
BSSH diploma@bssh.ac.uk

Appendix H: Personal Development Plan (PDP)

The PDP is a process to **plan, reflect and record** aspects of your progress and development during your programme.

Meetings

At 3 key stages during your programme (Before the start of your Dissertation, at 1 year and at submission) you must complete your pro forma and meet with your Personal Tutor to discuss it.

Time Management

Helpful hints to improve your time management skills.

Action Planning

Suggestions on how to focus your ideas and achieve your goals.

FORM A: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

First Review Meeting – To take place before the start of the Dissertation

It is recommended that this form is completed and used to form an agenda for discussions with your Personal Tutor.

Take time to reflect on the aims, intended learning outcomes, intellectual skills, practical skills, transferable and personal qualities which it is intended you will develop during your programme.

In relation to the above, are you concerned about any of the expectations that are placed upon you at the beginning of the programme?

At this stage in your education/career, you will have acquired many skills, such as report writing, presentation skills, group work skills, self-motivation, IT skills, time management, etc. Are there any skills in particular that you think you will need to work on to attain greater success on this programme?

Declaration by participant

Print name of Participant Signature of Participant

Date

.....

Declaration by Personal Tutor

Print name of Personal Tutor Signature of Personal Tutor

Date

Declaration by Programme Director

Print name of Programme Director Signature of Programme Director

Date
.....

This form **must** be returned to the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator, BSSH offices or via **diploma@bssh.ac.uk**

FORM B: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Second Review Meeting – after 1 year

It is recommended that this form is completed and used to form an agenda for discussions with your Personal Tutor during each semester.

It may be useful to revisit Stage 1 of your PDP at this time to refresh your memory.

Reflecting on your first year, what do you think were your strengths and weaknesses? How can you build on your strengths and address any weaknesses?

What aspects of your performance do you most want to improve in the remainder of the programme?

Are you developing the skills you need for your current / future career?

Declaration by participant

Print name of participant Signature of Participant

Date

Declaration by Personal Tutor

.Print name of Personal Tutor Signature of Personal Tutor

Date

Declaration by Programme Director

Print name of Programme Director Signature of Programme Director

Date

This form must be returned to the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator, BSSH offices or via diploma@bssh.ac.uk

FORM C: Personal Development Plan Final Review Meeting

It is recommended that this form is completed and used to form an agenda for discussions with your Personal Tutor.

Are there any aspects of your learning, performance or achievement on the programme that you think you could have done better? On reflection, how could you have done this?

What skills have you learned from this programme?

Declaration by participant

Print name of participant Signature of Participant

Date

Declaration by Personal Tutor

.Print name of Personal Tutor Signature of Personal Tutor

Date

Declaration by Programme Director

Print name of Programme Director Signature of Programme Director

Date

This form must be returned to the Hand Diploma and Master Co-ordinator, BSSH offices or via [**diploma@bssh.ac.uk**](mailto:diploma@bssh.ac.uk)

Appendix I: Notice of Submission Form

Section 1 (<i>Please PRINT</i>)
Name:
Current Job Title:
Preferred address for correspondence:
Title of Dissertation
Name of Dissertation Supervisor
Address of Dissertation Supervisor
Related Publications if any in the last 5 years:
Please attach a 400 word summary of your dissertation on a separate sheet

Appendix J: Research Design and Dissertation Modulespecification

General Information

Title	Research Design and Dissertation Module
Unit code	N/A
Credit rating	60
Level	Postgraduate
Contact hours	14 2 hours month = 24 in the programme
Other Scheduled teachingand learning activities*	Research Design Skills Course Good Clinical Practice Meetings with Academic Supervisors
Pre-requisite units	Hand Diploma 1-8
Co-requisite units	N/A
School responsible	BSSH validated programme with University of Manchester
Members of staff responsible	Current MSc lead
ECTS**	30
Notional hours ofLearning***	600

AIMS

The unit aims:

The Research Design and Dissertation Module prepares the participating participant in respect of conceiving, preparing and submitting the Dissertation proposal. The participant should have a practical and working knowledge of the design and conduct ofclinical research with respect to the legislation and regulation of the same. It represents essential preparation for undertaking a successful Dissertation.

The Module encourages the detailed exploration of the evidence-base for handsurgery practice thus promoting a culture of innovation and scientific enquiry.

Brief Description of the Unit

The participant is directed to complete and pass successfully through the widely available programme known as Good Clinical Practice. The online modules are concerned with designing clinical trials and the legislation and recommendations, planning a research trial, ethical issues, trial documentation, and data analysis. The online platform contains formative assessments that must be passed in order to have the module completion acknowledged. (The integral MCQ is termed formative as it can be retaken if failed).

There will also be an online course at the beginning of the academic year which the participating participant will be required to attend that will support the learning objectives of this Unit Specification. Specifically, there will be an emphasis on the potential options for the dissertation, study design, statistical methods and other relevant topics.

Preparation of the Dissertation on the participant's topic of choice will then be undertaken with the support and input of the Dissertation Supervisor and Personal Tutor as detailed in the Programme Specification and Masters in Hand Surgery Manual.

* To inform the "Key Information Set". Defined as 'any activity that a participant has to attend or undertake at a fixed point and that has no flexibility for when it is undertaken, and where the participant also has access to an available staff member' (*"Provision of Information about Higher Education: Outcomes of consultation and next steps"* June 2011/18)

** ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System): There are 2UK credits for every 1 ECT credit, in accordance with the Credit Framework(QAA). Therefore if a unit is worth 30 UK credits, this will equate to 15 ECT.

*** Notional hours of learning: The number of hours which it is expected that a learner (at a particular level) will spend, on average, to achieve the specified learning outcomes at that level. It is expected that there will be 10 hours of notional study associated with every 1 credit achieved. Therefore if a unit is worth 30 credits, this will equate to 300 notional study hours, in accordance with the Credit Framework (QAA).

Intended Learning Outcomes

Category of outcome	Participants should/will (please delete as appropriate) be able to:
Knowledge and understanding	• Demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of evidence-based practice including the investigation, preparation and analysis of data to inform clinical decision making • Demonstrate knowledge of the techniques of scientific enquiry supporting evidence based practice • Formulate a line of enquiry and determine appropriate methodology for that particular topic • Demonstrate a working knowledge of relevant statistical methodology
Intellectual skills	• Demonstrate the ability to conceive and plan a scientific enquiry or systematic review. This will include the capacity to undertake literature search and critically analyse that literature. • Prepare a research grant proposal • Critically analyse policy relevant to the delivery of hand surgery services • Apply statistical methodology in appropriate manner • Prepare a Dissertation on topic of choice
Practical skills	Not applicable
Transferable skills and personal qualities	• Demonstrate presentational skills facilitating communication with patients, colleagues and to larger audiences as appropriate. • Demonstrate the ability to work with, organise and lead the team with respect to developing a line of scientific enquiry. • Be capable of accessing literature databases and online journal facilities. Be able to undertake advanced searches. • Critically evaluate scientific and clinical literature • Be capable of designing an audit project. • Be capable of designing a research paper • Be capable of designing a systematic review. • Be capable of designing and submitting a proposal for research grant. • Be capable of selecting statistical methodology appropriate to a line of enquiry.

Learning and Teaching Processes (Including The Use Of E-Learning)

Research Design Skills Course Good

Clinical Practice online training

Progress supervisions with Dissertation supervisors

Assessment (Including Formative Assessment, E-Assessment, and Information about Feedback)

Assessment task	Length	How and when feedback is provided	Weighting within unit (if relevant)
Dissertation	10,000-15,000 words	See Appendix F for Progress	100%

Indicative Reading List

Not applicable

Date of current version	July 2022
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Appendix J: Contact details

Hand Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator

BSSH

The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
London WC2A 3PE

Email: diploma@bssh.ac.uk

Direct Dial 020 7304 4779

Mobile: 07512 883 194

MSc Lead for the Diploma and Masters Committee:

Mrs Helen Hedley

To be contacted via the Diploma and Masters Co-ordinator

Accessing 'Good Clinical Practice' course

The Good Clinical Practice course for clinical researchers in the UK can be accessed in a variety of ways, here are some suggestions for e-learning opportunities:

The NIHR offer e-learning to NHS and University employees via their website. Further information and links to the course itself can be found here

<https://www.nihr.ac.uk/health-and-care-professionals/training/good-clinical-practice.htm>

Many of the regional Post Graduate Deaneries offer the course, details of your local team can be found on the Health Education England website <https://hee.nhs.uk>

Citation Software

There are a range of options for collating and referencing published articles that you use in your work. The most well established is EndNote, which costs around \$250 and further details can be found here www.endnote.com. Also popular with previous Masters participants is Papers, available for approximately €70 from

<https://www.readcube.com/papers/> There are multiple other free platforms but the aforementioned have been used successfully for this course.

Appendix K: Hand Surgery MSc Thesis Mark Sheet

Student Name:	
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Thesis Title:	
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FEEDBACK: It is important that each assessor justifies their marks with written comments
For each section, please comment on (1) what was good, (2) not so good, and (3) how to improve for the future.

Marking domains	Comments	Mark
Formulation of question and how the existing evidence relates to this		/25
Contribution of current work to the question		/25
Candidate's ability to critique their own work and others		/25
Candidate's ability to explore the implications of the work and descend findings through the dissertation		/25
Total Mark		/100

Assessor Name:	Assessor Signature:	Date:

Marking system

Grade	Achievement
90-100%	EXCELLENT – allows award of DISTINCTION. Exceptional work, nearly or wholly faultless for that expected at Masters level. Perfect presentation.
80-89%	EXCELLENT – allows award of DISTINCTION. Work of excellent quality throughout. Excellent presentation.
70-79%	VERY GOOD – allows award of MERIT. Work of very high to excellent quality showing originality, high accuracy, thorough understanding, and critical appraisal. Shows a wide and thorough understanding of the material studied, and the relevant literature, and the ability to apply the theory and methods learned to solve unfamiliar problems. Very good presentation.
60-69%	GOOD PASS – allows award of MERIT. Work of good to high quality showing evidence of understanding of the research topic, good accuracy, good structure and relevant conclusions. Shows a good knowledge of the material studied and the relevant literature and some ability to tackle unfamiliar problems. Good presentation.
50-59%	PASS . Work shows a clear grasp of relevant facts and issues and reveals an attempt to create a coherent whole. It comprises reasonably clear and attainable objectives, adequate literature review and some originality. Presentation is acceptable, minor corrections allowed.
40-49%	Masters fail Work shows a satisfactory understanding of the research topic and basic knowledge of the relevant literature but with little or no originality and limited accuracy. Shows clear but limited objectives and does not always reach a conclusion. Presentation adequate but requires correction.
30-39%	Masters fail Work shows some understanding of the main elements of the research topic and some knowledge of the relevant literature. Shows a limited level of accuracy with little analysis of data or attempt to discuss its significance. Presentation poor, substantial corrections required.
20-29%	Fail: Limited relevant material presented. Little understanding of research topic. Unclear or unsubstantiated arguments with very poor accuracy and understanding. Presentation unacceptable
0-19%	Fail: Limited understanding of the research process. The topic is largely without evidence to support its exploration for research and the arguments are supported by poor sources of evidence. The thesis is disjointed and does not demonstrate logical coherent thinking with unacceptable presentation. Would require totally reworking in content and presentation if it were to be resubmitted.