Theology & Religious Studies

in the School of Arts & Humanities

6AAT5000 Independent Study Dissertation
Guidelines for undergraduate students
Preface

This booklet is intended to help you in writing a dissertation as part of an undergraduate level degree programme. Regardless of the level at which an extended research-based dissertation is required, certain basic advice remains constant – even up to and including a PhD thesis!

This booklet is intended to supplement the very important specific advice given by your dissertation supervisor and any classroom guidance on dissertation work provided by individual programmes. Writing a dissertation, even with the very best supervision, can feel a lonely enterprise; this booklet should provide an additional source of reference when your supervisor is not immediately to hand, and so help ensure that the overall support you receive in writing your dissertation is in line with what you receive in your other, taught courses.

Acknowledgement

This handbook is based on, and draws extensively from, one used very successfully in the Department of History for a number of years. We are immensely grateful to the Department for permission to reproduce much of its content, adapted where necessary to reflect the specific requirements of the Theology & Religious Studies Department.
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This handbook can be provided in alternative formats upon request to your Departmental Office – please contact trs@kcl.ac.uk.
Introduction

In some ways writing a dissertation may simply seem a matter of doing at greater length something that you should have already mastered at this point in your degree: writing an essay! There is no doubt (and this should be a reassuring thought) that a key element in succeeding with your dissertation will be to build on the skills and techniques that you have acquired in researching and writing other essays.

However there are four things you should note in tackling a dissertation rather than an essay:

- **Careful Planning** – This is vital to ensure that you tackle issues in an appropriate order and allocate appropriate space to each aspect of your topic. This is particularly the case with dissertations since they will be anything from three to four times longer than a normal essay.

- **Extra Time to Research** – This is needed since there are no classes or essays devoted to your dissertation and you will need more research for it than an essay. Your dissertation is expected to be the product of thorough and in-depth research into primary sources and its success rests on it containing ideas or insights which make an original contribution to scholarship, rather than simply summarising established wisdom.

- **Freedom and Self-reliance** – This is more significant to your dissertation than in to essays since no question is set for you and there is no prescribed reading list. This freedom is an advantage, in that you can follow your own interests and select for yourself (albeit in discussion with your supervisor) the topic you wish to pursue.

- **Primary Sources** – Although there are opportunities for working with primary sources throughout your degree, your dissertation provides and indeed demands close and sustained engagement with them.

This handbook aims to address these distinctive features of dissertation work by discussing four areas of consideration:

- Choosing a Topic
- Conducting Research
- Planning the Dissertation
- Writing the Dissertation.

Finally, the booklet outlines the mode of assessment and the regulations that apply to our dissertations in the Department of Theology & Religious Studies, including word counts, footnotes, and publication information.

1. **Choosing your Topic**

The topic you choose should be one which enthuses you, one which stems from your intellectual interests and priorities. If you are not sure of how to choose or frame a topic, then it is fine to accept advice from your tutor, another member of academic staff, a friend or even the internet, but the final decision should be yours. It should be a topic that you are happy to live with for several months!!

But **avoid being over-ambitious**. You should beware of using this opportunity to tackle a massive question that has been preoccupying you intellectually. The topic must be do-able. In composing your question consider the following things:

- **Express your topic as a question**

It is not essential to do this, but it is generally good practice. The more specific such questions, the better. Don’t ask ‘Did the Resurrection happen?’ but instead ‘How should we account for the divergence between the resurrection narratives in the gospels?’ Instead of ‘Were the Victorians religious?’ you could ask ‘What part did visual symbolism play in nineteenth-century Anglican worship?’ By doing this you narrow the focus of your work, making it more manageable and making your dissertation more concise and targeted. It is also helpful to tailor your title or question to a specific body of source material. ‘What can funerary busts tell us about Catholic piety in Baroque Europe?’ would work better than ‘Art and religion in Baroque Europe’.

- **Is the question answerable and researchable?**

In most cases, the answer to this question involves an initial survey of primary sources. Have they survived? Where are they? Are there too many or not enough? Are there printed versions in libraries, are they posted on the internet, or will you depend on manuscript originals in archives? What language will they be in, and if manuscript, will you be able to read the hand writing? Which potential supervisor has the expertise to point you towards the right sources? Is travel involved? Does it require sampling or numeracy skills that are readily to hand? Do not give up too soon, but never be afraid to drop or amend a topic where the research resource base is thin or to focus more narrowly within a broad topic, if you find that there is much more primary or secondary literature than you first thought.

Of course many dissertation topics in TRS will involve not so much the collection of written primary sources as the intensive engagement with published texts or conducting ethnographic or anthropological fieldwork. But here too it is just as important to formulate a definite research strategy in advance.

**IMPORTANT:** If you are going to conduct interviews as part of your research, it is your responsibility to obtain prior ethical approval. Please see section D. Research Ethics, page 12.
1. Choosing your Topic

- Where does your question fit within the literature on the subject?
  Almost any topic you choose to write about will already have a body of scholarship surrounding it. The issue that you have to determine is whether and how you are contributing something new to that body of scholarship. ‘Originality’ has many different meanings in this context. You can make a contribution by presenting well known sources in a new way, or by proposing that new kinds of sources have the power to alter familiar debates. Once again, the more delimited your topic is in time, space or subject, the easier it will be to demonstrate originality.

- How will you tackle the topic?
  Do you have a method of approach which really suits the subject? Can it be broken down into workable parts? Is there a part on which everything depends but that needs more work before deciding and proceeding further?
  This set of issues does not need to be fully resolved right at the start, but these are questions worth considering before you begin your research.

- How do you make the task as manageable as possible?
  Planning. Having a good methodology for your research makes you more organized and disciplined and helps inform your scholarly approach. Choosing the right method of approach is therefore every bit as important as developing your basic question. Consider what you feel comfortable with:
  - What kind of intellectual or scholarly approach or tradition appeals to you best: systematic theology, anthropology, comparative history of religion, philosophy, history or sociology?
  - Are you happier in working with artistic images than with texts or vice versa?
  - Are you for instance confident in handling statistics or do you prefer close analysis of texts?
  - Is the topic question actually suited to the approach you adopt?
  - What approach does the possible or intended supervisor favour?
  - If your approach is different to those which have already been adopted, what are its strengths or what does it add to the existing scholarship on the topic, i.e. new approaches to old problems can be welcome!

Don’t be afraid to ask people and to discuss you plan at length with your supervisor before beginning. Be sure that the topic suits the methodology and vice versa and that both the methodology and the topic suit your own academic strengths.

As you conduct your research there are likely to be a number of interesting avenues of research that you might follow, all taking you in very different directions. Having both a working question and a method of analysis to which you return again and again will help keep you focused on the essentials.

2. Conducting Research

- What are your sources?
  As well as secondary sources on your subject, you will need to consult a significant amount of primary sources in order to ensure that your dissertation includes ‘new’ research, approaches or conclusions. Do not limit yourself in thinking about what these sources might be – for a historical topic for instance, in addition to traditional sources such as manuscripts, diaries and newspapers you might also consider, where appropriate, private archives of societies or companies. For a theological or philosophical topic for instance, you might consider neglected thinkers alongside canonical ones, or the neglected works key figures alongside their more celebrated writings. If you still are not sure what your sources might be, consider some of the following:
  - Search library catalogues for books and journal articles that cover the general subject area that you’ve chosen.
  - Read the footnotes and bibliographies of works on the topic to see which sources other historians have used.

- Where are your sources?
  - Begin with the King’s Library. Even if they do not have the sources you require they may have collections of documents or archives on microfiche or CD-ROM, or may have a subscription to newspapers or journals which allows you to access them on-line. The library will also have databases and search engines which will help you in tracking down relevant source material. (Do not be afraid to ask the library staff for assistance.)
  - Try the numerous other libraries within London including the British Library and specialist libraries such as the Dr Williams Library or Lambeth Palace Library.
  - Utilise other sources of documents such as the National Archives or any of London’s countless archival repositories, including galleries or public institutions such as St Paul’s Cathedral.
2. **Conducting Research**

- Most universities have archival collections. King’s houses for instance The Foyle Special Collections Library, which houses over 150,000 printed works, as well as maps, slides, sound recordings and manuscript material.
- The London region is exceptionally rich in archival collections: a useful resource is AIM25 (www.aim25.ac.uk/index.htm), which gives electronic access to lists of material held in repositories across the capital.
- You may need to conduct **interviews** to generate your sources. If this is the case, remember that you cannot conduct such interviews until you have first obtained ethical clearance. It is your responsibility and not your supervisor’s to obtain this. Please see section D. Research Ethics, page 12.
- **DO NOT** be afraid of using the **internet** to help you locate sources and even to read scanned primary sources online. But do take care using information from unknown sources. Also remember how transient the web is as a medium, with websites frequently changing and disappearing. When you find key material, save or print it straight away for future reference.

Read around that subject so that you can frame the terms of reference for your research question. Look in the literature for clues from the experts who write on the subject for issues or aspects that have not been explored in any depth before. Another approach is to deal with a subject from an angle it hasn’t been examined from previously. Make sure that you become aware of the different debates on subjects, and start to formulate your own opinions – but be prepared to change those opinions as you do more research. While you’re doing this reading, take detailed notes, and begin to compile a bibliography.

As far as possible, stick to your plan, but note that this plan, or even your research question itself, can change as you do more research. It may be that you find that some information cannot be obtained, or that there is some material that needs to be incorporated at the expense of other information. This is part of the research process.

One of the key difficulties related to primary documents is that you might discover the ones that you require are difficult to find. In some cases, the documents will be impossible to locate, since they have been destroyed or, more frequently, because the person responsible for sending the files to the archives removed items that he or she thought were of little importance, but which turn out to be of interest to you. It is, therefore, important that you do some research into the primary documents available to you before you finalise your dissertation. It is quite possible that you will find some documents which slightly shift the direction of your research, so you should not be surprised if this happens!

Research methodology is a huge subject, and we cannot hope to do more than scratch the surface. Your supervisor will be a vital guide as to the specific sources and techniques appropriate for your particular dissertation, but remember that investigative activity of this kind is a key personal challenge which you must overcome as part of the dissertation process.

3. **Planning the Dissertation and the Protocol**

**Missing a deadline can mean a straight fail**, so it is imperative that you plan your dissertation clearly before beginning to avoid rushing towards the end. You may also be working on other modules/essays/exam revision during this time, which makes careful planning all the more important. Remember that part of the test in the dissertation is precisely to see whether you have the self-discipline and planning skills to make the dissertation fit properly within the time available.

**Initially:**

- Begin with a survey of the literature: this will help you to define the areas you wish to study in more detail.
- Block off time each week for work on your dissertation over the summer vacation. This will prevent you from putting it off due to a lack of urgency until it is too late.
- Your initial aim should be to prepare the **Protocol**. This short exercise of 1,000 words, which must be submitted by a specified date in the Michaelmas Term of your final year will be worth 10% of the final mark for the dissertation and must be of pass standard (i.e. get a mark of 40% or better) in order to qualify you to submit the dissertation proper. Failed protocols can be resubmitted by the first day of the Lent Term of your final year. After that date, no submitted protocols will be marked.
- The protocol is a summary of progress, which should demonstrate that you understand how you are going to tackle your dissertation; can sketch its content and structure; are familiar with the appropriate sources, and can give bibliographical information in the right format.
3. **Planning the Dissertation and the Protocol**

The Protocol should be divided into four parts as follows:

- A detailed introduction to the topic under consideration. This should explain the topic and why it is of interest; state the thesis you intend to argue for; list and explain the issues that need to be tackled in the dissertation; describe the method that will be used to deal with the topic.

- A list, in order, of proposed sections for the main body of the dissertation, with some indication of the content of each section.

- A numbered bibliography of between 8 and 15 items, giving details of primary sources and major scholarly works that have already been consulted and that are still to be consulted. NB: dictionary/encyclopedia articles and other such summaries of scholarship are NOT acceptable for inclusion in this summary bibliography, although they may be used for the dissertation and included in the bibliography of the finished work.

- A summary of the leading points relevant to your investigation from selected sources in (3) above, listing the key points you find of relevance in them.

**Before writing:**

- Divide your word count into the sections of your dissertation to avoid an overly long part one and a two-paragraph conclusion.

- Once your research is done but before you begin writing, consider developing two levels of structure within your dissertation. For example, you might write sections on different themes but within each section have chronologically ordered paragraphs, or, conversely, you might have sections devoted to successive chronological periods which have thematically defined paragraphs.

- It is impossible to prescribe in generic terms the best way to structure your particular dissertation, since each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses, and the critical determinant is what is most appropriate for your own specific case. The main thing is to continue to revisit and develop your outline dissertation structure throughout your dissertation. This will serve to focus your thinking throughout upon the final product, and will provide a very useful vehicle for discussing your evolving ideas with your supervisor at each stage of the process.

**After the Protocol:**

- The completion of the Protocol and the feedback you receive from your supervisor on it should provide you with a template for the remaining period of research and writing.

- Divide your remaining time between ‘research’ and ‘writing up’. Do not underestimate the time required for the latter.

- Also, remember that there is some overlap between the two: you should try to get ideas down on paper whilst they are still fresh in your mind. You may well find that this furnishes you with new questions to ask about your sources.

- Break down your research, and time allowance, by topic. This way you can avoid devoting so much time to one aspect of the topic that you cannot give others the attention they deserve. Try not to make these divisions on obvious categories such as ‘chronology’ or ‘geography’. Instead, wait until you have some handle on your ideas/arguments and then use them to structure the work more thematically (this structure can be changed later on if required). This may involve answering distinct sub-questions or developing distinct sub-arguments which work together in a logical fashion to build the overall argument you wish to make.

- Try to leave yourself plenty of flexibility in your timetable, especially towards the end, to cope with unexpected emergencies and also to allow you to follow interesting and important angles which become apparent during your research and writing.
4. Writing the Dissertation

Of the four areas which this booklet covers, the process of writing the dissertation is the one which differs least from the techniques with which you should already be familiar from writing shorter essays. Whereas your supervisor will be able to discuss with you at some length your choice of topic, your research methodology, and the structuring of your dissertation, he or she can only give you limited feedback on drafts of your final submission.

You are entitled to have up to 2 complete drafts of the dissertation read by the supervisor and to receive oral comments on those drafts.

This means that more, not less, effort should go into this side of the dissertation since you will necessarily have less support available. Be careful – an apparently well-conceived dissertation can often be let down by poor expression, clumsy and unclear phrasing, or careless proof-reading.

Timing: the most important thing to remember when writing your dissertation is to ensure you leave enough time to do your research justice. DO NOT leave the writing to the last minute.

Drafting: Writing your dissertation should be a process of trial and improvement, working through several drafts and gradually refining your work until you reach a satisfactory finished product.

Electronic backing-up: you MUST take care to regularly save and back up what you have written. Hours of irreparable hard work can be lost very quickly.

Proof-Reading: The examiner does not know what you meant to say, only what you actually say! Ensure that you leave enough time to read and check your work for mistakes, overlap and compliance with the word limit! You may find it easier to proofread from a printed copy and then type up your corrections.

Style – during your dissertation research you will have read numerous scholarly articles. As well as providing you with interesting arguments and details these can also be used as style guides. It is worth considering the way in which they construct their arguments and situate them within the existing scholarly debate, what techniques they use to convince readers of the power of their own ideas and how they use evidence without incorporating lengthy slabs of narrative. Although academic articles are by no means perfect in stylistic terms, and some are undoubtedly better than others, they provide a very good model to aim for, since the marking system awards highest credit for dissertations which approach such a 'publishable' standard. It is certainly better to use published articles as a model rather than looking at other people’s dissertations, since the latter are much more variable in quality and may therefore be misleading as examples.

What to include – You will almost certainly, during your research, amass much more material than you can possibly fit into the dissertation itself. It is important, therefore, to be selective when writing the final piece. It is here where the question which you are addressing becomes at least as important as your overall subject area in helping you determine what is relevant and what is not. You should ask of each sentence you write the question, ‘so what?’ If that sentence does not in some way advance your argument, it probably should not be there. Even in relevant areas, you should find that you know more than you have space to write, and that you are in effect summarizing your own knowledge – this is a good thing, since such well-informed summaries are less likely to be flawed than are passages where you are writing at the limits of what you know. In other cases, there will be fascinating stories or ideas which you have come across, and which you will be tempted to include because of their intrinsic interest, regardless of their relevance to the argument at hand. You should try your best to resist such temptations, since such interpolations, however worthy, merely serve to disrupt and confuse your overall message. Your dissertation is not your only chance to include these ideas, and you should aim to find some other more suitable outlet for them elsewhere.

Writing – Good academic writing is largely a matter of moderation. Avoid extremes of either assertive or narrative. Do not simply assert your points, instead ensure that each successive point is backed up with supporting evidence. You should similarly avoid slabs of narrative which lack a clear sense of what point you are trying to make. Another pair of opposing dangers to be avoided are advocacy and equivocation. Do not ignore contrary evidence and ideas, since it actually strengthens your argument to consider opinions opposed to your own and demonstrate why you have discounted them. On the other hand, you should not be so concerned to sit on the fence that your writing consists of a string of opposing points each prefaced by ‘However...’ – an approach which soon leaves the reader with no idea of which side you are really taking. When making an argument, try and avoid over using non-committal phrases (e.g. ‘seems like’, ‘maybe’ and ‘perhaps’) as it comes across as if you are unsure of your argument and can weaken the tone of your dissertation. If you haven’t convinced yourself of your argument, should you be using it, what is your evidence?
4. Writing the Dissertation

**Layout** – paragraphs are an important way of breaking down your work into manageable thoughts/arguments. In the first sentence of each paragraph, you can set out the general argument you wish to advance at that point. The remaining sentences can then either:

- provide the supporting evidence, without which your opening statement would be an assertion.
- introduce any necessary qualifications to your broad statement, and say why they do not undermine your overall argument.

Hence, a generic paragraph might run as follows:

‘*Hypothesis X is the most persuasive explanation for phenomenon A. This is shown by examples P and Q. Although hypothesis Y might seem equally persuasive in light of example R, this was clearly an exceptional case, as illustrated by characteristics F and G.*’

The result is to make it clear exactly where you stand and why. Focusing the first sentence of each paragraph on developing successive stages of your argument also has the advantage that you or the reader can quickly survey your developing case by reading just these first sentences – a useful way of checking on the logical flow, and making sure it is not disrupted by the detail. This generic paragraph structure is obviously just one possible way of organising your writing, and you should not feel concerned about deviating from it, but do try to carry across the general principles of clarity and balance into your own more developed writing style.

**Evidence and references** – you should use evidence in the same way as in your other essays – as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself, and always with an eye to how a sceptic might challenge your case. Remember that footnotes alone do not ‘prove’ an assertion, nor does a quote from however eminent an authority in itself prove anything more than that the person said it. If you want to back up an argument properly, you must include some actual evidence, and it is this which you should footnote, to give the reader an authoritative source to check the data concerned. Footnotes are also the place to refer to the works of other scholars whose ideas you discuss. You should keep your footnotes as short as possible, and put as much as you can in the main text. The only real occasion when extended text belongs in a footnote is when it constitutes an ‘aside’ which would disrupt the main flow of your argument (and since footnotes count equally towards your word limit, such asides should be kept to a bare minimum). See page 9 for guidance about the format of footnotes and bibliography.

**Plagiarism** – although your dissertation should include some degree of original though (as discussed above) you should not shy away from any reference to the work of others; quite the opposite. You must situate your argument within the broader scholarly debate, thereby demonstrating your familiarity with the secondary literature as a basis for your further research. Do ensure, however, that you are correctly referencing this literature to avoid the accusation of plagiarism. A typical dissertation might therefore run as follows:

‘Issue A has sparked significant academic debate. Scholars such as P and Q argue that the explanation lies in hypothesis X, while scholars R and S instead champion hypothesis Y. I argue that the evidence C and D can be better understood in light of my new findings E and F, and that this points to a hybrid hypothesis XY as the best way of understanding issue A’.

**Introduction and Conclusion** – these need not be overly long, perhaps only taking a few paragraphs each. These sections should serve the same purpose as in your shorter essays.

- The **Introduction** defines the scope of the issue you will address, explains the order in which you will do so, indicates your evidential base, surveys existing writing on the topic, and perhaps prefigures the argument you will advance.

- The **Conclusion** reminds the reader of the key points you have made, draws together and inter-relates ideas you have covered in separate sections, and sets out any broader implications, conclusions, or agendas for further research.

Again, published articles are the best guide as to how to tackle these two key elements of your dissertation.

**Sub-headings** – in an essay of this length, sub-headings are very useful to clarify for the reader the stage you have reached, and you should be ready to tailor these headings according to what is most appropriate for your argument – a division into two or three ‘Parts’, each with a few subsections may often be more appropriate than just a single level of section headings.
5. Submission

- All work is to be typed
- Typing should be double-spaced and in 12 point font
- It is up to you whether you wish to have the dissertation bound or not, but if you choose to do so please use a 'loose' format (like spiral, or comb, binding) so that, if we need to photocopy the dissertation, it is easy to do so, rather than book-type binding. Please don’t use anything bulky like a ring-binder to secure the work, as we have limited storage space in the department.
- You can go anywhere like Kallkwik on Fleet Street to get spiral binding done; and the LSE Shop on Kingsway does comb binding.
- An electronic copy should also be submitted on KEATS.
- Dissertations should be submitted with the School of Arts & Humanities standard coursework coversheet at the front (on the KEATS copy and on the hard copy submissions. You may include a coversheet of your own and/or contents page if you wish, but the School cover sheet should be at the front in either case.
- As with all assessed work your name must not appear anywhere on the document - please use your candidate number instead (available from Student Records).
- The word count for the dissertation is 8,000, EXCLUDING footnotes, appendices and bibliographies. At the same time, it is important to note that substantive material and discussion should not be placed in the footnotes. Appendices should also be used only where strictly necessary, for illustrative purposes, for example. There is no official minimum length for the dissertation – the penalty of writing much less than the word limit comes naturally from not having written enough on the subject. You can as in other essays go above the 8,000 word limit by 5% without penalty,

6. The Oral

- The oral examination counts for 20% of the total mark for the module. The examination will last for half an hour, which should be divided approximately equally between your own presentation and the examiners’ questions.
- The aim of the presentation should be to introduce the topic of the dissertation, for example by explaining its importance or setting it in a broader context in scholarship. You may wish to say why you chose the topic; explain any problems you experienced in researching it; summarise your conclusions, or to explain how our dissertation points to the need for more work in a particular area.
- You should of course avoid simply reading from the dissertation, as your examiners will have read it for themselves already.
- The presentation may take any form that you consider appropriate. Unless you tend to get very nervous when speaking in public (it is only two people you will be presenting to), you will find that speaking from notes allows you to come across more naturally and is good experience for longer presentations you might give in future. You can put the main outlines of your presentation on a sheet of A4 and give each of your examiners a copy at the start. If you wish to make a PowerPoint presentation you should contact the Department Office well in advance of the date of your examination to make the arrangements, and should be prepared to use alternative means of presenting your work in case of technical difficulties on the day.
- The examiners will mark the student’s performance by taking into account the following points: content of presentation, including its relationship to the written text of the dissertation; student’s presentational style (e.g. whether the presentation is well organized, clear, and articulate, and of the right length; use of AV/handouts etc.); student’s performance in response to examiners’ questions (e.g. whether questions are answered clearly and candidly and you are able to address areas of weakness detected by the examiners; whether you are able to see the connections between your dissertation and related areas of interest); overall quality (coherence, relevant knowledge, intellectual originality) of student’s performance.
- It is very important to note that the examiners are unable to reveal during or at the conclusion of the oral either their mark for this component or their provisional marks for the dissertation itself.
- NB The College’s rules on plagiarism apply to oral presentations just as they do to written work submitted for assessment. You must acknowledge any and all sources used, and must present all material in your own words except for explicitly acknowledged quotations.
A. Footnotes and Presentation

Once you have written the dissertation it is the easiest thing in the world to simply print it and hand it in. However, it is worth spending a few last hours formatting the document to ensure that it can be clearly read by your marker.

Here are a few basic guidelines:

Main Text

This should be double-spaced and in a reasonably sized font – normally 12 point is fine. Ensure that when you print you have enough ink as faded printing can be hard to read. You should always clearly indicate section breaks.

Word Count

This should be indicated clearly (and honestly!) on the title page and should include footnotes, but not your bibliography. Appendices are not included if they provide illustrative reference material (eg the text of a charter crucial to the argument of an essay on an Anglo-Saxon topic) but should be part of the word count if they include substantive argument.

Do try to hit the word-limit. A few words will not matter, but overrun or shortfall of more than 5% may be penalised.

Footnotes & references

It is always worth including references to the works you have read and the evidence you are using as you go along. Doing it when the dissertation is complete will take much longer. References should be given in footnotes, not in endnotes and not in parentheses within the main text. The most important rule of footnoting, whichever system you choose, is to be consistent. The Department recommends using either the ‘author short title’ system or the ‘author date’ system. These are illustrated below. Looking at the system of references in books and articles that you have read should help you sort out any uncertainties.

Use italics or underline to indicate titles of printed books or foreign words in the main text, although this does not apply if you are quoting in a foreign language.

Use superscript for footnote numbers.

Be consistent in choice of single or double-quotation marks in the text. The simplest rule is always to use single quotation marks, except for quotations within quotations, in which case double should be used. For example: ‘According to Moltmann, there is “a modern tendency in New Testament scholarship to fall prey to historicism, and to see theology as a Christian philosophy of religion.”’

Author Short Title Referencing:

For a book:

For an article in a journal:
SUBSEQUENT: Moltmann, ‘Do you understand’, 41.

For an article in a book of essays:

For an unpublished manuscript:
FIRST MENTION: Dr Williams Library [hereafter DWL], Free Christian Union MSS 24.132 (5), minute on the history of the Union

For a website:
Always indicate when you consulted the website.

For Databases usually the top level URL should be used, with an ID number for the relevant entry, if it exists. For example:

(If you are using the internet to access an ebook or an electronic edition of a printed journal in pdf (for example from JSTOR), you should reference it as if it were the printed version, giving page numbers).

For a newspaper:

Bibliography

List all books, articles and sources which are referenced in the text. These should be listed alphabetically by author’s surname and presented as for first citations in footnotes, discussed above. It is generally a good idea to subdivide the Bibliography, at least into primary and secondary sources.
For Reference

Author Date Referencing:

For all books and articles:
AS A SIMPLE REFERENCE: Burns (1999: 33-4); Moltmann (2010: 90)
WITHIN PARENTHESES: (Burns 1999: 33-4; Moltmann 2010: 90)

There is no agreed method of citing unpublished manuscripts or websites that do not have dates and authors when using the Author Date system. One solution is to use abbreviations, and to include a list of abbreviations along with the bibliography. For example:
AS A REFERENCE: CCEd Person ID 20918

Bibliography:
List all books, articles and sources which are referenced in the text. These should be listed alphabetically by author’s surname, with the date immediately after the author’s name.

For a book:

For an article in a journal:

For an article in a book of essays:
You will also need to include:
Streeter, B.H. (ed.) (1920), The Spirit: God and His Relation to Man Considered from the Standpoint of Philosophy, Psychology and Art

There are numerous good style guides on this and other such vexed issues as abbreviations, how to give dates etc. See for example Hart’s Rules, published by OUP, or the Modern Humanities Research Association’s Style Guide, downloadable at: www.mhra.org.uk/Publications/Books/StyleGuide/download.shtml

Submission
Research Dissertations should be double spaced, printed on single sides of paper and submitted in duplicate. Each copy should include the dissertation, footnotes and bibliography and should have a coversheet which at least includes your essay title, word count and candidate number.
B. Plagiarism – College Guidelines
Appendix to the Regulations Concerning Students

Plagiarism is the taking of another person’s thoughts, words, results, judgements, ideas, etc. and presenting them as your own.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and a serious academic offence. All allegations of plagiarism will be investigated and may result in action being taken under the College’s Misconduct regulations. A substantiated charge of plagiarism will result in a penalty being ordered ranging from a mark of zero for the assessed work to expulsion from the College.

Collusion is another form of cheating and is the unacknowledged use of material prepared by several persons working together.

Students are reminded that all work that they submit as part of the requirements for any examination or assessments of the College or of the University of London must be expressed in their own words and incorporate their own ideas and judgements. Direct quotations from the published or unpublished works of others, including that of other students, must always be identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks with a full reference to the source provided in the proper form. Paraphrasing — using other words to express another person’s ideas or judgements — must also be acknowledged (in a footnote or bracket following the paraphrasing) and referenced. In the same way, the authors of images and audiovisual presentations must be acknowledged.

Students should take particular care to avoid plagiarism and collusion in coursework, essays and reports, especially when using electronic sources or when working in a group. Students should also take care in the use of their own work. Credit can only be given once for a particular piece of work (or a significant part thereof) twice for assessment will be regarded as cheating.

Unacknowledged collaboration may result in a charge of plagiarism or in a charge of collusion.

Students are advised to consult School and departmental guidance on the proper presentation of work and the most appropriate way to reference sources; they are required to sign and attach a statement to each piece of work submitted for assessment indicating that they have read and understood the College regulations on plagiarism.

Students should be aware that academic staff have considerable expertise in identifying plagiarism and have access to electronic detection services to assist them.

Approved by the Academic Board June 2005 and endorsed by the Council July 2005.

C. Research Ethics
Who should apply and what research is covered?
Any King’s staff member or student doing research involving healthy human participants.

The term research should be taken in its broadest possible sense and includes questionnaires, observations and the use of materials derived from human participants as well as invasive or intrusive procedures. The re-use of personal data may also require ethical approval due to its sensitive nature or if individuals can be identified from it. Research raising any ethical issues with potential social or environmental implications may also require approval.

Where should I apply?
There is a risk based process which divides applications into low, moderate/uncertain and high risk so that the application process can be as efficient as possible.

High risk
All applicants should check that their dissertation is not high risk first. This is identified through the high risk checklist: www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics/applicants/sshl/riskcheck.html.
If you answer ‘YES’ to any of the questions on the checklist follow the procedure for high risk applications to the Social Science, Humanities and Law Research Ethics Subcommittee

Moderate or uncertain risk
Staff and research students should apply directly to their department’s Research Ethics Panel if the dissertation is not high risk.
Undergraduate and taught masters students should ascertain whether they can use the ‘low risk’ process below in the first instance.

Low risk
This process is only available to undergraduate and taught masters students.

These application procedures are explained fully online.
Application deadlines, forms and guidelines are also available: www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics/applicants/sshl/about.html

Further Information
Submitting using the wrong application process can result in delays to your application. If you are in doubt contact the Research Ethics Office or your local panel administrator as soon as possible.

Contact details and further information (including advice and Frequently Asked Questions) are available online www.kcl.ac.uk/research/ethics
Do you think something is missing? Did you find this guide useful?
Please email your comments and suggestions to trs@kcl.ac.uk