

POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON STUDENTS' RESEARCH

CODE: P028

Section: Academia

Procedure Owner: ARPB

Policy Owner: BOG

1. Introduction

Students enrolled in academic programmes at MQF Level 5 and upper may be requested to conduct research as part of the fulfilment of the obligations to obtain the qualification. This research has to be conducted according to the Policy and Procedure in this document. Students are expected to submit a long essay or a research project for MQF Level 5 HND programmes, a dissertation for undergraduate MQF 6 programmes and a thesis for MQF 7 master's degree programmes.

2. Guidelines, rules, and regulations

The Academic Research and Publications Board (ARPB) is the appointed unit within ITS responsible for the procedures related to the students' research journey in all the programmes offered by ITS.

The ARPB shall publish all relevant guidelines and instructions that complement ITS's Rules and Regulations. These shall include the relevant timelines, proposal and manuscript templates, assessment rubrics and procedures, academic formats, publication formats, ethical guidelines, academic integrity guidelines, the rights and responsibilities of both the student and the tutor/supervisor, and any other relevant documentation to support the student's research and the smooth administration of the process. These need to be presented to both the student and the tutor/supervisor before the submission of the proposal.

The ARPB shall update these guidelines regularly in consultation with the Board of Studies (BoS) as necessary.

3. The proposal and the selection of the tutor/supervisor

Students at HND, Degree and Master's Degree level must be introduced to the research process at an appropriate time in line with the programme's diet. The first step is to support the students to submit a proposal together with their suggested name/s of potential tutor/s and/or supervisor/s. The ARPB shall organise and provide all necessary support both through specific initiatives and following consultation with the Curriculum Department and the academics delivering study units related to academic writing and research.

Students should be challenged to think and to produce original research that contributes to the body of knowledge in travel, tourism, hospitality, and culture, especially in Malta. This will be reflected in the proposal.

The students are expected to develop the proposal according to the guidelines provided by the ARPB that reflect the relevant programme of studies.

At this stage, the proposal would be reviewed by the ARPB. Within its review, the Board shall either accept the proposal, or else refuse and recommend a number of changes or amendments before considering a resubmission.

The Institute provides a list of persons who would be available to act as tutors and supervisors. The students shall be given the opportunity to propose their own tutor/supervisor, subject to approval by the ARPB, which would look into the academic suitability of the proposed names along with other factors such as the research tutorship load of the suggested academic. In the case where the proposed name by the student is not accepted or the student does not have any names in mind, the ARPB shall allocate the tutor/supervisor that would best support the student's research.

Both the student and the tutor/supervisor must be made aware of the deadlines and milestones of the research journey, and of their roles, supporting services, rights, and responsibilities.

4. Doing the research

If the ARPB approves the proposal, the students may commence with their work by meeting the tutor/supervisor to plan the schedule of work. This must be carried out in line with the relevant rules and regulations, including any ethical clearance. It is the responsibility of the student to keep the tutor/supervisor updated and seek their feedback while meeting the stipulated deadlines.

The students have the right to ask the ARPB to change the tutor/supervisor if they can prove that they have not established a good working relationship with said tutor/supervisor. The tutor/supervisor can also submit a similar request. The ARPB shall facilitate this change one time during the research process.

The students are entitled to academic support not only from their tutor/supervisor but also from the ARPB and other units within the Institute in finalising their research, always recognising the primary role of the tutor/supervisor and the ARPB.

5.0 Manuscript format

The submitted long essay/dissertation/thesis must correspond to the established layout, format, and academic specifications published by the ARPB and the programme diet as approved by the BoS and the Programme Quality Validation Board (PQVB).

6.0 Progress and submission

The ARPB shall decide on reasonable submission deadlines for both the proposal and final manuscript, which in turn will be aligned to the programme of study as approved by the BoS and the PQVB.

Tutors and supervisors have the responsibility to inform the ARPB if the progress of the student's research work is not satisfactory or if there are any issues that would preclude the successful completion of the research.

On the other hand, the students have to respect the role of the tutor/supervisor and to submit work for feedback in good time.

The ARPB shall receive and decide on applications for exemptions from doing the research and for extensions to submission deadlines.

All research submissions have to undergo an anti-plagiarism check and should have been cleared in terms of ethical considerations before being assessed.

7. Assessment and moderation

The relevant Academic Programme Coordinator and the Registrar's Office shall administer the assessment process. Relevant rules and regulations shall apply in terms of failure grades and resits.

The students have a right of redress in case they do not accept the grade given to their research as per ITS's Rules and Regulations applicable to academic programmes.

8. Issue of final result

The final result shall be published by the Registrar's Office. Students may be precluded from graduating until they submit the final corrected version of the research to ITS according to the required format.

9. Publication

ITS reserves the right to publish the final version of the submitted student's research on its online channels, its publications, and its digital library.

10. Research culture

The ARPB together with the rest of ITS shall endeavour to nurture a research culture at the Institute that promotes quality research by the students in line with the Institute's mission statement and strategy.