



Dissertation Guide



Dissertation Guide

A864 MA Classical Studies Part 2

Dissertation Guide



This publication forms part of the Open University module MA Classical Studies Part 2. Details of this and other Open University modules can be obtained from Student Recruitment, The Open University, PO Box 197, Milton Keynes MK7 6BJ, United Kingdom (tel. +44 (0)300 303 5303; email general-enquiries@open.ac.uk).

Alternatively, you may visit the Open University website at www.open.ac.uk where you can learn more about the wide range of modules and packs offered at all levels by The Open University.

To purchase a selection of Open University materials visit www.ouw.co.uk, or contact Open University Worldwide, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA, United Kingdom for a catalogue (tel. +44 (0) 1908 274066; fax +44 (0)1908 858787; email ouw-customer-services@open.ac.uk).

The Open University,
Walton Hall, Milton Keynes
MK7 6AA

First published 2015

Copyright © 2022 The Open University

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or utilised in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the publisher or a licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd. Details of such



licences (for reprographic reproduction) may be obtained from the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS (website www.cla.co.uk).

Open University materials may also be made available in electronic formats for use by students of the University. All rights, including copyright and related rights and database rights, in electronic materials and their contents are owned by or licensed to The Open University, or otherwise used by The Open University as permitted by applicable law.

In using electronic materials and their contents you agree that your use will be solely for the purposes of following an Open University course of study or otherwise as licensed by The Open University or its assigns.

Except as permitted above you undertake not to copy, store in any medium (including electronic storage or use in a website), distribute, transmit or retransmit, broadcast, modify or show in public such electronic materials in whole or in part without the prior written consent of The Open University or in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Edited and designed by The Open University.

WEB11023 7

6.1

Contents

- [1. Introduction](#)
- [2. Tuition and supervision arrangements](#)
- [3. Submission and assessment of written work](#)
 - [3.1. Word limits](#)
 - [3.2. Cut-off dates](#)
 - [3.3. Completing and sending in your TMAs](#)
 - [3.4. Assessment of your dissertation](#)
- [4. Planning your dissertation](#)
 - [4.1. Deciding on a topic](#)
 - [4.2. Checking on availability of materials](#)
 - [4.3. Turning a topic into a dissertation](#)
 - [4.4. Working out a structure](#)
 - [4.5. Research Diary](#)
- [5. Preparing a research proposal](#)
- [6. Writing the dissertation](#)
- [7. Presenting and submitting your dissertation](#)
 - [7.1. Format of text](#)
 - [7.2. References and bibliography](#)
 - [7.3. Other parts of the dissertation](#)
 - [7.4. Submission arrangements](#)
 - [7.5. Date of submission](#)

- 7.6. Special circumstances

1. Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to set out clearly what is expected of you, and what you can expect from your tutor, in the production and assessment of your classical studies dissertation, and to provide advice and guidance that we hope will be of help to you. You should read it through carefully before you start work on your dissertation, and then return to it for reference whilst you are writing.

The dissertation is the culmination of your MA in Classical Studies. It is where you combine all of the research skills you have developed over the course of the MA, and show that you are capable of undertaking independent research. In earlier modules, including Part A of A864, your work was assessed via TMAs on topics largely determined by the module team. Now you have the opportunity to write at greater length on a topic you have developed yourself. You will need to be able to identify a subject that is appropriate for the length and scope of the dissertation, and produce a strategy for tackling it. You will also need to demonstrate (a) that you know how to use bibliographical resources effectively to locate relevant materials, (b) that you can prepare and write a sustained and logically structured academic argument in clear English prose, and (c) that you can present your work well, using appropriate scholarly conventions.

The topic of your dissertation should be related to a theme, approach or methodology you encountered during Part 1 of the MA



(A863) or the Subject Section (Part A) of A864. This means that it could be an aspect covered in the material, another aspect not covered but related to the material, or a type of evidence, approach or way of using sources that is in some way related to what you have learnt about the ancient world more generally. In other words, you are relatively free in your choice of topic, but you must state in your Outline Dissertation Proposal how your work on A863 or A864 thus far has fed into it. Moreover, your topic must be agreed between you and your tutor when you write your Outline Dissertation Proposal (see Section 2).

2. Tuition and supervision arrangements

First, a word about the tutorial support and supervision you can expect. Your supervisor for the dissertation is the same tutor you had for the Subject Section. Although it will be useful to be thinking about your dissertation long before the dedicated Dissertation Section (Part B) begins, the dedicated tutor support for your dissertation starts with TMA 04, and the Outline Dissertation Proposal you will hand in at this stage (week 29). This is a key document, as it will allow your tutor to give you detailed feedback on your dissertation plans, and to pick up on any potential problems arising from your choice of topic. As such, it is in your best interests to complete the Outline Dissertation Proposal as comprehensively as possible, and we strongly advise you to heed the advice you are given. One of the key aspects to being a researcher is knowing how to get the most out of any feedback you receive and treating it as a valuable resource.

During the course of the Dissertation Section that follows TMA 04, you will have four hours of dedicated one-on-one supervision time with your tutor. What form this takes will differ from student to student and tutor to tutor, but it might take the form of telephone calls, emails, Adobe Connect, or even, in rare cases, face-to-face meetings. You will be expected to make individual arrangements with your tutor as to how to use this time to your best advantage.



To provide some support whilst you are working on your dissertation, there are two further key stages in the Dissertation Section: the Comprehensive Dissertation Proposal and a Draft Chapter. These are formative TMAs that you will submit in weeks 34 and 39. Neither of these will be marked, but the feedback your tutor provides on them forms a central part of your dissertation supervision. The Comprehensive Dissertation Proposal will give your tutor the opportunity to assess your progress in the planning and thinking through of your dissertation, as well as the extent to which you have taken account of their feedback. The Draft Chapter will allow your tutor to provide you with feedback on your writing style, the way you construct arguments, and your use of scholarly conventions such as referencing. This is the only part of your dissertation manuscript that your tutor will read before it is submitted, so you should make sure that you take this step seriously and use it to show your tutor the way you intend to work. If there are any issues, they can still be dealt with at this stage!

In the Assessment section of the module website, you will find a Research Diary, in which you are required to keep a brief record of your various contacts with your tutor. This will help you to focus on the feedback given to you at various steps along the way: this feedback is the most important resource you have whilst you are writing your dissertation and you will benefit from taking seriously what is said to you.

Here are some hints for getting the most out of telephone supervision sessions:

- Each session should be focused on a particular topic or question, which you will have prepared in advance.
- A tutor's time is limited, and telephone conversations can easily become lengthy – use the time wisely.
- When the session ends, you and your tutor should both be clear about what the next stage is.

These points about focus and boundaries apply with equal importance to email contact; in the case of email, you also need to be aware that your tutor is unlikely to be able to reply to you immediately; he/she may well specify times during the week when he/she will be logging on to deal with MA dissertation queries.

As well as keeping in contact with your tutor, it is important that you stay in touch with other students in your tutor group via the forum. Writing a dissertation can be a lonely business at times, and being able to chat about mutual problems can be an enormous help, even if your topics don't look closely related at first.

3. Submission and assessment of written work

During the course of A864, you are required to complete three pieces of written work that relate to your dissertation before finally submitting the dissertation itself. These are:

- the Outline Dissertation Proposal (500 words): to be completed using the form provided in the [Assessment](#) section and submitted with TMA 04 in week 29
- the Comprehensive Dissertation Proposal (1,500 words): to be submitted as TMA 05 in week 34
- a Draft Chapter (2,000 words): to be submitted as TMA 06 in week 39.

These assignments will be given a ‘U’ (i.e. they are ungraded), but your tutor’s comments will indicate clearly how well you are progressing.

Useful points to note are:

The dissertation manuscript must be no longer than 12,000 words in length.

Only the completed dissertation will count for assessment purposes for this section of A864.

Details of the format of the dissertation and arrangements for submission are given in Section 7.

3.1. Word limits

A key aspect of being an independent researcher is knowing how to stick to word limits. Your TMAs and your dissertation are no different in this way from journal articles or book chapters. Every scholar, no matter how prominent, must adhere to the word limits dictated by publishers and editors, and it is an important skill to be able to say what you want to say in the number of words you are given. Your choice of topic will play a key role here. If you choose too wide a topic, you will struggle to construct a comprehensive argument in the number of words available to you.

While it may be helpful to the marker to include your raw data in an appendix in some instances (for example, if it is not readily available otherwise) these will be rare cases. Avoid using appendices unless it is absolutely essential and consult your tutor if you do want to include one. The word limits of your formative TMAs (TMAs 05 and 06) and your dissertation manuscript include any embedded quotations, headings for tables, content of tables, labels on diagrams, all references and footnotes, but not appendices or the bibliography.

As with all TMAs, you must include a word count in your manuscript. Note that for your dissertation, OU regulations state that you must include a total word count on your title page (see

Section 7.3). Your dissertation must adhere to the word limit and should not be submitted unless it does so. Further information on the penalties for writing too much or too little are given in Assessment information for Arts postgraduate modules, under Working on assignments.

3.2. Cut-off dates

In your Study Calendar you will find listed the TMAs and the dates by which they have to be submitted to your tutor. These cut-off dates are just as important in the Dissertation Section as they were in the Subject Section. If, for a legitimate reason (for example, illness), you find that you are not going to be able to meet a particular deadline, you must contact your tutor in advance to seek permission to have an extension. If you submit work late, the feedback your tutor is able to give you may not be as helpful as you would like, and he/she is ultimately not obliged to accept a late TMA.

3.3. Completing and sending in your TMAs

Broadly speaking, written work in the Dissertation Section should be presented and submitted to your tutor in a form similar to that used on the other MA modules you have taken. Note that the Outline Dissertation Proposal submitted with TMA 04 needs to be completed on the form provided. Your assignments should be submitted electronically (as eTMAs). To submit your TMAs



electronically, follow the instructions in the [Assessment Handbook](#).

Refer to [Assessment information for Arts postgraduate modules](#) for further clarification on how to submit your assignments and the dissertation. At this stage of your MA studies you should be aware of the need to use an appropriate system of scholarly referencing, and to include a bibliography with each piece of written work.

Advice on this is included in the [Assessment Guide](#).

3.4. Assessment of your dissertation

The Dissertation Section of this module is assessed entirely on the quality of the written dissertation you submit at the end of the module. It counts for 50% of the overall module mark. Obviously you will receive feedback from your tutor throughout the Dissertation Section of the module, and so will have a clear indication of how you are progressing. But at the end of the year your dissertation will be marked both by your own tutor and by a second marker.

The written recommendations of the two markers will form the basis on which the Examination and Assessment Board will determine your final result. Markers will recommend one of the following results:

- that the dissertation be awarded a Distinction
- that the dissertation be awarded a Merit
- that the dissertation be awarded a Clear pass
- that the dissertation be awarded a Pass



Dissertation Guide

- that the dissertation be awarded a Fail.

The general rules on resubmissions are described in your [Assessment Handbook](#).

4. Planning your dissertation

4.1. Deciding on a topic

It is very likely that you will have already decided on the broad topic of your dissertation. This is what we hope, and throughout the MA, and especially in Block 4, we have tried to make you think about designing manageable topics. Whatever your interest, you will need to find some way of approaching it within the limitations of a 12,000-word manuscript. You may be interested, for example, in looking at a social group in a particular historical context, an archaeological monument or process, or perhaps a literary text or series of texts. But for a viable dissertation at this level you will have to focus on a particular, manageable topic. Nothing is more fatal than to attempt blanket coverage of a large field: a topic such as ‘women in the Roman Empire’ or ‘gods in Greek literature’. The objection to such topics is not merely that you cannot hope to cover them effectively in the time and space at your disposal, but also that they are so broad that it would be difficult to achieve much of specific interest, either in terms of detailed interpretation or argument.

A useful general tip is: choose a relatively narrow and sharply defined topic, but one which can be related to larger issues. For example: ‘What do monuments X and Y tell us about the development of religion in the early Roman Empire?’ or ‘In what way do groups of texts A and B contribute to an understanding of the development of Z in Greek culture?’ The key point is (as

above): start with a question. There is no point in writing a survey simply listing one fact after another. You always need to be posing the questions ‘what?’, ‘why?’, ‘how?’ Trying to answer these questions will give your work structure and direction.

Undergraduate essays generally begin with a question, precisely to get students to construct an argument. At MA level, also, the crucial element is to construct an argument. Your dissertation title does not have to end up as a question – very few academic books or articles do have a question in the title. Nevertheless, academic authors have generally begun with a problem (a ‘what?’, ‘why?’ or ‘how?’). It may be a useful exercise to take one of the works of modern scholarship you have become particularly familiar with in A863 or A864 and consider how the author tackled the above issues.

4.2. Checking on availability of materials

A crucial part of deciding on a topic is making sure that you can get hold of the materials you need. The MA (especially the dissertation) is not a package served up to you complete like the undergraduate programme; it is your responsibility (in consultation with your tutor) to make sure your subject is realistic in the light of your access to libraries, geographical location and life-patterns. Indeed, if you discover that a topic just won’t work – for example you can’t obtain easy access to the necessary materials – you may need to switch to another topic. Your studies thus far should have

made you generally familiar with the nature and accessibility of sources in different areas of classical studies. The key point is to choose an area where you know there is a viable subject that you wish to tackle, and for which you know there are sources to which you have easy access.

When it comes to secondary scholarship, it will be essential to plan well ahead. If you need to visit a research library, check their online catalogue beforehand to be sure that the materials you want to consult will be available. Some online catalogues will allow you to reserve materials in advance. This is particularly important if you need to consult sources that are stored off-site. If you need to request materials by inter-library loan or postal service, do so in plenty of time so that they arrive by the time you need them. Remember that you are likely to find that some books or articles become unavailable just when you need them most! Part of convincing your tutor that you have a good dissertation topic will be showing that you have thought about how and where you are going to arrange access to the materials you need.

4.3. Turning a topic into a dissertation

Having limited the scope of your project to something manageable within the constraints of your time, you have to give it a direction. This means that the dissertation will have to present an argument, attempting to prove or establish something by means of presentation and analysis of evidence. There are many possible ways of doing this. Thus, while your dissertation is addressing a

particular question or examining a particular body of evidence, it should also present an argument which does at least some of the following:

- challenges or supports an existing interpretation
- discusses the value of a particular theoretical perspective
- assesses the importance and value of a particular kind of source, or set of sources
- assesses the importance and/or significance of a particular event or incident, or of some longer term development
- undertakes detailed analysis and interpretation of a source or set of sources.

Which of these you undertake will depend on the nature of your dissertation topic. But if you can frame your topic with these kinds of activities in mind, you will find that it helps you to work out a suitable structure, a matter to which we will now turn.

4.4. Working out a structure

In writing your dissertation you will have up to 12,000 words (excluding the abstract, bibliography and any appendices, but including any footnotes and quotations). So, the first principle is the one we have already been discussing: choose a topic that is capable of being dealt with adequately within the allocated word limit. This is important to be aware of because any worthwhile

research topic is liable to develop once work gets under way. One way of thinking through this problem is to look for areas where you could be flexible, i.e. areas that could be cut back, or even omitted altogether, if other, more relevant material needed to be included.

Thinking carefully at the outset about the question of length should also influence the way in which you structure your dissertation. Any dissertation will have an introduction, a middle and a conclusion.

Try to balance your allocation of words between them. Obviously an introduction is important: you need to tell your reader what you are intending to do and why. A conclusion is equally important: it should briefly summarise what you have done, explain its significance and, if appropriate, suggest how the subject might be extended.

In between the introduction and the conclusion comes the body of the work in which you assemble the evidence, analyse it, and put forward your argument based on that analysis. This middle section will need to be divided into chapters, each of which represents a major step in the development of the argument. Make sure you plan carefully from the outset what each of these chapters will be about, what their core argument and purpose will be, and how they contribute to your overall argument. You have already been through this process when you prepared TMA 04. How many chapters you divide the main body into will depend on your topic and the way you intend to go about tackling it, but chapters that are too short are likely to be superficial in character, so aim for

three to five. Remember that you need to identify one section of 2000 words to submit as a draft chapter.

It is important to recognise these limitations of space right from the beginning and to plan accordingly. It would be very time-consuming and a waste of your efforts to plan a structure that includes six or seven chapters, and then find that you need to cut or significantly restructure during the final stages of writing.

4.5. Research Diary

Part of the process of developing a research question is writing down your ideas when they come to you – even if you later discard them! – and developing a systematic approach to following up these ideas. In the Assessment section of the module website, you will find a Research Diary. This takes the form of a pro forma and it is designed to allow you to keep track of your progress. It is divided into two tables, one for the Subject Section of the module and the other for the Dissertation Section. You can add and delete lines in these tables in Word as required, but it is not necessary to make this into a lengthy document: it is not an assessment document, but is designed to help you work through your ideas and will be most helpful to you if it is clear and concise.

During the Subject Section, progress on your dissertation will likely take the form of initial ideas for topics or questions, and ideas for things you might like to read in order to follow up these ideas, such as articles you could read or bodies of evidence you might like to

take a closer look at. The two columns reflect these stages and allow you to write these things down so that you don't forget them, and to allow you to take steps in a systematic way. Your Research Diary can be shared with your tutor at any point during the Subject Section of the module: this is a useful way of getting ideas or feedback on your initial thoughts.

During the Dissertation Section of the module, your progress on the dissertation will be framed by more formal supervision from your tutor. The second table of your Research Diary is designed to allow you to keep track of these supervisions. Here you should record the dates on which you met, spoke to, or corresponded with your tutor, with a brief note of the points discussed – plus details of any substantial changes of plan agreed with your tutor. In this, you should also record the submission and return dates of your formative TMAs and the feedback you received. The purpose of this second table of the diary is twofold:

1. To provide an agreed record of the dates and topics covered during the four hours of tuition to which you are entitled.
2. To give you the opportunity to summarise and action feedback that you have received and record actions you have taken in a systematic way.

It is important that you attach your completed Research Diary to your final dissertation manuscript, as it provides a means by which



Dissertation Guide

The Open University assures itself that work being examined is genuinely that of the person to whom the credit will be awarded.

5. Preparing a research proposal

There are two stages to your dissertation proposal: the Outline Dissertation Proposal and the Comprehensive Dissertation Proposal. Block 4 of the module will have prepared you in advance for putting both these documents together.

The Outline Dissertation Proposal is to be completed using the form provided in the [Assessment](#) section – make sure it is complete before you submit it.

The Comprehensive Dissertation Proposal should be completed in running prose. These are the parts you must include:

Title: Do not feel bound by this (it can be altered).

Summary: State as concisely and clearly as possible what questions you will address, what your argument will be, and what sources you intend to use. The necessity of stating your argument in two or three sentences at this stage should be helpful in clarifying for yourself that there is a viable argument in your proposal.

Materials and chapter summaries: Go into more detail about your sources, giving some indication as to their aptness for your project, and how you think your discussion of them may be organised, chapter by chapter, in the final product. A provisional chapter structure is important, so make sure it is clear to the reader how many chapters there are going to be, what is going to go into each,

and how they will connect with each other. If possible give provisional chapter titles. Think of this as an exercise in persuasion: you are trying to convince your tutor that you have evidence (although as yet unexploited) for your thesis. Throughout this section you should refer to the secondary literature on the subject and, where necessary, indicate how you might use it. You may choose to argue in support of some work of scholarship or alternatively take issue with it, but you must at the very least demonstrate an awareness of some of the major secondary literature. You may also like to indicate at this stage what problems you think you might encounter along the way; your tutor is at least as interested in these as in your thesis.

Annotated bibliography: A list of the primary and secondary sources you intend on using should be appended to the proposal – though, again, this list will be provisional and will certainly expand once you begin serious work on your dissertation. Try to get the full and correct bibliographical details as early as possible; this will save a lot of time later. Annotations will help you to plan, and will show your tutor how you will use the works.

6. Writing the dissertation

Your MA study has been leading up to this moment, and it is worth remembering that although writing a dissertation of 12,000 words may not in theory be more difficult than writing a 2000-word essay (it is just a different kind of difficulty), to begin with it will almost certainly feel as if it is. You need stamina to keep going; you need to be organised about practical matters, such as note taking and developing a filing system; most of all, you need to start writing early.

To end this section, we have put together a brief list of top tips for your dissertation:

- Start the Dissertation Section by agreeing a timetable of contacts with your tutor. Don't let more than three or four weeks go by without giving him or her some sort of 'report back'.
- Plan well ahead. Organise books and library visits well in advance. It is an infallible rule that everything (research, writing, typing and correcting) will take longer than you expect, so do plan in some spare time.
- Start compiling a bibliography as soon as you start work. Don't put it on scraps of paper: put it in a ring-binder or an electronic file. Make sure that you record all the bibliographical information you will need: in addition to author and title, include the place of

publication, publisher and date and, in the case of articles in journals, page references. Include a note of where the source is available to you in case you need to return to it. If you accessed something online, be sure to note the date on which you did so as well as the URL.

- Back up your work: Never, never, never store important electronic information in only one place. To be safe from disaster, have a copy of everything both on the hard disk in your machine and on an alternative medium (Cloud, USB stick, external hard drive etc.).
- Keep an eye open for new publications in your own field.
- Make notes and record page references at the same time. You will likely not have time to return to find things like exact page numbers in the later stages of your dissertation, so exercise discipline from the start. For online sources, make sure you record the URL and the date of access.
- When writing, make sure that from the very beginning you use appropriate scholarly conventions (details can be found in the [Assessment Guide](#)). Getting it right from the start will save you an awful lot of time later on.
- Write clearly and crisply and avoid jargon wherever possible. Short sentences are more easily controlled

than long ones. Put in plenty of signposts. It is in your best interests to be kind to your markers!

- Keep in mind that a dissertation should be a form of argument in which the writer must attempt to convince the reader of his or her case. Be honest with yourself and make sure that you understand your own argument.
- Remember also that an argument is not the same as an assertion. You must make sure that you prove, or justify, or offer evidence for whatever you say by including properly referenced citations from primary sources and/or from modern scholarship. Remember, too, that your argument will be greatly strengthened if you recognise the force of points that might be made against – or that might qualify – the case you are advancing. Try to suggest ways in which these objections or qualifications might be answered.
- Remember to ‘plan’ your argument as carefully as the structure of the dissertation itself. Quite frequently authors ‘lose sight’ of their original argument as they become immersed in their writing. Having a brief plan next to you of the proposed line of argument (with a note of examples, etc.) to which you can refer constantly is very useful.
- Leave both the introduction and the conclusion until the bulk of the research has been written. This will

avoid wasting time rewriting them if your dissertation structure or argument changes. If you are the kind of person who prefers to write these first, factor in extra time at the end to redraft these.

- Make sure your written English is free of grammatical errors and typos. (Proofreading will help.) Again, be kind to your marker: too many errors make manuscripts difficult to read.
- Aim to have the first rough draft of your dissertation complete by the beginning of September to give you plenty of time to refine and revise it. The last weeks should be used to slim down your thesis (unless you've been very restrained, your first draft is likely to be over-length), to proofread your manuscript and to prepare the introduction and conclusion.
- Remember that your tutor and, behind him or her, the Student Support Team (SST) and the Classical Studies module team at Walton Hall are there to help. Don't suffer in silence: if you hit a problem, let someone know about it as soon as possible.
- Remember that whatever its problems, postgraduate research should be exciting and enjoyable. Keep your pen moving and your mind open – and good luck!

7. Presenting and submitting your dissertation

The Open University has certain regulations which govern the format and submission of taught higher degree dissertations, and in addition the MA in Humanities Programme Board lays down other requirements about the style of references, layout of bibliography, etc. In this section we bring all this information together. Please read it carefully, and then re-read it before you embark on the final version of your dissertation.

7.1. Format of text

Your dissertation manuscript should be presented double spaced throughout (with the exception of footnotes, bibliography and indented quotations). We suggest you use 12-point Times New Roman font, with footnotes (if relevant) and indented quotations in 10-point Times New Roman font. If you would like to submit your dissertation in a very different format, it might be a good idea to contact your tutor who will be able to give you advice.

In terms of margins, standard page formatting will usually suffice, but the minimum requirements are:

- Inside and outside margins 25mm.
- Top and bottom margins 20mm.

We suggest the first line of the opening paragraph of a section or chapter should be flush left. For subsequent paragraphs, indent

the first line. There is no need to insert an extra line space between paragraphs. Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout. Section titles should be presented in bold font. A table of contents should be provided, listing all the parts of the dissertation, with page references. Check that the wording of the chapter titles is identical with those in the body of the dissertation. (Section headings within chapters do not need to be included in the table of contents.) If your topic is a visual one, it will be necessary to back up your arguments with some well-chosen images. If you do include images, you can paste these directly into your work, but try to avoid creating very large files. The eTMA system will accept files up to 5MB. Stick to an image resolution of no more than 96 dpi. For more information, see the sections on 'Pasting images' and 'Minimising filesize' in the OU Computing Guide under [Screenshots and images](#).

You should make sure that you leave time to proofread your dissertation thoroughly before submission (a thorough proofread means reading through carefully more than once and always takes longer than expected). Punctuation and grammar, as well as spelling, should be checked carefully, and particular attention should be paid to quotations to ensure that you have transcribed them accurately (especially if you have any material or names in a foreign language). These are all matters to which examiners will pay close attention.

7.2. References and bibliography

Detailed guidance on the style and presentation of references and bibliography is given in the [Assessment Guide](#), and you should make sure that you have consistently followed conventions throughout.

Your bibliography should contain details of all the books and articles you have cited in your dissertation, not just the ones from which you have taken direct quotes. It is impossible to overemphasise the importance of taking care in how you present your references and bibliography. It is not just a formality but shows a scholarly way of thinking and writing. You must show that you are capable of distinguishing your own ideas from those of others, and also that you can distinguish between different ideas and opinions. You must also show that you can provide evidence for your claims by referring as precisely as possible to the (parts of) primary and secondary sources you have used: for example, using line numbers for primary sources, and page numbers for secondary scholarship. Work submitted at MA level should indicate that the author knows what a scholarly apparatus is for and how it should be presented. If you cannot show this, your dissertation will be in danger of not passing.

7.3. Other parts of the dissertation

There are three other important parts of your dissertation that require attention. First of all, you must supply an abstract, or synopsis, of the contents. This should be no more than 400 words in length, and a copy should be placed at the front of the dissertation, immediately following the title page and before the

contents page. The purpose of the abstract is to provide the reader with a brief but accurate summary of the content and structure of the dissertation – a bit like the ‘blurb’ provided on the flap or back cover of a book. You should try to describe clearly and concisely what your dissertation is about, giving an indication of the main divisions or chapters, how your argument is developed, and the conclusions reached.

Second, you must provide a title page. On the title page you must give the following information:

- the full title of the dissertation
- your full name
- your OU personal reference number
- the degree for which it is submitted (i.e. MA in Classical Studies)
- the date (month and year) of submission
- the total word count.

Finally, you must include a short statement making it clear whether any part of the dissertation has been submitted for a degree or other qualification at The Open University or any other university or institution. For example, your dissertation might build on a topic that you wrote about in Part A of A864. If this is the case, you should say so explicitly. You should also include a sentence making it clear that the entire work has been prepared by you alone. If this is not the case, you will need to provide details of the assistance you have received.

7.4. Submission arrangements

You are required to submit your dissertation in electronic form. You can find instructions on the submission process on the webpage [Submitting an EMA](#). If you have any problems, please telephone Assessment Handling Operations on +44 (0)1908 655291.

7.5. Date of submission

Your dissertation should be sent electronically via the system on or before the cut-off date of 12 noon (UK time) on 25 September 2023. This cut-off date is an absolute one, because the University does not offer extensions to the submission date for examinable work.

7.6. Special circumstances

Special circumstances relating to your examinable work submission should be reported to the University via the [Examinations and Assessment online submission tool](#). Full details of the procedure to follow is in the booklet [Information for Students Submitting Examinable Work on Electronically](#). The booklet also includes a copy of form E39, which may be used to submit special circumstances information in hard copy if you are unable to access the online submission tool. If submitting your examinable work electronically is going to be problematic for you, please contact your tutor or the SST and they will be able to advise you accordingly.