

# Student Handbook 2019-20

Faculty of Social Sciences  
School of Economic, Social and Political Science

Department of Gerontology

PG Certificate Gerontology / PG Diploma / MSc Gerontology

MSc Gerontology (Research)

iPhD Gerontology (taught element only)

## Disclaimer

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*This handbook is available in alternative formats on request.*

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# 1 Welcome

## Welcome from the Faculty of Social Sciences Associate Dean (Education)

Dear Students,

Welcome to the University of Southampton and good luck on the year to come. As an incoming student on one of our postgraduate taught programmes, you've already demonstrated your ability through your undergraduate studies, and we're glad you've decided to continue your education with us at Southampton.

Within the Faculty, you may also like to know that there are numerous staff who have chosen the role of ensuring the quality and innovativeness of your experience at Southampton. My role, as Associate Dean, is to provide leadership to this group of staff, developing educational strategy and ultimately overseeing all matters to do with your education and its assessment and quality. I have a commitment to ensuring the best possible student experience and, if all is working well, I will be like the duck on the pond - calm on the surface but paddling hard underwater.

In all of our endeavours, we aim to provide a distinctive flavour to our education, both when bringing students from all over the world to Southampton, and when taking Southampton to the world. It is our hope and intention that you too will experience our different and cutting-edge way of doing things, and that you will thrive and succeed in your studies and in all that University can offer you outside of your studies. Most of all, we hope that you will be happy during your time with us. This will shine through, and your positivity will be a beacon for friends, for opportunity and for achievements. Our staff are ready and willing to help you on that journey and we will be delighted to hear from you.

For now, though, welcome to what we hope will be a 'home from home', and good luck for your year to come.

With best wishes,



Jim Anderson  
Associate Dean (Education)  
Professor of Mathematics  
[J.W.Anderson@soton.ac.uk](mailto:J.W.Anderson@soton.ac.uk)

## **Welcome from the School of Economic, Social and Political Sciences**

Welcome to the University of Southampton. We are joint Deputy Head of School - Education and our responsibilities cover all aspects of postgraduate education and student matters, and primarily your experience while you study here. Postgraduate work will be more demanding in a number of ways; it is more than an additional year of undergraduate study. We are confident that you will see this as an amazing opportunity to deepen your knowledge and to develop essential skills. We are confident that you will become part of a lively postgraduate community that interacts both in the classroom and socially.

This Programme Guide contains a compendium of useful information about studying in Social Sciences at the University of Southampton. If you lose this Guide, you can access it [online](#). If anything in the Guide is unclear, Faculty staff are here to help. Questions about specific module material should be addressed to the module lead. Questions of a general academic nature should be addressed to the Programme Co-ordinator/Personal Academic Tutor assigned to you. The postgraduate programme coordinator for Economics is Dr Antonella Ianni. You can view the name of your Personal Academic Tutor on your student record which can be accessed via [SUSSED](#). In addition, staff working in the Faculty Student Administration Office located in Building 2, level 2 can explain and advise on many matters. In short, there is a wealth of support and you should use all that we make available to you.

**With Best Wishes,**

**Russell Bentley and Emanuela Lotti**

## **Welcome from the Head of Department & Director of the Centre for Research on Ageing**

Welcome to the Department of Gerontology and the Centre for Research on Ageing (CRA) in the Faculty of Social Sciences. We hope you find your studies with us are enjoyable and stimulating.

This Handbook will help to ensure that your induction into the Department goes smoothly and provides a useful source of information throughout your period of study. The Handbook provides information on the programmes, individual course modules, assessment and feedback, learning resources, student support, general calendar information and tutor contact details. Do take the time to find your way around this Handbook. The 'How to ...? Guides' at the end of the Handbook will prove invaluable when learning about the different practical tasks and resources involved with your study.

Feel free to email us if you have any queries. Happy studying!



**Professor Maria Evandrou, Head of Department and Director of the Centre for Research on Ageing**

The information contained within your programme handbook is designed to provide key information applicable to you and your programme during the 2019/20 academic year.

It complements the University's Student Portal. You can access the Portal by logging on to [SUSSED](#), using your user name and password, and clicking on the Students tab in the top navigation bar. It is important that you make use of these resources as they support the regulations relating to your obligations and that of the University while you are a student at the University of Southampton.

It also provides helpful information on matters such as housing, finance, leisure, healthcare and support facilities.

Resource	Web link
Faculty website	<a href="#">Faculty of Social Sciences</a>
Faculty staff information	<p>Dean of Faculty, Social Sciences: <a href="#">Professor Jane Falkingham</a>            Associate Dean of Education: <a href="#">Professor James Anderson</a>            Associate Dean of Research and Enterprise: <a href="#">Professor Sally Brailsford/Professor Rebecca Hoyle</a>            Associate Dean of International: <a href="#">Professor Sabu Padmadas</a></p>
School website	<a href="#">Gerontology</a>
School staff information	<p><b>Department of Gerontology and Centre for Research on Ageing (CRA)            Staff Contact Details and Research Interests</b></p> <p><b>Professor Maria Evandrou</b>  <b>Professor of Gerontology, Director of the CRA, Doctoral Programme Director and Residential Course Co-ordinator</b>            Tel +44 (0) 2380 594808 Fax +44 (0) 2380 598649            Email: maria.evandrou@soton.ac.uk</p> <p>Maria's research is varied and includes inequalities in later life, equity in health and social care, and inequalities amongst black and minority ethnic elders. She also examines the retirement prospects of future generations of elders, particularly the building and use of different types of policy tools for modelling income, pensions, health, incapacity, demand and supply of formal and informal care amongst older people in the future.</p> <p><b>Dr Gloria Langat</b>  <b>Lecturer in Gerontology (0.2 FTE (semester 1)), Examinations Officer and Senior Tutor</b>            Tel +44 (0) 2380 592571 Fax +44 (0) 2380 598649            Email: G.C.Langat@soton.ac.uk            Please note I only work Thursdays AM and Fridays AM.</p> <p>Gloria's research interests encompass demography, population dynamics, and gerontology. Her work focuses largely on resource-poor settings. She applies a mixed methods approach to the design and analysis of research. Gloria's broad research topics include: ageing in developing countries; HIV/AIDS; migration and health; impact of population dynamics on households and families; and urbanization.</p> <p><b>Dr Maja Fuglsang Palmer</b>  <b>Teaching Fellow in Gerontology, Study Skills Sessions Coordinator, Employability Co-ordinator and PGR forum and Writing Group Coordinator</b>            Tel +44 (0) 2380 592452            Email: maja.palmer@soton.ac.uk</p> <p>Maja's main research interests focus on informal care provision, particularly the pathways into informal care provision and how caring patterns change over time. Maja is a quantitative researcher with a background in Human Nutrition and Public Health and she is also interested in all health-related issues which affect the older population.</p>

**Dr Elisabeth Schröder-Butterfill**

**Lecturer in Gerontology, Staff-Student Liaison Committee Coordinator (0.6 FTE)**

Tel +44 (0) 2380 596880 Fax +44 (0) 2380 598649

Email: e.schroeder-butterfill@soton.ac.uk

Please note I only work Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Elisabeth's research interests cover older people's social networks, caregiving and migration and vulnerability in developing and transitional societies. Her academic background is interdisciplinary, combining demography, anthropology and sociology, and her research merges qualitative and quantitative methods, with ethnography informing the design and interpretation of survey sources.

**Professor Athina Vlachantoni**

**Professor of Gerontology and Social Policy, Head of Teaching Programmes and PGT Admissions Tutor**

Tel +44 (0) 2380 598940 Fax +44 (0) 2380 598649

Email: a.vlachantoni@soton.ac.uk

Athina's research interests combine the areas of ageing, formal and informal systems of support, and social policy. Her current research examines the demand for and supply of health and social care in the UK; informal care provision and receipt in India and China; life histories as determinants of outcomes in later life; and pension protection among ethnic minority groups in Britain.

**Dr Rosalind Willis**

**Associate Professor in Gerontology, Distance Learning Tutor and MSc Dissertations Tutor**

Tel +44 (0) 2380 595367

Email: r.m.willis@soton.ac.uk

Rosalind's research interests include the mental health of older people, inequalities in social care, and informal care and social support. Much of her work has an emphasis on ethnic diversity, and she has conducted research with ethnic minorities in the UK and experiences of dementia in Pakistan.

*If you wish to make an appointment with a member of staff, please either email or phone them.*

**Centre for Research on Ageing Research Staff**

**Dr Isabella Aboderin**

**Associate Professor in Gerontology**

Email: I.Aboderin@soton.ac.uk

Isabella is also a Senior Research Scientist and Head of APHRC's program on ageing and development in sub-Saharan Africa. Isabella's research interest centres on the nexus between issues of ageing and older persons and core development agendas in Africa, with a focus on age-based inequities in wellbeing and service access, older persons' economic and intergenerational roles and the life course of younger generations. Her research is driven by a conviction that issues of ageing not only affect us individually and in families but are crucial for the future of Africa's societies. Isabella is also a Senior Research Scientist and Head of the Africa Population and Health Research Centre's program on ageing and development in sub-Saharan Africa.

**Dr Min Qin**

**Research Fellow**

Min is currently researching later life health and well-being in Britain. She is applying the life course approach to investigate the correlates between early life events or life domain trajectories and later health and well-being. Min's previous research studied children's migration and health outcomes for 'left-behind' older adults in China and India.

	<p><b>Dr Giuseppe Troccoli</b>  <b>Research Fellow</b>  Giuseppe is a Research Fellow at the ESRC Centre for Population Change and the Department of Gerontology, working on the project 'Transnational healthcare and wellbeing among Polish migrants in the UK'. The project uses quantitative and qualitative methods in order to map healthcare attitudes and practices between the UK and other countries in the current Brexit transitional period. It also aims to assess how EU migrants' – as well as UK citizens' – access to transnational healthcare is likely to change. Previously, he has worked on the themes of migration, work and urban life in Belize, Central America.</p> <p><b>Visiting Research Fellows</b></p> <p><b>Dr Zhixin (Frank) Feng</b>  <b>Senior Research Fellow</b>  Email: Z.Feng@soton.ac.uk</p> <p>Frank is currently a Principal Investigator of a Worldwide Universities Network (WUN)-Research Development Funding. He is applying multilevel models to investigate the effectiveness of health service/investment on health inequalities among older people in China. He is also a Co-Investigator in an ESRC project: Extending our understanding of informal care provision in mid-life in the UK by linking qualitative and quantitative data in the 1958 National Child Development Study NCDS.</p> <p><b>Dr Jane Parry</b>  <b>Visiting Research Fellow</b></p> <p>Jane is a qualitative sociologist interested in the kinds of transitions that people make in later life (around retirement, bereavement and health crises), and how these are affected by social support and material resources. A second aspect of her research has focused on inequalities and boundaries between paid and unpaid work, with particular reference class and gender, taking a lifecourse approach to understanding participation.</p> <p><b>Professor Vivian Lou Wei Qun</b>  <b>Visiting Professor</b></p> <p>Prof Vivian Lou Wei Qun is Director of the Sau Po Centre on Ageing and Associate Professor, Department of Social Work &amp; Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong. Prof Vivian Lou Wei Qun is an international expert in the fields of long-term care, family caregiving, psychological well-being and evidence-based practice. She is also a member of the Social Work Training Fund Committee for the Hong Kong Government.</p> <p><b>Dr Jin Pil Um</b>  <b>Visiting Research Fellow</b></p> <p>Dr Jin Pil Um has worked on various international research projects including a comparative study on dementia, internal adjustment and mental health among the care workers in Japan and Korea; active ageing in the Asian Pacific countries; and investigating the income of older people in Korea, Japan and the UK. Dr Jin Pil Um is an alumnus in the Department of Gerontology (since 2014, for his MSc and PhD) and a collaborator with current staff.</p>
<p>Programme and module descriptions</p>	<p>Descriptions relating to your programme can be found via the programme pages on the web, and on Blackboard.</p> <p>Your programme structure (i.e. which modules make up your programme) is available in your programme specification and via the on-line programme catalogue which is accessible via <a href="#">Banner Self Service</a>.</p> <p>To find links to broad generic descriptions of the programmes and modules, follow links to your programme starting from the <a href="#">Faculty web pages</a>.</p>

## 2 General Information

### 2.1 Your student office

**Team responsibilities:** Manage and co-ordinate the delivery of key student life cycle activities within the Faculty. Provide a range of administrative services to the students and staff within the Faculty in support of enrolment, induction, student record maintenance, assessment, progression, attendance monitoring, awards and graduation.

<b>Gerontology</b> Building 2, Room 2040 Highfield Campus, Southampton, SO17 1BJ  Tel: +44 [0]2380592250 Internal 22250 Opening Hours: 9.00 - 17.00 Monday - Friday	gerontology.studentoffice@soton.ac.uk
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You should visit the Student Office for all general queries relating to the administration of your programme (this may include coursework submissions and collection of feedback, module registration changes, special considerations requests, sickness self-certification forms, suspension and withdrawal requests).

### 2.2 How we keep in touch with you

#### Email

We will use your University email account to contact you when necessary. We will not use any other email accounts or social networking sites. **It is your responsibility to check your University email account regularly** and you must not let your inbox exceed your storage limit.

Notification that you are due to exceed your storage limit will be sent to your University email account and you should take immediate action as you will be unable to receive further emails once your storage limit has been exceeded.

#### Written Correspondence

Formal correspondence regarding your programme of study (e.g. suspension, transfer or withdrawal from programme, academic performance (including progression/referral information), issues of academic integrity, student complaints and academic appeals) will be sent to your term-time (TT) or permanent (PM) address listed as active on your student record. You are responsible for advising the University if you change your permanent or term-time address. The University will not be held accountable if you do not receive important information because you failed to update your student record.

#### Use of social networking sites

We understand that students are increasingly using social networking sites to interact with members of their student community. You should note that any behaviour that affects other members of the University community or members of the general public in ways which might damage the standing and reputation of the University may be subject to [disciplinary action](#) within the scope of the University's Regulations.

### 2.3 Confirmation of your student enrolment status

The Student Office can provide you with a certificate to confirm your status as a student (e.g. for bank account opening purposes). Please ensure that you give at least 48 hours' notice of your requirements (longer at peak times such as at enrolment or during the examination periods).

Your award certificate will be produced using the legal name data you have provided within your student record. Please make any necessary amendments to your record immediately a change occurs to ensure that your certificate contains accurate information.

In accordance with policy, a scale of fees exists for the provision of certificates, transcripts and award certificates. Please see point 11 'Transcripts, Certificates and Award Letters' within the [fees section](#) of the University Calendar.

Your award certificate will be produced using the legal name data you have provided within your student record. Please make any necessary amendments to your record immediately a change occurs to ensure that your certificate contains accurate information. Changes are made via [Banner Self Service](#).

## 3 Supporting you through your studies

### 3.1 The role of your Personal Academic Tutor

The University operates a tutor system to help support and advise students in their academic study. As a student, you can expect to be allocated a [Personal Academic Tutor](#). Your Personal Academic Tutor may or may not be one of the teaching staff you see in the course of your studies, but their role in this context is to provide advice and support to you throughout your study, and to help review your academic progress. You can expect to see your Personal Academic Tutor at key points through your University career and, if you need to, you can contact them more frequently. Sometimes, your Personal Academic Tutor may refer you to other areas for support. They may refer you to individual support services, or to your student office for information, or to a Senior Tutor. The Senior Tutor (shown below) will have a more specialised understanding of supporting students, and may support you if you have a particular problem. You can also contact the Senior Tutor if you wish to change your allocated Personal Academic Tutor.

Gerontology	Gloria Langat	G.C.Langat@soton.ac.uk
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The University expects that you will engage with your Personal Academic Tutor, attend the scheduled meetings, respond to messages from your Personal Academic Tutor, and notify your Personal Academic Tutor (or the Senior Tutor, if you prefer) if you are experiencing problems which are affecting your performance, attendance or progress in your studies. In particular, you should contact your Personal Academic Tutor if you feel your performance in any forthcoming examinations will be affected by ill health or other special considerations, and check with your Personal Academic Tutor if you plan to cite him/her as a referee for job applications.

The Senior Tutor will have a more specialised understanding of supporting students and may support you if you have a particular problem. You can also contact the Senior Tutor if you wish to change your allocated Personal Academic Tutor.

Personal Academic Tutors can provide advice on assignment plans, your dissertation ideas, and help you learn from feedback on assignments.

*(See also the document on Blackboard giving details about the roles and responsibilities of different members of staff.)*

### 3.2 What to do if you are ill

It is important that your doctor (as well as your Personal Academic Tutor) is immediately informed of any illness that is likely to affect your studies. If appropriate, your GP may inform your Personal Academic Tutor that you are experiencing some health difficulties that may affect your academic performance. This will be done with your consent and you may wish the details of your illness to be withheld from your Personal Academic Tutor, although you should think carefully about this (your tutor will, in any case, respect your privacy).

More information can be found in the [General Regulations - Attendance and Completion of Programme Requirements](#).

### 3.3 External factors affecting your attendance or performance in your studies

We expect you to take responsibility for your studies to ensure that your full academic potential can be realised. However, sometimes difficulties can arise that can affect you.

If you are absent from an examination or other assessment or have other grounds for believing that your studies have been affected by external factors, you must bring this to the attention of your Personal Academic Tutor or to the Student Office immediately. Whilst we recognise that students can sometimes be reluctant to discuss cultural, sensitive or personal issues, it is essential that you bring problems affecting you to our attention immediately so that we can determine how best to help you.

### 3.4 Special considerations

If you believe that illness or other circumstances have adversely affected your academic performance, this is known as [Special Considerations](#). If you wish for these to be considered you must complete a [Special Considerations form](#). **It is important that you submit this in a timely manner and prior to the Board of Examiners. You will need to submit any Special Considerations forms to your Student Office.**

All claims must be substantiated by written documentary evidence, for example a medical certificate or GP/consultant letter, self-certification (although self-certification will not be regarded as evidence in relation to your examination performance) or a statement from your Personal Academic Tutor. The purpose of asking for supporting documentation is for you to be able to corroborate the facts of your submission.

All claims will be reviewed by the Special Considerations Board which meets regularly throughout the year. The Student Office will contact you via your University email account to let you know once approval has been made.

### 3.5 Student Support Review

The [Student Support Review Regulations](#) are in place to support students if concerns are raised about their health, wellbeing or behaviour which may be impacting on their academic progress and/or general management of life at University or on placement. The regulations seek to be both supportive and to actively engage with students prior to decisions made about their fitness to study. The regulations and supporting documents identify the procedure and support available to both students and staff when a student becomes unwell and/or presents a risk to self and/or others.

### 3.6 Suspending your studies

Should you feel that you need to take some time out from your studies, known as [suspending your studies](#), you should first discuss this with your Personal Academic Tutor. A Suspension Request form should be obtained, completed and returned to the Student Office. Please note that, if you wish, you can suspend your studies in order to undertake an internship or period of industrial training outside of normal vacation time.

### 3.7 Withdrawing from your studies

If you no longer wish to continue with your studies, a Withdrawal Notification form should be obtained, completed and returned to the Student Office. Further information can be found in the [General Regulations - Transfer, Suspension, Withdrawal and Termination](#)

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

## 4 Your safety

### 4.1 University/Faculty/School Health and Safety Policy and further information

The University's Health, Safety and Risk website, covering the Health and Safety Policy Statement and Management System, which defines commitment, governance, responsibilities and management of health and safety is available here:

<https://sotonac.sharepoint.com/teams/HealthSafetyRisk>

Ensuring student health and safety is a major goal of the University. As a new student you will have received information on Personal Safety and H&S/Fire Safety as part of your 'Southampton Welcome'. Both new and existing students should also take a look at the following links for further information:

[The Faculty of Social Sciences H&S sharepoint pages:](#)

<https://sotonac.sharepoint.com/teams/FacultyofSocialSciences/SitePages/Health-&Safety.aspx>

[You can also receive support from the Students' Union - SUSU at](#)

<http://www.susu.org/support>

### 4.2 Local arrangements

Key local Health and Safety arrangements are as follows. If you have questions relating to any of the following information please contact a member of the Faculty Health and Safety team, details of which you will find at the end of this section.

### 4.3 Action in the event of a fire



If you notice or suspect that there is a fire you should immediately raise the alarm by operating the nearest fire alarm call point (one will be located on the wall as you leave the building). The fire alarm is a continuously ringing bell.



On hearing the fire alarm you should immediately stop what you are doing and make your way out of the building by following the green emergency exit signs to the nearest exit, shutting doors behind you as you leave. Do not stop or return to collect personal belongings. Lifts will not operate when the alarm sounds.

**NOTE:** If you have a permanent or temporary mobility impairment that affects your ability to use stairs to exit a building then you should have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). If this is not the case, please contact your personal tutor for further assistance.

In any event, should you be isolated when the alarm sounds, please call 3311 from an internal telephone or 02380593311 from a mobile phone.



On leaving the building make your way to the assembly point. Ensure any car parks or roads are kept clear for emergency vehicles. Do not re-enter a building until you are told it is safe to do so by the Fire & Rescue Service, the senior Fire Warden or Security staff.

Fire extinguishers are provided in buildings but should only be used by those trained in their use and only if it is safe to do so.

Evacuation alarms are tested weekly. The times of these tests are detailed near main entrances to buildings. When tests take place the bell will ring for no more than a few seconds.

#### 4.4 Assembly points

Building	Assembly point
B2	South of Building 4, on the grass area between the Turner Sims and the Staff Centre, well away from the buildings
B4	South of Building 4, on the grass area between the Turner Sims and the Staff Centre, well away from the buildings
B6	South of Building 4, on the grass area between the Turner Sims and the Staff Centre, well away from the buildings
B32 (Education)	South of Building 32 on the Jubilee Plaza area before the service road and the library
B34 (Education)	Area around flag pole in front of University library.
B39 (S3RI)	Car park in front of B54
B44 (Geography / Psychology)	Grassed area in front of University Health Service Building (North end of Physics building).
B44a (Psychology)	Car park in front of B44 (Shackleton)
44 Chamberlain Rd (Psychology)	Car park in front of B44 (Shackleton)
B54 (Mathematics) and B56	Grassed area adjacent to Turner Sims Concert Hall
B58 (Social Science)	Grassed area adjacent in front of University Health Service
Other buildings	Check the emergency information that should be displayed on a noticeboard in teaching rooms.

#### 4.5 First Aid



In the event of an accident causing injury, the nearest first-aider should be contacted. Their details are displayed on signs in corridors. Alternatively, contact security on 3311 using an internal phone and they will assist. Following treatment, the incident must be reported to your line manager/supervisor and the Faculty Health and Safety team.

#### 4.6 Incident Reporting



If you are involved in an accident or incident, spot a hazardous situation or are concerned that you are being asked to do something without the necessary information, instruction or training that would ensure your safety, please report this to your supervisor and the Faculty Health and Safety team. The circumstances can then be investigated and measures put in place to minimise

future risk.

Incidents can be reported online at: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/healthandsafety/incident-report.page>

## 4.7 Induction and Training



As a new student you should have the following expectations with regard to Health and Safety:

- To be made aware of local emergency arrangements and H&S contacts on your first day.
- To receive a local induction before using any laboratory or workshop area. This will identify hazards and make you aware of particular procedures in place to help ensure your safety.
- That risk assessments and other written arrangements that maintain good H&S in all your activities will be brought to your attention by your supervisor.

## 4.8 Building Access

Most University buildings are open to all from 08.00-18.00 Monday - Friday excluding University and public holidays.

**ALL undergraduate students** - must leave buildings by 18.00.

**Postgraduate students** - Access by ID card may be available by approval of your Head of School, to postgraduate students (depending on student status and/or circumstances) from 06.00-23.00. If permission is granted, buildings are to be clear by 23.00 and remain so until 06.00 (Closure Period).

## 4.9 Out-of-Hours Policy

The Out-of-Hours Policy covers the Closure Period from 11.00pm through to 6.00am the following day and applies to every day of the year, including weekends and Public Holidays. You must have received approval to work during the closure period from your Head of School and this must be documented using **Form 1.5** available from the link <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/estates/what-we-do/security.page>

You are required to present a completed copy of the form, together with your University ID when requested by Security Staff.

## 4.10 Further information

More detailed information, forms and links to other sources of advice are available via the links provided in part 1.1 of this document.

#### 4.11 Contact Information

A student's primary contact should be their supervisor. However, the following contacts may be used if necessary:

Health and Safety Contacts				
Aloma Hack	Health and Safety Liaison Officer	4/3063 63A/1013	023 8059 3025	<a href="mailto:A.J.Hack@soton.ac.uk">A.J.Hack@soton.ac.uk</a>
Gary Griffiths	Health and Safety Co-ordinator	63A/1013	023 8059 4994	<a href="mailto:G.B.Griffiths@soton.ac.uk">G.B.Griffiths@soton.ac.uk</a>
Health, Safety and Risk Directorate				
HSR general and specific enquiries	Please contact HSR directorate if local contacts are not available	26 University Road	023 8059 3951	<a href="mailto:m.k.ridley@soton.ac.uk">m.k.ridley@soton.ac.uk</a>
Security - Central Control Room (CCR)				
CCR	023 8059 3311 (Emergency)	023 8059 2811 (Enquiries)		<a href="mailto:unicc@soton.ac.uk">unicc@soton.ac.uk</a>

## 5 Your Academic Programme

### 5.1 The academic year and the programme structure

The structure and modular content provided within the programme specification is specific to your own programme.

You can view the most up to date version of the programme specification on [SUSSED](#).

### 5.2 Registration and amendment to optional modules

Most programmes will have a number of optional modules. If applicable, you will need to select a certain number of optional modules to complete your portfolio of modules and fulfil the credit points as required for the programme.

When choosing your options, you are strongly advised to ensure that you have a similar total number of modules in Semester 1 and Semester 2, to maintain a balanced workload throughout the year. Once you have registered your options, it is possible for you make changes but there are restrictions. The substitution of modules is not allowed (i.e. you cannot take an extra module in semester 2 to replace a semester 1 module in which you failed to perform well).

You may request a change to your optional module choice up to the **end of week 2** in each semester. You should complete a Change of Module form to specify your request (forms can be obtained from the Student Office). If your optional module choices clash in your timetable, then you will need to amend your optional choice accordingly by contacting the Student Office immediately.

You should regularly check your online student record for details of your registered modules. This is particularly important after you have made any changes and will help to maintain the accuracy of your student record. It will also save time and confusion during the examination period.

### 5.3 Attendance

The [University attendance regulations](#) details the University expectations relating to attendance.

### 5.4 Additional Costs

You may incur additional costs because of your programme, for example for materials, field trips or books. General programme costs are located in the programme specification. Modules that are optionally available to select also include information on module specific costs.

## 6 Teaching and Learning Skills

### 6.1 Time management

It is your responsibility to manage your time in order to ensure that you keep up to date with the material presented and with the requirements of the programme. Deadlines for work submission should be adhered to otherwise marks will be deducted via the imposition of a [late submission penalty](#).

The framework of when lectures and classes occur and deadlines for submission of work will be made available to you well in advance, but if you are unclear about any aspect of your module you should talk this through with your module lead or programme lead. This knowledge will allow you to plan your life based on how you know you work best. Effective use of your time will allow you to perform well on your course and to enjoy student life.

One of the work-place skills you should aim to acquire at University is the ability to manage multiple priorities. If you have problems in this area, please discuss them with your Personal Academic Tutor.

### 6.2 Lectures

A single lecture slot lasts 45 minutes. It is therefore vital that you arrive promptly in order to gain maximum benefit from the time. Each lecturer will present material using either handouts or require you to make your own notes. Transcribing lectured material into a form that you find most useful is an important part of the learning process. You should ensure that you understand the material and, if you have difficulty in understanding or applying the knowledge, use recommended textbooks or the assistance of teaching staff during tutorials to gain understanding.

It is your responsibility to develop your ability in a given subject. How well you have acquired that ability and the associated knowledge is gauged by the assessment process. Lectures are provided for your benefit and you should take full advantage by ensuring you attend all of the lectures in a given module. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend, ensure that you get hold of a copy of the notes or handouts from your module lead.

### 6.3 Use of electronic recording devices or mobile phones in lectures or classes

Out of courtesy to staff and other students, please ensure that mobile phones are switched off in lectures and seminars. You are advised that lectures are the copyright property of the lecturer and permission to audio-record a lecture must be personally sought from the lecturer before proceeding.

If you wish to use an electronic device to take notes in a lecture, you should do so in a way that does not cause disruption to those sitting near you.

If you have a health condition for which additional support is needed, you may, following assessment by the University's educational support services, make appropriate arrangements with staff for recording lectures.

### 6.4 Tutorials/supervisions

Group tutorials/supervisions are timetabled for some modules (e.g. GERO6014). These sessions are intended for you to develop your problem-solving skills as well as for you to discuss further with an experienced member of staff any particular lecture material you are finding difficult to understand. It is essential that you come well prepared for these sessions. These sessions are one of the most effective ways of reinforcing the lecture material.

### 6.5 Independent or Self learning

Independent study or self-directed learning involves using libraries, data retrieval systems, internet, etc, or in a group working on coursework, reading the lecture material or reading around the subject. This should also develop your investigative and problem-solving skills in furthering understanding of the subject, creating links with other modules - past and present - and providing a broadening of your educational experiences and knowledge base.

Self-learning is your personal responsibility and your commitment to the programme. It requires discipline, motivation and focussing on achieving individually set targets. It enables you to reach your full potential academically, develops your personal skills and helps establish a successful professional career.

## 6.6 Key skills

Key skills are those skills which can be applied to other disciplines and fields of work. Employers are increasingly seeking to employ individuals with well-developed key skills. More can be found on the Academic Skills pages of the [library website](#). The Study Skills Co-ordinator and Gerontology Employability Tutor Dr Maja Palmer ( [maja.palmer@soton.ac.uk](mailto:maja.palmer@soton.ac.uk) ) will also be able to provide advice on furthering your key skills and improving your employability.

## 6.7 Faculty/School Policy on referencing

In Social Sciences degree programmes, including Gerontology the Harvard referencing system is preferred. Speak to your module lead before using any other referencing system. Details about how to use the Harvard referencing system can be found through the following library link: <http://library.soton.ac.uk/sash/referencing>

## 6.8 Academic integrity: the University Policy

The University expects that all students will familiarise themselves with the [Regulations Governing Academic Integrity](#).

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

Procedures will be invoked to investigate suspected breaches of academic integrity when concerns are raised during the marking process or in connection with suspected cheating in examinations. We are aware that students may have experienced differing standards at other institutions (including those overseas) but it is essential that you take steps to ensure your full understanding of the standards expected at Southampton as significant penalties can be imposed if these are breached. These penalties will always affect the mark you receive for the piece of work in question, and the most serious cases could lead to a reduction in degree classification or even termination of programme. There is likely also to be an impact on any future reference we provide.

It is often helpful to discuss ideas and approaches to your work with your peers, and this is a good way to help you think through your own views. However, work submitted for assessment should always be entirely your own, except where clearly specified otherwise in the instructions for the assignment. In some instances, working in groups will be required, and there may be occasions when work is submitted from the whole group rather than individuals. In these instances, the instructions will make it clear how individual contributions to the joint work should be identified and will be assessed. If you are in any doubt, check with the person setting the assignment. If you have worked with others you should make sure that you acknowledge this in any declaration you make.

If you wish to improve your study skills, always seek advice sooner rather than later. Your personal academic tutor or module convenor will be able to help you identify sources of assistance. It is an important element of independent learning, and a normal part of academic development, to recognise when you need to seek advice, and to learn to benefit from it. This would not necessarily mean that you are 'struggling' with your work – you may feel you need additional advice to reach your personal potential.

If in doubt about what is required in any particular assignment, what referencing styles are appropriate etc, always ask. Your tutor or module co-ordinator will be able to point you in the direction of appropriate sources of advice and information.

You are responsible for your own work and conduct, and for ensuring that you neither fall accidentally into poor academic practice in your written work nor engage in practices which breach academic integrity. Such practices are unacceptable, whether they have been followed deliberately or through a lack of understanding. As well as damaging your own development, failure to work with academic integrity is unfair to other students who complete work honestly and fairly. It can also potentially damage the relationship between staff and students which is at the heart of the

University community, and relationships with external partners. Ultimately, your results will not be a true reflection of your performance, which may potentially damage the academic standing of the University's awards.

Furthermore, should you have reason to believe that a fellow student is not working with academic integrity, you should speak in confidence to the Module Convenor. Your identity will not be revealed as part of any investigation; however no further action would be taken unless additional evidence is identified by the marker or module convenor.

## 6.9 Research Ethics

All research on human participants, their tissue or data requires ethical approval via the University's Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO) system ([www.ergo.soton.ac.uk](http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk)). This includes, but is not limited to, studies of the following kind:

- analysis of existing secondary data at an individual level, even where such data have been anonymised and/or the datasets exist in the public domain;
- collection of data using questionnaires and online surveys;
- collection of data using interviews, observations, focus group discussions or similar qualitative approaches; and
- experiments involving human participants.

Research on animals is governed by separate procedures.

If you are in doubt about whether the research for your dissertation requires ethical approval, please contact your divisional 'ethics champion', or a member of the Faculty Ethics Committee via [risethic@soton.ac.uk](mailto:risethic@soton.ac.uk).

To obtain ethical approval for your research, please apply via the ERGO system ([www.ergo.soton.ac.uk](http://www.ergo.soton.ac.uk)). Detailed guidance on how to apply and what documents to upload can be found on the Researcher Portal (<https://intranet.soton.ac.uk/sites/researcherportal/>) and in the Downloads section on the ERGO page.

Please note that the University does not permit mass emailing for the recruitment of research participants.

Your supervisor will need to approve your ethics application before it is reviewed by the Faculty Ethics Committee. There are no submission deadlines; instead applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. You will normally receive a decision within 10 working days. Please allow extra time in case you are asked for revisions. **You must not begin your research before you have obtained approval via ERGO!** Retrospective approval is never granted.

Failure to obtain ethics approval or to comply with the University's Ethics Policy will be investigated under the University's regulations governing Academic Integrity (<http://www.calendar.soton.ac.uk/sectionIV/academic-integrity-regs.html>)

# 7 Assessment and Examinations

## 7.1 Coursework assessment and submission

A number of modules include coursework assignments as part of the assessment. Coursework can often occupy a large amount of time. It is worth noting that getting a few extra marks on an assignment may not justify the extra time spent. Conversely, students who forget or do not bother to hand in work can make it very difficult for themselves to achieve their full academic potential.

When coursework is set a due date and time for submission will be specified. If you are unsure about the date or time required for any submission, it is your responsibility to contact the module co-ordinator to obtain clarity. Students should aim to complete assignments on a wide variety of topics and avoid re-using similar topics in several modules/assignments. Having said that, topics may be re-used a limited number of times, if the focus of the assignment question is very different, or if a different range of academic literature is drawn on. In such cases, students should seek the permission of the lead module convenor before starting their work on their assignment. Please be aware that the Turnitin submission system will pick up text that has been replicated across assignments, and this will be treated as self-plagiarism.

All coursework should be submitted in Microsoft Word format through Turnitin via Blackboard before **4.00 pm (UK time)** on the given published hand in date.

*Please consult the 'How to ...? Guide' on submitting coursework through Turnitin on Blackboard.*

## 7.2 Penalties for late coursework submission

When coursework is set a due date for submission will be specified and there will be associated penalties for handing in work late. The University has a [uniform policy for the late submission](#).

Work submitted up to 5 working days after the deadline should be marked as usual, including moderation or second marking, and feedback prepared and given to the student. The final agreed mark is then reduced by the factors in the following table.

University Working Days* late	Mark
1	(final agreed mark) * 0.9
2	(final agreed mark) * 0.8
3	(final agreed mark) * 0.7
4	(final agreed mark) * 0.6
5	(final agreed mark) * 0.5
More than 5	Zero

\*University working days excluding weekends, University closure days and public holidays.

## 1.3 Coursework extensions

If you know there will be a valid reason why you cannot submit the work at the given date you must contact the Student Office as soon as possible. You should complete a Special Considerations form, which should provide adequate detail of the reasons why you are seeking an extension. Your completed form should be submitted to the Student Office who will arrange for your request to be reviewed. The Student Office will contact you via your University email account to let you know once approval has been made. **It is your responsibility to request an extension in a timely manner and prior to the original deadline.**

## 7.3 Coursework and examination feedback

Feedback comes in many forms and you must learn to recognise the merits of all of these. The [Student Feedback Policy](#) provides an overview of formal feedback.

Formal feedback is well documented, and the following paragraphs identify ones that you are officially entitled to.

Informal feedback is just as important and comes in the form of individual chats with your Personal Academic Tutor, module leaders or project supervisors, or group meetings with academics after a lecture or practical session.

All coursework will be marked and returned to you, accompanied by feedback which will relate to the standard of your work and the reasons for the mark/grade given. You should note that all marks are considered provisional until they have been reviewed and confirmed by the Board of Examiners. This feedback will typically be returned within four weeks following your submission. Large assignments (e.g. your dissertation/project work) may take slightly longer to be returned. Bear in mind that if you hand in work late, your feedback may be delayed.

Where appropriate, for example with smaller problem-solving exercises like calculations, the lecturer will decide if feedback should be given individually or reported back to the whole group. You are, however always free to ask the lecturer personally how you are progressing.

The feedback you receive will be:

- **timely** - allowing you to learn from your work
- related to the **learning outcomes** for that piece of work
- **constructive** and **honest** – allowing you to take the comments on board, learn from your mistakes and understand why you did well.

For the feedback to be effective, it is important that you work with the feedback given and identify how you can improve your work in the future. Should you need further information about your work, get in touch with whoever marked the coursework.

#### 7.4 Release of results

Students will be given, as a matter of course, the marks they obtain in each individual module of study after they have been ratified by the Board of Examiners. More information can be found in [the Release of Marks procedure](#).

You should note that the official transcript of your marks would normally show the latest mark obtained in each subject with a note, where appropriate, that it was obtained at repeat or referral attempt.

## 7.5 Prizes

**The MSc Gerontology Best Performance Prize** is awarded to the PGT student with the best overall performance in the taught element of the part-time or full-time MSc Gerontology or MSc Gerontology (Research). The £100 prize will be confirmed at the Gerontology Exam Board and the relevant student contacted by the Gerontology Student Office.

**The MSc Gerontology Dissertation Prize** is awarded for the best dissertation submitted by a PGT student on the part-time or full-time MSc Gerontology or MSc Gerontology (Research) programme. The £100 prize will be confirmed at the Gerontology Exam Board and the relevant student contacted by the Gerontology Student Office.

**The MSc Gerontology (DL) Prize** is awarded to the PGT student with the best overall performance in the taught element of the part-time or full-time MSc Gerontology (Distance Learning) programme. The £100 prize will be confirmed at the Gerontology Exam Board and the relevant student contacted by the Gerontology Student Office.

**The MSc Gerontology (DL) Dissertation Prize** is awarded for the best dissertation submitted by a PGT student on the part-time or full-time MSc Gerontology (Distance Learning) programme. The £100 prize will be confirmed at the Gerontology Exam Board and the relevant student contacted by the Gerontology Student Office.

**Two £150 Hazel Muras-Osborn Prizes** for the MSc Gerontology, MSc Gerontology (Research) or MSc Gerontology (DL) Dissertation. These prizes will be awarded to the students with the most methodologically innovative and potentially impactful research, following the marking of their dissertations. Special consideration will be made to recognise students who demonstrate an interdisciplinary approach and to projects which have a strong link to professional practice. These new prizes will provide motivation to our final year MSc students and will reward those whose research has the possibility for real-world application. These prizes will be confirmed at the Gerontology Exam Board and the relevant students contacted by the Gerontology Student Office.

**The Dean's annual recognition for excellent academic achievement in the Faculty of Social Sciences.** Formal recognition from the Dean, on behalf of the Faculty, which may be included in your CV or equivalent as recognition of outstanding achievement while studying in the Faculty.

1. Dean's List Award for exceptional performance by achieving a Part Average Mark of 70% or over;
2. Dean's List Award for exceptional performance by achieving a Dissertation Mark of 70% or over.

The Dean's list will be confirmed at the Gerontology Exam Board and the relevant student(s) contacted by the Gerontology Student Office.

## 7.6 Final assessment

At the end of your programme, your overall performance will be assessed.

If you satisfy the academic standards necessary, the Board of Examiners will recommend you for award.

## 8 Staff/Student Liaison: getting your voice heard

### 8.1 Module Survey

The Faculty/School aims to consult with and to provide opportunities for all students and staff to make their views known. You are encouraged to offer your comments/suggestions to members of staff and feedback is requested for each module undertaken.

### 8.2 Module Reports

Your feedback to module surveys will be reflected upon by the module leader and will be included in the Module Report. Modules reports are available via SUSSED under the 'programme specific information' tab.

### 8.3 Staff Student Liaison Committees

Staff-Student liaison committees have representatives from across each programme. These committees have the role of monitoring the organisation and management of the student programmes, to note any difficulties that students may be encountering, and to take advice about ways of improving the programmes.

### 8.4 Student Representation

Through the [Students' Union](#) you will be invited to elect your Faculty/School representatives who co-ordinate the student voice on Faculty/School committees to enable your voice to be heard.

More information on the Students' Union officers and their roles is available on the [Students' Union Representation webpages](#).

## 9 Careers and Employability

The [Careers and Employability Service](#) provides support to students at all levels of study and has a range of opportunities on offer. Research<sup>1</sup> shows that graduates with no previous work experience are unlikely to be successful during the selection process and over 30% of positions will be filled by graduates who have already worked for that organisation. We provide drop-in advice, 1:1 guidance, workshops, skills sessions, Careers Fairs and employer led events to support your career planning as well as the following opportunities:

### 9.1 Excel Southampton Internships

The [Excel Southampton Internship Programme](#) offers 4-12 weeks paid internships which enhance your CV, expand your network and open graduate recruitment opportunities

### 9.2 Volunteering Bank

[Volunteering](#) is a great way to help you gain many of the skills employers are looking for, build your network and develop yourself in new ways. Opportunities vary in duration and the type of role advertised.

### 9.3 Employability events

The Careers and Employability Service work closely with departments and Faculties to provide targeted careers support within and alongside your curriculum. Activities and opportunities which are relevant to students may be advertised through email or in lectures. There are often opportunities to connect with organisations that offer themed events focused on employability. The Gerontology Employability Tutor (Dr Maja Fuglsang Palmer, [maja.palmer@soton.ac.uk](mailto:maja.palmer@soton.ac.uk)) will share such opportunities as they become available.

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<sup>1</sup> [High Fliers 2016](#)

In Social Sciences, we strongly encourage you to think about and work towards career opportunities that are best suited to you. Our postgraduate programmes will enable you to develop and enhance transferable skills that are highly valued by employers such as critical thinking, research, report writing, problem solving and teamwork. We work closely with the Careers and Employability Service ([www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/)) in order to provide tailor made employability workshops for our postgraduate students to prepare you for your future career and to give you information about further postgraduate study and funding opportunities. These workshops may include external speakers and networking opportunities.

In Social Sciences we recognise the importance of career planning and a member of academic staff has the role of the Social Sciences Employability Co-ordinator. The Employability Co-ordinator will email you with career planning opportunities, careers talks and events, placement and volunteering opportunities. If you have ideas for particular employability events the Employability Co-ordinator would be happy to discuss these with you. In addition, each Department has an Employability Co-ordinator (a member of academic staff) who will contact you about relevant events and workshops, training and job opportunities. We also recognise the value of placement experience both to enhance your skills and to give you an idea of what it is like to work in a particular sector or specific organisation. The University offers paid placement opportunities with a range of national and international employers to postgraduates on taught programmes through its Excel Southampton Placement programme (<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/placements/>).

There are a wide range of events, workshops, talks and careers fairs that are organised by the Careers and Employability Service (see [https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/postgraduates/index.page?#marketing\\_your\\_masters](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/postgraduates/index.page?#marketing_your_masters)) and an excellent careers resource centre in Building 37 and online that are all intended to assist you in your career planning. This includes advice about writing your CV and application forms as well as interview skills and assessment centre workshops. Appointments with a Careers Adviser are also available. For more information see the Careers website <http://www.southampton.ac.uk/careers/>

The dedicated Social Sciences contact in the Careers and Employability Service is Laura Messenger [L.M.Messenger@soton.ac.uk](mailto:L.M.Messenger@soton.ac.uk). The aims of a session with Laura can be to discuss career ideas, gain advice on an application form or curriculum vitae, etc. Please note that Laura's time is limited, so there may be a waiting time before she can meet with you.

## 10 Further study opportunities

Perhaps you are considering postgraduate study. There is a wide range of programmes leading to various qualifications available to you and selecting the appropriate programme may not be easy.

The first thing to realise is that you need to make a well-informed decision and therefore the key is to obtain all the information you need. The Faculty/School always aims to retain its best and brightest students for research. However, when collecting information about postgraduate studies, you should cast your net wide. You need to select an area that interests you – a difficult task in itself because you will also seek an area that has good employment prospects.

If you are interested in pursuing a PhD, there are some funding opportunities that you may be eligible for. These include the ESRC South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership (<https://www.southcoastdtp.ac.uk/>) as well as other University and Social Sciences scholarships. For updates on the most recent funding opportunities for both UK/EU and International students, check online at:

<https://www.soton.ac.uk/postgraduate/feesandfunding/index.html>.

The deadlines are usually between February and the end of April and normally require that a potential supervisor has been identified and the submission of a research proposal. Some guidance on writing a proposal can be found here:

[http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ageing/postgraduate/research\\_degrees/apply.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ageing/postgraduate/research_degrees/apply.page)

The current postgraduate students and their research topics can be found here:

[http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ageing/postgraduate/research\\_students.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ageing/postgraduate/research_students.page) . If you would like to discuss the possibility of undertaking a PhD/MPhil, please speak to your personal academic

tutor or contact Prof Maria Evandrou ([maria.evandrou@soton.ac.uk](mailto:maria.evandrou@soton.ac.uk)) who is the PGR Admissions Tutor.

Further details on the programmes offered by the Faculty/School can be found on the Faculty's/School's website.

## 11 Regulatory Issues

We hope that you will be satisfied with your experience during your time as a student at the University of Southampton, but we do recognise that, on occasion, things can go wrong. If you have a concern about any aspect of your experience at the University, we encourage you to raise it as soon as the concern arises.

It is always better to let us know that you feel there is a problem as soon as possible so that the matter may be resolved quickly. You may alternatively wish to consult with your student academic president if it is an issue in common with other students. Please be reassured that you will not suffer any disadvantage or recrimination as a result of raising a genuine concern, student complaint or academic appeal.

### 11.1 Academic appeals

Provided you have grounds, you may appeal against any academic decision made by the University. There are some exceptions and you should note you cannot appeal against a decision that has been made in the proper exercise of academic judgment. The [Regulations Governing Academic Appeals by Student\(s\)](#) outlines the regulations and procedure that should be followed should you wish to make an academic appeal.

The Students' Union Advice Centre has developed a [Guide](#) for students.

### 11.2 Student complaints

The [Regulations Governing Student Complaints](#) sets out the process that should be followed should you wish to raise a complaint about a matter relating to either the facilities and services provided by the University, its academic programmes and the conduct of University staff, and which has materially affected you.

### 11.3 Dignity at work and study

The [University's Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#) applies to the conduct of staff and students, in the context of their University work of study, or which otherwise affects the working, learning or social environment of the University. Fair criticism of staff or student performance or conduct will not be considered to be bullying or harassment provided that those involved are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect. Any allegation of harassment, bullying or victimisation will be treated seriously, regardless of the seniority of those involved, and anyone found to have behaved unacceptably may be the subject of disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or expulsion.

### 11.4 Student Non-academic Misconduct

As members of the University community, all students are expected to conduct themselves with due regard for its good name and reputation and are required to comply with the University's Regulations at all times. Any allegation of misconduct will be considered within the [Student Non-academic Misconduct Regulations](#), in accordance with the evidence and circumstances presented. Information for students on non-academic misconduct is available from the [Student and Academic Administration web pages](#)

## 12 Academic and Non-Academic Support

### 12.1 Support for student learning

There is support for student learning in the Centre for Research on Ageing, in Social Sciences as well as in central University facilities.

*Please refer to the separate documents 'Key Contacts – Roles and Responsibilities' and 'Student Support' on Blackboard for further details about the different sources of support.*

In the Centre for Research on Ageing you will have access to:

- The Senior tutor who can provide advice on the programme modules and other University issues;
- A Personal Academic Tutor who can provide advice on the programme modules and other University issues, and with whom you can discuss academic progress and personal problems relevant to your academic work;
- An MSc Dissertation supervisor who will provide advice and support during your independent research;
- A programme handbook;
- Student e-mail;
- Induction, module outlines and MSc Dissertation workshops.

Support for student learning is also provided at University level through:

- Access to library facilities, including on-line access to key journals, books and ageing databases such as AgeInfo;
- Access to facilities, training and advice provided by the Information Systems Services and the Assistive Technology Service within the library;
- Specialist support services for students with dyslexia and other specific learning needs;
- Support for students with disabilities, health conditions and mental health difficulties;
- Counselling and Careers Advisory Services;
- Assistance with written English for non-native speakers through the Centre for Language Study;
- An Advice and Information Centre within the Students' Union.

### 12.2 University Student Services

Apart from academic support provided by personal and dissertation tutors, students can also access a range of services offered by the University to receive help with specific needs. A brief overview of the support the individual services offer along with contact details is given below.

### 12.3 Centre for Language Study

Online study skills support is available for international students. This is provided by the Centre for Language Study and includes access to a comprehensive online toolkit in Study Skills and English for Academic Purposes. If necessary, students may also request an online tutorial slot to discuss, for example, an aspect of their academic writing; this will normally be delivered at an agreed time through the synchronous virtual classroom facility in their Blackboard course.

<http://www.southampton.ac.uk/ml/cls/index.page>

### 12.4 Enabling Services

**Enabling Services** provides a wide variety of support for students who have disabilities, mental health conditions, and/or specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia. Our expert team can provide advice and support relating to your studies, both while you are preparing for University and throughout your time here. We can offer a range of appointment options.

Tel: +44 (0)23 8059 7726  
Email: [enable@soton.ac.uk](mailto:enable@soton.ac.uk)  
<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport>

**First Support** is a small team who provide support to students who may be facing significant difficulties in their life or dealing with a crisis. The team offer appointments via telephone or Skype. They can be contacted during office hours.

Tel: +44(0)23 8059 7488  
Email: [firstsupport@soton.ac.uk](mailto:firstsupport@soton.ac.uk)  
[https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/mental\\_health\\_and\\_wellbeing/index.page](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/mental_health_and_wellbeing/index.page)

**Out of Hours** support is provided for very urgent situations (6pm to 8am and all weekends, Bank Holidays and University closure days). Life threatening or emergency issues should be directed to the appropriate emergency services in your own country.

Tel: +44(0)23 8059 2811

## 12.5 Dyslexia Services

Dyslexia Services is part of Enabling Services at the University of Southampton. It provides a range of services for students and departments and all tutors have specialist qualifications in dyslexia.

Tel: +44 (0)23 8059 7726  
Email: [enable@soton.ac.uk](mailto:enable@soton.ac.uk)  
[http://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/study\\_support/index.page?](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/study_support/index.page?)

## 12.6 Wessex Needs Assessment Centre (WNAC)

The WNAC provides specialist assessments for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), many of whom are eligible for the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). After an initial assessment you will have access to ongoing support, advice and guidance. WNAC offers assessment and training to all UK students in receipt of DSAs.

Tel: +44 (0)23 8059 7233  
Email: [wnac1@soton.ac.uk](mailto:wnac1@soton.ac.uk)  
[https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/assessment\\_centre/index.page](https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/assessment_centre/index.page)

## 12.7 Students' Union

The Students' Union (or 'SUSU' as it is often referred to) is a democratic, student led organisation, run by students for students. The Students' Union is independent from the University and aims to provide services, help and support to promote the interests of students.

Many of the facilities provided by SUSU are also available online, and so there is plenty of reason to utilise the services offered such as:

- Help and advice through our Advice and Information Centre (SUAIC), via email, phone or simply use their advice booklets. (<https://www.susu.org/help-and-support/advice-centre/2015/index.html> or call 023 8059 2085)
- A way to discuss any issues you face or need help with in the forums (see <http://forum.susu.org>)
- Or simply a way to keep in touch with fellow students in the forums

There are plenty of reasons to get involved and stay in touch with the Students' Union, and if you have any problems or need any help, we are here for you.

### Contact details:

**Web:** [www.susu.org](http://www.susu.org)  
**Email:** [education@susu.org](mailto:education@susu.org)  
**Phone:** +44(0) 23 8059 5220 (Vice President Education and Representation)

## 13 Aims of the MCs Gerontology and MCs Gerontology

## (Research) Programmes

### *Aims of the Programmes*

The aims of the programmes are to provide you with:

- Critical appreciation of the key theoretical perspectives within Gerontology and their application in the analysis of specific issues concerning ageing and the life course.
- Knowledge and understanding of contemporary debates within Gerontology concerning the lives of older people, their families and society, in both developed and developing countries.
- The ability to evaluate policies and initiatives concerning population ageing, welfare provision and the lives of older people, their families and carers.
- Knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods and the ability to apply them appropriately to investigate key research questions.
- Preparation for a career in the field of Gerontology and applied health and social sciences.
- Students pursuing the MSc in Gerontology or MSc in Gerontology (Research) will also be provided with the ability to design and conduct independent research within Gerontology, using appropriate research methods.

### *Learning Outcomes*

Having successfully completed these programmes you will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- Key theoretical and conceptual approaches to the study of ageing and the life course from a multi-disciplinary perspective;
- Key debates within Gerontology;
- The determinants of demographic change and the consequences of population ageing;
- Key changes in the life course over the last 100 years and their implications;
- Health and social care policies and initiatives which impact upon the lives of older people and their families/carers;
- Principles of research design and strategy and the appropriate choice of research method;
- Students pursuing the MSc in Gerontology or MSc in Gerontology (Research) will also be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of an individual research topic in the field of Gerontology.

# 14 Essays

Throughout the programme, you will be asked to complete essays. These will typically be pieces of assessed coursework. In this sub-section you will find some advice about how to write good essays. You are strongly advised to return to this information throughout your studies in order to remind yourself about what examiners are looking for.

## 14.1 Guidance on writing essays

An essay is a well-informed, critical discussion of a particular topic, often with a specific question or set of questions in mind. Before embarking on the reading for your essay, make sure you have the exact essay title or question in mind, so that your research is focused. Sometimes only parts of an article, book or report that you consult are relevant to your essay topic, so it's good to be selective in your reading and note-taking.

Don't forget to draw on lecture and seminar notes and readings, where appropriate, for a steer on where to locate suitable readings and research evidence. When reading for your essay, remember to make notes (including of facts and figures) since it's impossible to try and construct an essay entirely from memory! Try and paraphrase in your notes, in preparation for developing your own voice in your essays; where you are keeping a verbatim record of your reading, note this down, together with page numbers and quotation marks so that you can easily reference back to the source.

There are three key ingredients to a good essay. These are: a good introduction; a well-argued main part; and a conclusion which really *draws conclusions*.

In your **introduction** you should at the very least do the following:

- Present succinctly and clearly what the topic you are discussing is, and what specific question(s) you are addressing. For example, if your essay is about support that older people provide to their grandchildren, you could devote a short paragraph to the topic of intergenerational family support in general (support that older people receive, support they give, different kinds of support). However, you then have to focus in on the *specific* topic and questions you wish to address. *"In this essay I will examine a particular type of intergenerational support, namely support provided by older people to their grandchildren. This topic raises important empirical and theoretical questions: How common is such support, what forms does it take, and in what contexts does it arise? How is it negotiated? Is it based on notions of obligation or of reciprocity? What implications does it have for the welfare of children and of grandparents?"*
- A good introduction provides a brief preview of the main evidence you will draw on (*"I shall be comparing qualitative and quantitative evidence on grandparental support from the USA, UK and Indonesia to show the importance of cultural context..."*), and the main conclusions you will arrive at (*"The essay will conclude that where grandparental support has to replace parental support for children, for example due to a crisis in the middle generation, grandparents perceive their role as a burdensome responsibility. By contrast, providing additional support to grandchildren, alongside their parents, is experienced as satisfying. Contrary to expectations, the evidence does not show that provision of grandparental support is associated with expectations of reciprocal support by grandchildren."*)
- The introduction is also a good place for definitions of unfamiliar terms or concepts, and where there are different possible definitions; it allows you to state clearly how you are going to use a particular term or concept. Use the introduction also to state what you will not cover. (*"Some authors include small-scale gifts and support from grandparents, such as occasional baby-sitting, birthday and Christmas gifts, in their discussion of grandparental support. However, here I am only..."*)

In your **main part** you are presenting the evidence *and* argument for your position.

- A common weakness in essays is that there is too much description and not enough critical analysis. In most of your essays during the programme of the MSc you will primarily be drawing on secondary evidence, i.e. published articles, reports, policy

papers, existing demographic or other data. (In your dissertation you may collect some data of your own.) The temptation is simply to summarise what different articles etc. say. (“*Smith (2000) finds that grandparents in the USA provide on average 3.4 hours of support per week. Albert (2005) states that in the UK, the figure is around 4.5 hours.*”) The result is a list of points or a list of article summaries. This is not only boring to read, it also doesn’t provide the person marking your essay with any evidence that you have understood the topic and answered the question(s). Instead of a survey which summarises literature, an essay is supposed to be a critical analysis of literature in response to a question or ‘academic puzzle’.

- Critical analysis means that you make explicit connections between different arguments or pieces of evidence; you contrast different points of view and weigh up their relative merit; you draw attention to weaknesses in argument, method or evidence; you take a position and state which argument or evidence you find most convincing (and why), or you come up with a different position altogether.
- Before writing your essay (or dissertation) think carefully about the structure of its main part. It is never a good idea to structure around what you have read (a paragraph on Smith, then a paragraph on Wilkinson...). Instead, think about different themes that are relevant to the topic. To stay with the ‘grandparental support’ example, possible themes might be: types of support provided; contexts under which such support arises; motivations for grandparental support; implications for children; implications for grandparents. You would then draw together the evidence, argumentation and theory (where appropriate) from different readings, organised around these themes. Each section would weigh up, compare, contrast, criticise etc. the evidence from different sources on a particular theme.
- Another important thing in the main part of the essay is to be selective in what you report on. Very often your essay topic is in the form of a question, and if it is not, you are still expected to formulate specific questions to pursue. It is therefore crucial to present only that evidence and argumentation which is relevant to the question. You will always be working under time pressure and within strict word-limit constraints. Trying to cover everything will not be possible!
- Always remember to include concrete examples in support of your points. This allows you to present relevant qualitative and quantitative evidence (including, where appropriate, in the form of percentages, tables or graphs) and makes the essay much more lively.
- Finally, don’t forget to be scrupulous about acknowledging your sources. You must make clear where any evidence or argumentation or theory you include is from, and present a complete bibliography of sources used at the end of your essay. (See below, under Plagiarism and Referencing.)

A good **conclusion** is the lynch-pin of a good essay.

- The purpose of a conclusion is to summarise very briefly the main arguments of the essay, and to present a concluding verdict. Writing good conclusions is a matter of practice, and it takes time. Often in academic writing the temptation is to spend a lot of time polishing the main part, and not allow enough time for the introduction and conclusion. “*In conclusion, grandparental support is very important, but it differs in the USA, UK and Indonesia*” is not really adequate! Also avoid vacuous conclusions (“*This is a very complex topic with many sides to it, and further research will be needed...*”). The following advice should help you gain confidence in writing conclusions:
- The conclusion should always provide the harmonious counterpart to the introduction. Just as the introduction states clearly what the essay is going to do (which questions it will address, which evidence it will bring to bear), the conclusion re-caps what the essay has done. Always come back to the questions raised in the introduction (it’s fine to repeat them!) and state briefly how you have answered them. Do not shy away from repetition: it is good if the conclusion contains a brief summary of the main findings. (“*The main questions this essay addressed concerned the contexts in which grandparents provide support, the motivations for such support, and the implications for the welfare of grandchildren and grandparents. The evidence from the UK and the USA showed that ... By contrast, the evidence from Indonesia pointed to slightly different motivations,*”

*namely .... Across all contexts it was striking that far-reaching support, especially where it had to replace support from parents, caused a decline in welfare. The reasons for this were shown to be ... ”)*

- You are encouraged to present your own position in the conclusion. In the main part you summarised and evaluated different types of argumentation and evidence. Now say which argument and evidence you find most convincing. (“*As we have seen, Smith has argued that... By contrast, Wilkinson pointed out that... In my view, neither positions adequately consider ... I would therefore conclude that ...*”) You can arbitrate between different positions; you can state for which cases you find A applicable, and for which situations B; you can state why the weight of evidence supports A, rather than B; you can suggest modifications to existing theories or arguments; you can highlight gaps left in our understanding which require further investigation. Be bold!
- Finally: never introduce new material in the conclusion.

Good essay-writing is a skill which you acquire with practice. Do not be disheartened if early attempts fall short of the ideals. Even very experienced academics write several drafts, which they revise and sometimes abandon altogether, before they succeed in producing an acceptable version. Don't expect your first draft to be perfect, but instead allow enough time to revise and rewrite. Revisit the advice here over the programme of your studies and before you embark on your dissertation, and take on board your tutors' feedback on essays. That way you will soon find yourself writing well-structured, well-argued and well-rounded essays!

The following web-site includes links to a wealth of advice on writing your assignments or giving presentations:

<http://library.soton.ac.uk/sash>

## 14.2 How to present your essay

Aside from having a good introduction, main part and conclusion, essays should be written in a clear, concise style and should be free of spelling and grammatical mistakes. Always proof-read your essay before handing it in, and if you are unsure about formulation, ask a friend to check your essay for linguistic errors.

If you are including tables or graphs in your essay, which is often appropriate and useful for summarising data, make sure they are clearly labelled with a number and title, so that they can be understood without reading the text in which they are embedded. Always quote the source of the data (or the table / figure if you are reproducing an existing table or figure) below the table or graph.

When typing your essays please use 1.5 line-spacing, and allow a larger margin on the right. (For example, 1.5 cm left margin and 2.5 cm right margin.) Make use of section headings to organise your essay as appropriate, but avoid having too many short paragraphs and sections.

Use gender-neutral language and avoid formulations that are likely to cause offence. In March 1989 the Senate and Council of the University of Southampton endorsed the use of gender-neutral language in all University documentation. The Equal Opportunities Committee made this recommendation in the belief that language not only describes the world, but also helps to construct our understanding of it. Please make every effort to use gender-neutral language in your own work. Some examples of gender-neutral language are given below:

- people in general (for 'man in the street')
- layperson (for 'layman')
- artificial, synthetic or manufactured (for 'man-made')
- chair or chairperson (for 'chairman')

When talking about older people, avoid generalising formulations, like 'the elderly'. Terms like 'older people', 'older women', 'persons of advanced age' are more appropriate.

Guidelines on the use of anti-sexist, anti-racist, and non-disablist language and other useful resources can also be found on the British Sociological Association website:

<https://www.britisoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/>

### 14.3 Referencing

The main purpose of a bibliography is to enable readers of your work to trace the materials you have used and read further if they wish to. You are advised to keep a note of bibliographic details of all material you read as you go along (for example, by using EndNote or EndNote Web software), as it's cumbersome to have to find that information later on.

The bibliographical referencing system you are advised to use in your essays and dissertation is the Harvard citation system. According to this system references are placed in the text, rather than in a footnote or using numbers. You place an author's name in the text itself, and then put all references mentioned in the work in a bibliography at the end. (Using referencing software like EndNote makes this very easy because it automatically produces a bibliography for you based on your in-text references.) Here we show an example of Harvard referencing style. The most important thing to remember when using a referencing style is to be consistent, so if you prefer to use another type of Harvard referencing (e.g. the one recommended by the University of Southampton library) then please do so but remember to be consistent throughout the essay.

We recommend you use the online resource Cite Them Right (internet). Please refer to the How to...? Guide on accessing Cite Them Right online.

The following passage indicates the different ways in which references can be made in the text using this method.

As Hugo (1994a) has pointed out, in a country like Indonesia expenditures on the young far exceed expenditures on the old, so that old and young dependency 'burdens' are not commensurate. While the interpretation of dependency ratios is contentious, other demographic trends are less ambiguous (Ananta and Arifin 2003; Jones 1997; Kreager *et al.* 2005).

If an author has published more than one cited document in the same years, use a, b, c etc. after the year to distinguish these. Where several authors have the same surname, use initials in the in-text referencing to make the reference unambiguous. Works written by two authors should mention both authors' names, for example Applebaum and Schneider (2007), whilst works written by three or more authors are referenced as follows: Davidson *et al.* (2003). Note that in such cases you would still put all authors' names in the bibliography at the end of the document.

Occasionally you might wish to reference an idea or quote quoted in another text, but which you haven't read in the original. As in cases of direct referencing, you should make your source clear by writing: "Population aging will be one of the most important social phenomena of the next half century. It is important because changes in the aggregate age structure are mirrored within nearly all social institutions, from firms to families." (Preston and Martin 1994: 3, quoted in Marshall 1997: 345). You would then list the second source, the one which you have read, in full in your bibliography.

### 14.4 The reference list/bibliography

At the end of each essay or your dissertation, you have to provide a reference list/bibliography listing the details of *all* material cited in your essay or dissertation. Just as you must not omit any sources used and cited in your essay/dissertation, you should also not include material which you haven't read. References should be listed alphabetically; where there are several works by the same author, list them chronologically and then by letter (2001a, 2001b) if there are more than one in a single year.

There are precise rules about how different kinds of works should be cited, the following gives an overview of the order in which this information is presented, and some examples using Harvard referencing style.

#### Books

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of book, underlined or in *italics*  
Edition (if not first)  
Place of Publication  
Publisher

#### Journal articles

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of article in 'quotation marks'  
Title of journal, underlined or in *italics*  
Volume number and part no [e.g. 12(3)]  
Page numbers

### Book chapters

Chapter author's name(s) (or full name)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of chapter, followed by In  
Editor's name(s) and initials  
Title of book, underlined or in *italics*  
Place of Publication  
Publisher  
Page numbers

### Websites

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year (in brackets) (if available)  
Title of website, underlined or in *italics* [online]  
Available from: URL [Date accessed]

### Published conference papers

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of paper in 'quotation marks' In  
Name and initials of editor  
Title of conference, underlined or in *italics*  
Date and place of conference  
Place of Publication  
Publisher  
Page numbers

### Theses

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year completed (in brackets)  
Title of thesis, underlined or in *italics*  
Type of thesis (e.g. PhD Thesis)  
Name of division and institution where awarded

### Newspaper articles

Author's name(s) and initials (or newspaper title)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of article in 'quotation marks'  
Title of newspaper, underlined or in *italics*  
Date and Month  
Page numbers

### Working Paper / Discussion Paper

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of paper, underlined or in *italics*  
Paper type (e.g. Working Paper)  
Publishing organisation  
Paper number

### Unpublished conference papers

Author's name(s) and initials (or full name)  
Year (in brackets)  
Title of paper in 'quotation marks'  
Paper presented at Title of conference, underlined  
or in *italics*  
Date and place of conference

### Videos, Films or Broadcasts

Title, underlined or in *italics*  
Year (brackets)  
Type (e.g. Film)  
Name of author, director, broadcaster  
Production place, organisation, channel  
Date of transmission [where appropriate]

### This is the style recommended in the online resource 'Cite Them Right':

#### Endnote style: Harvard HWU Cite Them Right

Billoski, T. V. (1992) *Introduction to Paleontology*. 6th edn. New York: Institutional Press.

Morehouse, S. I. and Tung, R. S. (1993) 'Statistical evidence for early extinction of reptiles due to the K/T event', *Journal of Paleontology*, 17(2), pp. 198-209.

Schwartz, M. T. and Billoski, T. V. (1990) 'Greenhouse hypothesis: effect on dinosaur extinction', in Jones, B. T. and Lovecraft, N. V. (eds.) *Extinction*. New York: Barnes and Ellis, pp. 175-189.

### This is an adaptation of Harvard style recommended by the University of Southampton:

#### Endnote style: Harvard\_SotonUNI2015

Billoski, T.V. (1992) *Introduction to Paleontology*, 6th ed. New York: Institutional Press.

Morehouse, S.I. and Tung, R.S. (1993) Statistical evidence for early extinction of reptiles due to the K/T event. *Journal of Paleontology*, 17 (2), 198-209.

Schwartz, M.T. and Billoski, T.V. (1990) Greenhouse hypothesis: effect on dinosaur extinction IN: Jones, B.T. and Lovecraft, N.V. (eds.) *Extinction*. New York: Barnes and Ellis, 175-189.

### This is the standard Harvard style:

### Endnote style: Harvard

BILLOSKI, T. V. 1992. *Introduction to Paleontology*, New York, Institutional Press.

MOREHOUSE, S. I. & TUNG, R. S. 1993. Statistical evidence for early extinction of reptiles due to the K/T event. *Journal of Paleontology*, 17, 198-209.

SCHWARTZ, M. T. & BILLOSKI, T. V. 1990. Greenhouse hypothesis: effect on dinosaur extinction. *In: JONES, B. T. & LOVECRAFT, N. V. (eds.) Extinction*. New York: Barnes and Ellis.

At the Centre for Research on Ageing we recommend you follow the style given in the 'Cite Them Right' online resource. Please see the How to...? Guide which will help you to learn how to use Cite Them Right. However, the exact form of Harvard style you use is up to you. The most important thing to remember is to be consistent and make sure all referencing in your assignments follows the same style.

## 15 Marking Criteria for essays

The following table is *indicative* of award marks and the corresponding quality of coursework submitted for the PG Certificate / PG Diploma / MSc Gerontology and MSc Gerontology (Research).

The assignment grades are weighted according to the weight of each assignment in the module and contribute to the total average across the programme.

Grade	Numerical mark	Comments
High Distinction	80% and over	An essay which is original, well-argued, analytical, critical, comprehensive, and reaches independent conclusions. Draws on a range of appropriate empirical evidence, interpreted correctly.
Distinction	70-79%	An essay which is well-argued, analytical, critical, and comprehensive, and which reaches independent conclusions, but which lacks the originality associated with the first type of answer. Draws on a range of appropriate empirical evidence, interpreted correctly.
Merit	60-69%	An essay which is well-argued, analytical, with some criticism, and reasonably comprehensive in its coverage. Draws on a limited range of appropriate empirical evidence, interpreted correctly.
Pass	50-59%	<u>Either</u> : an essay which conveys a reasonable amount of information, but little argument, criticism, or analysis; <u>or</u> an essay which contains an identifiable line of argument with little supporting evidence.
Fail	0-49%	An essay showing limited knowledge of the subject area, lack of relevant literature, evidence and criticism, poorly structured and argued, and/or does not address the essay question adequately.

## 15.1 Marking Criteria for presentations

The following table is *indicative* of award marks and the corresponding quality of coursework submitted for the PG Certificate / PG Diploma / MSc Gerontology / MSc Gerontology (Research).

The assignment grades are weighted according to the weight of each assignment in the module and contribute to the total weighted average across the programme.

Grade	Numerical mark	Comments
High Distinction	80% and over	A presentation which is original, well-argued, analytical, critical, comprehensive, and reaches independent conclusions. Draws on a range of appropriate empirical evidence, interpreted correctly.
Distinction	70-79%	A presentation which is well-argued, analytical, critical, and comprehensive, and which reaches independent conclusions, but which lacks the originality associated with the first type of answer. Draws on a range of appropriate empirical evidence, interpreted correctly.
Merit	60-69%	A presentation which is well-argued, analytical, with some criticism, and reasonably comprehensive in its coverage. Draws on a limited range of appropriate empirical evidence, interpreted correctly.
Pass	50-59%	<u>Either</u> : A presentation which conveys a reasonable amount of information, but little argument, criticism, or analysis; <u>or</u> a presentation which contains an identifiable line of argument with little supporting evidence.
Fail	0-49%	A presentation showing limited knowledge of the subject area, lack of relevant literature, evidence and criticism, poorly structured and argued, and/or does not address the presentation question adequately.

## 16 Data Protection Act and record keeping

The University's Data Protection Policy can be read by accessing this URL:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/privacy-policy.page#downloads>

# 17 Dissertations

The following are guidelines for the supervision and preparation of dissertations for the award of the Master's degree in Gerontology in the Faculty of Social Sciences. These instructions are in accordance with the University's general regulations for the Master of Science as published in the University Calendar.

You will receive further information about preparing and submitting your MSc Dissertation in the course of the academic year, in the form of an MSc Dissertation Handbook and MSc Dissertation Workshops.

## 17.1 What is an MSc Dissertation?

An MSc Dissertation is a substantial academic report on a piece of independent research, which makes an original contribution to the body of knowledge. Writing an MSc Dissertation will allow you to undertake independent research guided by your dissertation supervisor on a topic of *your* interest and choosing. Unlike the essays you have prepared as assignments for other modules, the dissertation will permit you to go into much more depth on a particular research topic. You will also gain experience of managing a piece of research from beginning to end: conceptualising a problem, formulating research questions, designing a methodology, reviewing existing literature, collecting and analysing data or other evidence, writing up your findings, drawing conclusions, and compiling a bibliography.

Typically, an MSc Dissertation takes one of the following forms:

- A report on research you have undertaken by collecting and analysing your own primary data.
- A report on secondary analysis you have undertaken on an existing qualitative or quantitative data set.
- A critical literature review.
- A critical evaluation of a particular policy or intervention.

A student who has qualified for the award of the Diploma at an appropriate level may, with the approval of the Faculty of Social Sciences Board, be permitted to undertake research and submit a dissertation for the award of the MSc in Gerontology / Global Ageing and Policy (DL).

## 17.2 Dissertation workshops

You will have acquired generic skills for researching and writing a dissertation during the GERO6014 (Quantitative Research Methods) and/or GERO6015 (Qualitative Research Methods) programme modules.

These skills include formulating research questions, doing literature searches, choosing research methods, identifying data sources, and handling the ethical and safety issues involved in research. In addition, there will be online Dissertation Workshops, in which practical, methodological, intellectual and ethical issues specifically surrounding research on or with older people will be discussed.

## 17.3 Deciding on a topic

You are encouraged to start thinking about your MSc Dissertation topic as early as possible during the MSc programme and to discuss your plans with your Personal Academic Tutor. *In particular, any dissertation plans involving the collection of primary data, e.g. through interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, will require careful planning and ethical approval<sup>[1]</sup>.* This takes time! Similarly, obtaining existing data and the rights to use them can be time-consuming.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Please see the section on Ethical Review above

Your dissertation topic should be agreed with your Personal Academic Tutor and the MSc Dissertations Tutor during Semester 2, arrangements for which will be finalised nearer to the time.

#### 17.4 Dissertation supervision

*Frequency of meetings:* Students can expect a minimum of four supervisions, usually beginning after the taught component of the programme has been completed.

*Record-keeping:* Students should ensure that a record is kept of dates of meetings, the content of those meetings, and of guidance given to the student in a brief 'Supervision Record'. The Dissertations Tutor will provide you with a template for a Supervision Record.

*Comments from supervisors on drafts:* Supervisors will provide comments on the structure and scientific content of your writing but will not be expected to read a document containing the entire dissertation. Students are expected to ensure the clarity of their written work.

MSc Dissertation Supervisors will be allocated in Semester 2, and efforts will be made to match your interests with the expertise of CRA staff. Your MSc Dissertation Supervisor will provide feedback and advice on your choice of topic, methodology, relevant literature and the availability of data. She or he will also advise on safety and ethical issues. Once your research has started, you will be provided with general support and direction with your research and writing.

*Supervision:* the allocation of supervisors is a matter for the department. Students should NOT approach individual members of staff with requests for supervision. However, students should note that it may not be possible to accommodate requests for a change of supervisor.

**You should note that advice on dissertations given during the supervisory process cannot be taken to guarantee a particular outcome for the piece of work, as this is determined by a separate and independent examination process.**

#### 17.5 Risk Assessment for Dissertations

All students undertaking dissertations must complete a risk assessment form. A template form will be provided by the Dissertations Tutor.

Students who change their original research plans will have to complete a new risk assessment form.

If your work involves fieldwork of any kind, *you must not proceed* with this until this form has been reviewed by your dissertation supervisor and permission has been granted. You must discuss with your supervisor the safety implications of your proposed research or fieldwork and the strategies to eradicate or minimise risk. Fieldwork is regarded as any activity undertaken for the purpose of your research which involves the collection of information, including from others, whether by means of survey, observation, interview or other means such as internet or e-mail contact. It also encompasses visits to sites outside the University for the collection of material relating to your dissertation, for example, consultation of documentary sources.

If you are planning to travel away from your home town to collect material in countries other than the UK, even if you normally live in that country, you must check the Foreign & Commonwealth Office's (FCO) website. Any guidance from the FCO must be adhered to.

#### 17.6 Rules and regulations

##### Length

The length of your dissertation should be no more than 15,000 words (excluding 300-word abstract, acknowledgements, academic integrity declaration, title page, contents pages, footnotes, reference list, and appendices). Please note that tables and figures in the body of the dissertation are included in the word limit, as are quotations from qualitative data. Words beyond the maximum limit will not be marked.

##### Academic Integrity

You must make sure that you understand the University policy regarding academic integrity. Please make sure that you are familiar this policy which can be found at:

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/calendar/sectioniv/index.page>

You will be asked to include a disclaimer to indicate that the dissertation is your own work.

### 17.7 Submission of Dissertations

The period of time allocated to the Dissertation is approximately three months for full-time students. Part-time students are allowed six months to complete the dissertation.

Dissertations must be submitted in the following way:

one electronic copy in Microsoft Word format submitted on Blackboard via Turnitin no later than 4pm UK time on the day of the deadline.

### 17.8 Marking criteria for MSc Dissertations

The following table is *indicative* of award marks and the corresponding quality of MSc Dissertations submitted for the MSc Gerontology. The assignment grades are weighted according to the weight of each assignment in the module and contribute to the total average across the programme.

Grade	Numerical mark	Comments
High Distinction	80% and over	A Dissertation which meets the criteria in 'Distinction', and which is also of exceptional quality or originality.
Distinction	70-79%	A Dissertation which meets the criteria in 'Merit', and which also shows an advanced level of critical engagement, synthesis of literature, methodological complexity, analytical depth, and insightful recommendations for future research and policy/practice.
Merit	60-69%	<p>A Dissertation which has a clear structure, including a contents page, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion/conclusion and bibliography; is clear in style and free from excessive grammatical, spelling and typographical errors, and is presented in the prescribed format, appropriately referenced and to the prescribed length.</p> <p>It will show the ability to analyse, interpret, conceptualise and critically evaluate relevant literature and evidence; the ability to identify clear research questions, and draw out the implications of the work for future research or policy/ practice where appropriate.</p> <p><i>A dissertation that is primarily 'literature-based' will, in addition show the ability to synthesise and present theories, ideas and research findings in a well-structured manner, answering the research questions appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>A dissertation incorporating research by its author will, in addition show the ability to use appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative research methodologies; show the ability to plan, execute and report an independent piece of research with reference to existing literature; and answer the research questions appropriately.</i></p>
Pass	50-59%	<i>A dissertation that meets some, but not all of the criteria listed under 'Merit'.</i>
Fail	0-49%	A dissertation with poor structure, lack of appropriate literature, lack of critical engagement, inappropriate methodology for the research questions, incorrect interpretation of results, conclusions that do not follow from the results presented, and/or does not answer the research questions adequately.

## **17.9 Further information about your Dissertation**

You will receive further information during the online MSc Dissertation Workshops. In addition, you will be given an MSc Dissertation Handbook containing more detailed information. If you have any questions about the MSc Dissertation, please contact your Personal Academic Tutor or the MSc Dissertations Tutor.

## **17.10 Example of a Dissertation title page**

University of Southampton

**2020**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF GERONTOLOGY

**Title of Your Dissertation**

Your Name

A dissertation submitted in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for  
MSc in Gerontology by  
instructional course.

Word count: XXXXX

\* Delete as applicable