

MFOM dissertation

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Why a dissertation?

- Formulate a clear question
- Find and appraise the evidence
- Present information clearly
- Interpret information, place it in context, make policy recommendations
- Write clearly, succinctly, and logically
- Sustain the motivation to run a longterm project over several months or years from concept to conclusion
- Team-working, networking

FOM research competencies: knowledge

Be able to understand:

- How to design a research study.
- How to use appropriate statistical methods.
- The principles of research ethics.
- How to write a scientific paper.
- Sources of research funding.
- The principles and application of epidemiological methods in research and in problem solving
- The application of medical statistics and the interpretation of statistical analysis methods in scientific research.
- Computer based systems for data collection and analysis.
- Ethical considerations in research.

FOM research competencies: skills

- Be able to define a problem in terms of needs for an evidence base.
- Be able to undertake systematic literature search.
- Be able to undertake a systematic and critical appraisal and review of scientific literature.
- Be able to produce an evidence based digest of the literature.
- Be able to frame questions to be answered by a research project.
- Be able to develop protocols and methods for research.
- Be able to execute an appropriate study design.
- Plan data collection for simple surveys including sample selection and methods of recording and storing data.
- Be able to use databases.
- Be able to accurately analyse data statistically.
- Have good written and verbal presentation skills.
- Present investigation and results in the format of a research based report.
- Be able to write a scientific paper for peer-reviewed publication.

FOM research competencies: attitudes

- Demonstrate curiosity and a critical spirit of enquiry, and where appropriate a critical attitude towards current practice.
- Acceptance of the need for critical review and for research so as to found a solid base for good practice.
- Ensure patient confidentiality.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of ethical approval and patient consent for clinical research.
- Respect individual confidentiality when presenting data.
- Disposition to cooperation and liaison with statisticians and other research colleagues.

What are assessors looking for?

- Clarity
- Relevance to policy or practice
- Meeting the criteria in the assessment proforma
- < 10,000 words

Assessment proforma

- Presentation and layout
- Clarity of abstract
- Background data and references
- Clarity of study aim
- Methodology – appropriateness and clarity
- Statistical methods - appropriateness
- Presentation of results – clarity; tables and figures
- Discussion of findings, potential bias, strengths and weaknesses
- Contextualisation within Occupational Medicine policy or practice
- Statement of contributions
- Ethical issues
- **Specific comments** (any issues which need addressing or clarifying)

From FOM guidance document

“ ... All candidates must accept the responsibility to produce a dissertation of an acceptable standard in a timely fashion. ... ”

Options for assessors

- Accept in current format
- Accept with minor modifications – no reassessment
- Major modifications - reassessment
- Reject - even major modifications will not make it acceptable for MFOM

Assessment: Peter Taylor award

We would rate the work in this dissertation in its current format as:

- below the minimum standard for the MFOM. This means an assessment of POOR.
- meeting the minimum standard for the MFOM. This means an assessment of AVERAGE.
- better than that required for the minimum standard for the MFOM. This means an assessment of GOOD.
- far exceeding that required for the minimum standard for the MFOM. This means an assessment of EXCELLENT.

Timetabling for new trainees

- Preparations (year 1)
 - Outline protocol (end year 1/beg year 2)
 - Data collection and analysis
 - Drafting
 - Final drafting
 - Assessment (before part 2 MFOM/year 4)
 - Revision, resubmission (before CCT)
- } (yrs 2 & 3)

Preparations in year 1

- Read FOM web links
- Choose general topic
- Begin literature review and reference management
- Agree academic supervision: by educational supervisor, MSc supervisor, other academic supervisor
- What additional advice or collaboration is needed? (eg statistical advice, occupational hygiene)
- Consider attending relevant course(s)
- Refine topic and specific objectives of research during discussions with supervisor
- Submit for ethics approval, if required
- Obtain other permission(s) required (eg to use data or facilities belonging to employer)
- Agree outline timetable with educational supervisor
- Apply for any funding or resources needed

“Equivalent evidence”

- Research dissertation
- Substantial published work

Relevant FOM web links

- Regulations for Membership (MFOM) April 2008
http://www.facoccmmed.ac.uk/library/docs/mfom_r08.pdf
- Question and Answer Sheet on Changes to the Faculty Examinations
http://www.facoccmmed.ac.uk/library/docs/t_qa3_exams.pdf
- Question and Answer Sheet on Changes to the MFOM Dissertation
http://www.facoccmmed.ac.uk/library/docs/t_qa4_mfomdi ss08.pdf
- Guidance on Research Dissertations Written for Purpose
http://www.facoccmmed.ac.uk/library/docs/t_rdissguid.pdf