Aims

This module aims to introduce students to non-experimental research skills.

The students will research the literature and available on-line forensic resources, and produce a written report detailing their findings, providing a critical appraisal of their area of research and specifying conclusions and recommendations for further research.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, you will have acquired and demonstrated:

- To demonstrate the ability to plan and execute a programme of investigation, and the appropriate level of critical thinking and evaluation of forensic scientific data
- To be able to access scientific literature and databases, select and review critically the literature relevant to the topic of the project.
- To produce a report detailing the project aims, results, conclusions and recommendations, demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the techniques and methodologies utilised in forensic science.
- To demonstrate skills in effective communication of the project aims, methodology and outcomes.
Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Type</th>
<th>Module Mark (%)</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 page progress report</td>
<td>10 %</td>
<td>Week 7 of Semester 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Monday 11\textsuperscript{th} November, 4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation, ~4,000 words</td>
<td>70 %</td>
<td>Week 4 of Semester 2</td>
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<td>Monday 17\textsuperscript{th} February, 4pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>Week 6 or 7 of Semester 2</td>
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Allocation of hours of student effort (including contact time and assessment)

Research work and directed study: 90 hours (including 10 hours supervisor contact and class time)
Report preparation: 50 hours
Oral examination and preparation: 10 hours

Supervision

Your dissertation supervisors can provide information on the topic and guidance on finding references. Any questions regarding the format or style of the dissertation should be directed to the module tutor, Chrystelle Egger.

You are expected to take the initiative when dealing with your supervisor. You must arrange to meet with your supervisor in week 2 of semester 1 to discuss the topic. After that, you should arrange a mutually convenient schedule of meetings. After each meeting with your supervisor, you must write a quick memo in the form of an e-mail sent to the supervisor, which will sum up the points discussed during the meeting and the various actions to be taken. A printout of these memos must be handed in with the progress report first (semester 1) and then with the dissertation (semester 2), otherwise your work will be penalised.

Your supervisor will read one full draft of the progress report and one full draft of the dissertation. Anything else will be at their discretion.

There will be class hours throughout the semesters to deal with general topics such as structure of progress reports, reference style and writing style.
Word Count:
The word count for this assignment is 4000 words. This means that dissertations between 3600 and 4400 words are acceptable (± 10%). You will be penalised if you exceed the word count.

The following sections DO NOT contribute to the word count:
- Abstract
- Figure legends
- Data contained in tables
- References

Plagiarism
You are required to submit an electronic copy of your dissertation through Turn-it-in, a program capable of detecting plagiarism. Submission will be via the module section on the KLE and more guidelines will be available there. You will be permitted to upload a draft of your dissertation and view the originality report prior to submitting the final document if you wish.

For more information on plagiarism, please follow the university links given below:

- Keele University: Student guide to the plagiarism regulations
  http://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/paa/governancedocs/guidetoregs2011.pdf

- For a full set of regulations, refer to regulation 8.12: Regulation 8: General Regulations for University Examinations and Assessments / Point 12. Unacceptable Coursework and Academic Misconduct
  http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulation8/#d.en.19990

- From the Independent Advice Unit at KUSU:
  http://www.kusu.net/plagiarism.html
# Timetable

## Semester 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Project Selections: early September</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
| 2    | **Class Hour 1:**                | Monday 10-11am LJ1.20
|      | Induction - Project allocations will be made. |
|      | Getting Started - Introduction to the dissertation module: expectations, guidelines |
|      | - Structure of dissertation: referencing, writing and word counts |
|      | - Supervisors: expectations and meetings. |
| 3    |                                   |
| 4    |                                   |
| 5    | **Class Hour 2:**                | Monday 10-11am LJ1.20
|      | Progress - Progress report requirements; session on appropriate reference style. |
| 6    | **Drop in session 1:**           | Monday 9:15-10am LJ1.20
|      | Further clarification on progress report requirements if required (optional) |
| 7    | **2 Page Progress Report**       | Monday 11th November, 4pm |
| 8    |                                   |
| 9    |                                   |
| 10   | **Class Hour 3:**                | Monday 10-11am LJ1.20
|      | Feedback - Explanations on possible improvements from the progress report to the dissertation stage. |
|      | - Dissertation Format: maximising marks, figures, table etc. |
|      | - Writing: in depth session on appropriate writing style). |
|      | - Dissertation guidelines and marking scheme. |
| 11   |                                   |
| 12   |                                   |

## Semester 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Seminar 2</th>
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| 2    | **Class Hour 4:**                | Monday 9h30-10am LJ1.20
|      | Final touch - Final discussion on dissertation requirements and common errors. |
|      | - Viva guidelines and marking scheme. |
| 3    | **Drop in session 2:**           | Monday 9h30-10am LJ1.20
|      | Further clarification on dissertation requirements if required (optional) |
| 4    | **Dissertation Due**             | Monday 18th February, 4pm |
| 5    | **Drop in session 3:**           | Monday 9h30-10am LJ1.20
|      | Clarification on viva requirements if required (optional) |
| 6    | Interviews |
| 7    | Interviews |
| 8    |           |
| 9    |           |
| 10   |           |

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You must submit TWO paper copies of your dissertation, and upload one copy through Turnitin on the KLE.
**Structure of Progress Report:**

The purpose of the progress report is to define the scope of your dissertation and give a clear plan for completing the full dissertation. The report should be written with 1.5 line spacing and standard margins, in 12 point font.

It should include:

- Title of dissertation
- How you intend to define the topic *(what you will and will not include)*
- Brief summary of background
- Brief outline of discussion (may be bullet points)
- Annotated bibliography – 20 relevant references with short notes on each.

**Structure of Dissertation:**

The report should be written with 1.5 line spacing and standard margins, in 12 point font.

### Title / Title page

- **Title**
  The title should be short and straightforward, describing the work
  Do not use non-standard abbreviations and symbols
- **Title Page**
  Your full name and student number
  The word-count should be declared at the foot of the title page

### Abstract

- No longer than 1 page
- May include a small graphic (not more than 4 x 8 cm, not compulsory)
- A summary setting out briefly the main objectives and results of the work
- It should give the reader a clear idea of what has been achieved
- Figures, diagrams, tables may be used (These must be referenced as appropriate)

### Main Body of Dissertation

- **Introduction / Background**
  Describe clearly and concisely the nature of the problem/topic under investigation
  Lay out the background to the investigation background.

- **Relevant references to the peer-reviewed scientific literature is required.**

### Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

- An objective assessment of the findings, their significance and potential impact.
- The conclusions should *not* summarise information already present in the text or summary.
- A brief statement outlining suggestions for further research should be included.

### References


A minimum number of references is expected (ca.25), however this number will vary greatly with the topic chosen, and more thorough literature surveys are expected for most topics.
Referencing

The referencing style for this assignment is that of “Forensic Science International”, see web link below for more information:

http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/505512/authorinstructions#N10D7D

You must adhere to this reference style in your report if you do not want your work to be penalised. A class on different reference styles and their importance will be run during semester 1.

For the purposes of this project report you should list your references (papers, books or web-sites referred to in the text) at the end of the report. These should be linked to an appropriate point in the text, using a sequential reference number in square brackets []. Ensure that all references cited in the text are given in the bibliography, and that they are in the order in which they appear in the text.

Sample bibliography taken from the web link given above

• Reference to a journal publication:

• Reference to a book:

• Reference to a chapter in an edited book:

• Reference to a website:
  [4] Author(s) (if known), Title of page [type of medium]. URL (year of publication or last update). [accessed date]

Common errors in referencing include:

• Reference numbers do not link to text or order of references is incorrect
• Over-enthusiastic referencing of “common knowledge”, particularly to textbooks
• Over-use of websites
• Inconsistent presentation of references and missing information in the references
• Too few references (may indicate a lack of reading)

The information included in your dissertation must be from a valid source. These include:

• articles in peer reviewed journals http://wok.mimas.ac.uk/
• textbooks http://www.keele.ac.uk/library/
• online databases of forensic science resources
• government reports and other publications
• websites of professional bodies
  The International Association for Identification http://www.theiai.org/
  European Network of Forensic Science Institutes http://www.enfsi.org/

Interlibrary Loans - If you don’t have access to a journal article or book, please contact your supervisor, he/she may have a copy. If not, you can order interlibrary loans via Amy Cowles in the Forensic Science Laboratory. Please note that the number per student is restricted as these items are expensive.