Information for Dissertation

I. Definition of the Dissertation

The dissertation is a required component for those students who choose to complete eight courses to fulfill their graduation requirement.

The dissertation is regarded as mainly a research effort. It serves to develop the student's abilities for independent research and analysis by analyzing a research questions in a specific area of Contemporary China. The thesis will normally include a literature review, developing and implementing reasonably rigorous methods for investigation and providing an analysis of the results. It will also include conclusions based on the analysis as well as a list of references used and appendices if necessary.

The student is expected to complete an original research paper dealing with a chosen topic under the supervision of a NTU faculty member.

The dissertation must be written in English.

II. Procedures to Complete Your Dissertation

1. Identifying a Topic

Ideas for a dissertation topic may come from coursework, work experience or other activities such as China Immersion. It is recommended that students start, and continuously refine, a list of possible topic ideas as they progress through their coursework. Ideas might be built on a combination of term papers, subject project work, readings, lecture material and the student's own working experience.

The student had to contact and consult with faculty members who have the expertise and might be interested in serving as your Supervisor.

2. Selecting a Supervisor

Student is to identify your own Supervisor. The list of Faculty and Research Interest is available from office of NCPA.

Please present and discuss your Dissertation Proposal with individual faculty member and ask for his or her consent and approval.

The dissertation supervisor's main role is to advise and guide you through the dissertation process. They can help you shape your ideas into a feasible and manageable dissertation topic and advise you on the best course of action. They will provide advices on the organization of the dissertation, its development, execution and overall quality.
Each supervisor and student will meet regularly during the course of completing a dissertation. Supervisors will review drafts of the dissertation prior to submission for examination. Students must anticipate that their supervisor will need a fair amount of time to read and comment on each draft. Therefore, plan accordingly to synchronize your schedule with your supervisor’s in order to complete the dissertation in a timely manner.

It remains, however, the sole responsibility of the student to ensure that all requirements of the dissertation are met.

3. Submitting Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a 3-5 page document which outlines the major areas of the dissertation. Usually a dissertation proposal includes a brief introduction to the topic, objectives, literature to be reviewed, methods and analysis procedures proposed and anticipated outcomes. A timeline for the completion of the dissertation should also be included.

4. Internal Examiner

The supervisor may suggest to the Programme Director, the name of a faculty member to act as the internal examiner. Per the rules set forth by the University pertaining to the dissertation examination process, at no time will the name of the internal examiner be revealed to the student as this is to be a “blind” review process.

If the proposed internal examiner declines to serve in this capacity, or if none is indicated by the supervisor, an internal examiner will be assigned by the Programme Director.

5. Examination

The examiners, including your supervisor and the internal examiner, will need to have at least one month to prepare an examiner's report. During this time, the examiners will not communicate with each other or the student on any matters pertaining to the examination of the dissertation.

Students will be informed by the office of NCPA of the outcome of their dissertation examination in due course. One of four outcomes is possible:

i) The dissertation is passed with no further amendments needed
   The student may proceed to make two hard bound copies of the dissertation and email the soft copy (in pdf format) to NCPA.

ii) The dissertation is passed pending minor amendments as specified in the examiner’s report
   The student is to make the minor amendments and verify these with their supervisor. Upon satisfaction of the supervisor that the minor amendments have been completed, the student may proceed to submit the two hard bound copies.
iii) The dissertation is passed pending major amendments as specified in the examiner's report

In this case, the student will not graduate as originally scheduled. Upon satisfaction of the supervisor that the major amendments have been completed, the student must re-submit one hard bound copy for re-examination within three months of the examiner's report. It will then be submitted for re-examination.

iv) The dissertation is not passed

In this case, the student will not graduate as originally scheduled. Instead, student is referred to undertake further work and advised to re-submit a dissertation at a later date.

6. Conferring of the Degree and Convocation

Upon submission of the two hardbound copies, the University will notify the student by letter that the degree has been conferred. The letter is an official document of the University which grants the student the status, rights and obligations of the degree of Master of Arts in Contemporary China (MACC). You have officially graduated upon issuance of this letter. (Congratulations!)

The degree scroll will be handed to the graduated student at the next convocation ceremony (held in every July) or mailed at the time of convocation.

III. Standards

The standards set for the minimum quality of a dissertation are those generally recognized as being:

(a) Adequate in scope to indicate a mastery of the field of study;
(b) Reasonably rigorous in method;
(c) Comprehensive and complete in the analysis;
(d) Stating conclusions which are justified and qualified by the overall validity and reliability;
(e) Proficient level of grammar, word usage and spelling.

1. Methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative methods and/or research procedures are acceptable for use in a dissertation. It is assumed that students will make every attempt to provide for a rigourous application of the research methods used. Some non-rigourous research methods may not qualify to meet the minimum standard in the opinion of a supervisor or internal examiner. Proper justification of the particular manner of application of any method is a necessity.
2. **Length**

The minimum length is 15,000 for Dissertation written in English. However, many dissertations at the Master’s level are more than 50 pages in length in order to adequately cover the necessary scope and expectations. There is no maximum page limit either, however, verboseness is discouraged. Complete and concise is the standard advised to determine length. In other words, the dissertation should be as long as it needs to be and no longer.

3. **Ethics**

Absolutely no plagiarism is allowed; proper footnoting to quoted information is required. Direct quotation of more than 40 words/80 characters should be set off as block quotations.