



# **HND TG LONG ESSAY GUIDELINES**

**For proposals submitted in Academic Year 2020-2021**

Queries regarding these guidelines should be addressed to the Programme Coordinator and the Academic Research and Publications Board on [arpb@its.edu.mt](mailto:arpb@its.edu.mt)

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## Introduction

As part of the Higher National Diploma [HND] programme, students are required to present a long essay on a specific research/project. This document provides guidelines to students and tutors on the expected practice of the Institute of Tourism Studies for the completion of the HND Long Essay.

It is important that every user is familiar with the content of the guidebook. Reference to the guidelines provided should address most of the queries that emerge during the research and writing process.

Good luck on this journey!

***“Historians are like deaf people who go on answering questions that no one has asked them” - Leo Tolstoy***

## Learning Outcomes

The Knowledge, Skills and Understandings include:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of various research methods and their appropriate application to the chosen circumstance identified.
- Demonstrate the ability to identify other areas ancillary to one's research which merit further investigation.
- Identify circumstances within the industry and determine when to recommend an investigation through a research project.
- Select a sample as a representation from an identified population.
- Compare data collected to other data sought through the preliminary research.
- Analyse findings.

## Teaching and Learning Strategy

To prepare the student for the long essay, the academic programme offers one module namely Research Methods which enables the student to gain necessary skills, knowledge and understanding required for the successful completion of the long essay.

It is advisable that the subject of the long essay involves an area of research of direct interest to the student. Interest in the subject, coupled with a keen sense of curiosity, promises for a better outcome. If the student is unable to think of a subject, the Institute of Tourism Studies will suggest titles for the student to choose from. ITS sometimes refers to stakeholders to identify possible essay titles thus making the essay useful also for the industry.

## Planning your Work

The long essay is the work of the student and it is the student’s responsibility to take all the relevant decisions on how to plan the research and writing of the long essay. It is also the student’s responsibility to ensure that all the necessary internal deadlines are met to enable submission in a timely fashion.

### 1. Research & Writing Plan (subject to change through official notification)

Timeline	Plan
May 2020	Research Proposal submission
October/November 2020	Literature Review Research and Identify Research methodology
December/March 2021	Prepare Final Draft for Tutor’s review
January/May 2021	Final submission

## Writing your Long Essay Proposal

The student is required to submit a provisional title for the long essay together with a detailed research proposal to the programme coordinator for HND Tour Guiding (Please refer to Appendix A) This would then be handed to the Academic Research & Publications Board (ARPB) for approval. Before the student starts working on the proposal, he or she must make sure that a long essay by a similar title or a similar specific subject area has not already been submitted in the past or is in the process of being written. Once the ARPB approves the

proposal and appoints a tutor for the long essay, the student can start working on his or her long essay.

## **Meetings with Tutor**

Students are expected to meet their tutor on a regular basis. The frequency of meetings depends on the specific circumstances of the research carried out by the student and the level of guidance required. As an indication, a meeting with the tutor on average once a month should suffice but more frequent meetings may be required.

It is the student's responsibility to request a meeting with the tutor by means of email. The tutor will propose a date and time convenient for both. Students are reminded to check their ITS email address regularly.

The student should take notes of the discussion with the tutor. The advice and guidance given by the tutor is essential for the student's learning process and failure to take notes may mean that an important piece of advice is lost. Taking proper notes enables the student to make the best of the time spent discussing with the tutor. The student may have to update the notes after the meeting and ensure that they are complete.

Tutors shall not be required to oversee any chapters or finished long essays of students who fail to meet with their assigned tutor throughout the year based on the recommended frequency. This will result into an automatic failure from the module HND5021 entitled Project.

## The Role of the Tutor

The role of the tutor is to advise and provide guidance, ensuring that all internal deadlines are met, progress reports filed accordingly and inform the Academic Research and Publications Board of any student setbacks.

Regular meetings are essential to ensure that the student is on the right track in terms of research subject, methodology and programme of work. It is also mandatory for the student to meet the tutor before final submission.

The tutor is advised to see the work of the student and provide adequate feedback within 15 days.

**The tutor should keep a log of meetings and emails if any. Tutors must also in fill in the Long Essay Meeting Report after every meeting. At the end of the year both tutor and student must sign the report.**

## The Long Essay: General Information

### 1. Word Count

The length of the long essay cannot exceed 5,000 words excluding the front matter, bibliography and appendices. Minimum word count is 4,500 words.

### 2. Assessment Criteria

The assessment of the long essay will be based upon a clear expression and articulation by the student of an analytical approach, research focus, clear methodology and stated results of a research project (Refer to Appendix E).

The long essay will be assessed by a member of the ITS academic staff who will also consult with the student's tutor. Long essays may also be made available to External Examiner/s. In cases where marking requires further clarification, a third examiner will be appointed, and the external examiner consulted. Students may also be requested to attend a viva-voce examination.

### 3. Academic Honesty

ITS has very clear policies about plagiarism and collusion.

Students are required to submit their long essay for Turnitin evaluation when the go-ahead is given by their tutor. Turnitin compares work against electronic sources including the internet, books, journals and other students' work, and generates an originality report indicating which parts of the work originate from other sources. Students are required to fill in a Declaration of Authenticity.

### 4. Submission

#### Submission of the Long Essay for grading

Once finished writing the long essay, the student must submit the research on VLE via Turnitin.

- The student must first submit a **draft version** of the work. After viewing the Turnitin originality report, student can do any necessary changes before submitting the final version.
- The student will then submit the **final version** for Turnitin assessment. This will be accessed by the examiner. The originality report would only be visible to the tutor and examiner.

#### Submission of the Final Long Essay

Before graduation, the student is required to submit the following to the Head Librarian:

- **2 hardbound copies** of the final version of the long essay (1 copy is to be given to the tutor)

**The long essay cover must be leather bound in dark with gold print.** The outside front board must have in gold print, the long-essay title, which shall be in 24pt type, name and surname, the designation of the degree (Higher National Diploma in Tour Guiding) and the year of submission in 20pt type.

**The spine of the long essay must have in gold print**, the long-essay title, name and surname and the year of submission. The information must be printed along the spine in a way that is readable when the volume is lying flat with the front cover uppermost.

**The long essay must be printed on 80gsm A4 size paper. Any tables, graphs or images, must be produced in colour in all copies.**

- 1 digital copy of the finalised long essay. This must be in PDF format.

A student may not be allowed to graduate before submitting the hard-bound copies and the digital copy.

## **5. Extensions**

A student requesting an extension must do so in writing to the Academic Research and Publications Board, justifying the request and explaining the mitigating circumstances. The request is to be made in advance of the submission date.

Needing extra time because the student has failed to meet the tutor is not a not a justified reason for an extension.

Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis and will only be granted by the Academic Research and Publications Board. Extensions may delay completion of course and therefore graduation.

## **6. Publishing and sharing of research**

A number of students will be chosen by their respective tutors to participate in a student symposium. Chosen students will give a short presentation to present their research and findings of their long essay to other ITS students, staff and invited guests at the end of their course.

ITS reserves the right to publish students' research in its official publications and to invite students to present their research during ITS official events.

## Appendix A: Format and Structure of the Long Essay

What follows are guidelines and some helpful advice on acceptable practice. Since the nature of long essays may vary, students are advised to consult the assigned tutor for more specific advice in relation to the long essay.

### 1. Title Page

This should include:

1. Long Essay Title
2. Course
3. Year
4. Name of Student

### 2. Authenticity Form

The long essay should include an Authenticity Form. The Authenticity Form must be printed, signed and inserted in the introductory pages of the electronic and hard copy of the long essay.

### 3. The Abstract

An abstract should provide an overview of the research study in all its aspects. It should be around 150-200 words and should answer the following questions.

- What does this research set out to do and why?
- How did it seek to do it?
- What are the general findings?
- What do these suggest?
- What conclusions are reached?
- What are the implications of these?

#### **4. Acknowledgements**

In this section, the student should express thanks to those who assisted in the research. These should be kept to a minimum.

#### **5. Table of Contents**

#### **6. Introduction**

This section should introduce the reader to the background of the study and the nature of the problem being considered. It should therefore set the study in context, explaining why this study is important, highlighting significant issues, problems and ideas. The aim and objectives should be stated clearly in this chapter.

#### **7. Literature Review**

In a long essay, the student is expected to provide a critical review of the existing literature on the research topic being studied. The purpose of the review is to bring together relevant knowledge and information on the selected topic. It should act as the basis for the eventual analysis in the long essay where the outcome of the student's research is discussed in the context of existing knowledge. The literature review should be the point of reference in the discussion on the research question.

#### **8. Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research process for the reader to evaluate the design, procedure and findings.

The methodology section should be well-structured. The following is an outline of the Methodology Section:

- Review of Data Collection Methods (an in-depth discussion on the chosen methodology relevant to the area of research and a discussion why other methodologies were refuted/not applicable to your research).

- Secondary Data (analysis of the supporting data to be used in research such as published studies etc...).
- Primary Data (where an in-depth description is given of the tools - such as fieldwork, document analysis, surveys carried out, when it was conducted, duration).
- Criteria for Sample Selection (detailed description of the processes employed leading to the sample choice for the study - this applies for both qualitative and quantitative research).
- Pilot Study: prior to collecting data students are encouraged to test the research tool for clarity and accurate use of terminology. Any changes conducted to the original tool need to be documented.
- Methods of Analysis (discussion of the methods of analysis used, such as SPSS, content analysis, deconstruction, textual analysis, semiotics, historical analysis, etc...).
- Limitations (of the methods used, for example access to informants).

## **9. Analysis and Discussion of the Results**

The findings are analysed and the results are presented and discussed with reference to theories and ideas outlined in the literature review.

A common mistake of student research is to include all the information that has been gleaned from during the research process, regardless of its applicability to the research question. The aim of the results chapter is to create an argument to accept or reject the hypothesis or to answer positively or negatively the research aims objectives and/or question/s set. Therefore, students are urged to only include the information that helps to develop the argument. A supplementary appendix should be used to present "raw data" if necessary. Students should seek theoretical guidance on appropriate techniques to analyse qualitative or quantitative data depending on the chosen research approach.

In presenting the results, the student should ensure that the approach used, whether it be quantitative or qualitative, demonstrates a consistency of approach throughout the chapter.

Marks are awarded for the intellectual clarity of the presentation of results, as well as the visual clarity of presentation.

It is useful to present results in sub sections that relate to each of the objectives set in the introduction. A summary of key results at the end of the chapter is always helpful, highlighting the main research findings.

## **10. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This chapter should draw together all the issues of the research and link back to the aims and objectives which were outlined in the Introduction. Have the aims set at the beginning been met? If not, why not?

What are the implications arising from the findings? Students are advised to be careful to avoid unfounded generalisations and interpretations. ALL recommendations should be based on evidence.

Students are encouraged to present suggestions for future research in the area.

## **11. References**

This section includes full details of all the books and journal articles cited or referenced throughout the long essay. Anything included in the long essay that is not referenced will be assumed to be the student's own work. It is therefore essential for the student to reference work well and correctly. The reader should be able to identify the exact source and refer to it directly. The Harvard method of referencing is the only accepted referencing method. (Refer to Appendix D on how to reference correctly.)

Students should include references to:

- Acknowledge that the work/idea belongs to another person

- Provide evidence of own research
- Illustrate a point
- Support an argument or theory
- Allow others to locate the resources used
- Avoid accusations of plagiarism

Referencing is not about listing every book and article that has been written and/or read about the subject. What is included in the reference list should be material that has been used in the literature review or elsewhere in the long essay.

## **12. Appendices**

The Appendices should include supplementary material which is unnecessary in the main body of text. Such supplementary material could include important forms, questionnaires, tables and lists of data supportive of the study. It may also be useful to include a sample of the primary data collected for example interview transcripts.

**A half-day tour itinerary related to the long essay should be included in this section.**

**NOTE:** All primary data collected, such as completed questionnaires, transcripts or notes of interviews, should be saved as the examiners may ask to see such evidence.

## Appendix B: Do's and Don'ts in the Literature Review

- The student should use the literature to explain the research. The main aim is to show why the research needs to be carried out, the identification of the methodology and to further support the student in explaining how the research work adds to the research already carried out.
- Students need to summarize the work read but also decide which ideas or information are important to support the research area. More importantly, students should also look for the major concepts, conclusions and theories that underlie the research, and identify similarities and differences in the literature consulted.
- Students are expected to evaluate and show relationships between the work already done (Is Researcher Y's theory more convincing than Researcher X's? Did Researcher X build on the work of Researcher Y?) and between this work and their own. To do this effectively, students should carefully plan how to organize their research work.
- As you will soon discover, if you try to be fully comprehensive you will never be able to finish the reading! The literature review should not provide a summary of all the published work that relates to your research, but survey of the most relevant and significant work.
- It is easier to read than to write. However, writing can help understand and find relationships between the works consulted and the research material. Students are advised not think to assume that their first written submission of any part of the long-essay as being the final or near-final version. Writing is a way of thinking, so students are encouraged to write as many drafts as necessary. Ideas and information can be further polished with further research and feedback from the tutor.
- The moment will come when the student will have to write the references page and then realize to have forgotten to keep the information need. Students are encouraged to always keep this information in their notes.

## Appendix C: Writing and Grammatical Conventions

The typescript should be clear and consistent and typed in Font 12. The typing should be at least 1½ line spacing on A4 paper. The left-hand margin should be sufficiently wide for binding purposes. **Avoid the use of the first person.** For example, "I investigated the following issues ...", should be more properly phrased as "the following issues were investigated..." or "this study looked at...".

**Sentence Length:** Sentences should be concise, clear and informative. Clarity is often lost by using long sentences or inappropriate words. Overtly long sentences tend to become very difficult for the reader to understand.

**Quotations** should be typed in single inverted commas. If the quotation is more than four lines long it should be set as an extract and the whole quotation indented. N.B. The exact spelling and punctuation of the original should be followed. The author's name, date and page number included in brackets underneath.

**Abbreviations (and acronyms)** must be typed in full when first mentioned, with the abbreviation in brackets. The abbreviation can be used thereafter.

**Numbers:** Use words for numbers up to ten. Exceptions which should always be expressed as figures are: (i) ages (ii) percentages, e.g. 25 per cent.

**Non-sexist writing** Use neutral terms, unless a specific male or female is meant.

**Page numbering:** The entire work, including references and appendices, should be numbered consecutively from the first page of the first chapter. Page numbers should be located centrally at the bottom of the page.

To note:

- Very good grammar and syntax is expected. It is recommended that the long essay is proofread. Tutors will NOT act as proof-readers. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that a good piece of work is presented for grading.
- Special attention should be given to the final version of the long essay.
- Students need to be prepared for the unexpected, such as loss or corruption of files. Ensure regular back-ups of any work.
- An electronic version of the student's long essay will be kept online. The Library makes available e-long essays to other ITS students. It is advisable therefore that the electronic version is user-friendly.

## Appendix D: Referencing and Citations

### Referencing

Referencing is compiled at the end of the long essay where the student presents a list of the sources used to complete the research work. This is called either a reference list or a bibliography and it is always written in alphabetical order by author name. Strictly speaking, a bibliography includes all sources used, whereas a reference list contains only sources cited in the text. For the purpose of this long essay, you are expected to include a Reference list.

### Citations

Citations indicate the source used to quote or refer to concepts or ideas. The three most common sources of reference are books, journal articles, and internet documents.

**Below are just a few examples based on the Harvard method of referencing:**

#### Books

The basic pattern for a reference to a book is: Author, initials, (year), *Title of book* (Edition if later than first e.g. 3rd ed.). Place of publication: Publisher.

For example:

Doganis, R. (2001). *The airline business in the 21st century*. London: Routledge.

In the case of an Edited book use following format:

Beech, J. & Chadwick, S. (Eds.). (2006). *The Business of Tourism Management*. Harlow, England: Prentice Hall.

In the case of a Chapter in an edited book use following format:

Zammit, J. (2008). From a National Airline to an EU Leisure-based Carrier. In A. Graham, A. Papatheodorou, & P. Forsyth (Eds.), *Aviation and Tourism: Implications for Leisure Travel* (pp. 119- 135). Aldershot: Ashgate.

### Journal Article

The basic pattern for a reference to a journal article is: Author, Initials. (year). Title of article. Title of journal, Volume number.

For example:

Buhalis, D. (2000), Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management*, Vol.21(1), pp.97-116. 28.

Ideally, one should cite articles that are less than ten (10) years old. However, this is not cast in stone, and very much depends on the relevance and value of the academic article.

### Electronic Sources (Internet)

The basic pattern for a reference to an electronic source is: Author, Initials. (year). Title. Retrieved month day, year, from Internet address.

For example:

Zalkin, C. (n.d.). *Made in Japan: The Culture Behind the Brand*. Retrieved August 29, 2009, from [www.brandchannel.com](http://www.brandchannel.com).

If no date is shown on the document, use n.d.. If the author is not given, begin your reference with the title of the document.

## Appendix E: Assessment Criteria

The assessment and weighting of each long essay will be based on the following criteria:

### 1. Introduction – Rationale (5%)

Grades will be awarded for:

- Purpose of long essay
- Underlying themes
- Justification - Why?
- Key aims and objectives/hypothesis – proposed

### 2. Literature Review (15%)

Grades will be awarded for:

- Evaluation and review of both theoretical and secondary research data
- Thorough knowledge and comprehension of topic
- Understanding of relevant concepts and theories
- Discussion of conceptual and theoretical issues
- Appropriate use and review of literature
- Theoretical and applied knowledge
- Summary and clear understanding of principal issues relevant to topic

### 3. Research Methodology (20%)

Grades will be awarded for:

- Selection of clear research aim and objectives and/or testable hypotheses (where applicable)
- Selection of appropriate research methodology
- Critical evaluation of such methodology
- Clear understanding of research limitations / ethical issues

#### **4. Analysis of Results / Research (20%)**

Grades will be awarded for:

- Clear presentation of results
- Appropriate analytical interpretation of results
- Application and synthesis of results to research objectives, hypotheses and literature
- Appropriate use of statistical methods (where applicable)
- A synthesis and evaluation of research results, inferences and implications

#### **5. Conclusions / Recommendations (10%)**

Grades will be awarded for:

- Logical and clearly structured conclusions
- Appropriate synthesis between research and literature
- Evaluation and summary of key research outcomes / main concepts and issues
- Potential applications of findings to future research

#### **6. Tour (20%)**

Grades will be awarded for:

- Content
- Presentation
- Structure
- Relationship with the overall research goals

#### **7. Presentation (5%)**

Grades will be awarded for:

- Ability to organise and represent ideas and data in a clear, logical and appropriate form
- Grammatical correctness, structure and readability

- Appropriate use of references and referencing systems
- Appropriate use of visual material where applicable