

Dissertation Help

Student Help & Advice

This dissertation study guide addresses the significant tasks you will undertake when writing a dissertation. It aims to help you to feel confident in the construction of this extended piece of writing, and to support you in its successful completion. The process of having to describe your study in detail, in a logical sequence of written words, will inevitably highlight where more thought is needed, and it may lead to new insight into connections, implications, rationale, relevance, and may lead to new ideas for further research. Before embarking on any substantial writing for your dissertation you will need to check the exact requirements regarding:

- The word limit: maximum and minimum; and whether or not this includes words within tables, the abstract, the reference list, and the appendices;
- Which chapters are expected to be included, in which order, and what kind of material is expected in each;
- The kind of content appropriate to place in the appendices rather than in the main text; and
- The marking scheme or guidance outlined by your university.

When you undertake a dissertation you must include a rationale: an explanation of why you are studying the topic and why it is important. You will need to show evidence that experts in the field do find it important, they need to relate to the dissertation study. It is not good enough to say that you find it personally interesting (you shouldn't be studying it otherwise!). Think of your reader(s). In justifying your study it can be useful to imagine a cynical critic who cannot imagine why anyone would waste their time on such a study! If you can address their concerns you will be doing well. There are some principles that guide the structuring of dissertations in different disciplines. You should check departmental and course regulations. Below is a structure that is commonly used:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Contents page
- Introduction
- Literature review
- Results
- Discussions or Findings
- Conclusions
- References
- Appendices

Your research should be guided by a central research question (or a series of closely-connected questions). This needs to be made clear early on (although you may refine your question(s) as your understanding deepens. Your research questions will help you to stay on target and to avoid being distracted by interesting (but irrelevant) digressions.

Question: Where Can I Find Sample Dissertations?

Answer: [Sample Dissertations](#)