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Dissertation guidelines

By

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WHAT WE LEARN HERE?

- Why should one write a dissertation?
 - What to write in a dissertation?
 - How to write a dissertation?
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WHAT IS A DISSERTATION?

- A dissertation or thesis is a long piece of **academic writing** based on **original research**. It is usually submitted as part of a PhD or master's, and sometimes as part of a bachelor's degree.
 - A dissertation is a **research project** completed as part of an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.
 - An effective dissertation should generally answer the "**how**", "**what**", and "**so what**." It should be a statement that represents an argument, yet is refutable by the reader.
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AIM OF DISSERTATION

- The aim of the project/dissertation is to test the independent research skills students have acquired during their time at university/course of study, with the assessment used to help determine their final grade.
 - A dissertation allows students present their findings in response to a question or proposition that they choose themselves.
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TYPES OF DISSERTATION

- The type of dissertation you complete will vary depending on your topic and availability of time. One of the main differences is between empirical and non-empirical dissertations.
 - **Empirical dissertations** are dissertations which involve collecting data, for example in a psychology degree. This may mean putting into practice professional and ethical guidelines when collecting data from members of the public.
 - **Non-empirical dissertations** are based on existing data and arguments in the work of others. This is likely to mean spending a lot of time with your head in a book! In this type of dissertation, you need to make sure you don't just describe what others are saying, but critically analyze the work and explore its practical applications.
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CHOOSING A TOPIC

- We will give you a topic
 - You can choose a topic of your interest
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- Dissertation Proposal - It is mandatory to submit a 1000 words dissertation Proposal
 - Final Dissertation
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DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

- A research proposal is a more detailed description of the project you are going to undertake.
 - It should also indicate your proposed Research Scheme.
 - It should build on the thinking that you have done in defining your research problem; and on early reading that you have done on the topic.
 - A comprehensive research proposal will make you think through exactly what it is that you are going to do, and will help you when you start to write up the project.
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YOUR PROPOSAL SHOULD CONTAIN -

- **Introduction of the Dissertation Topic:** The researcher is required to introduce the subject and the issue involved in brief.
 - **Statement of Problem:** The researcher is required to explain the debatable issue involved in a research topic. Such issues could be single or multiple. A Statement of Problem is basically a statement that illustrates a clear vision and the overall method that will be used to solve the problem at hand. Usually used when doing research, a problem statement discusses any foreseeable tangible or intangible problems that the researcher may face throughout the course of the project.
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- **Research Questions:** A research question is an answerable inquiry into a specific concern or issue. It is the initial step in a research project. The "initial step" means after you have an idea of what you want to study, the research question is the first active step in the research project.
 - **Hypothesis:** A research hypothesis is the statement created by researchers when they speculate upon the outcome of a research or experiment. It is an assumption with which the researcher begins its research and throughout the research paper, the researcher should seek to prove or disprove the hypothesis.
 - **Scope of Study:** The researcher is required to identify the broad framework within which the study is designed. The researcher may also highlight the limitations of the study within this segment.
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- **Objective of Study:** The researcher has to identify the aims and objective of the study i.e. what the researcher
 - **Research Methodology:** The method that the researcher adopts to conduct a research i.e. doctrinal or non-doctrinal or empirical. The researcher has to state along with the method the justification of using the method in a research paper / project. Please note that the researcher can use a combination of both the methods as long as the researcher is able to justify the usage of the combined method.
 - **Literature Review:** The researcher has to go through the existing materials (both primary and secondary) and provide a review or assessment of the existing literature.
 - **Tentative Chapterization:** The researcher is required to briefly state how the researcher intends to go about the research. The researcher is required to categorize the paper / project into broad chapter and provide a gist of contents that the researcher intends to include in each chapter.
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RESEARCH PROBLEM

Research problem sets out:

- the issue that you are going to be investigating;
 - your argument (what you want to prove, disprove, or explore); and
 - the limits of your research (i.e. what you are not going to be investigating).
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- It is important that you establish a research problem at, or close to the start of, your project.
 - It is one of the key tools you have, to ensure that your project keeps going in the right direction.
 - Every task you undertake should begin with you checking your research problem and asking “will this help me address this problem?”
 - You should be willing to revise your research problem as you find out more about your topic. You may, for example, discover that the data you were hoping to analyze is not available, or you may encounter a new piece of information or a new concept while undertaking a literature search, that makes you rethink the basis of your research problem.
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DEVELOPING A RESEARCH QUESTION

- Once Research Problem is identified, you need to frame Research Questions.
 - This will enable you to easily navigate the thought process in writing your dissertation.
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METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter or section describes how you conducted your research, allowing your reader to assess its validity. You should generally include:

- The overall approach and type of research (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, experimental, ethnographic)
- Your methods of collecting data (e.g. interviews, surveys, archives)
- Details of where, when, and with whom the research took place
- Your methods of analyzing data (e.g. statistical analysis, discourse analysis)

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- Tools and materials you used (e.g. computer programs, lab equipment)
 - A discussion of any obstacles you faced in conducting the research and how you overcame them
 - An evaluation or justification of your methods

Your aim in the methodology is to accurately report what you did, as well as convincing the reader that this was the best approach to answering your research questions or objectives.

COLLECTING DATA

For most research projects the data collection phase feels like the most important part. However, you should avoid jumping straight into this phase until you have adequately defined your research problem, and the extent and limitations of your research. If you are too hasty you risk collecting data that you will not be able to use.

Consider how you are going to store and retrieve your data. You should set up a system that allows you to:

- record data accurately as you collect it;
 - retrieve data quickly and efficiently;
 - analyse and compare the data you collect; and
 - create appropriate outputs for your dissertation e.g. tables and graphs, if appropriate.
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LITERATURE REVIEW

- The aim of a literature review is to show your reader that you have read, and have a good grasp of, the main published work concerning a particular topic or question in your field. This work may be in any format, including online sources.
 - According to Caulley (1992) of La Trobe University, the literature review should:
 - compare and contrast different authors' views on an issue
 - group authors who draw similar conclusions
 - criticise aspects of methodology
 - note areas in which authors are in disagreement
 - highlight exemplary studies
 - highlight gaps in research
 - show how your study relates to previous studies
 - show how your study relates to the literature in general
 - conclude by summarizing what the literature says
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The purposes of the review are:

- to define and limit the problem you are working on
- to place your study in an historical perspective
- to avoid unnecessary duplication
- to evaluate promising research methods
- to relate your findings to previous knowledge and suggest further research

A good literature review, therefore, is critical of what has been written, identifies areas of controversy, raises questions and identifies areas which need further research.

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- Upon scrutinizing the initial dissertation proposal, the course-coordinator will either approve or reject the proposal. In the event of rejection/modification of the proposed Research Proposal, the candidate will have to re-submit another Research Proposal incorporating the suggested changes within a stipulated time fixed by the course-coordinator.
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FINAL DISSERTATION

- Cover page/title page
 - Certificate by supervisor
 - Declaration by student
 - Acknowledgements
 - Table of Contents
 - Index of Authorities (Statutes/Judgments/Other official sources)
 - List of Abbreviations (If required)
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- Introduction
 - Methodology (Research Objective; Scope and Limitations/Research Gap; Hypothesis; Research Questions; Research Methodology; Value of Research; Literature Review; Research Plan/Tentative chapterisation)
 - Main body of dissertation (Broken down into Chapters or Parts)
 - Conclusion and Suggestions
 - Bibliography (Books – Scholarly articles – Articles from news sources – Internet sources)
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COVER PAGE/TITLE PAGE

The very first page of your document contains

- Your degree program/Name of Course,
 - your dissertation's title,
 - your name,
 - Roll Number/ID Number
 - submission date.
 - Name of University and Logo
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- Certificate by supervisor
 - Declaration by student
 - Acknowledgements
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- In the table of contents, list all of your chapters and subheadings and their page numbers. The dissertation contents page gives the reader an overview of your structure and helps easily navigate the document.
 - All parts of your dissertation should be included in the table of contents, including the appendices and Bibliography.
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INDEX OF AUTHORITIES AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- List of Statutes, Policies and Regulations
- List of Judgments
- List of Abbreviations
- List of Figures and tables

All of these should be in chronological order.

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the topic
 - Statement of Problem
 - Research Objective
 - Scope and Limitations/Research Gap
 - Hypothesis
 - Research Questions
 - Research Methodology
 - Value of Research
 - Literature Review
 - Research Plan/Tentative chapterisation)
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MAIN BODY OF DISSERTATION/DISCUSSION

- It should be in chapters (Maximum of 6 chapters including Introduction and Conclusion)
 - You should be able to address all the research questions raised.
 - You should also analyse the results or findings from your research
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CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

- The dissertation conclusion should concisely answer the main research question, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of your central argument and emphasizing what your research has contributed.
 - wrap up your dissertation with a final reflection on what you found. This type of conclusion often also includes recommendations for future research or practice.
 - Give possible suggestions to overcome the statement of problem.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

- You must include full details of all sources that you have cited/used.
 - It is important to follow a consistent citation style.
 - Each style has strict and specific requirements for how to format your sources in the reference list.
 - You should use Bluebook 19th edition/20th edition through out the dissertation
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OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The written Dissertation will carry a total of 150 marks which will be followed by a viva-voce carrying 50 marks.
 - **Footnotes:** It is mandatory to cite/use footnotes.
 - Submit on-time
 - Dissertation Proposal is Mandatory
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Thank You....
Any Questions..??
