University for the Creative Arts

BERLIN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & INNOVATION

DISSERTATION GUIDE

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YOUR DISSERTATION THESIS GUIDELINES

IN BRIEF

Your Dissertation needs to be officially submitted on Canvas the latest by the date which has been indicated as a deadline to you. Apart from this official submission, an exact copy of your Thesis has also to be submitted electronically only to your supervisor as well.

The length should not exceed the word limit which is **15000 words** excluding cover pages, abstracts, contents, bibliography pages and appendices. **Words count from the first one of the Introduction to the last one of the Conclusion.**

You have to use the specific word template to write your Dissertation (see the sample in this Guide), which will be send to you electronically in due time.

The technical specifications are:
Font type: Times New Roman
Font size: 12
Paragraph alignment: Justified
Line spacing: 1,5
Every Chapter starts at a new page
Your Table of Contents should also include page numbers
If you have Tables, Pictures etc you need to include a chart of these after the Table of Contents
You also need to include a Table of Abbreviations if this is necessary
It is not obligatory to have an Appendix in your Dissertation

You have to document all your sources in your Thesis and also sign, the "Academic Ethics Form" (see the sample at the end of this Guide). You will receive the Form electronically.

If any of the above drafting and submission rules is not followed your Dissertation Thesis will not be accepted.

The dissertation is worth 30 ECTS of your 90-credit program.

You need to send your work to your supervisor gradually, chapter by chapter. Remember that our faculty professors do not work over the weekend, that you should expect a reply within 3 days (your supervisor needs time to read and assess what you have sent) and finally that your final work should be sent at least a week before your submission deadline. The final decision to submit you work must be taken by you and not by your supervisor.

Generic Mark Descriptors

	7	90 - 100	80 - 89	70 - 79	60 - 69	50 - 59	40 - 49	30 - 39	0 - 29
Level 7	**Knowledge of contexts, concepts, technologies and processes** The extent to which knowledge is demonstrated: *relevant contextual or theoretical issues are identified, defined and described* *historical or contemporary practices are identified, defined and described* *appropriate technologies, methods and processes are identified, defined and described*	Exceptional and remarkable critical understanding of current issues and historical contexts demonstrating knowledge at the forefront of the discipline Exceptional and highly original understanding of techniques methods and processes	Excellent and highly sophisticated critical understanding of current issues and historical contexts demonstrating knowledge at the forefront of the discipline An excellent and highly impressive understanding of techniques, materials and processes	Comprehensive critical understanding of current issues and historical contexts much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline. Comprehensive knowledge of techniques and processes, and a critical understanding of their potential to advance scholarship in the discipline.	Significant understanding of current issues and historical contexts, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline. Significant knowledge of the techniques and processes applicable to understanding research and advanced scholarship in the discipline	Sound understanding of knowledge of current issues and historical contexts, some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline. Sound knowledge of the techniques and processes applicable to research and advanced scholarship in the discipline	Passable understanding of knowledge of current issues and historical contexts, some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of the discipline. Acceptable knowledge of the techniques and processes applicable to research and advanced scholarship in the discipline	Insufficient understanding of knowledge of the contextual, historical or theoretical issues that inform the discipline. Insufficient knowledge of techniques applicable to research and advanced scholarship in the discipline.	Very poor demonstration of understanding of contextual, historical or theoretical issues that inform the discipline. Very weak knowledge of technologies, methods and processes
	Understanding through application of knowledge The degree to which research methods are demonstrated: *relevant knowledge and information is compared, contrasted, manipulated, translated and interpreted* *knowledge and information is selected, analysed, synthesized and evaluated in order to generate creative ideas, solutions, arguments or hypotheses*	Exceptional and remarkable demonstration of research methods which generate highly developed critical insights into existing knowledge Exceptional and remarkable critical evaluation of existing knowledge leading directly to new hypotheses Exceptional and remarkable judgements made in relation to creative practice, current ideas, arguments and hypotheses	Excellent and highly sophisticated demonstration of research methods leading to impressive critical insights into existing knowledge Excellent and highly sophisticated critical evaluation of existing knowledge working towards new hypotheses Excellent and highly sophisticated judgements made in relation to creative practice, current ideas, arguments and hypotheses	Rigorous use of established methods of research combined with the ability to generate new concepts or insights into existing knowledge. Critical evaluation of current knowledge to evaluate methodological practices and propose new hypotheses. Carefully considered judgements on highly complex or 'under-researched' problems showing evidence of systematic analysis and deduction and creative processes to resolve them.	Confident use of established methods of research combined with the ability to recognise new concepts using existing knowledge. Critical evaluation of current knowledge to analyse methodological practices and propose hypotheses Informed judgements made on highly complex research problems showing evidence of systematic analysis and deduction and creative processes to resolve them	Sound use of established methods of research to develop and interpret existing knowledge. Critical evaluation of current knowledge and recognition of methodological practices. Sound judgements made on complex research problems showing evidence of systematic analysis and deduction and creative processes to resolve them.	Passable use of established methods of research to develop and interpret existing knowledge. Evidence of critical evaluation of current knowledge and recognition of methodological practices. Passable judgements made on complex research problems showing evidence of systematic analysis and deduction and creative processes to resolve them.	Insufficient use of existing methodologies to develop knowledge. Inability to fully understand or interpret relevant knowledge and methodological practices. Research problems are insufficiently complex and require mainly routine analytic and creative processes to resolve them.	Inability to use and interpret existing research methodologies Little or no ability to evaluate existing knowledge Inability to define a research problem and to generate solutions or hypotheses through research and practice
	Application of technical and professional skills The degree to which: *appropriate materials and media are selected, tested and utilised to realise and present ideas and solutions* *appropriate technologies, methods and processes are demonstrated* *transferable, professional skills are effectively demonstrated* *self management and independent learning are demonstrated*	Exceptional and remarkable critical and evaluative skills utilised leading to highly original solutions to very complex problems Outstanding application of advanced technical skills that fundamentally challenges current understanding and practices Exceptional and remarkable demonstration of professionalism, self-management and independent learning	Excellent and highly sophisticated critical and evaluative skills utilised leading to impressive solutions to very complex problems Highly impressive application of advanced technical skills that challenge current understanding and practices Excellent demonstration of professionalism, self-management and independent learning	Evidence of a high level of critical and evaluative skills in order to create original solutions to a range of highly complex problems. Application of advanced skills, techniques and processes that challenge knowledge and understanding of the discipline. Demonstration of a very high level of professionalism, self-management and independent learning	Evidence of the critical and evaluative skills necessary to construct solutions to a range of complex problems Application of advanced skills, techniques and processes that contribute to knowledge and understanding of the discipline. Demonstration of a competent level of professionalism, self-management and independent learning	Evidence of the critical and evaluative skills necessary to identify solutions to a range of complex problems. Application of advanced skills techniques and processes that sustain independent learning in the discipline. Clear demonstration of professionalism, self-management and independent learning	Evidence of the critical and evaluative skills necessary to identify solutions to a range of varied problems. Application of advanced skills techniques and processes that sustain independent learning in the discipline. Acceptable demonstration of professionalism, self-management and independent learning	Inability to demonstrate the critical and evaluative skills necessary to identify solutions to problems Insufficient ability to demonstrate the skills necessary for sustained independent learning Insufficient evidence of professional and transferable skills	Very poor ability to apply appropriate materials and media to present ideas and solutions Very poor judgement shown in choice of methods and processes Inability to manage self, meet deadlines, work professionally and independently

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING YOUR DISSERTATION THESIS

ABSTRACT

Has to be around 200 words, and in essence it is the summary of your Introduction and Conclusion. As it is rational this is the last thing we write when the whole Dissertation is complete.

INTRODUCTION

1000 words. It has to include, the following elements:

- Brief analysis of the research topic
- Trigger and Rationale (reason for research topic selection)
- Aims and Objectives
- Methodology (Primary or Secondary research?, methodological tools adopted and why, limitations of research)
- Synopsis (summary) of the Chapters

CHAPTERS

There are 4: Two for literature review, one for methodology and one for findings, analysis, and discussion. Chapters should be numbered and have a Title as well. All Chapters should also have a symmetry regarding size and start from a new page.

Chapter One: Literature Review I (3000 words)
Chapter Two: Literature Review II (3000 words)
Chapter Three: Methodology (2000 words)
Chapter Four: Findings – Analysis – Discussion (5000 words)

CONCLUSION

1000 words. Here we summarize the results OF ALL our work of the Dissertation and not we should not confuse the conclusion with the "discussion" part of questionnaire anaylsis (which is different and should be included in a Chapter).

APPENDIX – APPENDICES

You can include more than one. They do not count towards the word limit (only the Introduction, Chapters and the Conclusion count). Here you can include elements such as: questionnaires template, legal documents, maps, statistical documents, photographs, charts etc. You can include those elements that if you inserted them in the Chapters they will alter the structure and character of the document. In other words, you can include graphs in the Chapters but not 30 of them in a sequence. Similarly, you can include and comment parts of legislation in the Chapters but not the actual law document.

(ONLY CHAPTERS ARE NUMBERED)

DETAILED GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING YOUR DISSERTATION THESIS

A. Beginning with your Dissertation

B. Dissertation Structure

C. Other General Guidelines

A. Beginning with your Dissertation

A.1. A few words about this guide

A successful dissertation will present a thorough and critical review of relevant literature and of current subject knowledge. It will demonstrate high levels of analytical and critical awareness, the ability to synthesize theories, and the ability to relate theory to practice. The theoretical base will be tested against practical illustration(s).

This document covers your dissertation process and specifies the appropriate goals, as well as information relating to your responsibilities and appropriate format.

A.2. Why Do Research?

Here are some reasons for you to do research (Priya Narasimhan, 2006):

- ✓ Thrill of finding out something that no-one else has done before you
  - Being a pioneer
  - Becoming a world-class expert in cutting-edge topics
- ✓ Going to conferences
- ✓ Matters both in industry and in academia

A.3. Learning Outcomes of the Dissertation

Doing your dissertation is a lengthy procedure and probably you will get a lot of surprises. Here are some learning outcomes your dissertation should target to (Nigel Coates, 2010):

1. Select, critically discuss and apply an appropriate research methodology and method(s) to their chosen research topic.
2. Demonstrate an awareness of the contexts that impact upon the research topics.
3. Demonstrate a rigorous understanding of the theory and literature relevant to the issues under investigation and link this to the research method(s).
4. Conduct research and organize the findings into a comprehensive and explicit structure that is critically assessed and is linked to the conclusions drawn.
5. Critically reflect on the processes involved in the research and the contribution of the research to the topic area.
6. Illustrate and document progress within the dissertation process by providing an adequate set of working papers and log book.

A.4. Where Should You Start?

At the beginning, it is essential that you take a little investigation at the bibliography about the topic you are concerned about. This will help you get some new ideas and find out about the literature "gaps" that might need further investigation. Here are some ideas where to look first (Priya Narasimhan, 2006):

- ✓ Papers appearing in the top *conferences* (not necessarily journals) in your field over the past 2-3 years
- ✓ Look at the best papers in those conferences
- ✓ Look for taste in research, taste in presentation style, amount of work that it takes to have a best-paper award
- ✓ Your advisor's thesis

- Helps you to understand how much "work" your advisor will expect
- Ask your advisor what he/she is proudest of and what he/she would do differently, if given a chance to re-write the dissertation

✓ The theses and recent papers of your committee members. This will help you to understand their outlook on publication and writing

A.5. Writing your Dissertation Outline

You should use your Template (see the sample in this guide) from the beginning of the process in order to save time and effort and also for organising your work better. Your Outline is practically you "Table of Contents" so you can draft some provisional titles for your Chapters and subchapters (you can of course change these later), in order to help yourself structure your research. A brainstorming activity would also be helpful.

A.6. Organizing Your Dissertation

A.6.1. Some basic guidelines

The best time to think about how to organize your dissertation is during the pre-writing stage, not the writing or revising stage. A well-thought-out plan can save you from having to do a lot of reorganizing when the first draft is completed. Moreover, it allows you to pay more attention to sentence-level issues when you sit down to write your dissertation.

Be aware that genres are not fixed. Different professors will define the features of a genre differently. Read the assignment question carefully for guidance. Understanding genre can take you only so far.

A.6.2. When should I begin putting together a plan?

The earlier you begin planning, the better. It is usually a mistake to do all of your research and note-taking before beginning to draw up an outline (Plotnick Jerry, 2005). Of course, you will have to do some reading and weighing of evidence before you start to plan. But as a potential argument begins to take shape in your mind, you may start to formalize your thoughts in the form of a tentative plan. You will be much more efficient in your reading and your research if you have some idea of where your argument is headed. You can then search for evidence for the points in your tentative plan while you are reading and researching. As you gather evidence, those points that still lack evidence should guide you in your research. Remember, though, that your plan may need to be modified as you critically evaluate your evidence.

A.6.3. How much of my time should I put into planning?

It is self-evident that a well-planned paper is going to be better organized than a paper that was not planned out (Plotnick Jerry, 2005). Thinking carefully about how you are going to argue your paper and preparing an outline can only add to the quality of your final product. Nevertheless, some people find it more helpful than others to plan. Those who are good at coming up with ideas but find writing difficult often benefit from planning. By contrast, those who have trouble generating ideas but find writing easy may benefit from starting to write early. Putting pen to paper (or typing away at the keyboard) may be just what is needed to get the ideas to flow.

You have to find out for yourself what works best for you, though it is fair to say that at least some planning is always a good idea. Think about whether your current practices are serving you well. You know you're planning too little if the first draft of your essays is always a disorganized mess, and you have to spend a disproportionate amount of time creating reverse outlines and cutting and pasting material. You know you're planning too much if you always find yourself writing your paper a day before it's due after spending weeks doing research and devising elaborate plans.

Planning provides the following advantages (Plotnick Jerry, 2005):

- ✓ helps you to produce a logical and orderly argument that your readers can follow
- ✓ helps you to produce an economical dissertation by allowing you to spot repetition
- ✓ helps you to produce a thorough dissertation by making it easier for you to notice whether you have left anything out
- ✓ makes drafting the dissertation easier by allowing you to concentrate on writing issues such as grammar, word choice, and clarity

Overplanning poses the following risks:

- ✓ doesn't leave you enough time to write and revise
- ✓ leads you to produce dissertations that try to cover too much ground at the expense of analytic depth
- ✓ can result in a writing style that lacks spontaneity and ease
- ✓ does not provide enough opportunity to discover new ideas in the process of writing

B. Dissertation Structure

In brief, your Dissertation should have the following structure:

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW I

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW II

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION
- **4.1 FINDINGS**
- **4.2 ANALYSIS**
- **4.3 DISCUSSION**

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

WHAT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE IN YOUR **INTRODUCTION** IS:

- A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE TOPIC
- AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- BRIEF METHODOLOGY DESCRIPTION
- YOUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTERS

IN THE **LITERATURE REVIEW CHAPTERS** YOU SHOULD INCLUDE INFORMATION THAT YOU WILL FIND IN THE EXISTING LITERATURE THAT IS RELEVANT TO YOUR DISSERTATION TOPIC (THIS IS CALLED "SECONDARY RESEARCH"). IN THE FIRST LITERATURE REVIEW CHAPTER YOU INCLUDE WHAT YOU HAVE DISCOVERED BY THE EXISTING LITERATURE FOR THE GENERAL ELEMENTS OF YOUR THESIS, AND IN THE SECOND ONE, FOR THE SPECIFIC ONES.

IN THE **METHODOLOGY CHAPTER** WHICH IS THE SHORTEST CHAPTER OF YOUR DISSERTATION YOU SHOULD ANALYSE YOUR METHODOLOGY STRATEGY FOR YOUR RESEARCH

THE FOURTH CHAPTER CONTAINS WHAT WE CALL "PRIMARY RESEARCH" AS IT IS RESEARCH THAT IS CONDUCTED BY YOU FOR THE FIRST TIME, WHEREAS THE "SECONDARY RESEARCH", THE EXISTING LITERATURE THAT YOU USED IN YOUR LITERATURE CHAPTERS, CONTAINS WHAT HAS BEEN ALREADY WRITTEN BY OTHERS.
SO, IN THE **FOURTH CHAPTER FINDINGS - ANALYSIS - DISCUSSION** YOU WILL REFER TO ITS SUBCHAPTERS AS FOLLOWS:

4.1 FINDINGS: YOU WILL PRESENT YOUR DATA, RESULTS AND FINDINGS. YOU CAN USE STATISTICAL PIE CHARTS OR ANY OTHER GRAPHIC FORM TO PRESENT THEM OR LISTING THEM.
4.2 ANALYSIS : YOU WILL PROVIDE AN ANALYSIS OF THE ABOVE FINDINGS WITH YOUR OWN WORDS (AT LEAST FOUR PAGES)
4.3 DISCUSSION: THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT AND PERSONAL PART OF THE DISSERTATION WHERE YOU WILL PROVIDE YOUR OWN VIEWS FROM ALL THE RESEARCH YOU HAVE DONE. NOT ONLY THE PRIMARY BUT ALSO THE SECONDARY. YOU DID ALL THESE RESEARCH IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO REACH THIS PART AND THIS IS WHERE ALL RESEARCH IS UNITED (AT LEAST FIVE PAGES).

FINALLY YOUR **CONCLUSION** SHOULD REFER TO THE WHOLE DISSERTATION.

More specifically:

Title page
Declaration
Abstract
Acknowledgements
Table of Contents
Introduction
Literature Review (2 Chapters)
Methodology (1 Chapter)
Findings, Analysis Discussion (1 Chapter)
Concluding Remarks
Bibliography
Appendices

➢ Title page

Begin with the title of your dissertation.

➢ Declaration

You will find at the end of this guide the dissertation template with the exact type of the title page you should use.

➢ Abstract

- A summary of the dissertation
- Objectives
- Methods
- Findings
- Conclusions

An abstract is a short introduction to the subject at hand. Whether it is for reading a paper, seeing a poster, or attending a talk, a person wants to know if the subject is something of interest. That abstract aims to give more information about the title of the dissertation and it is a bit of a flirtation. The goal is to entice someone to want more. In this way, you do not want to give it all away for free. Instead, a well-done abstract whets the reader's appetite for more. So an abstract should not be too long (two paragraphs is too much), nor too short (two sentences is usually too little). (Robert W., 2000)

Some extra things to note for your abstract:

- References should not be given simply because you should not be going into such detail.
- It should be one **paragraph** summarizing the whole dissertation (not more than 200 words)
- It would be better to write the abstract the time your dissertation is completed.
- It should contain all the important points of the dissertation: (Daniel Kies, 1995)
    - **purpose**
        - What is the reason for writing?
        - What is the main idea?
    - **scope**
        - What is the focus in this piece?
        - Where do you concentrate your attention?
    - **method**
        - What kinds of evidence do you provide?
        - How do you try to convince the reader of the validity of your main idea?
    - **results**
        - What are the consequences of the problem or issue that you are discussing?
    - **recommendations**
        - What solutions do you present to the reader to resolve the problem of issue in the piece?
        - Do you recommend action or change in your piece?
    - **conclusions**
        - Do you describe a 'cause and effect' relationship or explain the origins of this issue or problem?
        - What conclusions do you draw from your study of the issue or problem?

➢ Acknowledgements

- Parents and friends
- Contributors
- Don't forget the Supervisor!!!

Thanks to those who have assisted you. First of all, write the names of people who in any way were concerned with your dissertation writing task. You may include the following people in your

list: Supervisor, professors, advisors, librarians, laboratory assistants, colleagues, parents and friends.

Now you need to narrow down the list to those names that played a major role in your assistance and finalize them to include in dissertation acknowledgement.

Try to limit dissertation acknowledgement within **one page**. Use the page at the dissertation template.

➢ Table of contents

- Chapter names, numbers and page numbers
- Chapter sections
- Tables and diagrams
- Use word templates or devise your own

It should include Chapters and/or sections & sub-sections with page numbers. Use the dissertation template.

➢ Introduction

- Reasons for investigation-Research Question
- Aims and Objectives of Research
- Intro to Methods
- Background or explanation of project choice
- Outline of chapters and structure

Writing the introduction to your dissertation is as important as any of your chapters, as it sets out for the reader what you intend to cover in your dissertation. It sets out for the reader what is you intend to do, the questions you are answering, how you propose to do it as well as background information on your topic that the reader might need. While the format will be different depending on what type of dissertation you are writing you should still cover some basic information, including (Jade Wildy, 2010) **General description of your topic**

Providing a general description of your topic first "sets the scene" for both your thesis and your introduction. It is essentially an introduction to your introduction that explains the general field your dissertation belongs to.

1. **background**

The background provides the reader with the history of the topic your thesis is on. It may include the historical lead-up to your dissertation, the specific scientific information for your dissertation, or what the main theories or writers in your topic were (this would be elaborated on in your Literature Review). It is also useful to include definitions, specific assumptions, equations or other information that the reader will need to know in order to understand what you have

written. Essentially you are providing all the necessary tools for your dissertation to be understood by the reader. You are also leading up to proving that there is a need for your research. *Be careful not to over simplify*. Assume your reader is intelligent, somewhat knowledgeable in your field, but does not know everything.

2. **gap statement**

Your "Gap Statement" is essentially the gap in the area in your field that your research is intended to fill. It states clearly that there is a need for your research, as established in your background and elaborated in your Literature Review. It states that there is a need for what you are researching and sets out the problem, hypothesis or question that your research responds to. Your "Gap" does not need to be Earth shattering, and can state that while your problem has been discussed previously, no one has done it in this way or has used this technique. Your "Gap Statement" may be comprised of several questions that your thesis will answer.

3. **how you intend to fill it (aims and objectives)**

This section sets out what you will cover in your dissertation and how you intend to do it. This could include the methodology you use, framework, experiments. There is a key difference between an aim and an objective. *Aims* are a broad intent like "investigating how the make-up industry uses metals," where as an *objective* quantifies it, for example "investigating 20 samples of products from company X, for metal traces."

4. **structure of your dissertation (chapters)**

It is useful to explain the structure you have used in your dissertation, and a general reference to the content of your chapters, so the reader knows what to expect. This can be a chapter by chapter statement or one that is more broad-based on the content of your thesis. Once you have written your introduction, it is important to proofread it and check it against the actual content of your chapters to avoid unnecessary mistakes which may have come about from the editing process. This is especially important if you have written the introduction first, as you may have changed the content of chapters, moved them about or changed direction. If you write your introduction first, it can be useful to go back to your introduction to re-clarify in your own mind what you set out to do, to measure if you are still on track.

5. **an ending statement to lead the reader into your dissertation**

➢ Literature review

- Demonstrates your knowledge of theory
- Shows how you research relates to previous work
- Explains main points of relevant theory
- Critically examines / evaluates its usefulness and reliability
- Discusses themes and contradictions
- Identifies theory which will be analytical tools used in your project
- Reasons for investigation-Research Question
- Aims and Objectives of Research
- Intro to Methods
- Background or explanation of project choice
- Outline of chapters and structure

In writing the literature review for your dissertation, your purpose is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are. As a piece of writing, the literature review must be defined by a guiding concept

(e.g., your dissertation research objective, the problem or issue you are discussing or your argumentative thesis). It is not just a descriptive list of the material available, or a set of summaries (http://www.ukdissertations.com/dissertation-literature-reviews.php).
Besides enlarging your knowledge about the topic, writing a literature review lets you gain and demonstrate skills in two areas:

1. information seeking: the ability to scan the literature efficiently, using manual or computerized methods, to identify a set of useful articles and books
2. critical appraisal: the ability to apply principles of analysis to identify unbiased and valid studies.

A literature review must do these things:

a. be organised around and related directly to the dissertation or research question you are developing
b. synthesize results into a summary of what is and is not known
c. identify areas of controversy in the literature
d. formulate questions that need further research

A literature review is a piece of discursive prose, not a list describing or summarizing one piece of literature after another. It's usually a bad sign to see every paragraph beginning with the name of a researcher. Instead, organize the literature review into sections that present themes or identify trends, including relevant theory. *You are not trying to list all the material published, but to synthesize and evaluate it according to the guiding concept of your dissertation or research question.*

Some questions to ask yourself before including material:

1. What is the specific thesis, problem, or research question that my literature review helps to define?
2. What type of literature review am I conducting? Am I looking at issues of theory, methodology or policy? Quantitative research (e.g. on the effectiveness of a new procedure)? Qualitative research (e.g., studies)?
3. What is the scope of my literature review? What types of publications am I using (e.g., journals, books, government documents, popular media)? What discipline am I working in (e.g., nursing psychology, sociology, medicine)?
4. How good was my information seeking? Has my search been wide enough to ensure I've found all the relevant material? Has it been narrow enough to exclude irrelevant material? Is the number of sources I've used appropriate for the length of my paper?
5. Have I critically analysed the literature I use? Do I follow through a set of concepts and questions, comparing items to each other in the ways they deal with them? Instead of just listing and summarizing items, do I assess them, discussing strengths and weaknesses?
6. Have I cited and discussed studies contrary to my perspective?
7. Will the reader find my literature review relevant, appropriate, and useful?

Literature review is an in depth analysis of the previous research accredited by scholars and researchers which is usually the part of an introduction to an essay, report or thesis. When conducting literature review, you are required to do a review on the work established by the scholars while also highlighting its strength and weaknesses.
(http://dissertationguru.blogspot.com/search/label/literature%20review%20help)

1. **How To Do Literature Research**

Conduct a brief research on what has been written on the subject. For this purpose, you can use as many bibliographical sources as possible to find the pertinent titles, like, references and bibliographies in relevant textbook and journal articles, if you are still confused ask your instructor about it. Go for the abstracting journals, such as, library and information sciences abstracts. You can also go through all the relevant electronic reference library, expanded academic etc.

2. Write Down The Bibliographical Details:

Noting all the important bibliographical details of articles and books as soon as you find the references will save your time a lot. But note down the ones which you will be utilizing in your literature review otherwise, it will be much difficult for you to find the bibliographies later on.

3. Going Through The Material:

Now, that you have all the pertinent material in your hands, you should read it thoroughly and understand what it is saying in order to effectively utilize it in your review. You should read them with a very keen eye to outline the positive and negative aspects of each and take the notes as you move along the text.

4. Start Writing A Literature Review:

Just like the other types of academic writing, writing a literature review also has an introduction, body and conclusion.

- ✓ Your introduction should include:

The topic of your discussion that is your dissertation statement. The topic parameters, that is, what should a reader expect in the coming body paragraphs.

- ✓ Your Body paragraphs should include:

Historical background about the topic. Comparison between alternative viewpoints and the current one. Different approaches to the subject, like, historical, empirical, philosophical etc. Definitions. Research studies. Methodologies employed. General perception about the topic. Discoveries about the topic.

- ✓ You conclusion should include:

Short summary of all the arguments and counter arguments in the review. Short summary of the general conclusion in the review.

And a short summary of your thesis statement and it's stance in the review.

➢ Methodology

The methodology chapter of a dissertation is an important component that essentially maps out the methods that you will utilize when researching and writing this lengthy chapter. Therefore, your methodology chapter must include a general definition or some type of overview of the approach that you will use in conducting your research. You will also need to provide a thorough description of how you will go about collecting the necessary data, as well as the analytical procedure that you will use to draw conclusions based on this information. (http://www.essaytown.com/writing/write-methodology-chapter-dissertation-thesis)

The methodology chapter of your dissertation is not necessarily meant to provide so much detail that the reader can completely recreate the process that you used to conduct your research. At the same time, it should be thorough enough that the reader can plainly see that you were thorough in your methods and that the methodology you utilized was sound. In other words, ***it should demonstrate that you took various variables into account and that you can be reasonably assured that the results are accurate***.

Methodology…

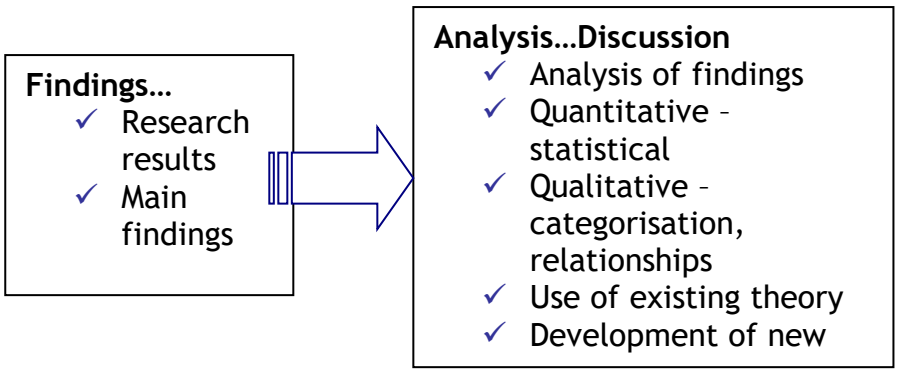
- Explains research methodology and justifies your choice and why other methodologies were rejected.
- Identifies and discusses the methods of data collection chosen and explains why.
- Identifies the prospective methods of data analysis:
  - Quantitative – statistical
  - Qualitative – categorisation, relationships
- Explains practicalities of research
- Identifies and discusses limitations of the methodology, methods etc.

As with any type of writing, your methodology chapter should include an introductory paragraph that describes the problem that you will be addressing through your methodology. The subsequent paragraphs should not go on to further address the issue, however. Rather, the paragraphs that follow should provide an explanation of the methods you will utilize to gather the data necessary to address the problem. In addition to describing these methods, you might also provide justification for selecting this method of data collection.

When providing justification for the method of research you are using, you might also provide an explanation for deciding not to utilize certain commonly accepted research methods. Or, you might provide an explanation for purposely including or excluding certain groups from your research

When discussing the methods you will utilize to conduct your research, you should also discuss certain variables that may have an impact on the outcome of your research. As such, you should develop a dissertation methodology that will account for these variables in order to still conduct useful research that will have a true impact upon the field.

➢ Findings Analysis Discussion



➢ Concluding Remarks

- Main conclusions that were drawn from your research
- Support for existing literature
- Contradictions to existing literature
- Any Limitations / problems you faced

A dissertation conclusion is where you bring it all together, stating very clearly your answer to your central question and if appropriate making recommendations, suggestions etc. A dissertation recommendation should include what you think should be done after all your research regarding your subject. It is very important to express your own opinion. In a dissertation conclusion you should:

- ✓ Be precise.
- ✓ Sum up all your work in the dissertation conclusion.
- ✓ Always mention your findings from the questionnaires and statistical tools if you have used any in your dissertation conclusions.
- ✓ Be creative. Prove new ideas.
- ✓ Use graphs as a reference in your recommendation.

➢ Bibliography

- Harvard system
- Do not mix

Bibliography is a complete list of your sources, correctly formatted. You should use the Harvard System that you will find in this guide.

➢ Appendices

Any supporting muterial.

Do not omit any of these:

Title (and title page)…… *conveys a message*

Abstract…..*for the librarian*

Contents Listing…….*shows the right things are there*

Acknowledgements…….*get your supervisor on your side!*

Introduction……..*says "I am going to look at the following things".*

Review of Previous Work……*show you know the subject*

Philosophy of Approach……*show you can pick out important ideas succinctly*

Plan of Attack……..*show you approached the problem in a systematic way*

Description of the work……*details, so that others can follow what you did*

Critical analysis of the results……..*show you know its limitations*

Future Work……..*show you know what's missing*

Conclusions…….*repetition of the intro, but with reference to the detail.*

References…….*Cover the field; examiners will look for the key references*

Appendices……..*Nitty Gritty details that would clutter your eloquent description*

From: *How Theses Get Written: Some Cool Tips*, Steve Easterbrook

C. Other General Guidelines

C.1. Writing Style

The level of writing must be appropriate to the level of the Masters degree. Specifically, acute attention should be paid to correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and clarity of style. Also, it is the student's responsibility to edit the text for typing errors, uncover all spelling errors, including dissertations that have been typed by another party. Note that a spell-check programme does not uncover all spelling errors e.g. principal and principle can be confused (Nigel Coates, 2010).

Normally, there should be no first person references (I, we, us) in the dissertation. If self-reference is required, reference may be made to "the author" or "this study". The exception to this is in the conclusion section, where personal comments may be appropriate.

- Write impersonally / passive voice
  - 'The evidence suggests that……'
  - 'It can be argued that…..'
  - 'Interviews were conducted…'
    etc.
- Do not write
  - 'In my opinion….'
  - 'I think that…'
- Past tense

Take a look at some basic advice about academic-essay writing (Anderson Silber, 1987)

A. Miscellaneous observations on a topic are not enough to make an accomplished academic essay. An essay should have *an argument*. It should answer a question or a few related questions (see 2 below). It should try to prove something—develop a single "thesis" or a short set of closely related points—by reasoning and evidence, especially including apt examples and confirming citations from any particular text or sources your argument involves. Gathering such evidence normally entails some rereading of the text or sources with a question or provisional thesis in mind.

B. When—as is usually the case—an assigned topic does not provide you with a thesis ready-made, your first effort should be to formulate as exactly as possible the question(s) you will seek to answer in your essay. Next, develop by thinking, reading, and jotting a provisional thesis or hypothesis. Don't become prematurely committed to this first answer. Pursue it, but test it—even to the point of consciously asking yourself what might be said against it—and be ready to revise or qualify it as your work progresses. (Sometimes a suggestive possible title one discovers early can serve in the same way.)

C. There are many ways in which any particular argument may be well presented, but an essay's organization—how it begins, develops, and ends—should be designed to present your argument *clearly and persuasively*. (The order in which you discovered the parts of your argument is seldom an effective order for presenting it to a reader.)

D. Successful methods of composing an essay are various, but some practices of good writers are almost invariable:

- They start writing early, even before they think they are "ready" to write, because they use writing not simply to transcribe what they have already discovered but as a means of exploration and discovery.
- They don't try to write an essay from beginning to end, but rather write what seems readiest to be written, even if they're not sure whether or how it will fit in.
- Despite writing so freely, they keep the essay's overall purpose and organization in mind, amending them as drafting proceeds. Something like an "outline" constantly and consciously evolves, although it may never take any written form beyond scattered, sketchy reminders to oneself.
- They revise extensively. Rather than writing a single draft and then merely editing its sentences one by one, they attend to the whole essay and draft and redraft—rearranging the sequence of its larger parts, adding and deleting sections to take account of what they discover in the course of composition. Such revision often involves putting the essay aside for a few days, allowing the mind to work indirectly or subconsciously in the meantime and making it possible to see the work-in-progress more objectively when they return to it.
- Once they have a fairly complete and well-organized draft, they revise sentences, with special attention to transitions—that is, checking to be sure that a reader will be able to follow the sequences of ideas within sentences, from sentence to sentence, and from paragraph to paragraph. Two other important considerations in revising sentences are diction (exactness and aptness of words) and economy (the fewest words without loss of clear expression and full thought). Lastly, they proofread the final copy.

C.2. Research

A degree of proficiency in the understanding, selection and execution of research methodologies and methods must be evident. It is expected that these procedures will provide (Nigel Coates, 2010):

i) a defensible verification of the ideas put forward in the dissertation, as well as

ii) development and exploration of the ideas in applied conditions. If an existing case is presented, sufficient secondary research must be attempted to produce a coherent and informed critical evaluation of that case.

It is also possible that the application of knowledge can be made under some other circumstances not directly indicated here, so long as the use of the knowledge is appropriate and illustrative.

The connection between the knowledge and the original case or primary data for the dissertation must be explicitly articulated and the case or data be presented as a valid and reliable means of verification of this knowledge. If the goal of the dissertation is not data based but conceptual in nature, then the validity and verifiability of the concepts must be established.

C.2.1.Selecting and Researching Your Topic

When you have been used to having essay questions and assignment topics set for you, it can be difficult to decide what to do when you have been given some freedom in this respect. There is also a risk that the freedom might go to your head so that you take on more than you can cope with in the time available. When deciding on a subject for your dissertation keep in mind the

research requirements, and be guided by the adage 'the narrower and more specific the better'. If you are unsure consult your supervisor (Developing on Academic Skills, 2003).

i. Choosing your topic: the hunt for an idea

So how do you choose a topic in the first place? You will probably already have inkling about the kind of topic that appeals to you, and it's likely that you will have been asked to engage in background reading before the start of the term or semester in which you begin your dissertation unit. This should narrow down the possibilities. Finding a topic of particular interest is a bit like a treasure hunt – you pick up an interesting idea, perhaps from something you have read or discussed in class, and follow it up through published texts such as books, journals, and websites by following up references, until you fix on a particular aspect which you feel needs to be addressed. Keep the following points in mind:

- Is the topic of academic significance, and not trivial?
- Is the topic really manageable in the time available? It is a common mistake to imagine that you can cover far more than is actually feasible, so keep a suitably narrow focus. Do not ask too big a question. Make sure that you take advice from your supervisor on this.
- Be aware of your own standpoint – your own take on the topic. How do your own attitudes, values and beliefs affect your research? No one can be entirely objective – be honest about your own interests and values.
- As early as possible, write down your thesis – the proposition that you are investigating. Keep this to hand whenever you are analysing evidence or writing out your argument, so that you do not fall into the trap of simply collecting facts rather than unfolding a clear argument relating to a narrowly defined issue.

ii. Conducting a literature search or review

In order to write with confidence about your topic, you will need to read what members of the academic community have already been said about it. Take advice from library staff on this to ensure that you know how to access relevant material in a variety of formats. Always ask for guidance from staff – do not avoid looking at a particular resource because you are not sure how to access it. Library staff is there to help you do exactly this.

Remember to look for up-to-date references to the topic. There may well be classic texts, particular relating to underpinning theories, but you should also see what has been said in recent years. The availability of electronic journals will help greatly with this, as they are easily searchable.

iii. Researching and exploring your topic: *methods and methodologies*

Research is a form of learning, or finding out. When you find out anything, you do it in a particular way, or using a particular methodology, even if you are not aware of it. If you are a third year student, and particularly if you are a Masters level student, you should be aware of the methodology you are adopting in your search for evidence, and of where that methodology fits in the spectrum of possible approaches. For example, it is common to read about quantitative research and qualitative research:

Quantitative research	*Qualitative research*
is based on scientific method. It purports to be as objective as possible, and is often based on statistics or other measurable, empirical data. Conclusions will be drawn from the analysis of things clearly measured.	is often based on subjective data items, which cannot be given a numeric value, for example the attitudes and opinions of a range of individuals on an issue. Anthropological study, for example, may be based on small details of people's experience, collected through observation. These will be described in words rather than numbers, and statistical generalisations cannot be drawn from them.

In practice, few dissertations involve only qualitative or only quantitative methods, but there is often a major focus on one end of the spectrum or the other. Where will your focus lie? The answer should depend upon the kind of enquiry you are engaged in: again, ask your supervisors for advice about this.

iv. The importance of having a thesis and evaluating it critically

Remember that you are constructing an argument or defending a thesis, from the beginning to the end of your assignment. Keep your thesis – the statement you are defending or central argument you are asserting – in the forefront of your mind as you write. Think of this central idea, and the logical development of your argument (train of thought) around this, as being the central path of your dissertation, and make sure that you do not have sections or paragraphs which are somewhere in the shrubbery out of sight of the main path. Every paragraph should further the central argument, by providing another angle on it, additional evidence, and evaluation of that evidence in relation to the central thesis.

v. Managing your notes

With a long assignment of this nature it is essential that you manage your notes well from the start of your research to the editing of the final version of the dissertation. Organise them using methods that suit your learning style, and make sure that you keep detailed notes of all of the references you will want to use, including a detailed bibliography.

C.2.2 Research Using the Internet

More and more students are turning to the Internet when doing research for their dissertation, and more and more supervisors are requiring such research when setting topics. However, research on the Net is very different from traditional library research, and the differences can cause problems. The Net is a tremendous resource, but it must be used carefully and critically.

The printed resources you find in the Library have almost always been thoroughly evaluated by experts before they are published. This process of "peer review" is the difference

between, for example, an article in Time magazine and one in a journal such as the University of Toronto Quarterly. Furthermore, when books and other materials come into the University library system, they are painstakingly and systematically catalogued and cross-referenced using procedures followed by research libraries the world over. This process is the basis for the way materials are organized in the Library, and it makes possible the various search functions of the Web catalogue.

On the Internet, on the other hand, "anything goes." Anyone can put anything they want on a Web site, there is no review or screening process, and there are no agreed-upon standard ways of identifying subjects and creating cross-references. This is both the glory and the weakness of the Net - it's either freedom or chaos, depending on your point of view, and it means that you have to pay close attention when doing research on-line. There are a great many solid academic resources available on the Net, including hundreds of on-line journals and sites set up by universities and scholarly or scientific organizations. Using material from those sources is no problem; it's just like going to the Library, only on-line. It's all the other stuff on the Net that you have to be cautious about.

Here are a few basic guidelines to remember (MacDonald W. B. & J. Seel, 1998)**:**

Don't rely exclusively on Net resources. Sometimes your dissertation will be to do research only on the Net, but usually your supervisors will expect you to make use of both Internet and Library resources. Cross-checking information from the Net against information from the Library is a good way to make sure that the Net material is reliable and authoritative.

Narrow your research topic before logging on. The Internet allows access to so much information that you can easily be overwhelmed. Before you start your search, think about what you're looking for, and if possible formulate some very specific questions to direct and limit your search.

Know your subject directories and search engines. Google, alltheweb (or Fast), Alta Vista, Yahoo and other search engines differ considerably in how they work, how much of the Net they search, and the kind of results you can expect to get from them. Spending some time learning what each search engine will do and how best to use it can help you avoid a lot of frustration and wasted time later. Because each one will find different things for you, it's a good idea to always use more than one search engine.

Keep a detailed record of sites you visit and the sites you use. Doing research on the Net inevitably means visiting some sites that are useful and many that are not. Keeping track is necessary so that you can revisit the useful ones later, and also put the required references in your paper. Don't just rely on your browser's History function, because it retains the Web addresses or URLs of all the sites you visit, good or bad, and if you're using a computer at the University the memory in the History file will be erased at the end of your session. It's better to write down or bookmark the sites you've found useful, so that you'll have a permanent record.

Double-check all URLs that you put in your paper. It's easy to make mistakes with complicated Internet addresses, and typos will make your references useless. To be safe, type them into the Location box of your browser and check that they take you to the correct site.

The following points are guidelines for evaluating specific resources you find on the Net ((MacDonald W. B. & J. Seel, 1998)**.** If you ask these questions when looking at a Web site, you can avoid many errors and problems.

1. Authority

- Who is the author?
- Is the author's name given?

- Are her qualifications specified?
- Is there a link to information about her and her position?
- Is there a way to contact her (an address or a "Mailto" link)?
- Have you heard of her elsewhere (in class, or cited in your course text or in Library material)?
- Has the author written elsewhere on this topic?

2. Affiliation

- Who is the sponsor of the Web site?
- Is the author affiliated with a reputable institution or organization?
- Does the information reflect the views of the organization, or only of the author? If the sponsoring institution or organization is not clearly identified on the site, check the URL. It may contain the name of a university or the extension .edu, which is used by many educational institutions. Government sites are identified by the extension .gov. URLs containing .org are trickier, and require research: these are sites sponsored by non-profit organizations, some of which are reliable sources and some of which are very biased. Sites with the .com extension should also be used with caution, because they have commercial or corporate sponsors who probably want to sell you something. The extension ~NAME often means a personal Web page with no institutional backing; use such sites only if you have checked on the author's credibility in print sources.

3. Audience Level

What audience is the Web site designed for? You want information at the college or research level. Don't use sites intended for elementary students or sites that are too technical for your needs.

4. Currency

- Is the Web site current?
- Is the site dated?
- Is the date of the most recent update given? Generally speaking, Internet resources should be up-to-date; after all, getting the most current information is the main reason for using the Net for research in the first place.
- Are all the links up-to-date and working? Broken links may mean the site is out-of-date; they're certainly a sign that it's not well-maintained.

5. Content Reliability/Accuracy

- Is the material on the Web site reliable and accurate?
- Is the information factual, not opinion?
- Can you verify the information in print sources?
- Is the source of the information clearly stated, whether original research material or secondary material borrowed from elsewhere?
- How valid is the research that is the source?
- Does the material as presented have substance and depth?
- Where arguments are given, are they based on strong evidence and good logic?
- Is the author's point of view impartial and objective?
- Is the author's language free of emotion and bias?
- Is the site free of errors in spelling or grammar and other signs of carelessness in its presentation of the material?
- Are additional electronic and print sources provided to complement or support the material on the Web site?

If you can answer all these questions positively when looking at a particular site, then you can be pretty sure it's a good one; if it doesn't measure up one way or another, it's probably a site to avoid. The key to the whole process is to think critically about what you find on the Net; if you want to use it, you are responsible for ensuring that it is reliable and accurate.

C.3. The Literature Review

The literature review will include the following qualities (Nigel Coates, 2010):

- The topic of the dissertation will derive from a systematic body of knowledge;
- The review of this knowledge is made as current as possible;
- The knowledge is organised into a comprehensible and explicit structure;
- All major points are included and extraneous information omitted;
- Critical theoretical analysis/evaluation informs choice of research approaches/methods;
- A summary is produced outlining the current state of the knowledge.

It is further implied that the result of the literature review will be used either in 1) a situation for which the student has collected primary data OR 2) to critically examine and assess the operation of this knowledge in an existing case study OR 3) to re-evaluate existing published data or knowledge to derive new knowledge or meaning. The main points of the body of knowledge being synthesised are to be i) critically selected and analysed and ii) the strengths and weaknesses of the synthesis itself are to be discussed and appropriate conclusions drawn.

How to Conduct a Literature Review

Take a look at the list below. Does it look familiar? It could be a step-by-step guide on how to conduct primary research, but in fact it describes the stages of conducting a literature review (Cooper, 1984):

1. Problem formulation
2. Data collection
3. Data evaluation
4. Analysis and interpretation
5. Public presentation

If one thing must be realized about conducting and reporting a literature review it is that **the stages for conducting and reporting a literature review parallel the process for conducting primary research.** With a few modifications, what one knows about conducting primary research applies to conducting secondary research (i.e., a literature review). The key components are (a) a rationale for conducting the review; (b) research questions or hypotheses that guide the research; (c) an explicit plan for collecting data, including how units will be chosen; (d) an explicit plan for analyzing data; and (e) a plan for presenting data. Instead of human participants, for example, the units in a literature review are the articles that are reviewed. Validity and reliability, the same issues that apply to primary research, also apply to secondary research. And, as in primary research, the stages may be iterative and not necessarily completed in the order presented above.

The Table below, from Cooper (1984), is a framework to guide the completion of the four research stages of a literature review. On the left, the table identifies the general characteristics of each research stage: the research questions asked, the primary functions of each stage, the procedural differences that may lead to differing conclusions, and the potential sources of invalidity at each stage. For each of the characteristics, the remaining columns of the table pose key questions to guide the review writer in: *problem formation, data collection, data evaluation, analysis and interpretation*, and *public presentation*.

	Research stage				
Stage Characteristics	***Problem formation***	***Data collection***	***Data evaluation***	***Analysis and interpretation***	***Public presentation***
Research questions asked	What evidence should be included in the review?	What procedures should be used to find relevant evidence?	What retrieved evidence should be included in the review?	What procedures should be used to make inferences about the literature as a whole?	What information should be included in the review report?
Primary function in review	Constructing definitions that distinguish relevant from irrelevant studies.	Determining which sources of potentially relevant sources to examine.	Applying criteria to separate "valid" from "invalid" studies.	Synthesizing valid retrieved studies.	Applying editorial criteria to separate important from unimportant information.
Procedural differences that create variation in review conclusion	1. Differences in included operational definitions. 2. Differences in operational detail.	Differences in the research contained in sources of information.	1. Differences in quality criteria. 2. Differences in the influence of non-quality criteria.	Differences in the rules of inference.	Differences in guidelines for editorial judgment.
Sources of potential invalidity in review conclusions	1. Narrow concepts might make review conclusions less definitive and	1. Accessed studies might be qualitatively different from the target population of studies. 2. People	1. Nonequality factors might cause improper weighting of study formation. 2. Omissions	1. Rules for distinguishing patterns from noise might be inappropriate. 2. Review-based evidence might be used to infer	1. Omission of review procedures might make conclusions irreproducible. 2. Omission of review findings and study procedures might make conclusions obsolete.

	robust. 2. Superficial operational detail might obscure interacting variables.	sampled in accessible studies might be different from target population of people.	in study reports might make conclusions unreliable.	causality.	

From "Scientific Guidelines for Conducting Integrative Research Reviews," *Review of Education Research,* 1984, *52,* pg. 293. Copyright 1984 by Sage Publications.

C.4. Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions and conclusions play a special role in the dissertation, and they frequently demand much of your attention as a writer. A good introduction should identify your topic, provide essential context, and indicate your particular focus in the dissertation. It also needs to engage your readers' interest. A strong conclusion will provide a sense of closure to the dissertation while again placing your concepts in a somewhat wider context. It will also, in some instances, add a stimulus to further thought. Since no two dissertations are the same, no single formula will automatically generate an introduction and conclusion for you. But the following guidelines will help you to construct a suitable beginning and end for your essay.

Some general advice about introductions (Freedman L., Plotnick J., 2008):

- Some students cannot begin writing the body of the dissertation until they feel they have the perfect introduction. Be aware of the dangers of sinking too much time into the introduction. Some of that time can be more usefully channelled into planning and writing.
- You may be the kind of writer who writes an introduction first in order to explore your own thinking on the topic. If so, remember that you may at a later stage need to compress your introduction.
- It can be fine to leave the writing of the introduction for a later stage in the dissertation-writing process. Some people write their introduction only after they have completed the rest of the dissertation. Others write the introduction first but rewrite it significantly in light of what they end up saying in the body of their dissertation.
- The introductions for most dissertations can be effectively written in one paragraph occupying half to three-quarters of the first page. Your introduction may be longer than that, and it may take more than one paragraph, but be sure you know why. The size of your introduction should bear some relationship to the length and complexity of your dissertation.
- Get to the point as soon as possible. Generally, you want to raise your topic in your very first sentences. A common error is to begin too broadly or too far off topic. Avoid sweeping generalizations.
- If your essay has a thesis, your thesis statement will typically appear at the end of your introduction, even though that is not a hard-and-fast rule. You may, for example, follow your thesis with a brief road map to your essay that sketches the basic structure of your argument. The longer the paper, the more useful a road map becomes.

How do I write an interesting, effective introduction (Freedman L., Plotnick J., 2008)**?**

Consider these strategies for capturing your readers' attention and for fleshing out your introduction:

- Find a startling statistic that illustrates the seriousness of the problem you will address.
- Quote an expert (but be sure to introduce him or her first).
- Mention a common misperception that your dissertation will argue against.
- Give some background information necessary for understanding the dissertation.
- Use a brief narrative or anecdote that exemplifies your reason for choosing the topic. In an assignment that encourages personal reflection, you may draw on your own experiences; in a research dissertation, the narrative may illustrate a common real-world scenario.
- In a science dissertation, explain key scientific concepts and refer to relevant literature. Lead up to your own contribution or intervention.
- In a more technical dissertation, define a term that is possibly unfamiliar to your audience but is central to understanding the essay.

In fleshing out your introduction, you will want to avoid some common pitfalls:

- Don't provide dictionary definitions, especially of words your audience already knows.
- Don't repeat the assignment specifications using the professor's wording.
- Don't give details and in-depth explanations that really belong in your body paragraphs. You can usually postpone background material to the body of the dissertation.

Some general advice about conclusions (Freedman L., Plotnick J., 2008):

- A conclusion is not merely a summary of your points or a re-statement of your dissertation. If you wish to summarize—and often you must—do so in fresh language. Remind the reader of how the evidence you've presented has contributed to your dissertation.
- The conclusion, like much of the rest of the dissertation, involves critical thinking. Reflect upon the significance of what you've written. Try to convey some closing thoughts about the larger implications of your argument.
- Broaden your focus a bit at the end of the dissertation. A good last sentence leaves your reader with something to think about, a concept in some way illuminated by what you've written in the dissertation.
- As with introductions, the length of the conclusion should reflect the length of the dissertation.

How do I write an interesting, effective conclusion (Freedman L., Plotnick J., 2008)**?**

The following strategies may help you move beyond merely summarizing the key points of your dissertation:

- If your dissertation deals with a contemporary problem, warn readers of the possible consequences of not attending to the problem.
- Recommend a specific course of action.
- Use an apt quotation or expert opinion to lend authority to the conclusion you have reached.
- Give a startling statistic, fact, or visual image to drive home the ultimate point of your dissertation.
- If your discipline encourages personal reflection, illustrate your concluding point with a relevant narrative drawn from your own life experiences.
- Return to an anecdote, example, or quotation that you introduced in your introduction, but add further insight that derives from the body of your dissertation.
- In a science or social science dissertation, mention worthwhile avenues for future research on your topic.

C.5. Being your own Critic before Submitting your Work

There is much to be gained from critiquing your own work; by now you may have become used to doing this before submitting your assignments. If not, it is particularly important to do so with such a substantial piece of work as a dissertation.

Using a self-evaluation checklist (Developing on Academic Skills, 2003)

You may find the following grid useful in checking aspects of your work. Depending on your subject discipline, you will probably find some terms and some categories more useful and important than others, but this is a generic overview of the kinds of criteria markers use for dissertations. Make sure that you also have in front of you a copy of the specific marking criteria for your dissertation. Clearly, for this checklist to be of any real value, you need to be use it while there is still time to address those questions where your answer is 'no', or seek further guidance where your response is 'not sure'.

Questions	Yes/No/ Not sure
1 Dissertation topic Is the topic clear and well defined? Does it involve a problem, question, or hypothesis that sets the agenda and points precisely to what needs to be explored or discovered? Is the topic of genuine relevance or interest within your subject discipline? Does it pick up on important or interesting themes or subjects arising from your studies?	
2 Literature review Have you accessed the most recent literature of relevance to your topic, as well as seminal sources from the past? Do you refer to major books, articles, artefacts? Since quality is more important than quantity – how well have you selected your material? Does the literature review hang together, to show how the ideas and findings have developed, or is it merely a shopping list of books and articles? Is the review critical? Does it briefly evaluate, showing how your dissertation fits into what is mistaken or lacking in other studies? The literature review should provide a critically appraised context for your studies.	
3 Theoretical underpinnings Does theory permeate the structure from beginning to end, from statement of problem to conclusion? Are you asking yourself a key question, presenting a thesis, or defending a statement? Be clear about your approach.	

Theory is the framework of your study – not a luxury. Your dissertation will be judged, in part, by how well you express and critically understand the theory you are using, and how clearly and consistently it is connected with the focus and methodology of your dissertation.	
4 Methodology Two chief criteria: Is your choice of methods and research techniques well suited to the kind of problem you are studying? Methods work if they provide a persuasive response to your question, positive or negative. Is your description of the methods you have adopted clear enough to take a blueprint and replicate?	
5 Results Are your findings faithful to what you actually found – do you claim more than you should? Don't 'massage' your evidence or findings… Have you provided enough evidence to make a convincing case? Have you presented everything directly relevant to the question in such a way that the reader doesn't have to flip back and forth to make her or his own connections? Are results or findings clearly and accurately written, easy to read, grasp and understand?	
6 Conclusions Have you answered the question 'So what?'. What should we do with your findings and conclusions? What do they imply? Findings don't speak for themselves – they need to be analysed. Have you explained what your findings mean and their importance, in relation to theory and practice?	

From: Developing on Academic Skills, 2003 the University of Southampton, available online at http://www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk/develop.htm

THE DISSERTATION TEMPLATE

University for the Creative Arts

BERLIN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & INNOVATION

Dissertation Title:

Master title:

Name:

Year:

ABSTRACT

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Statement of compliance with academic ethics and the avoidance of plagiarism

I honestly declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and none of its part has been copied from printed or electronic sources, translated from foreign sources and reproduced from essays of other researchers or students. Wherever I have been based on ideas or other people texts I clearly declare it through the good use of references following academic ethics.
(In the case that is proved that part of the essay does not constitute an original work, but a copy of an already published essay or from another source, the student will be expelled permanently from the postgraduate program).

Name and Surname (Capital letters):

……

Date: ……/……/……

(leave this page empty)

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS / ANALYSIS / DISCUSSION

4.1 FINDINGS

4.2 ANALYSIS

4.3 DISCUSSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX

ACADEMIC ETHICS FORM

Statement of compliance with academic ethics and the avoidance of plagiarism

I honestly declare that this dissertation is entirely my own work and none of its part has been copied from printed or electronic sources, translated from foreign sources and reproduced from essays of other researchers or students. Wherever I have been based on ideas or other people texts I clearly declare it through the good use of references following academic ethics.
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Name and Surname (Capital letters):

.....

Date: ...../...../.....

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