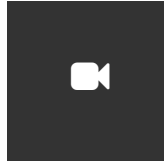


## Focus

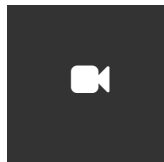
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students at WBS must do more than simply present facts and description. Dissertations also need the application of theoretical concepts to explain and interpret the object of study. This means that you should explore examples and cases from real life. Through your argument, you should also present a way of understanding your subject which is linked to the issues and debates in the literature. You should show both sides of these issues and debates and show how they relate to your thesis and any findings from your project. The literature that you have encountered on different modules is a good starting point, but you must read beyond these texts. One way to do this is through using the bibliographies of the course readings as a springboard for further reading. Another way is to identify the key words in your title and use them to help you search the library catalogue.

Listen to these four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

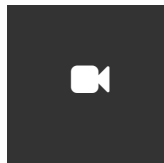
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



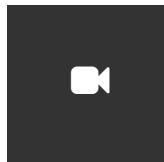
**Note:** Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.



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**Note:** Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything is unclear.

## Skills development

Having a logical and timely decision-making process is crucial to all those working in the business environment. Focusing and scoping out your dissertation will help you practice your decision-making skills.

# Dissertation Possibilities

Listen to Associate Dean Keith Glaister talking about the possibilities for your dissertation.

- While you listen, take notes of the different options that may be available to you.

**Note:** *Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.*

Here are some dissertation titles that WBS Masters students have had in the past:

- Social Media Marketing in the Charity Sector - The Effectiveness of the Cystic Fibrosis Trust's Use of Facebook and Twitter for Message Dissemination
- Implementing the Balanced Scorecard to Explore Performance Improvement Strategies for the Black Swan Hotel
- Accelerating time to market of new product releases at Vertu luxury mobile phones
- Examining (Betting) Market Efficiency: Arbitrage and the Law of One Price
- Performance analysis of Sanofi Aventis: The impact of Mergers and Acquisitions on gaining competitive advantage
- GlaxoSmithKline: Full Steam Ahead
- Exploring the Success of a Fashion Pureplay Etailer: An Analysis of the Performance of ASOS
- Public-Private Partnerships (PPP): Understanding Mutual Value. A Case Study of the Current Jaguar Land-Rover (JLR) - West Midlands Police (WMP) Engagement
- Alignment of Frontline Healthcare Professionals with the 'Productive Ward Programme': A case study examining Employee Alignment with a Lean based strategy in an NHS Organisation
- CSR in Developing Countries: An Exploration of CSR in Zimbabwe
- Analysis of Relationship between Standardisation Activities and Financial Performance: Alaxala Network's Strategy for Standardisation
- Analysis of Ownership Structure and Valuation of two Danish Industrial Biotechnology Companies
- Cultural disparities within a knowledge intensive organisation and the impact upon knowledge sharing behaviour: An exploratory case study of detectives at New Scotland Yard
- An investigation into the viability of a Smart technology enabled, Sustainability oriented, Marketing strategy for an Energy Supplier
- Branding in the pharmaceutical industry: Building brand equity of prescription pharmaceuticals through effective marketing communications; F. Hoffmann-La Roche case study
- Supply Chain Transformation Strategy for Raimbek Group: Planning and supplier relationship issues

# Reading

Throughout your modules so far you have been developing your academic reading skills for postgraduate level study. By now you should be able to skim for main ideas and scan for specific details. If you are using digital texts, you should also be expert in doing keyword searches. Another reading skill which you should have by now, and which is particularly useful during your dissertation preparation time, is speed reading. You need to read abstracts, introductions and conclusions quickly in order to see whether an article or chapter is going to be useful to you. If you do not think a text will be useful, leave it and go onto the next text. You also need to be sure of your topic and thesis if you are going to make quick decisions about texts. If you are not sure of your topic and thesis go back to your supervisor for help. Don't forget to take notes of interesting ideas and information while you are reading and make sure you note down the reference details. If you need to review your reading strategy, have a look at [The Learning Edge: Reading Strategies \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ui2mpPDP7E\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ui2mpPDP7E). You should also check with your supervisor how long your bibliography should be. This will give you an idea of how much reading you should do.

One way to gain a lot from multiple texts without reading them in detail is to have a reading group. This could be the students who share the same supervisor. The idea is that you agree what to skim read and when; then, meet afterwards to discuss the text. Each member of the reading group will have gained a confident understanding of different parts of the text. When discussing it together, you can get a much fuller picture. You can ask your supervisor for help in choosing key articles and chapters to read in this way - usually the underpinning theory texts are the most useful in the early stages of dissertation preparation.

[University of Warwick Library: Business and Management webpage \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/subjects/social-sciences/business/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/subjects/social-sciences/business/)

[University of Warwick Library \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library)

[Google Scholar \(http://scholar.google.co.uk/\)](http://scholar.google.co.uk/)

## Group work task (2)

Watch this video to find out about the group work task.

- While you watch, take notes so that you know what to do at each step.

**Note:** *Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.*

## Skills development

Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.

