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Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

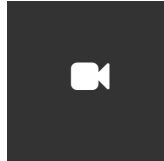
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

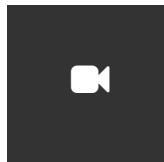
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

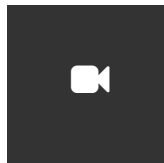
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



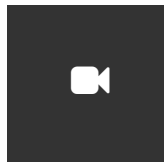
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

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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.

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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.

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

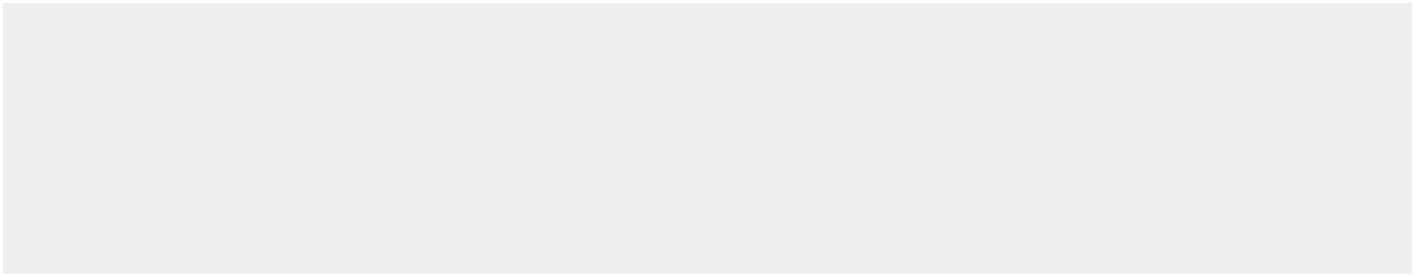
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

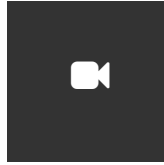
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

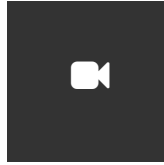
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

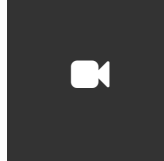
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

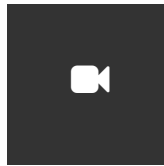


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

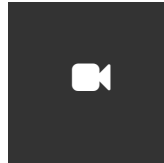
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



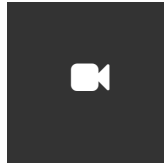
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Writing up

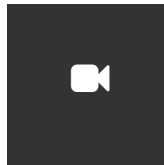
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

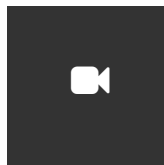
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



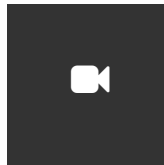
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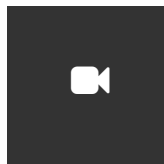
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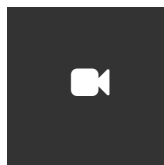
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Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

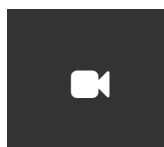
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
- This downloaded content does not include video or audio content.
- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:

“

A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

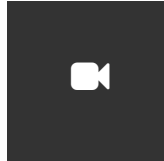
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

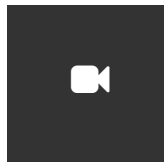
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

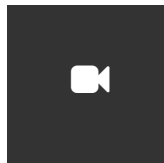
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



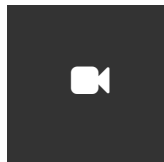
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

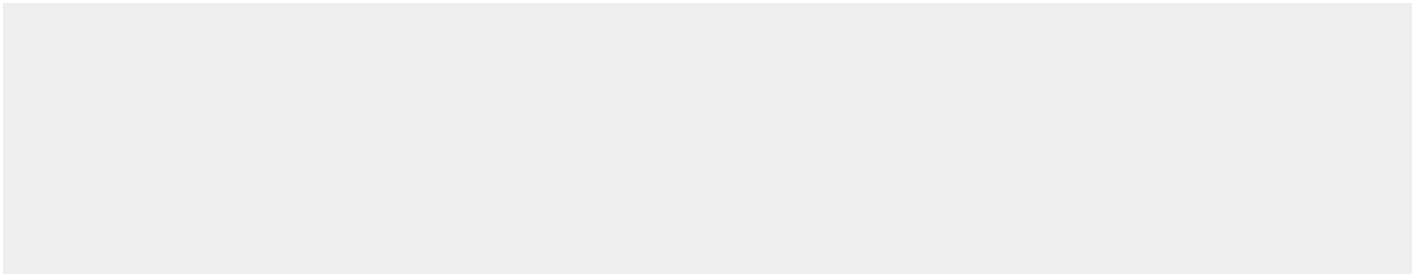
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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

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.*



Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

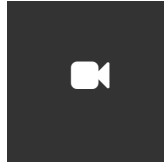
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

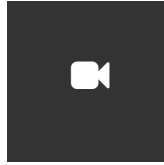
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

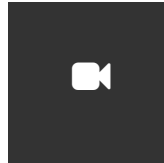
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

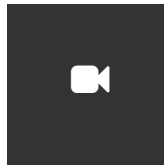


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

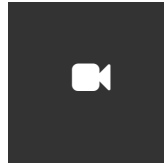
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



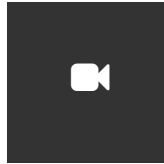
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Writing up

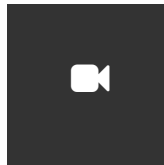
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

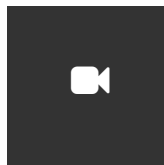
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



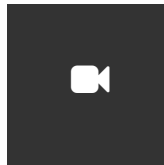
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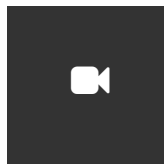
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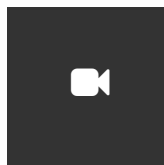
Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

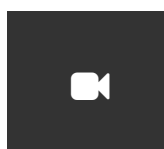
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
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- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

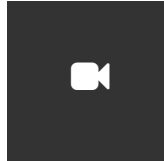
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

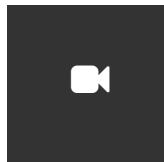
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

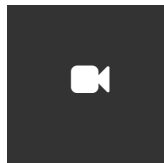
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



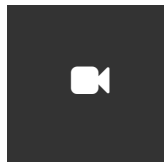
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

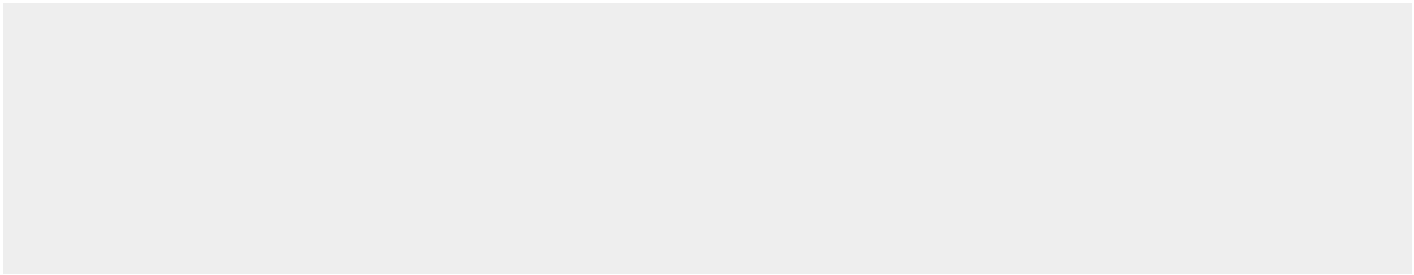
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

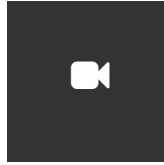
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrK-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrK-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

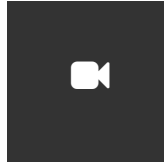
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

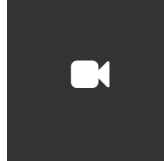
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

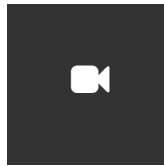


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

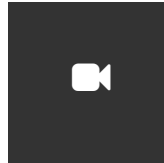
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



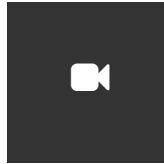
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Writing up

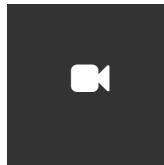
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

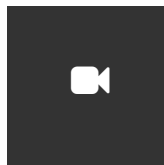
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



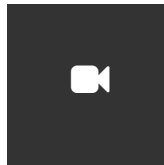
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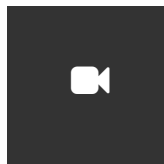
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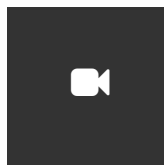
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Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

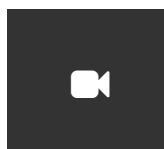
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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.



- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
- This downloaded content does not include video or audio content.
- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

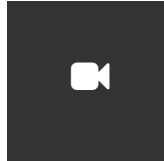
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

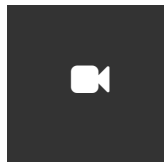
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

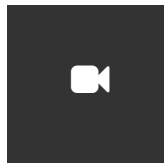
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



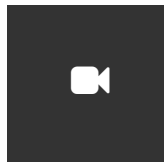
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

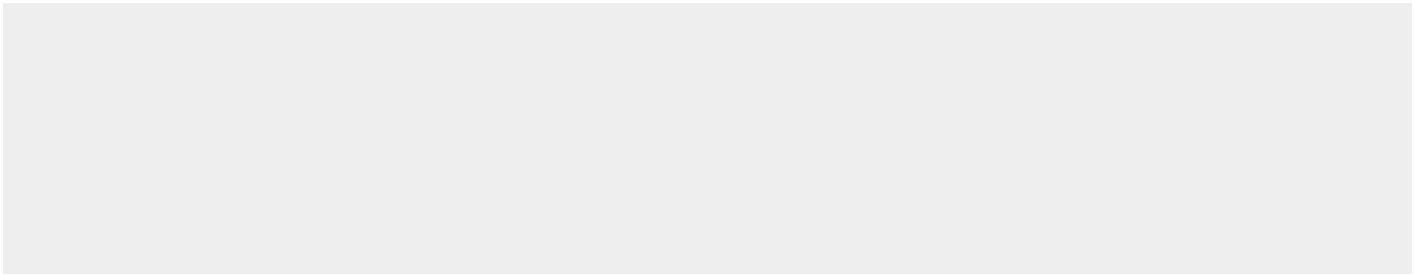
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

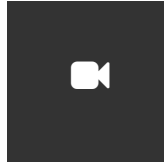
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrK-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrK-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

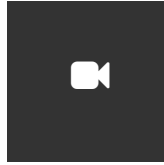
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

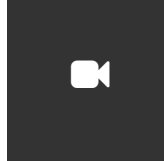
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

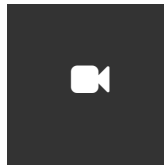


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

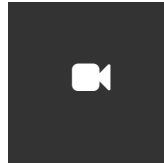
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



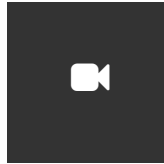
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Writing up

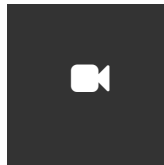
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

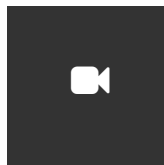
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



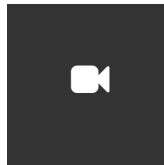
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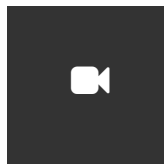
Note: *Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.*



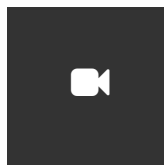
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Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

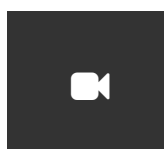
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
- This downloaded content does not include video or audio content.
- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

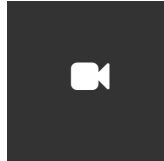
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

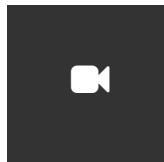
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

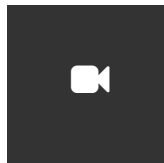
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



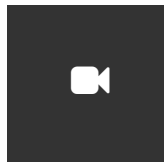
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

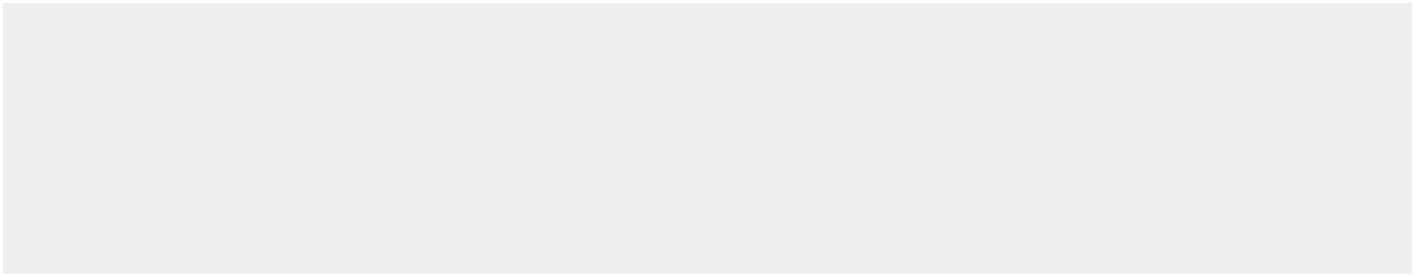
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

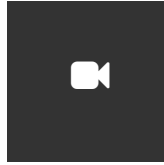
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

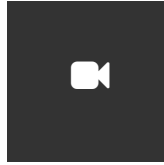
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

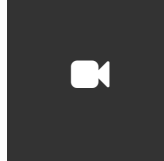
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

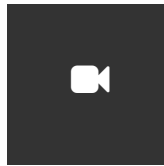


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

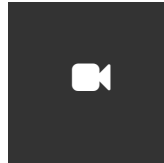
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews)'.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be>)
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY>)
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU>) and (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ>)

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



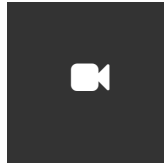
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Writing up

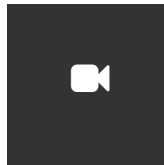
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

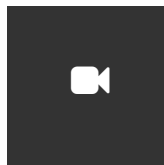
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



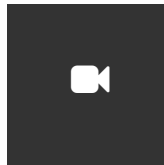
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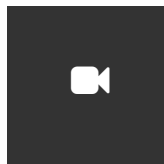
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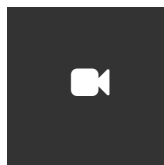
Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

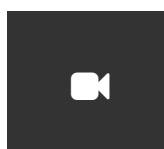
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
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- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

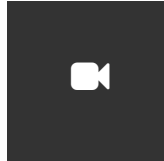
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

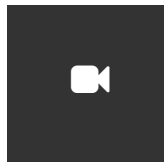
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

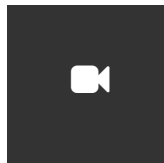
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



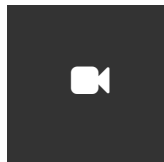
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

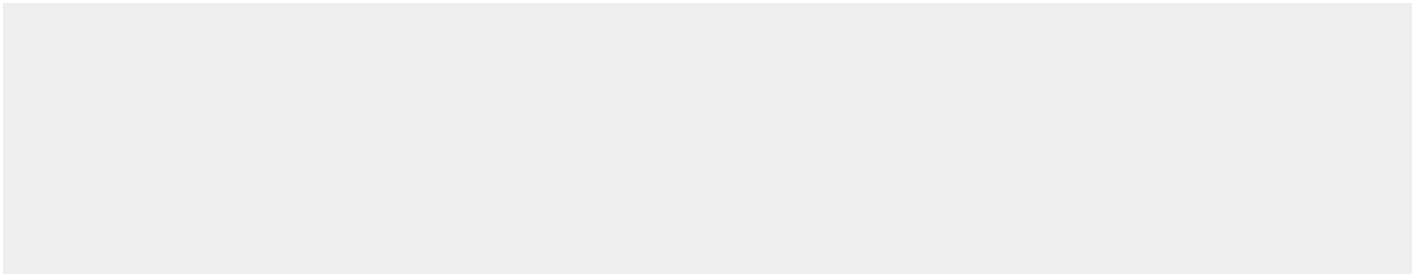
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

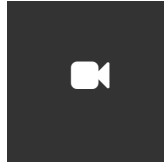
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrK-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrK-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

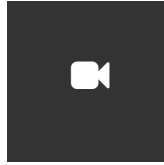
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

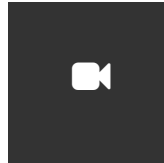
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

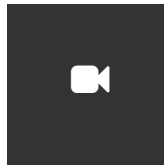


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

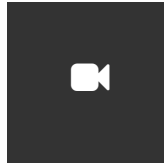
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



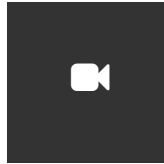
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Writing up

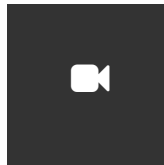
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

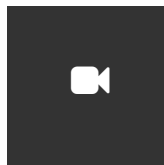
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



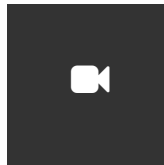
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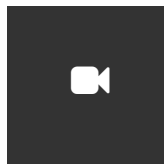
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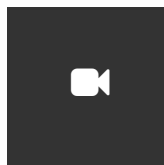
Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

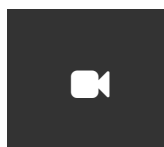
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
- This downloaded content does not include video or audio content.
- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:

“

A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

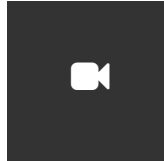
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

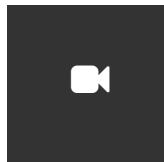
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

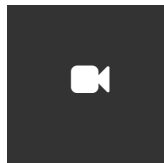
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



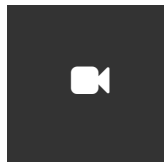
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

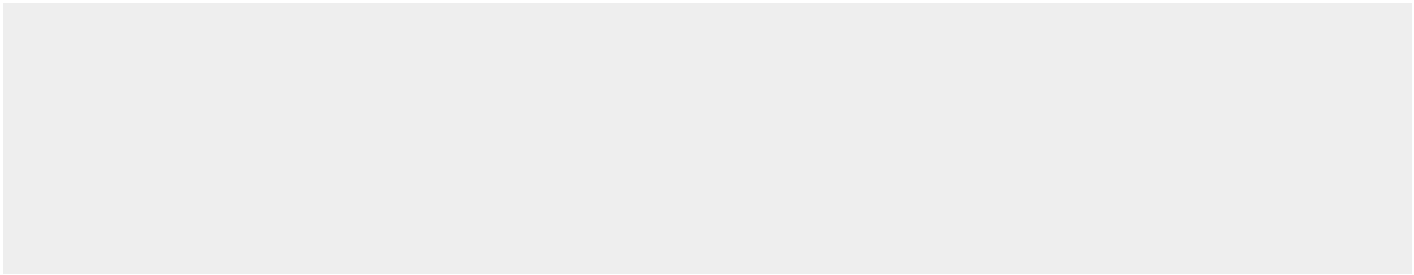
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

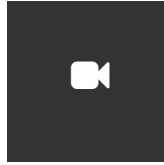
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

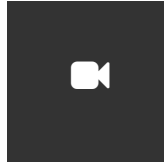
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

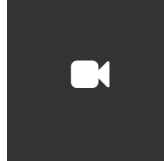
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

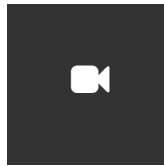


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

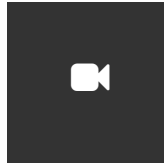
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



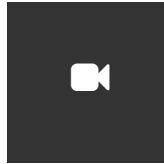
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Writing up

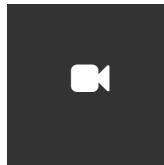
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

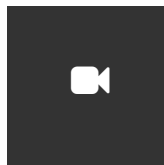
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



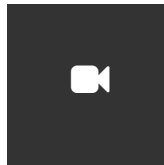
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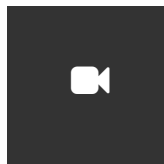
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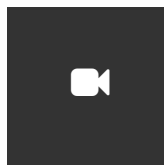
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Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

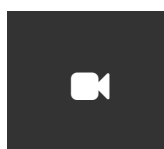
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
- This downloaded content does not include video or audio content.
- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

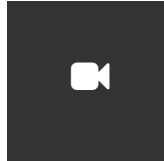
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

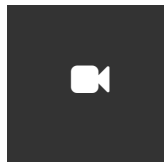
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

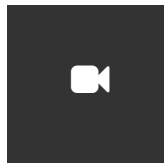
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



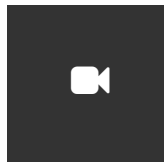
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

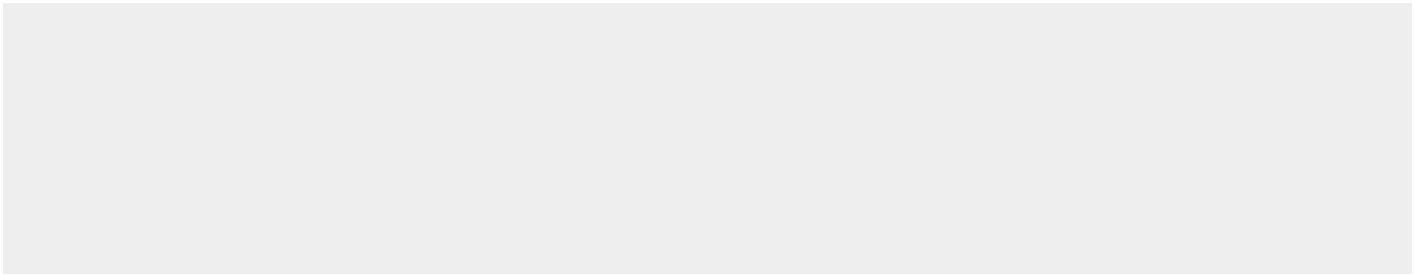
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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.*



Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

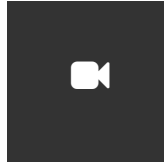
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

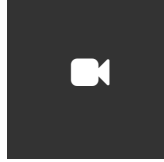
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

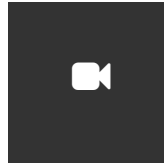
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

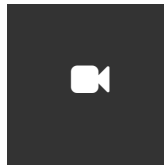


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

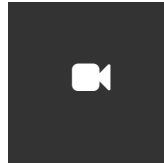
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



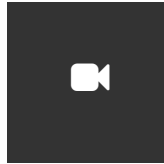
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Writing up

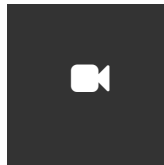
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

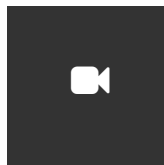
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



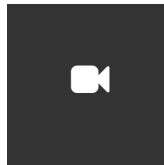
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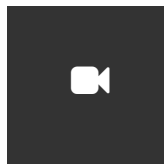
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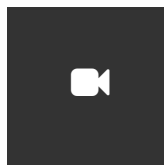
Note: *Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.*

Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

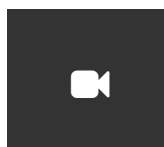
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
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- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

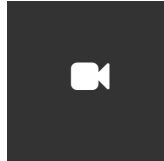
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

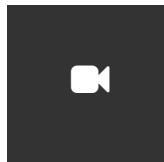
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

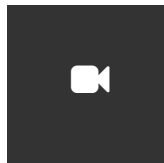
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



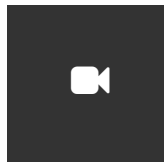
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

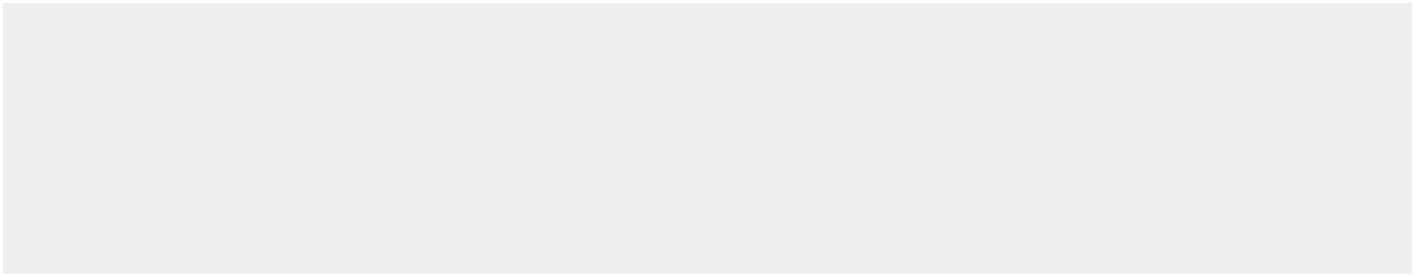
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

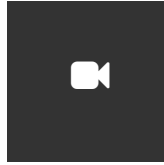
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

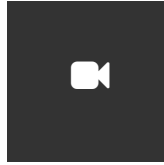
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

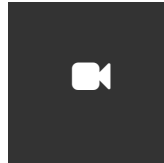
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

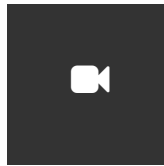


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

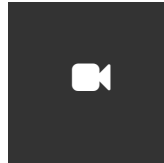
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



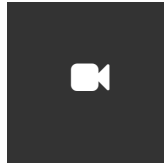
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Writing up

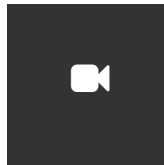
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

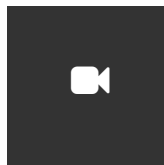
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



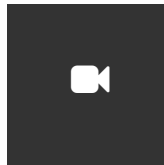
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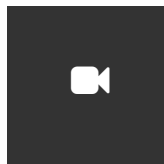
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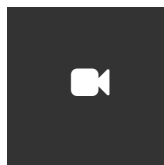
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Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

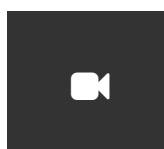
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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.

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



- The primary method for accessing WBS course materials is online via [my.wbs](#).
- This content was last updated on May 24th 2025 at 11:49 PM.
- This downloaded content does not include video or audio content.
- This downloaded content does not include discussion of the materials.
- Updates and errata for content will be published to [my.wbs](#) only, so please be aware that this document may become out of date.

Introduction

Dissertations at WBS are long pieces of written academic work that involve some form of research.

This dissertation workbook will help you prepare for, investigate and write up your dissertation. We have included useful videos, web links and readings to help you through your dissertation journey. Please watch this introductory talk from Associate Dean Keith Glaister who is Professor of International Business and oversees our Masters programmes.

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

Why a dissertation?

As well as exploring a topic in a much greater depth and producing a longer piece of writing, a dissertation also gives you the opportunity to develop your academic skills and many of the transferrable skills that will be very useful to you in the work place.

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

- What did they think about the dissertation at the start of the process?
- How did their view change?

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

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Aims and objectives

Dissertation Aims

1. Undertake an in-depth academic and practical analysis and interpretation of an area of your choice.
2. Apply academic and practical skills and concepts from the course in a systematic manner.
3. Analyse and interpret academic and practical information in new contexts.
4. Develop your research skills and critical understanding.

Possible Dissertation Purposes

- Critically review existing knowledge in order to present a synthesis or new understanding of existing knowledge.
- Analyse a situation, problem or issue relevant to work or an organisation.
- Develop and evaluate an innovative approach to a specific policy or management question or problem.

Dissertation Skills for Employability

research data analysis interpretation summarising communication
time management critical thinking focused reading

The University of Warwick regulations say that:



A dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Postgraduate degree shall constitute an ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge in an approved field and shall afford evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature, and be submitted in accordance with the appropriate programme regulations.

Manage the process

Everyone finds that the reading and research process take longer than planned and this can have a negative effect on the writing-up stage. A WBS dissertation should have the following characteristics:

- An ordered, critical and reasoned exposition of knowledge gained through the student's efforts.
- Evidence of awareness of the literature, its strengths and weaknesses and any gaps needing to be filled.

This means that you must manage your time carefully so that you can complete the dissertation process before the deadline. To make a timetable for yourself, you need the following information:

- What is the deadline for your proposal or scoping document?
- What are the deadline and word count for your dissertation?
- How many tutorials can you have with your supervisor?
- Is there a drafting process supported by your supervisor?
- When are the Academic Writing Tutor drop-in sessions?
- Are there other dissertation writing support sessions? See 'Advice and support' tab.

Possible drafting process

- Prewriting → make notes on your ideas and ideas from the literature to create a ...
- rough plan → fill in the text to create a ...
- rough draft → tidy up the language to develop a ...
- Draft 1 → decide where the holes are and fill them or re-organise to develop a ...
- Draft 2 → edit and format, then ...
- submit!

There are a variety of time management methods:

- Outlook (<https://support.office.com/en-us/outlook>)
- Mindtools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_HTE.htm)
- Gantt (<http://www.ganttproject.biz/>)
- MS Excel (<http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelTemplates/excel-gantt-chart.html>).

Manage the client

Some students will choose to do their research in a company outside the university. This means the student takes on the role of being a consultant. The company and person that they deal with at the company are called the client.

This film shows the first meeting between a consultant and their new client.

- What is on the consultant's paper?
- What questions does the consultant ask?
- Which of the questions ask for further explanation?
- At the end of the meeting, does the consultant have enough information to get started on the project?

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

Skills development

The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.

Advice and support

There is a wide variety of advice and support available for students writing dissertations. Here are some links for you to explore.

- [About to start your dissertation? \(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM\)](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX0m6B5ongM)
- [Undergraduate and Masters writing mentors \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/scs/skills/awp/advice/writing_mentors/)
- Introduction to the database lectures - please refer to the section in your 'Academic Writing and Avoiding Plagiarism' module.

Your supervisor and you

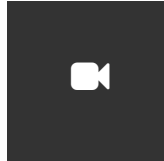
WBS supervisors are usually members of the full-time academic team. They expect to have one initial meeting with you and at least two progress meetings. They often hold group meetings at the start of the dissertation journey so that you can meet other students who are exploring similar topics as you. You should prepare questions for all these meetings and be prepared to listen and take notes of what your supervisors (and fellow students) say. When you have begun your dissertation journey, you will need individual contact with your supervisor. This contact can be face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. You must liaise with your supervisor to organise this contact time.

Focus

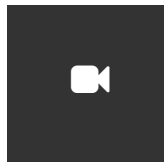
Your dissertation must be clearly organised around a thesis, argument or problem. The title of your dissertation should signal what you are exploring. The academic literature that you use should also relate to the key concepts relevant to the topic that you are investigating. All postgraduate students 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.

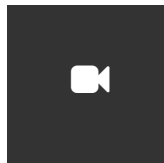
- How did each of them focus on their dissertation topic?



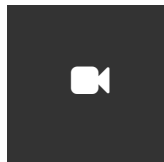
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Your supervisor will help you focus on an interesting topic. The topic and focus process may be different according to which degree you are doing, so make sure you follow your professors' instructions very carefully and ask them for help if anything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

Structure

Think carefully about the structure of your dissertation: the order of ideas in your argument, how you will divide them up and how many words you will put in each section. After a few days of 'pre-writing' (making notes of your ideas and the ideas in the literature), writers usually start with a rough plan which changes when they have started writing, done more reading, conducted their research and are drawing conclusions. You should check your plan with your supervisor before you start writing and whenever you are going to make a major change to the structure. Here are some possible dissertation structures.

Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction
Literature Review	Literature Review	Theory in Context	Theory in Context
Methodology	Case Study	Application	Case Studies
Project set-up and data collection	Discussion	Analysis & Discussion	Project set-up and data collection
Findings & Discussion	Conclusion	Conclusion	Discussion & Conclusions
Conclusion	Bibliography	Bibliography	Bibliography
Bibliography	Appendices		

Language

During your studies at WBS, you have done a lot of reading and these texts will have had a variety of styles depending on their document type, purpose and intended audience. The texts that are the closest to the structure, language and style you should be writing in are the academic journal articles. You will have already submitted some written assignments on your course and gained some feedback. If any of the feedback has related to the way you write or the language you use, then this page is for you. You may also just want to check your writing style or get some new words and phrases to add to your vocabulary and make your writing less repetitious, more fluid and professional. There are also two suggestions for how to beat writer's block at the bottom of the page.

Here are three websites that can help you to improve your writing:

- [GlobalPAD >> Open House - Writing Style](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/)
(<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/writing/writingstyle/>)
- [Phrasebank at the University of Manchester](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/) (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>)
- [UEfAP \(Using English for Academic Purposes\): A Guide for Students in Higher Education - Writing](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm)
(<http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm>)

Writer's Block

One way to beat writer's block is make writing an everyday activity. Get into the habit of writing 500 words per day about anything. This will help your brain open up and the words and ideas flow out so when you really need to get down to serious writing, it will not be so difficult. Another way to beat writer's block is to 'give yourself permission to write garbage' - watch this video: [Writer's block - instant cure](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcKtcXbjwD4>).

Quiz

Now you have the chance to try out some structuring ideas for yourself. If you struggle with this quiz, you will know you have more to learn about structure.

Please attempt the six questions below.

Proposal

The dissertation proposal is a working document that helps you clarify your focus, objectives, academic literature, methods and timetable. It will help your supervisor engage with you and your research. Your supervisor will review your proposal and guide you so that your research has the potential to fulfil the academic requirements of the course.

For students on the following courses, the proposal will be assessed as 10% of their dissertation grade:

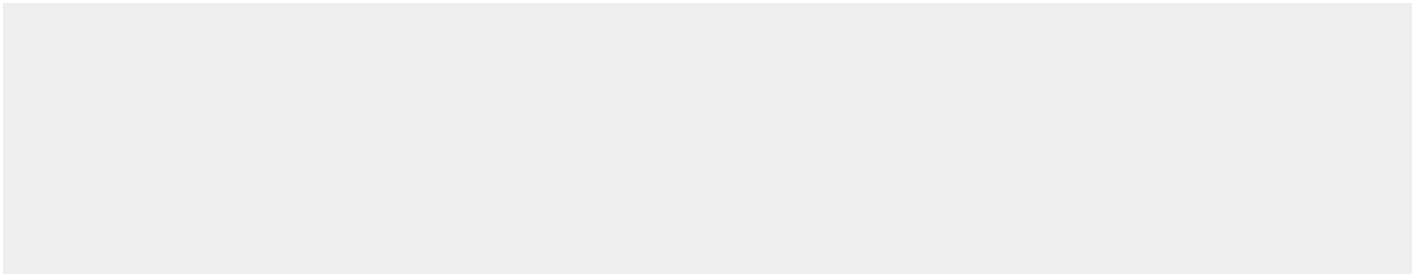
- MSc Finance
- MSc Finance & Economics
- MSc Accounting & Finance
- MSc Financial Mathematics (5%)

Watch these videos of WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

- What advice can you get from each of their proposal creation experiences?

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

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Ethics

When you are writing your proposal, it is very important to think about the ethics of what you are doing, especially during your research. For more information about research ethics please see your Student Handbook.

Skills development

Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.

Proposal structure

This proposal structure is suitable for most programmes whereas the structure shown in 'Proposal structure (2)' has been specifically designed for MSBA students.

Your project proposal should be no longer than three sides of A4 and you should structure it like this:

- Your name and contact details - telephone number and WBS email address
- A title which indicates the proposed area of study (this can be modified as your work progresses)
- A statement on the focus of the dissertation and why it is important (two paragraphs maximum)
 - Can you provide an example of the problem or issue that you want to investigate? What do you think you will find out and why is this interesting? What are the key theories and literature in this area?
- Research aims (i.e. what are the major specific objectives of your project?)
- Research design
 - How do you intend to carry out your research project? What frameworks, theories, methods and tools will be relevant to your research project? Which particular questions do you want to answer with this research project?
- Research methods
 - Will your approach involve generating new data or using existing data? How will you collect the data and who will you collect your data from (sampling and selection)? How will you analyse your data? Defend your choice in comparison to other forms of analysis. Are there any drawbacks of researching in this way? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses.
- Availability of research
 - Are library facilities adequate? Will the organisation(s) involved allow you access to the data you need? What are the 3-4 key references (e.g. texts/journal papers) for your research project idea?
- How does your research project relate to the course syllabus and modules (two paragraphs maximum)?
 - Which area(s) of the whole programme is/are most relevant and how? Are there any ethical or confidentiality issues in your project, including informed consent for respondents, and any potential conflicts of interest?
- Timetable

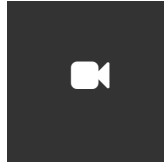
If you are not sure what the dissertation proposal for your degree programme should contain, please contact your Programme Team.

Proposal structure (2)

The proposal structure shown on this page was specifically designed for MSc Business Analytics students, but the extra information given about key details may be useful to all WBS Masters students.

Watch this screencast of Dr Frances O'Brien (Associate Professor of Operational Research) giving advice about the dissertation proposal outline for MSc Business Analytics students.

- Make a note of which key words she highlights and what she says about them.



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

Group work task (3)

Instructions

Materials: A2 sheet of paper, pencils, pens, ruler

Alternative materials: MS PowerPoint

Think about how to explain your proposal to another person. Look at the [research poster presentation training video \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMSaFUrk-FA). The student in the examples has completed his research project so his poster is very large and detailed. Your poster will be much smaller and less detailed, but you can learn a lot about poster presentation skills from what he says. To get an idea of what a real research presentation conference is like, look at [Academic Excellence Conference, Poster Presentations, 2008 Keene State College \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFiWW73Qu2Q&list=PLhMpsEfUNhOw_iWTobidt738jStj7iGOH).

Next, create a research poster for your proposal. Meet with a group of fellow students from your subject area and give a 3-minute presentation about your proposal using your poster to help you. Answer your fellow students' questions. Now listen to their proposal presentations, take notes and ask questions.

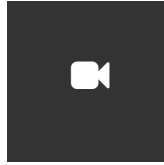
Skills development

Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.

Literature review

Watch this screencast from Dr Rochelle Sibley about how to undertake a literature review.

- Listen carefully and look at the key points on the slides.
- Take notes of any points that you did not know before.
- Stop, start and repeat the screencast sections to make sure that you understand all of Rochelle's advice.
- Make a note of anything you do not understand and ask your supervisor about it.



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

Skills development

Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.

Citation

You have already completed some assignments at WBS, so you should be familiar with quoting, paraphrasing and summarising the words and ideas of other people in your writing. The [Library website \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/) offers referencing support and provides you with guidance for the [Harvard referencing style \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/referencing/referencing-styles) used at WBS

For help with incorporating citations smoothly into your writing, go to [Using English for Academic Purposes \(http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm\)](http://www.uefap.com/writing/writfram.htm), click 'Reporting' and then 'Synthesis'. Example 1 at the bottom of the page is particularly useful.

If you have not tried using a software package to help you organise your bibliography, you may like to try one while writing your dissertation as this usually saves time and can be added to your CV as another software package that you are familiar with. Below are links to information about Endnote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks.

For a brief comparison of all EndNote, Zotero, Mendeley and RefWorks from the University of Minnesota Library, click here: [Introduction to Citation Managers \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YerqPBwLEqg&index=17&list=PLPogJZvXgE_PiDRvYJVak5EPFY0aJojdW). Then, click on the links below to find the corresponding information and training for each software package:

- [Endnote \(https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/\)](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/students/endnote/)
- [Zotero \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JyPSVpvJzkQ)
- [Mendeley \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLtk6n8cFdk)
- [RefWorks \(https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks\)](https://www.youtube.com/user/ProQuestRefWorks).

Plagiarism

According to Oxford Dictionaries online (2014), plagiarism is:



The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.

There are two main reasons for students to plagiarise. Firstly, some students have poor citation skills; for instance, they do not take notes of reference details when they are reading to find quotations, so when they incorporate other writers' words and ideas into their own writing, they do not give the correct reference details with them, such as author's name or date. Secondly, some students are not confident in their own ideas and use the ideas and words of other people without giving any reference information. In both cases, these are academic crimes that may lead to failure and in both cases, they are easy to avoid.

1. Be meticulous in your note-taking.
2. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are yours.
3. Make sure your notes clearly show which ideas are quotations, paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas with the full bibliographic reference next to them.
4. If you are using a bibliographic software package to help with your referencing, check every new entry carefully to make sure the reference details it has collected are correct.
5. When you are incorporating other people's ideas in your work, transfer the information from your notes very carefully using the correct punctuation.
6. When you are editing your writing to help it flow better, make sure your paraphrases and summaries of other people's ideas don't change their intended message.

For more information and advice about plagiarism, please see the following links:

- [University of Warwick \(https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959\)](https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=51959)
- For Warwick's [University Regulations on plagiarism \(http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating\)](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/cheating) , click on the link (left) and scroll down to Section B.

Methodology

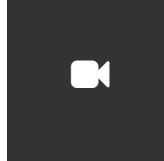
Your dissertation gives you the chance to explore both primary and secondary research methods.

Secondary research methods are those you use to create your literature review and investigate the context of any cases you are reviewing. This means using your reading skills (e.g. skimming for main ideas and scanning for specific detail) and your writing skills (e.g. note-taking and summarising). If you need to improve your library search skills, you can find help and advice at [Getting Started](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/using/help/new-users>).

Primary research methods are divided into two main categories: qualitative and quantitative. You should explore both the qualitative and quantitative topic bars on the left of the screen before deciding which research methods to use. You could combine elements of both and engage in mixed methods research. Focus on what will help you investigate your project most effectively.

Watch this screencast below from Dr Estelle Shale (formerly WBS Associate Professor of Operational Research) about managing data.

- Listen carefully and make a note of all the new advice you hear.

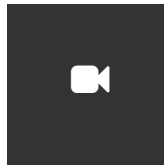


Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research usually deals with the opinions and experience of a relatively small number of people. The most common related methods are observation, interviews and discourse analysis. Tools for qualitative data analysis include NVivo, advanced MS Word and MAXQDA. For advanced MS Word usage, see this [Tutorial: Qualitative Analysis in Word \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX9R6Y6fyfk) and for MAXQDA, see [MAXQDA: Importing Documents \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81OzYIR1aw0&list=PL7E1F5150A4F5F291).

Watch this film of a difficult qualitative interview. Watch, listen and take notes, then use your notes to help you answer the questions below.



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

- The researcher is particularly interesting in how company rankings affect employee attitudes. What did the interviewer gain from the interviewee in terms of data relevant to this focus?
- What did the interviewee's body language signify about their feelings about being interviewed?
- At what point in the interview did the interviewee's mood change?
- In your opinion, how successful was the interview?

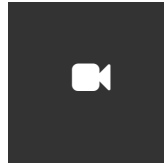
For more information about qualitative research:

- Watch WBS Associate Professor of Governance Kevin Morell's video '[How Much Data is Enough for a Masters Dissertation \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZ8Vu3kBJxl&feature=youtu.be)' (Focus on Interviews).'
- Watch Gerry Katz talking on '[Ethnography or observational research \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tHgNXzS2EY)'.
- Watch Graham R. Gibbs's videos on interviewing: [Part 1: Interviews and the Interview Society \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9yRgBS2JmXU) and [Part 2: The Pros and Cons of Interviewing \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PbB2sAq-PQ).

Quantitative research

Quantitative research deals with numerical measures, such as financial amounts, demographics and trends. The number of people or amount of company data is relatively large. The most common related methods are questionnaires and the collation of companies' statistical data. Tools for quantitative data analysis include SPSS, advanced MS Excel and R. For projects that need you to build models from historical company data, you can use SAS or other specialist modelling software. For advanced MS Excel, go to: [Using Excel in data analysis \(https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/\)](https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/xedition/brymansrmxe/student/excel_analysis/) and for R, see: [The Landscape of Data Analysis \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4glzG-tB22o&list=PLG4y4w32mF3okfFigbGb6DnElzahK_j8z) . For SAS, go to: [How to use SAS \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwKfZq9IPFM&list=PLC141D1D2693F6AA3), and for other specialist modelling software, search online and follow up on any that look interesting to you in YouTube.

Watch the film below from Professor James Mitchell showing ways of coping with quantitative data. Watch, listen and take notes; then use your notes to help you decide what you would like to do.



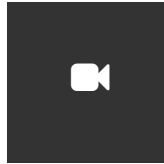
Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Writing up

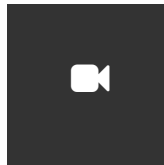
Writing up involves pulling together all the ideas and information you have gathered in your literature search and research. You should now try to fit what you have collected into your plan and see if the structure still works. If you want to make any major changes to your structure, you should check these with your supervisor first.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about their Masters dissertations.

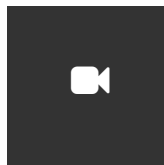
- What advice do they give about the academic writing process?
- What does each of them do when they get stuck?



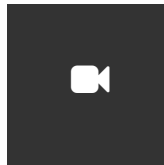
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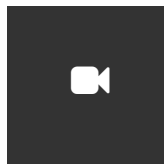
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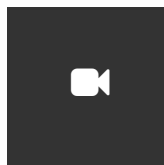
Note: Audio and video is only available in the online version of this content.

Watch the three films below from Dr Mark Johnson (Associate Professor of Operations Management) about his ideal writing environment, writing routine and what he does when he gets stuck.

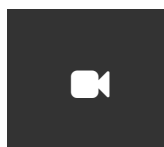
- How do his preferences compare with yours?



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



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



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

Setting the scene can help you get on with the task of writing. For example, some people make a soundtrack of music that inspires them and others create a routine involving rewards and mini-deadlines, like mealtimes or TV shows.

Click on the links below to see famous authors of fiction talking about writing:

- [Ian McEwan on his Writing Process \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZEE9_iZRk)
- [John Irving's Creative Schedule \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDN4UwtXcfs)
- [James Scott Bell on Writing: The Best Advice I Know \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ixZJzrkZ2g)

Editing

Editing is a very important stage in your dissertation writing journey. The website 'Write to Done: Unmissable articles on writing' suggest the following editing steps:



1. *Don't edit while you're writing.*
2. *Put your work aside for a few days.*
3. *Read through in a different format.*
4. *Edit for structure and content first.*
5. *Cut out 10% of your words.*
6. *Use spell-check - but use your eyes too.*
7. *Read your piece backwards (or slowly).*
8. *Let it go.*

For further information about each step, go to [Write to Done \(http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/\)](http://writetodone.com/eight-simple-tips-for-editing-your-own-work/).

Here are some other ways to help you edit your work:

- Make sure your grammar and spell-checkers are on and then investigate any words that are underlined or highlighted.
- Read your work aloud and where you trip over the words or it does not sound right, check for an error.
- Make a list of the errors that you know you often make and check your work systematically for them.
- When you think you have finished, send your final draft to your supervisor for feedback.

Skills development

As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.

Formatting

- Typed in Arial 11pt.
- A4-size page layout.
- 1.5 lines spacing.
- 2.54cm margins.
- ID number in the header of every page.
- Page numbers (bottom centre).
- If you are required to print your dissertation, print it double-sided. The in-house print service at the University - Warwick Print - offer a dissertation binding service. By providing your dissertation as a PDF document they will print, bind and deliver direct to your Programme Team. Rates start at approximately £15. Further information can be found at www.warwickprint.co.uk (<http://www.warwickprint.co.uk/>).

Contents

1. In the middle of the title page, give the project title and your student ID number. At the bottom of the page, write:



This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I am aware of the University of Warwick regulation concerning plagiarism and collusion.

No substantial part(s) of the work submitted here has also been submitted by me in other assessments for accredited courses of study, and I acknowledge that if this has been done an appropriate reduction in the mark I might otherwise have received will be made.

2. You should include a 1-page summary (abstract), setting out briefly the objectives of the project and conclusions reached. The abstract will be included in the word count (see your Student Handbook for more details on the word count policy). The abstract should be a maximum of 500 words.
3. All citations should be punctuated and referenced correctly.
4. References should be quoted in Harvard style in the body of the work and in the bibliography and not at the foot of individual pages.
5. A bibliography should be included at the end of the dissertation.

Wordcount

Please see your handbook for the WBS word count policy.

Quiz (2)

Try the two tasks below to test your editing skills.

Task 1

Read through the following paragraph and see how many grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors you can find. Choose the option that you think is correct - but beware - although we've given you a choice, not all of these are wrong!

Penrose (2004) argues that Martin's concept of "instinctive response" (2000, p.23) becoming so widely that some companies and individuals were failing to acknowledge approaches to conflict resolution. Chalmers and Reed (2008) undertook a study looking at how ten multi-national organisations applied Martin's in particular on the elements associated dynamics and conducted employee surveys to establish levels of job satisfaction, communication and job security. Their findings were with those of Lopate and Brookfield (2006), Nussbaum (2006) and Straka demonstrating that where had failed to resolve intra-team conflict, there was a considerable of between six and eight (see Figure 4) before alternative methods of resolution were and/or applied. Although Chalmers and Reed acknowledge that study did not have a clearly defined control group (2008, p.76), it is obvious from their data that Martin's theory a profound impact on how companies in this sector strategised their structures. Penrose (2004) may have been an early of this view point, subsequent studies by Palanchi and Simmons (2010), Benyon (2010), Surande *et al* (2011) and Canavor (2012) reinforce Penrose's initial concern that Martin's framework and analytical approach the illusion of impartiality whilst dismantling recognised processes for , and responding to changes in team and role dynamics. Surande *et al* point out that without a and agreed mechanism for reacting to change, any discussion of organisational dynamics is at best at worst "engenders confusion and job insecurity amongst the workforce" (2011, p.142).

If you need more support on the mechanics of writing, please see the [Centre for Applied Linguistics' online resources](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/) (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/academicenglishskills/>).

Task 2

Read through the following paragraphs carefully, thinking about how it could be made more concise. How low can you get the word count for this paragraph without losing any of the content or crucial detail? (An answer is attached below, but please try not to reveal it until you have attempted the exercise.)

Since corporate staff are highly important in, perhaps one might say even vital to, the achievement of company strategy, it is unexpected that there are so few empirical studies that systematically and comprehensively examine their functions within organisational dynamics. The very limited range of sources does indeed include a very interesting piece of work by Salvini, Heron, and Argyll (2009), who report their survey results on the multi-layered and complex relationship between headquarters size and the level of success of corporate strategy systems in several hundred international companies. The results of this survey, which did cover a wide range of companies in multiple geographies, did illustrate that there is a very notable level of variation in the size and scope of activities of corporate headquarters that was dependent on and influenced by the individual organisation's location and specific corporate-level strategy. Additionally to this, further, valuable work in the field has been undertaken by Terra and Smith (2010), Corbett, Klaus and Govinski (2011) and Terra, Stevenson and Dvoratz (2011), with a particular focus not on the relationship between geographical location and corporate headquarters size, but rather on the extremely wide variety of functions that corporate headquarters can have in multinational businesses. Also, other studies, such as Simpson (2012), Dorande and Coren (2012) and Liverson (2013), have been undertaken on the perceived visibility of corporate headquarters and the effect of this visibility on the range of functions that the headquarters have in relation to corporate strategy.

Although the above-mentioned studies are valuable in forwarding understanding of this issue, it was clear that there was an urgent need to explore the gaps in the data. The current study conducts a quantitative and qualitative assessment of a large, multinational company, focusing in greatest detail on the relationship between corporate staff function and their level of communication with a carefully chosen selection of other employees within the company's sales force. This approach allows us to clearly establish the level of communication and communicative function of corporate staff within the company, with the expectation that these corporate staff would demonstrate a capacity to construct and maintain more complex, organised and efficient communication networks than those created by other categories of employee with the company's structure. **(369 words)**

Submission

Before submitting your dissertation, check the following:

- Have you followed the guidelines for formatting given in 'Writing up'?
- If you made any part of your document in a separate file, have you now collated all the document parts together in one document?
- Have you converted your document into a PDF?
- Is it the correct file?

All students must submit their dissertations electronically via *my.wbs* before the deadline.

If something has happened that makes you think that you will not be able to finish your dissertation on time (e.g., severe illness or the death of a family member), you must submit an extension request as soon as possible before the deadline through *my.wbs* and include evidence, such as a doctor's report. Extensions are not granted for the heavy workloads related to internships or resitting exams.

Please see your student handbook for more information on submitting your dissertation, including the dissertation cover sheet.

Skills development

The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.

Marking

Watch this video from Professor Davide Nicolini about the Masters dissertation marking criteria and the marker's expectations.

- Check that your dissertation meets each of these criteria.
- Look at the marking grid pdf attached at the bottom of the page for further details.

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

Feedback

You will receive your dissertation mark and feedback via *my.wbs*. You will receive your provisional, internally agreed mark and feedback within 20 working days of your submission. If you have any questions about your dissertation feedback, you should contact your supervisor because they are one of the markers and will be able to explain anything in the feedback that you are unsure of.

Skills development

It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback many of you get before returning fully to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.

Group work task (4)

On your own, reflect on each stage of your dissertation journey and make a list of the things you learnt along the way. Then make a list of the things you found most difficult; for each item, write down how you solved the problems you faced. Next, make a list of anything that you would like to investigate more and write down how you can find the opportunity to do this.

Now meet with fellow dissertation writers and share what you have written down. Listen to and question your colleagues about their experiences to discover where the similarities and differences lie. This will help you see how although you have all shared a particular type of journey, everyone has had a different experience and gained different things from it.

Skills development

Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use the benefits of hindsight to make your future processes more efficient and more effective.

Skills for the future

You have developed a number of skills during your dissertation journey. Here are the ones we have mentioned in this workbook.

- The ability to ask questions, take notes and ask follow-up questions is not only useful for careers in consultancy, but also in any job where there is an information gap that you must fill in order to complete a task.
- Discussing ideas before reading helps you to focus on what you are really looking for in a text. This is a useful skill for your academic, personal and work life.
- 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.
- Verbally sharing ideas and information about something you have read is a vital skill for business, as are listening, taking notes and asking questions.
- Scoping out proposals is a skill that is particularly useful if you have a project management job role, but the microskills of providing background and contextual details, assessing methodological possibilities and deciding on a timeline are useful for all jobs.
- Summarising your dissertation's argument, process and structure into a poster and 3-minute presentation is great practice for the future. It helps you practise the transferrable skills of prioritising information, summarising, explaining, creating and using visuals, and presenting to an audience. These skills will be useful for any career path.
- Researching, collating, reporting and synthesising what other people say and write is part of all jobs in the business world, so the skills you develop while doing your literature review will be very useful to you in the future.
- As a WBS student and soon-to-be alumnus, you are expected to hold very high standards in everything you do. Editing is one way to develop the meticulous attention to detail that will be required of you in the business world.
- The ability to meet deadlines is something that all people face in the workplace. Your assignments and dissertation at WBS give you the chance to practise meeting deadlines and coping with the processes involved if you cannot meet a deadline.
- It's very important to gain as much learning as possible from your studies at WBS and one way is through the feedback you receive from the academics who mark your assignments and dissertation. The feedback for your dissertation is particularly useful because it is usually the last feedback you get before returning to the world of work. Understanding and responding to feedback are vital skills for every worker. Some people feel very defensive towards negative feedback, but at WBS we try to make our feedback as constructive as possible so that our students can learn from it and move on with improvements in mind.
- Critical thinking and learning from past events are crucial to any job in the modern business world. The best way to face a new task is to look at past similar tasks and use benefits of hindsight to make your processes more efficient and more effective.

Watch four WBS PhD students talking about the transferrable skills they gained from their Masters dissertation process.

- Which of these skills do you think will be particularly important to you in the future?

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