

Writing a Dissertation Report

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Hello

Writing a Dissertation Report

Writing a Dissertation Report (1)

What is a Dissertation?

- Different to a normal essay or body of work you may have previously submitted
- A larger piece of writing, typically between 6,000 to 10,000 words
- The report should be:
 - contestable and focused
 - assert your own conclusions based upon evidence
 - provocative, whereby you take a stand and justify the discussion you are presenting
 - provides a route to the reader to guide them through your work
- The report should **not** be written in first-person and avoid vague language

Writing a Dissertation Report (2)

Structure of the Dissertation Report

- Title Page
- Declaration of Originality, Copyright and Ethics
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if applicable)
- List of Figures (if applicable)
- Acronyms (if applicable)
- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Methodology
- Chapter 4: Results and Analysis
- Chapter 5: Discussion
- Chapter 6: Project Management
- Chapter 7: Conclusion
- Bibliography
- Appendices (if applicable)

Writing a Dissertation Report (3)

Creating a Title for the Project

- The title page will reflect the whole content of the dissertation
- It should be informative, and to the point
- The title will also be in harmony with the content of the thesis
- The goal of the title is to draw the reader's interest
 - typically, will be between 8 and 15 words long
- You will want to be specific and accurate with the title
- It is recommended to avoid phrases such as:
 - *"An investigation of..."* or *"A study into..."*

Writing a Dissertation Report (4)

Writing an Abstract

- The abstract will provide a summary of the most important facts or ideas
- It is considered to be a mini-version of the paper
- You should state the field of study and the definition of the problem
- You should also provide a main conclusion of the project
 - i.e. what was the main outcome?
- Typically, an abstract will be between 300 and 500 words long
 - it should be no more than a single side of A4
- The writing of an abstract should be in *past tense* and *third person*

Writing a Dissertation Report (5)

Introduction Chapter

- The introduction chapter should be clear, concise and organised
 - it will aid in setting up the project and its importance
- It should be written in an engaging manner to make the reader interested in your project
- The purpose is to make an underlying foundation to the project
- It will provide an overview of the subject area
- Also used to define the structure of the dissertation
 - details what will be discussed in each chapter
- A structure similar to:
 - describe what is known about the problem
 - describe what is unknown about the problem
 - discuss why the study is important

Writing a Dissertation Report (6)

Literature Review Chapter

- Provides a review of research paper, and details:
 - the complete story about your research topic
 - how your project fit within existing work in the area
- Gives a theoretical background to the project area
- Enables you to justify how your findings are relating to the body of knowledge in your research area
- Helps establish a link between what you propose to examine and whats already been done
 - assist you in refining your research methodology
- It is **not** a summary of literature, but an argument
- Follow these rules:
 - only provide literature which helps the research
 - cite and reference each paper correctly
 - provide a summary of what the author did and how it informs your research
 - critique the work — what was good and what was bad?

Writing a Dissertation Report (7)

Methodology Chapter

- Explain how the work will be done and the methods you are using
- Essentially, this is your research design
 - explain as much as necessary so the reader can reproduce the project
- Start writing this chapter as you are performing any experiments/investigations
- Provide a reference if necessary to procedures you are copying and or those that have been described previously
 - i.e. following another researchers' methodology, cite them

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Implementation Chapter (if applicable)

- Explain the important aspects of your implementation
- Discuss and show algorithms that are necessary for your work
 - should be shown as a code listing and labelled appropriately
- Provide details about the key technology and tools
- Give a detailed description on the development process
 - were there any challenges? if so, how were they addressed?

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Results and Analysis, and Discussion

Results and Analysis Chapter

- Describe the findings of your research
- Explain any observations made from your experiments
- Provide your data and the evidence for it
- Data can be represented in tabular or graphical
 - but do not over-do it
 - do not just include graphs and tables
- If you have any negative results - talk about them
 - these may be important to other people
 - do not leave them out “bad data” as they could be useful later

Discussion

- Provides your own point of view on the results obtained
- You are expected to interpret and describe the significance of your findings
- Summarise your achievements and deficiencies of the project
 - be honest about the deficiencies and inadequacies of your work
- Part of the process for this chapter is to demonstrate your ability to recognise the problems that remain
- Highlight the importance of your study and what you have contributed
 - think of arguments in-favour and against your results

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Project Management Chapter

- This chapter will contain your reflection on the management of your project
- You should consider the social, legal or ethical issues
- Provide a discussion to responses you received from the feedback of your supervisor
 - the first supervisor will know how well you tackled the problem
 - your second marker will not
- Consider the following:
 - what problems did you encounter? how did you overcome them?
 - how diligently did you work?
 - how did you seek advice? and how did you respond to the advice?
- This should be evidence driven
 - provide evidence in the form of meeting logs in the appendices etc
- Reflect on the timeline of the project
 - create a new Gantt chart and compare it to the one provided in the project proposal

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Conclusion Chapter

- This will be your opinion after considering all the information
- You should:
 - summarise your principal findings
 - emphasise what should be accepted as the *new* established knowledge
- It will link back to your introduction
- Must contain a summary of evidences supporting each conclusion made
- Provide a brief statement on how your solution addresses the problem stated

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Bibliography/References Chapter

- Not a chapter of sorts, it is a list of citations used in your project
- Necessary to provide validation to the work undertaken
- Lets the reader know where you have collected relevant information from
- Use the APA referencing style, seventh edition

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Narrative Convention

- The report should be written in a third-person manner
 - except for the **Project Management Chapter**
- The choice of words and phrasing is **formal**
- Which of these is a better approach of writing?

I really expected that the results would be different, like, the way in which I was able to get feedback from my parents.

The results obtained from the experiment were not as expected. The feedback received from some of the participants...

Writing a Dissertation Report (14)

Dissertation Report Templates

- Two templates are provided for your report:
 - [LaTeX](#)
 - [Microsoft Word](#)
- Use a template you will be most familiar with
 - if you do not know LaTeX, do not use it!
- There are no marks associated with which template you use
- However, it is imperative you stick to the template and sections provided

Goodbye

Goodbye (1)

Some Advice...

1. Do not start with the introduction or conclusion
 - the purpose of the study may change, you do not want to re-write the introduction again and again
 - start with the literature review
 - this is one of the most time-consuming parts of the report
 - then work on the methodology, results etc.
2. For each chapter, you will need the following:
 - an introduction
 - the main body of that chapter
 - a conclusion
3. Do **not** write in first-person
 - work should be written in third-person
 - when writing the methodology, do not write it as if the study has already been done
4. Write with conciseness and brevity in mind
 - do not include stuff not pertinent to the topic being discussed

Goodbye (2)

Questions and Support

- Questions? Post them in the **Community Page** on Aula
- Additional Support? Visit the [Module Support Page](#)
- Contact Details:
 - Dr Ian Cornelius, ab6459@coventry.ac.uk
 - Mr Terry Richards, ac6860@coventry.ac.uk