

ADPA6000 – Independent Project

Written Dissertation Route (Level 6)

Module Overview

- Module: ADPA6000 – Independent Project
- Programme: BA Commercial Dance
- Assessment Route: **Written Dissertation (10,000 words)**
- Assessment Weighting:
 - Written Dissertation: 70%
 - Research Journal: 15%
 - Viva Voce: 15%
- Level: 6 (Final Year)

Purpose of the Independent Project

The Independent Project is designed to enable students to undertake **in-depth, self-directed research** within a chosen area of the dance industry. The project requires students to demonstrate intellectual independence, critical engagement with literature, and a clear sense of professional identity. The written dissertation must integrate academic research with applied or practice-based enquiry where appropriate.

What Is a Dissertation?

A dissertation is a substantial piece of academic writing that investigates a focused research question or problem. At Level 6, it is equivalent to an extended research assignment that demonstrates the student's ability to plan, research, analyse, and communicate complex ideas in a coherent and scholarly manner.

The required word count for this route is **10,000 words**.

Level 6 Expectations

At Level 6, students are expected to:

- Demonstrate a systematic and detailed understanding of a specialist topic

- Critically evaluate academic literature and industry research
 - Apply appropriate research methodologies
 - Construct sustained, evidence-based arguments
 - Communicate ideas clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
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Choosing a Research Topic

The chosen research topic must:

- Relate directly to the dance industry or professional practice
- Be clearly defined, focused, and researchable
- Enable critical analysis rather than description
- Support applied or practice-based enquiry where appropriate

Examples may include (but are not limited to):

- Training models in commercial dance
 - Neurodiversity in dance education
 - Pedagogy, leadership, or assessment practices in dance
 - Health, wellbeing, or sustainability within professional practice
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Research Question

The research question is the foundation of the dissertation. It should be clear, focused, and analytical. All chapters of the dissertation must link back explicitly to this question, ensuring coherence and academic rigour throughout the work.

Researching the Topic

Students are expected to engage with **credible and scholarly sources**, including academic journals, textbooks, and relevant industry reports. Research should identify key debates, theoretical frameworks, and gaps within existing literature. Accurate record-keeping of sources is essential to support correct Harvard referencing.

Dissertation Structure

The written dissertation should normally be structured as follows:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology

- Results (if primary data is collected)
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Subheadings may be used to support clarity and logical progression.

Introduction (10%)

The introduction should account for approximately **10% of the total word count**.

It should:

- Present the research question
 - Outline aims and objectives
 - Provide a clear rationale for the study
 - Establish the academic and professional context
 - Indicate the overall structure of the dissertation
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Literature Review

The literature review must critically engage with existing academic and industry research. Sources should be organised thematically, conceptually, or methodologically. The review should compare perspectives, identify areas of debate, and clearly demonstrate how the current study addresses gaps in knowledge.

Methodology

The methodology chapter explains how the research was conducted. It should outline:

- The research approach (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, practice-as-research)
 - The methods used (e.g. interviews, surveys, observation, analysis of practice)
 - Justification for methodological choices
 - Ethical considerations
 - Limitations of the research design
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Results (Where Applicable)

Where primary data has been collected, a results chapter must be included. This chapter presents findings objectively and clearly, using tables or figures where appropriate. Interpretation of findings should be reserved for the discussion chapter.

Discussion

The discussion chapter interprets the findings in relation to the research question, literature review, and aims of the study. It should demonstrate critical analysis, evaluate the significance of findings, and explore implications for professional practice.

Conclusion (10%)

The conclusion should account for approximately **10% of the total word count**.

It should:

- Summarise the key findings of the research
 - Revisit and directly address the research question
 - Highlight the contribution of the study to knowledge and/or professional practice
 - Acknowledge limitations of the research
 - Suggest clear directions for future research or practice
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Practice-Based and Applied Enquiry

The dissertation must demonstrate clear links between theory and practice. This may include evaluation of teaching practice, choreography, leadership approaches, or other professional applications relevant to the dance industry.

Assessment Criteria

The written dissertation is assessed against the following criteria:

- Engagement with Literature
 - Knowledge and Understanding
 - Cognitive and Intellectual Skills
 - Practical Application Skills
 - Transferable Skills for Life and Professional Practice
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Academic Writing and Referencing

All work must be written in a formal academic style, with clear structure and logical argumentation. Harvard referencing must be applied consistently throughout, including accurate in-text citations and a complete reference list.

Research Journal

Students must submit a research journal evidencing the research process, including reading, note-taking, idea development, and methodological decision-making. The journal supports assessment of independent research and professional practice.

Viva Voce

Following submission, students will undertake a viva voce examination. This oral assessment evaluates the student's understanding of their research process, methodological choices, findings, and professional relevance of the study. You will provide evidence that you have sourced your work from a wide range of credible sources, including academic journals, textbooks, current news articles and websites of the last five years, as well as seminal/essential works in your field of study. A complete bibliography must be included at the end of the PowerPoint/Presentation.