

Research reports, reflecting on the process and suggestions of what to write/include

The research report ideally gives a more detailed summary and background to your research plans. It enables your supervisor to assess and advise you on your chosen topic, approach and methodology. It is essentially a fleshed out research proposal and is an active and current statement of where you are at, where you hope to take the research and how you plan to get there (i.e. snap-shot of where you are at). It is not, however, just a statements of facts (a list of what you have read for example) but it should include some evaluation of what you have read and commentary (analysis) of where what you are doing fits in and how it does. What follows is not proscriptive but may be of help. Regardless of whether you do or do not follow this format you do need to think about the following.

- **Title** or working title of dissertation, your name, student number module code
- **Research Aims** or Questions. You should say something about why you want to do this particular project, what makes it a suitable topic to study, its relevance, its importance. (Q. Why is your topic important – write it down)
- **Literature review.** A literature review is NOT simply a commentary or summary of a list of books you have read so far. It is an evaluation of the literature that relates to YOUR field and where your research sits in it. (Q. In reviewing the literature – where does your topic sit? – Write this down.) You need to locate your project in terms of wider academic debates, particularly in your chosen discipline or subject area. Is there a gap in the literature which you consider needs filling, and which justifies your research? Are you talking a stand in opposition to some widely held views, or wish to try out someone's ideas in a different context (= applied research). Remember that no work exists in a vacuum and you need to be aware of who else is working in your area of study and what has already been achieved. You should mention works and all works mentioned must be fully referenced. This section should demonstrate your state of knowledge, the 'proof' of your knowledge if you like.
- **Method/methodology.** A detailed account of the content and methodology of your project will be needed for the final Dissertation but it is understood in many disciplines that, at this stage, the methodology cannot be over-specified in advance: if this is the case you should discuss the way that you will approach your study initially, the sorts of methods that you anticipate using, and your strategy for developing the methodology over the course of your study. You could indicate some sort of timescale for your project.
- Some mention of **expected outcomes** i.e. what do you hope to establish and the means by which you intend to present your project. If you wish to include videos, audio tapes or other multi-media this should be explained and justified. You may wish to mention areas which would require further research (which could be pursued at a later date i.e. you have come across it, think it is interesting BUT beyond the scope of this piece of work for instance).

In all of this there should be a level of reflection, evaluation of where you are at. By looking at this and engaging with the process actively you should be able to make statements of confidence, with confidence. Your research should demonstrate something new (ultimately and ideally) and you should be indicating:

- How far you have got in your thinking.
- What can you establish, what can you say with confidence.
- What do you need to undertake, by when and how?
- What can you junk for this research (but is very interesting and shows where your research could be developed)

All work should be immaculately presented with good structure and grammar, with spelling and references checked. Please refer to the Referencing Handbook. Use the draft turnitin link to check for utility checker (unfair practice or plagiarism detector).

Reflective report should be around 1000 words and include your reference list to date (NOT included in the word count).