



Prifysgol Cymru
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University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Research Methods Workshop

(Workshop / Session 9)

Writing your Dissertation

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

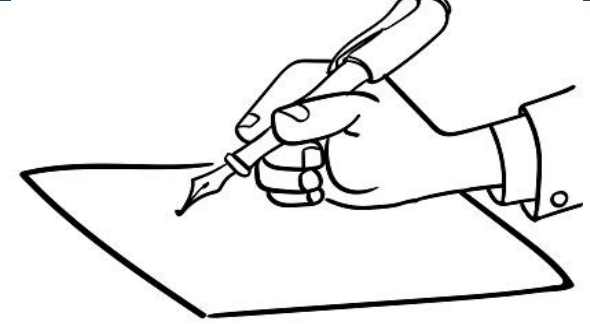


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This session's **Aims**

- understand the issues about which you need to be concerned when undertaking writing for your project report
- evaluate different ways to structure your project report
- differentiate between a traditional dissertation and a consultancy report
- adopt an appropriate and accessible writing style for your report
- write a project report focused on meeting the necessary assessment criteria

Writing



- Research shows that writing may be the time when we think most deeply
- Should not be seen as the last stage, but rather as something that is continuous throughout the research process
- Why so most of us view writing with such concern? – We are afraid of criticism, and often impatient

UNDERTAKING WRITING

Some (hopefully) helpful Tips

- Create dedicated time for your writing (a few hours a day), as writing requires sustained effort and concentration
- Write when your mind is fresh – whenever that is
- Find a regular writing place - psychological and physiological comfortable
- Minimize distraction (e.g. mobile phone, social media, flat mates)
- Have regular breaks (e.g. write 50 minutes, have a 10-minutes break)

Some more (hopefully) helpful Tips

- Create a structure for your writing – list of chapters and sub-chapters
- Think about what each (sub-)chapter should contain before you start writing – use bullet points
- Always try to finish a section before calling it a day; never leave a complex section half completed
- Commence a new writing session by reviewing the previous one

Making your dissertation clear and accessible

- Chose a good title – as short as possible, while describing the content accurately
- Ask your mother what she thinks the title describes – their description should matches your content
- Tell a clear / logical story – you need a main story line that links all chapters
- You a different size / bold for your (sub-)chapter headlines

Making your dissertation clear and accessible

- Use tables, diagrams, and figures to visualise – they need to be numbered and have a headline
- Write clear and simple; avoid too long and complex sentences; avoid jargon; do not use too much direct citations
- Check your spelling and grammar very carefully
- Revise your dissertation on a continuous basis

STRUCTURING YOUR DISSERTATION

The Abstract

- **A short summary of the complete content of the dissertation (200 – 300 words)**
- **Contains the following four paragraphs:**
 - **What were the research questions and why are they important?**
 - **How did you go about answering the research questions (methodology)?**
 - **What did you find out with regards to your research questions?**
 - **What conclusions do you draw?**

The Introduction

- **Should give the reader a clear idea about the central issues of concern in your research and why it is worth studying - should state the research aim and questions**
- **Traditional dissertations focus on the gap in the literature, consultancy projects focus on a description of the company (e.g. history, size, products) and the identified business problem**
- **Ends with a description about how the remainder of the dissertation / report is structured**

The Literature Review

- **Define terminologies**
- **Set your study within its wider theoretical context**
- **Develop the conceptual framework (hypothesis)**
- **Please have a look at what we discussed in the previous workshop sessions!**

The Methodology

- **Describes the context specific research settings (e.g. company, industry, country)**
- **Describes and justifies the target population, sample size, and sample technique**
- **Describes and justifies the data collection process**
- **Describes and justifies the methods used to analyse the data**

Findings and Results

- **Here you are supposed to report the results of your analyses**
- **Probably the most straightforward chapter**
- **However, it has to be clearly linked to your research questions and conceptual framework**
- **DO NOT present results that are not linked to your research question**

The Discussion

- **In this chapter you need to discuss your findings in the light of existing literature / current business practices and your findings**
- **It's about the "So what?" – What meaning do your findings have for the literature debate / the company**
- **Can be combined with the results / findings chapter**

The Conclusion

- **Provides a final summary of the findings; answers the research questions**
- **Gives recommendations / solutions**
- **Discusses the limitations of the study; highlights future research potentials**

MEETING THE MARKING CRITERIA

Expectations

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- develop a suitable and appropriate research proposal;
- critically appraise the literature pertaining to a problem domain;
- evaluate, select and apply relevant research techniques in both primary and secondary fields;
- rigorously analyse the evidence gathered;
- generate and justify appropriate conclusions based on the previous analyses, demonstrating awareness of the limitations of the research;
- produce an organised and structured document that adheres to academic convention.

Assessment Rationales

- The thesis structure / extended outline is an important road map for the entire project and needs a great deal of care and consideration.
- It will give you and your supervisor a clear perspective of the research project.

Assessments

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Component 1 - Coursework

Mode of assessment	Volume	Weighting
A written research proposal	1,500 - 2,000 words	10%

Assessment Component 2 - Coursework

Mode of assessment	Volume	Weighting
Individual Dissertation	6,000 words	90%

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	0%
Coursework	100%
Practical	0%
TOTAL	100%

Assessment Requirements

- Please note that the research needs to have a clear Business focus.
- The thesis structure / extended outline needs to show a significant improvements compared with your research proposal
- The proposal is a formative task, thus, it is a pass/fail assessment.
- However, please note that you if don't submit your proposal you can-not process with your dissertation

Assessment Evaluation 1

- **Introduction and research question:** Laying out the appropriate context for the study. Identifying and justification of the explanatory variables and dependent variables. Identification of the problem / gap in the literature
- **Literature awareness:** Identification of key literature/authors of the topic: classics; landmarks; most recent developments.
- **Empirical content:** Justification of data type and approach to data collection. If primary data: Types of interviews to be conducted, sampling method and size, will pre-testing be done, identification of and solutions to potential problems; reasons for methodological choices made; accuracy, completeness, level of detail, and clarity of reported information. If secondary data: quality of data, reasons for choice, accuracy, completeness, and level of detail.

Assessment Evaluation 2

- **Methodology:** Suitability for the task at hand; identification of technical, statistical and analytical tools and/or software that will be used; awareness of methodological issues and of limitations of study; awareness of research integrity, honesty and ethics issues.
- **Conclusions Findings:** Possible outcomes or contingencies identified and briefly discussed.
- **Coherence and logic between sections of outline/action plan:** Each part of the writing should be appropriately connected to yield a seamless product that is functional for finishing the final document.
- **Appropriate writing standard:** Correct use of grammar, spelling, and syntax
- **Bibliography and Referencing:** Correct use of Harvard referencing requirements.

Final Points to Highlight

- Ensure that you keep earlier versions of the dissertation as back-up copies
- Get feedback from your supervisor on drafts during 1-to-1 meetings!
- Read the module handbook!