

Introduction to SHSS6070 - Independent Study

2019/20

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Today's Lecture Content

- Introduction to Independent Study (Dissertation) Process
- Generation of a Research Question
 - (if you have not already done so)
- Introduction to the Presentation and Marked Proposal

What is an Independent Study (dissertation)?

- **The aim of the dissertation is to:**
- To provide students with the opportunity to engage in a substantial self managed project, in a field of study related to their degree.
- For students to build on concepts, skills and techniques developed in previous modules, and to demonstrate the ability to direct their own studies.

This module provides an opportunity for you to demonstrate, and have assessed, the extent and quality of your capabilities in:

- selecting a suitable topic for independent study;
- justifying the relevance of your chosen topic;
- selecting, devising and applying appropriate methodological and analytical approaches;
- sustaining independent study;
- anticipating and solving problems in pursuit of that study;
- identifying key findings and issues in that study.

SHSS6070 Dissertation Lecture Timetable

- Weekly S1 lecture schedule provided on Moodle...

Lecture – 9am Tuesday

Tasks

Workshops

Dissertation supervisor

- Semester 2 outline on Moodle

What stage are you at?

- So...you have decided upon a topic, have spoken to a lecturer about the viability of a study in that area, have done some preliminary reading, gathered a few references over the summer, have thought about a potential method AND...
- Are now ready to REALLY get started.....

Yes?

- Good News! This is where you should be at this stage of the process.
- If so, you are well on the way towards producing a good dissertation....

Not quite?!

- Time for a bit of urgency / prioritising
- Presentation – WC October 21st October
- Proposal – 10% of Dissertation mark – 1st of November Via Turnitin on Moodle
- Significant correlation between proposal and dissertation...
- Final document: October – April 24th (6.5 months)
- ‘Loads of time’????

Sample Timetable

(you will generate your own)...

- **October** – Decide upon title / gather resources for literature review / send away for information / write formal proposal and prepare presentation / complete ethics form
- **November** – Gather more resources / write introduction and literature review / decide upon and write method / contact participants, club or organisation, gain written consent / achieve ethical approval / gather data.
- **December** – Gather data / write introduction and literature review
- **January** – Gather data / analyse data / write results.
- **February** - Write discussion
- **March** – Write summary and abstract / final presentation issues – Supervision ends - start of Easter break.
- **April 24th** – Dissertation submission

How long are you going to spend on this per week?

- How many hours a week should I set aside?
- 4 hrs a week? X 4.5 weeks per month = 18hrs a month.
- **Reality of how long things take....**

E.g. October: potential timescale...

- Decide upon topic and title: 2 – 4 hours
- Research, gather, organise literature: 20 hours
(at least 40 relevant and good quality resources)/ order journal articles / write to individuals or organisations / photocopying

You also have to ACTUALLY read these...

- Research different methodologies and decide upon your method: 4 hours
- Write method section (1st draft): 3 hours
- **Total = approximately 30 hours per month (7 hours per week)**

Note: this is a rough example, some will need to spend more time – some less time.

7 hours a week – Is that easily achievable???

- How best do you work? 1 hour a day / devote 1 full day to your dissertation? Individual preference.
- Wednesday – Dissertation & Perspectives day?
 - If you have sporting commitments, what day will work best?
- Start a routine as soon as you can.

Remember: you will not be able to control everything...

Response times to your enquiries / participants may only be able to be tested on certain days or times / people may drop out.

- Try to be efficient: e.g. can you test more than one person on the same day / link up with other students?
- Work out when your **REALLY** busy times of the term / year are going to be and plan around that.
- Assessment hand in dates - provided.

Your supervision entitlement:

- Individual tutorial sessions with your allocated tutor.
- Weekly / fortnightly / monthly?

Plus...

- Group tutorials with your allocated tutor.
- Tutors will have particular ways of working – contact your tutor as soon as you can to get a good working relationship going!

Dissertation Proposal and Presentation...

Research Proposal and Associated Presentation / Progress Report (Hand in final week of this term).

Weighting:

- The research proposal is worth 10% of the module mark.
- Presentation and Progress Report are not assessed however these are **mandatory** and failure to complete these may result in failure of the module.

Research Proposal Length: 1500 words maximum

Presentation: WC 21st of October

(5 minutes in length followed by 5 minutes of questioning)

- **Hand in Date: 1st of November – 1 copy via Turnitin**
- **If you have this completed beforehand, your supervisor can approve your project ASAP.**

Write a formal proposal for the research idea that you have for your dissertation.

The proposal follows on from:

1. The dissertation introduction session held last semester.
 - ✦ Those who attended the dissertation lecture (and did something as a result) are at an advantage at this stage.
2. Preliminary review of research conducted over the summer.

Dissertation Presentation – Mandatory Presentation:

You will be expected to present for 5 minutes (using PowerPoint / other methods) on your proposed dissertation idea.

You should use your dissertation proposal as a basis for your presentation.

Presentation Handouts:

- A short (1 side of A4) typed handout must be produced: 2 copies are required (1 for staff member and 1 for yourself).
- The handout must include proposed title, brief aims of project, rationale, main literature reviewed, methods, any results, discussion points, issues to be resolved.
- Obviously one side of A4 is short, so the above should be in bullet points on the main points of your study.

Venues and Date:

- All presentations will be held during the WC 21st October (exact dates, venues, groups and staff to be confirmed).

IMPORTANT DATES

These will be added to the handbook...



- Your working title should be agreed by Friday the **11th of October, 2019.**
- Dissertation presentations are to be held during the week commencing 21st of October, **2019 (*attendance is compulsory*)**.
- Dissertation proposals (worth 10% of module mark) **MUST** be submitted by the 1st of **November, 2019.**
- **Progress report – informal 300 words max. via e-mail by 13th December.**
- The first draft of your literature review should be submitted **before 1st of January 2020.**
- **Submission date for the dissertation (ONE BOUND COPY + Turnitin submission): Friday the 24th April 2020.**

Please remember that the submission date is final...

Confirming your choice of research question...

Please arrange to see a lecturer at some point either today or next week...

Remember:

- Lecturers are busy, so make an appt.
- If you are struggling at **ANY** point – please ***do not HIDE*** in the hope the problem will go away (it will not).
- Arrange regular meetings with your supervisor (once allocated) & keep them updated on your progress (or lack of it).

Proposal (1500 words) – Information on Moodle



- **Specifically the marks will be allocated as follows (relative weightings in brackets):**
- Introduction and rationale for the study (utilising relevant and appropriate literature). (30%)
- Clearly identifying the aims of the study. (10%)
- Outline the proposed methodology for the study, providing a strong rationale for the choices made. (30%)
- Identify the methods of data analysis. (20%)
- Draft timetable for the completion of the sections of the dissertation. (10%)

What stage are you at?

Group 1:

- Those of you who have already got a reasonably firm idea of what they are likely to be doing (i.e. those who attended dissertation session last semester).

Group 2:

- Those who have not decided upon a research idea yet.

Group 2:

How can I find a suitable topic
for my dissertation?

What interests you?

- A long time will be spent on the topic.
- You will have to keep working away through some aspects of the project that may not be very exciting.
- Much easier if the topic will remain interesting to you!
- Are there any areas of your course which you have found interesting and would like to investigate further?

What career do you want?

- If you have definite career plans you may want to ensure that your project is in that area.
- Think about interviews in 9-12 months time...
- Getting a job is a competitive business.
- Having a relevant dissertation on your CV may set you apart from other applicants with a similar degree.
- Many students take their dissertations to interviews to indicate their potential and it may give the interviewer something specific to discuss.

...I STILL have no
idea what I want
to do!

Start with your interests...

- If possible you should have already studied the subject or general area and have **SOME** background knowledge.
- At least to level 4 / 5 of a degree
- Something you studied several years ago as part of your GCSE's / college course is not the most sensible idea...
- You may feel that you would like to do something relating to strength training, barriers to exercise or hooliganism in sport.
‘Interesting topic... but what could I do a dissertation on?’

Follow the following procedures:

- Write down everything that you know about the topic (this may not be very much at this stage, but it will be a starting point).
- Write down why you thought of it in the first place – what makes it interesting.

What questions does the topic raise?

- Write these down (however odd they seem).
- You should have come up with some possible questions.
- Go and read around the subject to see what has already been done in the area.
- Databases: Sportdiscus / medline / psycharticles etc.
- Even Google Scholar as a very basic starting point...

Refining your ideas...

- The question may be very interesting but may have been “done to death”, and the answers may be blindingly obvious once a bit of reading has been done.
- Once you have found a question with scope for further research you should discuss this with a potential tutor for further advice.

Summary

- Keep the details from what you have done today – start a dissertation folder (if you don't already have one).
- If you have decided upon a definite idea then start to gather resources on that topic to make sure it is a worthwhile area of study (rationale).
- You are now ready to start writing your formal project proposal.
- **Next weeks session:** dissertation proposal presentation & ethical considerations.

Any Questions?