Dissertation Outline

Title Page

Should contain at least the following:

DISSERTATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

Title:

By: Student Name

(at the bottom of page)

Name

Student ID

Date:

Advisor:

Abstract

Generally the last thing written, the abstract should briefly tell the reader what the dissertation is about. The student should summarise the key points of the document, including the problem, the research question and the method. The maximum length for a dissertation abstract is 350 words.

Table of Contents, List of Tables, Table of Figures

The Table of Contents and the List of Tables are best done using the facilities in Word.

Chapter 1: Aims of the Dissertation

The first section of the dissertation body should provide the introduction to the problem to be addressed by the dissertation research. The problem statement may discuss relevant literature as necessary to support the existence of the problem and/or provide pertinent background information, but the literature review is the place for most of this material. At the conclusion of the problem statement, the reader should have a clear understanding of the problem to be addressed in the dissertation.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This is an examination of the literature relevant to the dissertation problem, and the problem statement should logically flow out of it. Ideally, all relevant research directly bearing on the dissertation problem should be included, but the most important

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outcome is that you do not directly repeat research that has been done already and that you identify the theoretical basis of your work. Every effort should be made to include at least some recent relevant literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology section presents the details of the research process; it is the way or ways you answer the problem specified in the aims section. Although the exact content of this section will vary as a function of the nature of the particular research, the methodology section should generally include the following topics:

1. *Participants and/or sites:* This will include detailed descriptions: who or what they are; where they are located; why and how they were chosen; how access will be obtained; ethical concerns regarding access such as confidentiality; when and how often met with, etc.

2. *Role of the researcher:* This will include a detailed description of what posture(s) you will take as a researcher, such as participant-observer, clinical interviewer, etc. Address how these roles fit with the research questions and theoretical framework, and how your prior experience, research or otherwise, will affect the study in terms of researcher bias.

3. *Data gathering or data generation techniques:* You will include a detailed rationale and descriptions of what was done, when, how, how long, why, etc.

4. *Data analysis:* You will describe the proposed analytic process, your rationale for choosing it, and the various steps involved in it, whether graphical, statistical or other.

5. *Trustworthiness of the method:* Discuss issues such as validity, reliability, ethics, and ability to generalise. Discuss also the validity and reliability of the data.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Results

This is where you explain the data you've collected—tables, summary of findings, etc. Analysis goes in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Data

This is where your analysis of the data appears.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

State what you can conclude from the research, the implications of the results and what further research would be advantageous.

References

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References must be formatted using the Harvard system of referencing. The Laureate library resource accessible from your desktop has all the detail you need on this along with many other useful sources.

Appendices

The need for a dissertation to be documented completely to permit independent replication usually requires the inclusion of appendices. Appendices typically contain materials that help to explain what has been done but are either too bulky or too tangential to incorporate in the text. The instructions given to the subjects, consent forms and original instruments or questionnaires are some materials that may appear in appendices.

Presentational Requirements

- You should print your own copy to keep and to verify that your document prints appropriately. You do not need to submit a 'hard' paper copy to the University. Submitting your dissertation in electronic format as a Word document is the usual format.
- Referencing and text format must follow the Harvard citation style; the library Web site has details of this.
- Times New Roman, Arial, or other easily readable fonts are acceptable. Nonstandard typefaces or scripts are not acceptable.
- All text must be double spaced, except tables, which must be single-spaced.
- Font sizes should be 12 point for text and 10 point for footnotes.
- Style should be consistent throughout the document, including preliminaries, end matter, table headings, figures and captions.
- There is no formal limit on file size, but you should use an appropriate resolution. High-resolution photographs add little or nothing to academic value, and you may be asked to produce a smaller version if you have produced an unreasonable size of file. A file size of less than 2 megabytes is usual.

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