How to write a dissertation proposal?

Writing your dissertation is likely to be the most challenging piece of writing you will face during your time at college or university, but it doesn't have to be difficult with all the help that's currently available. Your first port of call should be your tutors, and you can also check out the useful our site guides. This one looks at what is likely to be the first step on your long journey to completed dissertation – writing your dissertation proposal.

The Basics

Your dissertation proposal is not just a document you need to submit by an agreed deadline, it's main purpose is to help you plan and write the full dissertation

Don't start writing your full dissertation until you have had approval for the proposal. Your tutor might suggest making radical changes, so wait for feedback.

Remember that the structure of a research proposal is very different from that of an essay. You don't need to prove your thesis or provide answers to the research questions you will investigate – just give the person reading it an idea what these are. Rather, a research proposal is like a map of the territory you are going to investigate.

The research proposal should: put forward the bones of your argument; explain how your argument will fit together; and give the reader an idea of the methodology you will use.

The proposal should also give the reader an idea of how your research will fit into the wider area.

Ideas about Structure

You should consult with your course leaders and tutors about how you need to structure your dissertation proposal. Some departments will have stringent formats which you will need to stick to, others will be more easy going about the structure you use

However, there are some basics which you are likely to cover in your proposal

In the introduction, you will probably include an overview of the subject you are discussing, picking out the most prominent theories and relevant empirical research. The introduction will also cover the reasons why your dissertation is important, the structure of the proposal, and research aims and objectives.

A literature review overview. Here, you won't go into great detail about the texts you will include, rather you will give a brief description of the currentacademicliterature. This should include identifying gaps in research, the role played by theory, and current research studies. You will also suggest your research questions at the end of the literature review.

If you are planning to do primary research you should also include a short section discussing the methodology you are going to use. You will explain your rationale for the selected methods as well as describing those methods. Ethics and data analysis will also be discussed. Make sure the methods you suggest are reasonable!

Make sure you present the proposal according to any standards your department has.

Don't forget…

Before you submit your proposal, make sure..

It's well presented, structured and formatted as requirements specify, and is free of spelling and grammatical mistakes.

Ask yourself – is this topic importantIs it current

Is the project do-able – is there a clear research aim, is the scope of the project clear, are the timings reasonable, will there be access issues you can't overcome

Is the methodology suitable for your proposal (will it uncover the data you need) and is it properly explained

It's worth getting a friend or someone from your peer group to read through your proposal to check for mistakes you've missed. After all, you can do the same for them!

Bibliography

How to Prepare a Research Proposal

http://www. lums. lancs. ac. uk/phd/PhDproposal/

A guide to writing your masters dissertation

http://www. sml. hw. ac.

uk/postgraduate/downloads/dissertations/dissertationguide. pdf

SouthamptonSolentUniversity

Dissertation proposals & writing dissertations

http://mycourse. solent. ac. uk/mod/book/view. php? id= 2744

DurhamUniversity

How to prepare a research proposal

http://www. dur. ac. uk/theology. religion/respropguide/