

Research Process

Dissertation markers expect the explanation of research process to be included in Methodology chapter. A typical research process comprises the following stages:

1. Selecting the research area. You are expected to state that you have selected the research area due to professional and personal interests in the area and this statement must be true. The importance of this first stage in the research process is often underestimated by many students. If you find research area and research problem that is genuinely interesting to you it is for sure that the whole process of writing your dissertation will be much easier. Therefore, it is never too early to start thinking about the research area for your dissertation.

2. Formulating research aim, objectives and research questions or developing hypotheses. The choice between the formulation of research questions and the development of hypotheses depends on your research approach as it is discussed further below in more details. Appropriate research aims and objectives or hypotheses usually result from several attempts and revisions and these need to be mentioned in Methodology chapter. It is critically important to get your research questions or hypotheses confirmed by your supervisor before moving forward with the work.

3. Conducting the literature review. Literature review is usually the longest stage in the research process. Actually, the literature review starts even before the formulation of research aims and objective; because you have to check if exactly the same research problem has been addressed before. Nevertheless, the main part of the literature review is conducted after the formulation of research aim and objectives. You have to use a wide range of secondary data sources such as books, newspapers, magazines, journals, online articles etc.

4. Selecting methods of data collection. Data collection method(s) need to be selected on the basis of critically analyzing advantages and disadvantages associated with several alternative data collection methods. In studies involving primary data collection, in-depth discussions of advantages and disadvantages of selected primary data collection method(s) need to be included in methodology.

5. Collecting the primary data. Primary data collection needs to be preceded by a great level of preparation and pilot data collection may be required in case of

questionnaires. Primary data collection is not a compulsory stage for all dissertations and you will skip this stage if you are conducting a desk-based research.

6. Data analysis. Analysis of data plays an important role in the achievement of research aim and objectives. Data analysis methods vary between secondary and primary studies, as well as, between qualitative and quantitative studies.

7. Reaching conclusions. Conclusions relate to the level of achievement of research aims and objectives. In this final part of your dissertation you will have to justify why you think that research aims and objectives have been achieved. Conclusions also need to cover research limitations and suggestions for future research.

8. Completing the research. Following all of the stages described above, and organizing separate chapters into one file leads to the completion of the first draft. The first draft of your dissertation needs to be prepared at least one month before the submission deadline. This is because you will need to have sufficient amount of time to address feedback of your supervisor.