

Final Project Report:

An interactive study guide on postgraduate dissertation research and writing

The project was proposed by Dr Sarah Singer (ICWS, UoL) to fulfil a need for dissertation skills guidance across most of the University of London Worldwide Master's programmes, including her course, MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration. The project team consisted of CDE Fellows Dr Matthew Phillpott (lead), Dr Clare Sansom, Dr David Baume, and Professor Stephen Brown, with Tiffany Tupper contributing as a CDE student fellow and Dr Singer working with us.

The Online Guides, Modules, instructor guidance, and downloadable versions can all be found on the **PORT** website under the course title *A practical guide to projects and dissertations*:
<https://port.sas.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=183>

13 September 2021

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Summary

The project, *an interactive study guide on postgraduate dissertation research and writing*, was designed to find out more about student needs and concerns when confronted with a dissertation project at Master's level and then to produce guidance in the forms of PDF guides and online modules, which will help to satisfy these needs.

The immediate audience was to be Master's students and their tutors/lecturers on the various University of London Worldwide courses, but the intention from the start was to provide the guidance material in a form that could be embedded in other UK institutions' programmes of study. The resulting study guides are therefore offered as open educational resources (OER) under the [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) licence.

The project was initially designed as a 1-year project (October 2019-October 2020) but due to severe disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020 and 2021, the project was extended until May 2021.

The work package contained three main phases:

1. Investigation
2. Design
3. Creation and Review

The research was conducted in the first phase, via a survey directed towards programme leads. The design was conducted based on the research findings, starting with an outline and then full drafts of the individual guides. In the end, only 6 of the intended 10 guides were produced, due to time constraints. A follow-up proposal has been submitted so that the remaining four guides can be created as well as build evidence to see if revisions are needed in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. In the final phase, we copy-edited and re-purposed the guides into both online modules and PDF/doc guides.

Introduction

The dissertation assignment forms a large part of most Master's programmes in almost all disciplines in the UK, yet there is often limited guidance and instruction for students on how to complete what is, most likely, the largest and most complicated assignment that they will have completed to date. This makes the dissertation potentially an intimidating component of postgraduate study, possibly serving as a barrier to student progression and successful completion of the programme of study.

A clearer understanding of how we may support students during this process is required. More importantly the guidance must be provided in a format that is accessible and useful. The project *Interactive study guide on postgraduate dissertation research and writing* was commissioned to develop a series of study guides to aid Master's students in London and throughout the UK with undertaking a dissertation project. Specifically, the project was to involve:

1. Work to understand existing practices/guidance across London Higher Education institutions.

2. Identifying disciplinary crossovers and differences.
3. Exploring the nature of dissertation work and the concerns that students have when confronted with such an assignment.

The guides were to be developed in such a way that they can be reused as Open Educational Resources (OERs) by other institutions. It was important, therefore, to not only provide access to them in the form of PDF guides and online modules on an open Moodle course page but also to offer downloadable versions for embedding in other VLEs and LMSs.

The scope and focus of these guides were to be decided based on the results of the investigations into existing guidance and student/staff views, but possible topics suggested were:

- The process of dissertation writing
- Time management skills
- Writing skills
- Citation skills
- Guidance for Literature Reviews
- Source identification
- Research analysis skills
- Consideration of ethics, privacy, copyright
- Formatting and presentation guidance

The team was aware from the start that there are differences between disciplines, especially between STEM and Humanities subjects, which would need to be accounted for. The guides were therefore designed as generic, but with options for individual institutions/departments, to add discipline-specific advice to their copies of the guides. The project team came from a diverse disciplinary background, making it easier to internally assess any issues that might occur in this respect.

Phase 1 – Investigation

In the investigation phase our student fellow, Tiffany Tupper, conducted a survey with programme leads in various Worldwide and School of Advanced Study departments to uncover the gaps, needs, and concerns of students and staff around the dissertation project. The survey was scheduled to be launched in March 2020, but due to a national lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this was delayed until May 2020, with a completion date of June 2020. The survey was sent to 19 selected programme leads, of which we received a 36% response rate.

The resulting report can be found in appendix A.

In summary, the survey highlighted the need for more student peer-to-peer engagement and interactive opportunities in the form of workshops, sessions, and training. The survey found that programme leads believe that identifying and gathering ‘primary and secondary sources, good academic writing, and evidence of thoughtful and sustained arguments’, are of key importance for completing the dissertation project, but that students often struggle with:

- Connecting research to concepts,
- Devising original research questions,
- Writing and composition,
- Research methods, and
- Answering complex questions.

The survey also highlighted that students struggle at the beginning, often finding themselves lost and uncertain how to start. On the question of what kind of online/face-to-face support already exists, the survey suggested that ethics, copyright and privacy, citations, and the writing process are well-catered for, but that time management, source identification, image usage, presentation skills, and developing research questions are less likely to be taught.

Phase 2 – Design

In July 2020 and based on the conclusions of the survey, David Baume compiled a document outlining what the study materials might be and how they should be structured (see appendix 2). The focus of this outline was to introduce or reinforce students with the capabilities that they would require to complete a dissertation project. Each guide would encourage an active and practical approach by the students to tackle a range of skills. The exercises would be designed to guide students through a process or reflection directly relevant to their choice of topic and approach.

The rest of the team provided comments and we discussed as a team changes that we might like to see in David's outline. For the most part, the outline was agreed as the right way forward, but with a few changes:

- Add guidelines for lecturers at relevant points to suggest workshops and other activities that could be conducted face-to-face or in a synchronous online environment. The survey had highlighted the need for more peer-to-peer and live support opportunities.
- Removal of University of London Worldwide specific resources or (where these are openly available) provide alternatives as well. This would allow the study guides to be used by other institutions as an open educational resource. If designed correctly, individual institutions would then be able to add local guidance alongside the general guidance in the guides.

Due to time constraints, only the first six study guides were written. These were produced by David Baume and Matthew Phillpott, with corrections suggested by the team, and were completed by December 2020.

Phase 3 – Creation and review

Between January and May 2021, Clare Sansom and Matthew Phillpott transformed the drafts into finalised study guides and online modules. Clare Sansom copy-edited all 6 modules and the introductory material, whilst Matthew Phillpott re-purposed the copy-edited drafts into the following formats:

- Online modules using the H5P tool on Moodle;
- Workbooks in .docx format (where needed).

These were developed on the PORT Moodle website (<https://port.sas.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=183>). PORT was chosen as it is designed for research training materials for a UK (rather than internal) student audience and does not require a login to access.

In addition, instructor guidance files were produced for modules 1, 3, and 4, and downloadable versions of the guides were offered in .docx, PDF, and H5P formats. A .mbz file was created as a backup of the Moodle course as well, in case of interest in embedding the entire course on other Moodle instances.

Stephen Brown prepared online surveys for modules 1 and 2 which were sent to students on the MA in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration programme and to students on the CDE PGCertHE to gain a range of feedback. Early feedback was used to make changes to the online module approach, most specifically to reduce the inclusion of video, which was found to be less useful than expected. Final feedback was concluded by Friday 21 May 2021.

Eight students provided feedback on module 1, although not all the questions were answered by all the respondents; and one student provided feedback on module 2. According to the responses received, both modules 1 and 2 are successful overall, although module 2 was described as 'too long'. The purpose and outcomes of the Guide as a whole need greater clarification. The video transcripts are very helpful while the videos themselves do not seem to add much. Functionality of the interface on tablet devices in particular needs checking. The learning activities are mostly effective, although in module 2 the respondent reported that the 'So what? question' section was not very helpful because "It left me with more questions than answers." Overall, respondents found the downloadable form feature helpful.

Recommended study times do not seem to be a very reliable guide but, in the case of module 1, several respondents said they did not have the information required to complete the exercise, suggesting that they are not currently engaged in dissertation writing. This may explain the shorter than expected study time in module 1. In the case of module 2, as only one student responded, there is some doubt as to the validity of their comments about the usefulness of the activity section and overload of material. If future funding is obtained there would be plans to repeat and extend the surveying at a more sensible time in the academic year.

The raw results for these surveys can be found in appendix 3.

The timing for feedback was not optimum as no new beginners were starting their dissertation project. If further funding is obtained, the team plans to create another survey to cover all six modules and roll this out at a more appropriate time in the academic year, when new students will be focused on their projects. This survey will be useful for any future developments of the resource.

Conclusions

Whilst the scope, approach, and structure of the dissertation project varies across disciplines at Master's level, the survey results combined with the teams' combined knowledge of their own discipline areas suggests that there are fewer differences than similarities in the capabilities and skills required by students.

This means that research skills-focused study guides and online modules are appropriate interventions to provide additional support in the early stages of the dissertation project. However, as the survey results suggested, what is needed is more synchronous contact between tutors and students and peer-to-peer opportunities to discuss the project, at least about skills and methodologies required to complete it. By including some suggestions for instructors, we hope to have helped highlight that this is an area that students would benefit from during the project period.

The survey results are based on only a small number of responses and cannot, therefore, be taken as conclusive evidence. Additional surveying of Master's students (before, during, and after completion of the dissertation project) would be beneficial to understand their specific needs and concerns. A greater focus on peer-to-peer support would help give students more confidence. Such an approach would need careful consideration and more evidence about what exactly would be useful (rather than annoying or even unwelcome) for students. If further funding is obtained, then these questions will be a key focus for the project team.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Report | Tiffany Tupper

Methodology

This survey of academic programme leads focused on the dissertation writing process in Master's programmes to better understand the varied academic landscape across the University of London. The survey gathered information about current guidance and identified gaps in student support.

Design: The research team determined that survey would be completed by June 2020. Next, the group designed research questions, both multiple choice and open-ended, and vetted them for understanding with a small pilot group of CDE fellows. Finally, the team identified 19 participants from across the University of London system to survey. Participants had 10 days to complete the request.

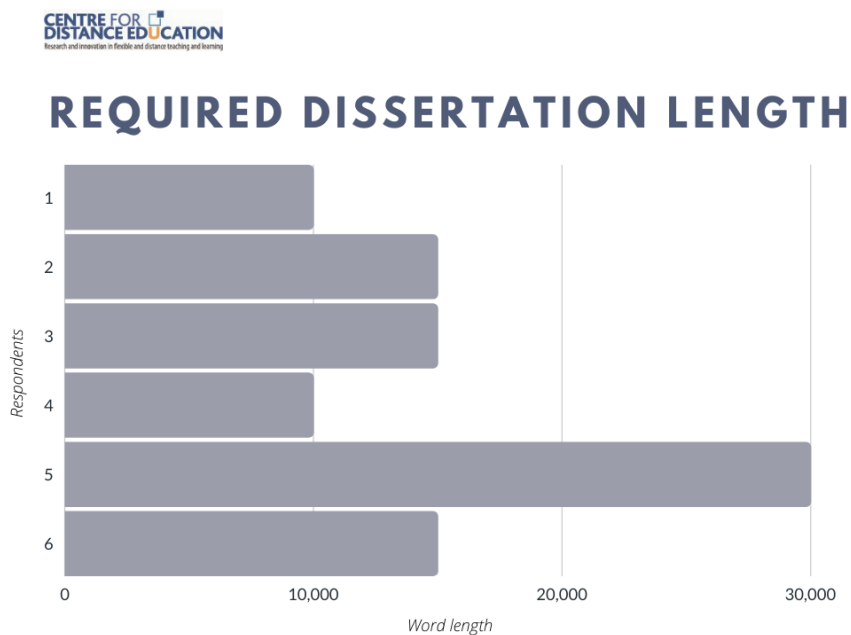
Survey: The survey was comprised of 10 questions and took participants approximately 30 minutes or less to complete. Participants were contacted via email with a unique URL link generated by the University of London's JISC survey program and received two reminder emails.

Results

Questionnaire Completion Rate: 19 participants were invited to complete the survey and seven responded, resulting in a 36% response rate.

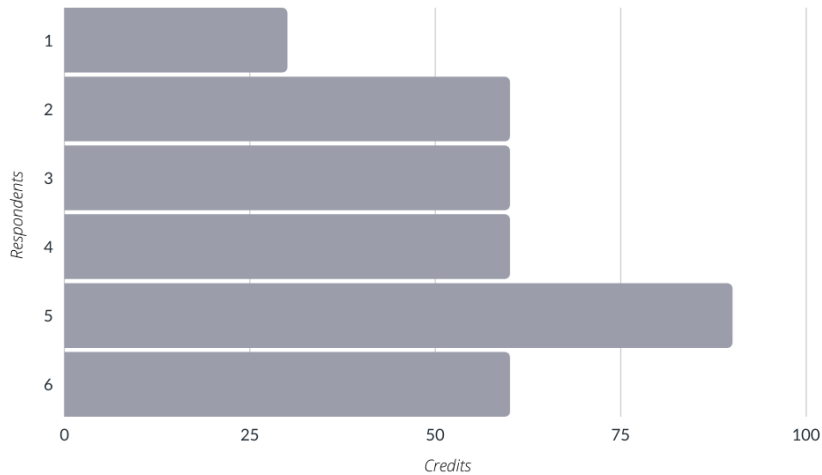
Findings

Length: Of the seven respondents, six noted that a dissertation was required for their programme. The average length of the dissertation is approximately 15,500 words, with a range 10,000 to 30,000 required words.



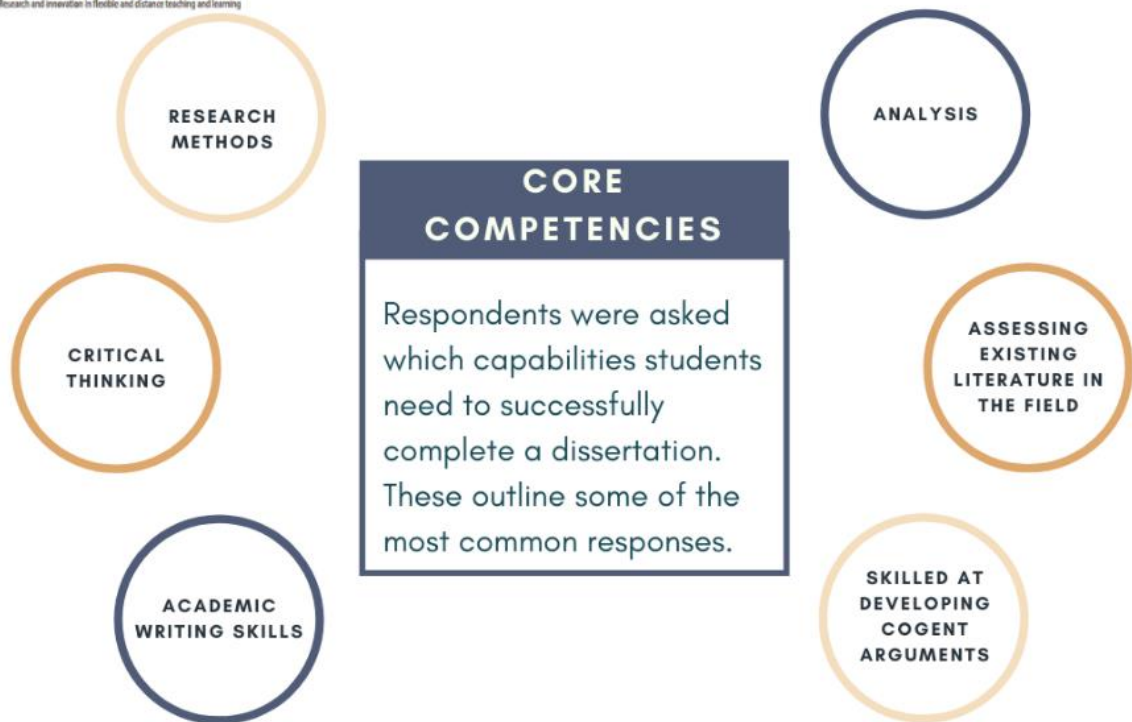
Credits: Four respondents replied that the dissertation was weighted at 60 credits. As outliers, one respondent noted that the dissertation was worth 30 credits, while another said that it accounted for 90 credits. Note that total credits for the whole Master's course varied among respondents, though these were largely unknown given that few participants included this information.

CREDIT COUNT FOR DISSERTATION



Core Capabilities: While respondents represented various departments and schools within the University of London, similar elements emerged regarding the core capabilities students need to successfully complete a master's dissertation.

As outlined below, most respondents emphasised the importance of research skills and critical assessment of existing scholarship including primary and secondary sources, good academic writing, and evidence of thoughtful and sustained arguments. Some respondents also emphasized project planning and problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to craft appropriate recommendations for the complex questions put forward within the dissertation.



Key Challenges: Of the essential capabilities needed to complete the dissertation, most participants alluded to challenges in developing an original line of investigation. Put plainly, one respondent said students may not know where to start. Additionally, some students had difficulty relating empirical research to concepts and frameworks to answer the challenging questions posted by their dissertations.

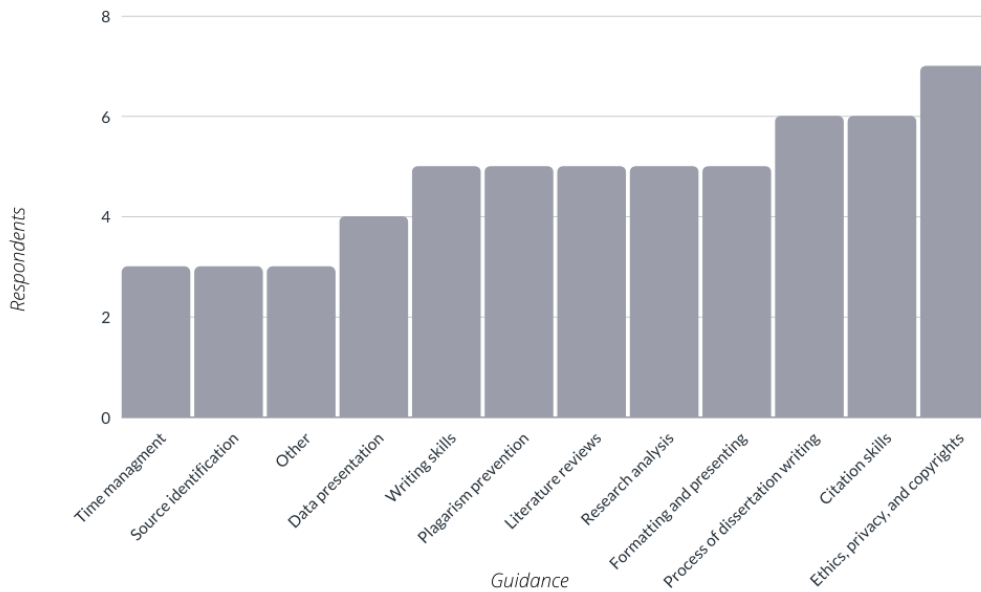


Existing Guidance: Concerning existing guidance for the dissertation process, all respondents reported significant online support for students in their institutions. Additionally, 66% of respondents explicitly noted that students are assigned a dissertation tutor or supervisor. Moreover, 83% of respondents indicated that students were offered a module or workshop for preparation. One respondent, who did not indicate that their program included a dissertation module, included that students participated in eight hours of seminar preparation towards the dissertation.

All respondents noted a multi-pronged combination of online and live approaches to dissertation guidance, including textbooks, formative exercises and assignments, small group meetings, and special skills training courses, though support appeared to be skewed towards online resources. While all respondents reported that students received one-one-on support, 71% of respondents also noted that students have access to online resources.

Topical Areas of Study: Respondents largely concurred on the major areas of guidance provided to students. 100% of respondents agreed that students were informed on ethics, copyright, and privacy. A further 85% of respondents said students received training on the dissertation writing process and proper source citation. Conversely, only 43% of respondents noted that students received guidance on time management, source identification, or other areas such as image usage, presentation skills, and developing research questions.

AREAS OF GUIDANCE



Suggestions for New Resources: Respondents suggested new resources for students centred on interactive opportunities in the form of workshops sessions, and training. Nearly all recommendations suggested more peer-to-peer engagement, possibly in online learning communities, and additional live sessions with professors to discuss writing skills, literature reviews, and research methods.

While the survey results suggested that students have ample access to online resources, the respondents' comments implied that students lack collaborative, hands-on opportunities to learn new skills, dialogue in real time with colleagues, and informally address concerns about the dissertation process.

A melding of the ample online curriculum with enriching, live exchanges may enhance the progression of dissertation writing. A further area for research could consider how improved interaction among students and faculty affects the writing experience.



Intended overall learning outcome for the study materials

Students will have planned and undertaken a research project that demonstrably:

- Meets the requirements (academic, professional and / or regulatory) of their particular course of study and
- Conforms to good academic / professional practice, in their discipline and more widely

Starting points

Achieving this overall outcome is likely to require some, possibly all of the outcomes listed in the section below, and possibly others.

It is likely that students starting their research project or dissertation will already have successfully developed some of these capabilities, but possibly not others. Different students are likely to have developed, and not developed, different capabilities, depending on their previous studies and academic and / or professional experience.

How to deal with different starting points?

An early stage in any student's project or dissertation process may be for them to identify the particular capabilities that:

1. They have already successfully developed and demonstrated, and
2. They are additionally likely to need in order to succeed with the project or dissertation

A simple test instrument will be developed to help students to identify both of these sets of capabilities at the start of their studies. This will help them to identify their development needs, hence how to select from the suite of materials available. Wherever feasible this test instrument should ask them to demonstrate the capability, rather than simply stating whether or not they think they have achieved it. People sometimes misjudge their capabilities.

This test will only provide guidance. There will be no problem if students want to revisit topics in which they already have some capability. However we should discourage them from skipping over topics in which they have little capability.

There is no need or expectation of the students to study each of the topics that they need right at the start of their studies. We should rather encourage them to study what they need when they need it, that is, when they will have both the opportunity and the need to apply it.

A 1:1 or small group conversation with a tutor or supervisor on the results of this test would be valuable, to help each student to further clarify and prioritise their development needs.

Component or contributory outcomes

1 Clarifying the parameters within which the research project or dissertation is to be taken

You need to have and maintain a clear concise accessible written account of the main parameters within which the project is to be undertaken. These will include:

- Essential dates, schedules and in particular deadlines for each stage of the work
- Learning outcomes of the project or dissertation whose achievement you need to demonstrate, along with assessment criteria, marking schemes etc.
- Any requirements or recommendations on choice of topic, process, content, methodology...
- Requirements on structure, headings, length, presentation, referencing and any other significant factors for interim (if required) and final project report
- Contact details for academic, pastoral, technical and administrative support
- Anything else which impinges on your proper undertaking of the project and may affect success or failure in assessment

Guidance, a workbook and opportunities for interaction will be provided. An active system that provides reminders of key dates, deadlines etc. would be valuable.

2 Identifying the research question, topic and title

By the scheduled date you should have identified the research question you are going to tackle, and the topic and title of the proposed study.

(You should have completed, and received and used feedback on, a draft of this, comfortably ahead of the deadline.)

Guidance, a workbook and opportunities for interaction will be provided.

3 Identifying methodologies

Informed by the research question, by the norms of study in your discipline, and by any specific guidance provided by your course, you need to select and / or devise one or more appropriate methodologies for each stage of the process.

This is a vast topic. Students can feel deluged with information. A concise early-stage, possibly interactive, guide on issues in and approaches to the selection of methodologies across the range of disciplines that may be involved in the study would be a useful front-end to the necessary large amount of information available on methodologies.

Guidance, a workbook and opportunities for interaction will be provided.

4 Using and managing sources and information

Academic work requires these information capabilities:

1. Locating information from a reference

2. Referencing and citing sources
3. Locating sources on a particular topic or issue
4. Critically reviewing both sources and information
5. Critically using information
6. Managing information, for example through the use of reference management software

Students typically learn the first two of these during undergraduate studies. (In distance learning courses they may not learn the first one, as references are often provided via links.)

These six do not form any particular sequence or hierarchy – they are an interconnecting network of capabilities.

As students are increasingly encouraged to use a wide range of appropriate sources and media, and as such sources and media are fundamental to some disciplines, advice and guidance need to extend well beyond conventional written materials.

The main principles and practices of the six capabilities remain the same, but there are some differences from subject to subject.

University of London Worldwide Library guides, information, and a workbook on managing sources and information will be provided, along with opportunities for interaction.

5 Defining and prioritising tasks and managing time

From early in their studies, and with growing sophistication and accuracy, and making necessary adaptations for changing personal and professional circumstances, students will be able to:

- Identify the principal tasks and the next task involved in doing the work
- Allocate an appropriate amount of time to the task
- Schedule and prioritise the task within their overall programme of work and life
- Discover their most effective and practical working schedule
- Adapt tasks and schedules in the light of experience

Guidance, a workbook and opportunities for interaction will be provided.

6 Conducting a literature review

A review of the literature; that is, a critical summary, analysis and overview of what is already published that may be relevant to the intended study, and an account of its possible relevance; is a common and often necessary feature of research projects and dissertations.

At an early stage in the process, students will develop and demonstrate the capability to conduct and write up a literature review.

Guidance, a workbook and opportunities for interaction will be provided.

Note: These six components comprise the set of modules that have been developed through the initial project and that are currently (summer 2021) available on the project website. The four components below (7-10) are earmarked for development if Part 2 funding becomes available.

7 Data analysis

[This section is likely to be so subject dependent that I cannot imagine a generic account of it. Suggestions welcome!]

8 Argument and critical thinking, relating theory to practice

This may be considered the academic heart of the research project or dissertation.

Students need to be able to, in ways appropriate to the discipline being studied, do some of these things:

- Identify important work by individual authors relevant to the field of study.
- Identify, illustrate, source, and then critique coherent clusters of knowledge, data, ways of thinking, approaches to practice, etc.
- Identify significant similarities and differences between these clusters.
- Arrive at, state, justify, and then critique, a particular position, a particular approach, a particular chain of reasoning (perhaps using new data they have collected), perhaps leading to a particular conclusion, or at any rate to an interim conclusion.
- Interpret data / practice in relation to theories / models, identifying and seeking to explain the respects in which the data / practice do and do not illustrate or support the theories / models. Work in both directions, from data / practice to theory / model and vice versa. Perhaps begin to identify new theories / models.
- Answer the research question, with a commentary on both your current view of the appropriateness of your question and on the adequacy of the answer. You are allowed to say “if I were doing this project again, I would...” as well as “If I had more time now, I would ...”
- Identify and justify further useful questions arising from the work.
- Perhaps identify, collect, collate and analyse new data demonstrably relevant to the research question.
-

Guidance, a workbook and opportunities for interaction will be provided.

As with other items on this list, departments or courses may be able to provide more subject-specific accounts of what is involved in making arguments, thinking critically, relating to theory and practice, and other important issues in the discipline.

If it can be done, it would also be helpful to relate some of these aspects of academic work in the discipline to the marking scheme for the dissertation.

9 Writing, editing and presenting a dissertation or project report

In the process of conducting the research and writing the report, students will develop and demonstrate the capabilities of:

- Devising a clear and appropriate structure for the report, within any guidance provided by the course.
- Writing clear, engaging, un-pompous, scholarly prose that communicates the information and ideas that the author intends to communicate to the intended audience(s).
- Reviewing and editing text, quite possibly with acknowledged external help, to ensure that the report is of high quality.
- Meeting all of the requirements specified by the course and the institution for the report.
- Also, making presentations on the work using a variety of current media – perhaps including PowerPoint, audio, video
- Undertaking live and online discussions on the work

10 Embodying inclusive and ethical practice

The following should be demonstrated:

- If prior ethical approval for the work was required, this has been obtained.
- Proper citing, referencing and sourcing, as described in item 4 above.
- No plagiarism or collusion
- Diversity in selection of ideas and sources.
- Accessibility of the report to those with disabilities.
- Explicit attention to ethical issues in the defining, undertaking and presentation of the work.

Originality (and quality) in research projects and dissertations

A research project or dissertation should include some appropriate degree of originality.

It should go beyond what Baume (2013) calls ‘local originality’, which may be expressed as “I had never seen or heard that thought until I expressed it.” Originality should not be confined to recalling, and perhaps slightly reworking, ideas that are already out there in the literature and well known. The work at Master’s level should go beyond that.

On the other hand it need not aspire to what Baume (ibid) calls ‘global originality’, as in, perhaps rather melodramatically, “That thought has never before been thought in the history of the universe.”

Originality in a project or dissertation probably implies something in between, perhaps something like: “This idea had not previously been published in a form and location which was reasonably accessible to the current author of the idea”.

So some element of originality is required – perhaps significant data not previously available, existing data interpreted in an unfamiliar and productive way, a fresh perspective on things already known, a fresh critique and /or application of existing ideas and practices.

There are two dimensions in play here. Originality, and quality.

We have tried to suggest what 'appropriate originality' might mean in the context of a research or dissertation project. But originality alone isn't enough, as any parent of a two-year-old artist can attest.

'Quality', as ever, is more elusive. But we need to try. 'Conceptually and/or practically useful' is one useful indicator of quality. A useful, or at any rate interesting, advance in thinking and in practice.

Originality and quality seem to be intimately connected.

Finally, on originality as all other matters – follow any local guidance!

Pedagogy

A simple common pedagogy is suggested. Some of this is already included or described in previous sections, but the materials will need to go beyond what is said above.

Main elements of the pedagogy are:

- Describe, explain and illustrate the overall learning outcomes, as above. Of course, attainment of these can only be demonstrated at the end of the Masters programme.
- Similarly describe, explain and illustrate each of the component learning outcomes. Some of these can be demonstrated sooner than others.
- Provide a way in which the student can identify whether / to what extent they can already achieve this component outcome, and thereby they can plan which component outcomes they do and do not need to work on.
- In the case of outcomes, they do need to work on, help them to decide where in the process of their project or dissertation it would be productive for them to work on this outcome. Encourage them to put this information into their study diary.
- Encourage students to keep their learning needs under review. Projects, to some extent at least, can acquire a life of their own, and change.
- For each component, provide a short clear sequence of learning activities which will lead students to achieve the outcome.
- Back up these activities with any necessary information, resources and guidance.
- Make maximum use of good resources that are already available. Do not write new resources unless this is absolutely necessary.
- Encourage, indeed require, students to apply what they are learning to their own particular research project or dissertation, at every stage, in every activity. This will make their studies much more useful. They are probably not interested in becoming librarians – but they do need to be able to find, use, and properly reference, literature and other sources. They are probably not interested in becoming full-time project managers – but they do need to be able to manage their own current project. And so on. Relevance is all.
- It will aid students' learning if there is a discussion forum associated with each component outcome, where they can compare notes and information. (Not every student will be working on every component outcome at the same time, but asynchronous interaction can still be useful.)

- A forum for all project or dissertation students in the department will also be useful. Research, of course, can be a lonely business. Even when working on different projects and different topics within their discipline, students are still facing some common issues. A shared space where they can work on these common issues, or just a chat, will be appreciated.
- If resources allow, provide feedback to students on their performance in the final submitted learning activity for each component outcome. If not, offer criteria against which they can judge their responses.

One aim of this pedagogic process is to provide the maximum of relevant and applied learning whilst using a minimum of both student and staff time.

Concluding comment

Some of these component outcomes are expressed in general and abstract terms. They additionally need:

- Guidance on what these outcomes mean in the particular discipline being studied, and
- Examples, to bring them to life

Acknowledgement

My thanks to Emily Wilson, recent Masters graduate, for feedback and suggestions based on her dissertation experience.

References

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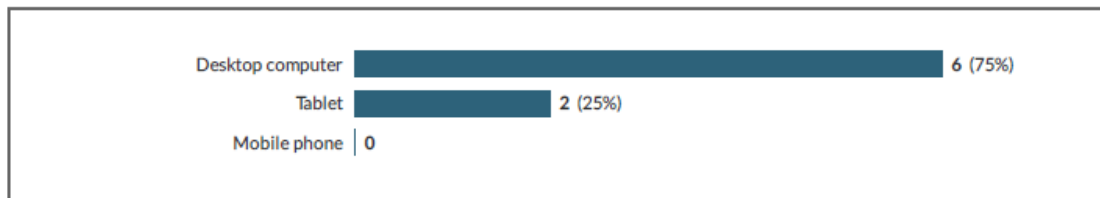
Trowler, P., 2015. *Writing Doctoral Project Proposals*. 2nd ed. Lancaster: Paul Trowler.

Comment: The Trowler booklets are about doctoral studies. Nonetheless, scaled down, the advice provided there is very useful for projects at Masters level.

18 July 2020

Module 1 responses

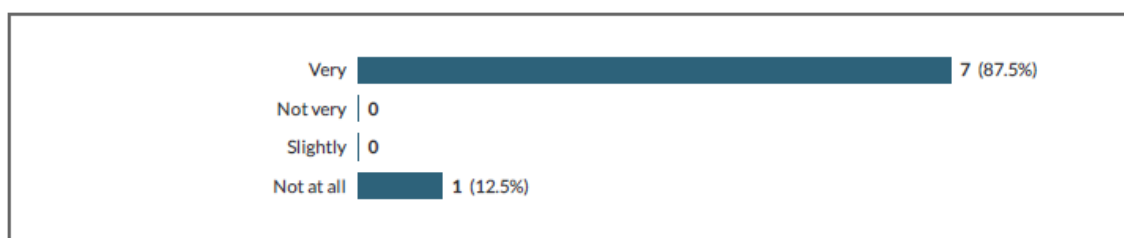
1. What platform are you using to study this guide?



2. From just the Guide home page, what do you think you will be able to learn from this guide?

Showing first 5 of 7 responses	
I expect of an assessment but later understood its more of restudying the course handbook/manual	735626-735617-76849937
From this guide I will learn the process and steps involved in developing a project/dissertation	735626-735617-77207795
Using and managing sources and information	735626-735617-77221444
I think it's got potential to provide a very useful handrail for the novice researcher like me.	735626-735617-77281749
Plan for my dissertation.	735626-735617-77281904

3. How helpful do you think this Guide will be for you?

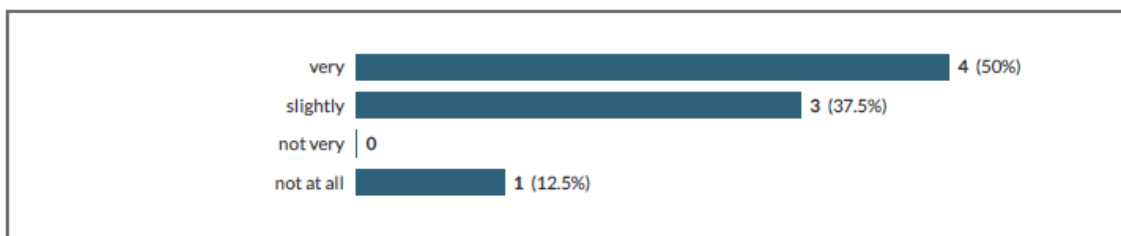


3a. Please explain your answer.

Showing all 5 responses	
It gives me the opportunity to restudy the course handbook/manual	735626-735617-

	76849937
It gave me a brand idea of what to expect from the course	735626-735617-77207795
because of corona and other issues i have to do some changes in myresearch. this guide will re center my thoughts	735626-735617-77221444
It breaks down what feels like quite a challenging chunk of work, andassists with planning.	735626-735617-77281749
As i prepare to start writing my dissertation, i hope to get good insights onwhat i should consider as i develop one	735626-735617-77516972

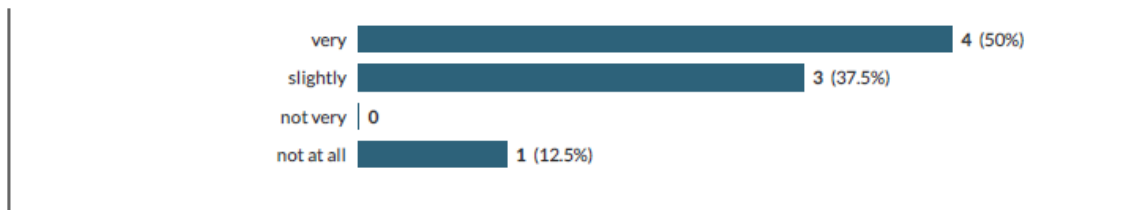
4. How easy was it to navigate through the module pages?



4a. Please explain your answer

Showing all 3 responses	
it was so easy to navigate using the arrows top and bottom	735626-735617-76849937
<p>I'm terrible with IT- so that won't help. So I rely on highly intuitive programming that is very clear on what to press, and when to do x or y.</p> <p>I found it a little challenging to work out what to press for the next bit ofwork (eg when it said "try this next exercise" I wasn't sure what that referred to or where to find it).</p> <p>The slides section wasn't particularly easy to navigate slide by slide on thetablet. I kept jumping several slides along until I worked it out.</p>	735626-735617-77281749
The guidelines to moving to the next steps were very clear and leading tothe right content.	735626-735617-77516972

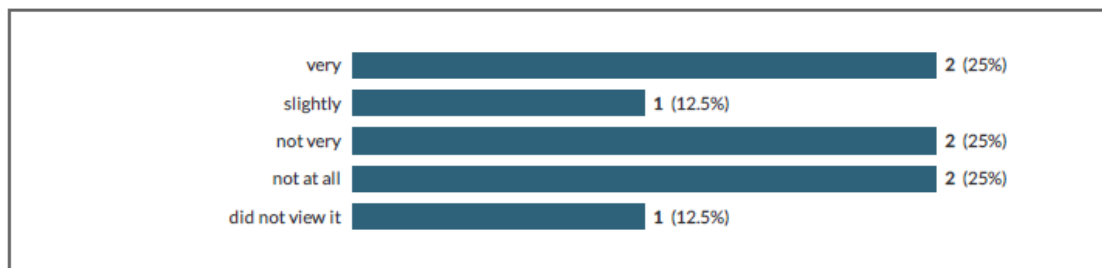
5. How helpful did you find the 'Overview' section?



5a. Please explain your answer.

Showing all 2 responses	
Useful	735626-735617-77281749
it is well summarized and has a good highlight on the focus of the course	735626-735617-77516972

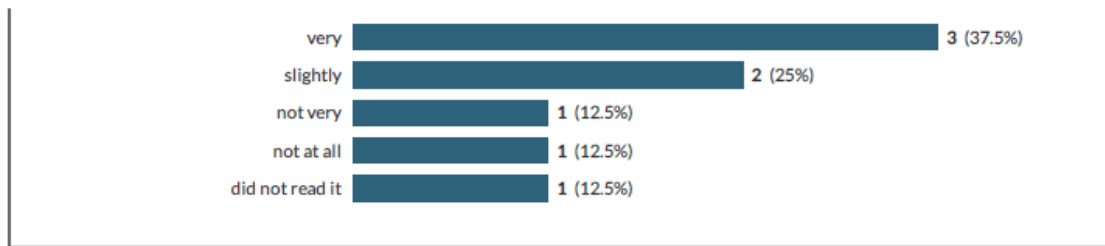
6. How helpful did you find the 'Introduction' video?



6a. Please explain your answer.

Showing all 5 responses	
filling your work means a lot and can be revisit any time no matter howlong. (achieve)	735626-735617-76849937
the subtitles goes very quickly. have to stop it to mage to read it.	735626-735617-77221444
This was good but just needed a clear link to what to do next to access theexercise.	735626-735617-77281749
It's not necessary to use the video. Providing the information in text isbetter.	735626-735617-77391892
My network was skipping. Could not view it.	735626-735617-77516972

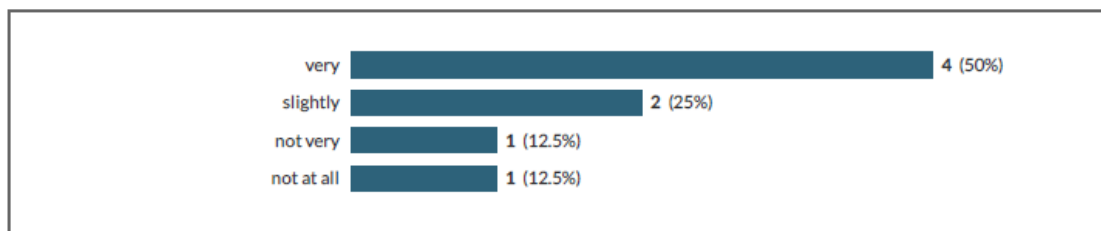
7. How helpful did you find the 'Introduction' video transcript?



7a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response	
gives a good overview of what is covered in the course, clearly summarised	735626-735617-77516972

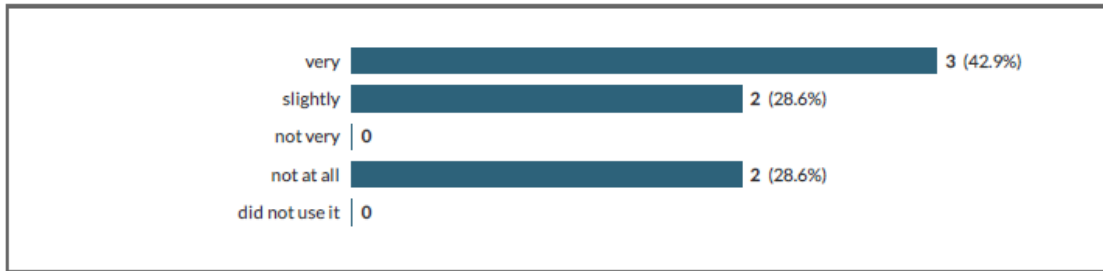
8. How helpful did you find the 'Activity' section?



8a. Please explain your answer.

Showing all 3 responses	
This was good to get some thoughts down and create a key reference point	735626-735617-77281749
Not able to all of the information required.	735626-735617-77281904
It gives the learner opportunity to practice the session. I could easily tell where am not yet doing well	735626-735617-77516972

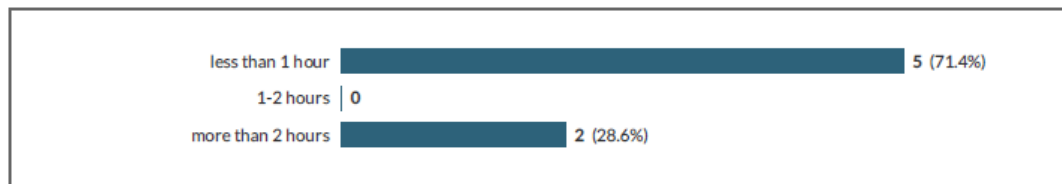
9. How helpful did you find the downloadable Module 1 'Clarifying the parameters' form?



9a. Please explain your answer.

Showing all 3 responses	
was not able to answer most of the questions	735626-735617-77207795
I tried it out on the tablet but my text didn't seem to come through. I would have used this on a PC if I was doing this for real.	735626-735617-77281749
the different versions provided made it easy for me to download in a version that was best suiting.	735626-735617-77516972

10. How long did it take you to complete the module?



11. How did you study the module? For example, did you complete all the sections in one sitting? Did you study them in the suggested order?

Showing first 5 of 7 responses	
not in one sitting but in two sitting	735626-735617-76849937
Completed the sections in one sitting	735626-735617-77207795
no, i did not study them in suggested order or all the sections in on sitting.	735626-735617-77221444
All in one sitting, but as the text didn't quite work on the form I didn't spend much time getting the form right,	735626-735617-77281749

One sitting on my laptop. (Laptop should be added to question one of this survey by the way.)	735626-735617-77281904
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12. Did anything about the module surprise you?

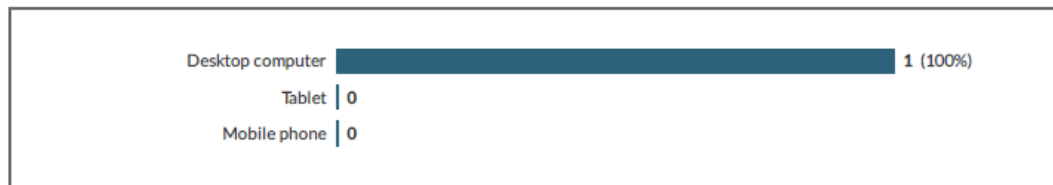
Showing first 5 of 6 responses	
not at all	735626-735617-76849937
No	735626-735617-77207795
no	735626-735617-77221444
No	735626-735617-77281904
No	735626-735617-77391892

13. Do you have suggestions for improvements to the module?

Showing first 5 of 6 responses	
No suggestions	735626-735617-76849937
The module could be more detailed and explanatory with more examples and active question. It seems vague and generalised.	735626-735617-77207795
it looks great	735626-735617-77221444
Just keep the flow of the module by keeping buttons very clear and simple.	735626-735617-77281749
Indicate what questions students fill in the form in the start page of the activity.	735626-735617-77391892

Module 2 responses

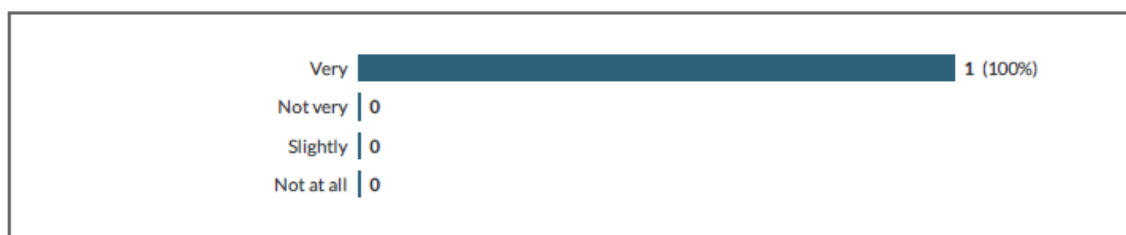
1. What platform are you using to study this guide?



2. From just the Guide home page, what do you think you will be able to learn from this guide?

Showing 1 response	
How best to approach my dissertation in totality.	743838-743829-78487449

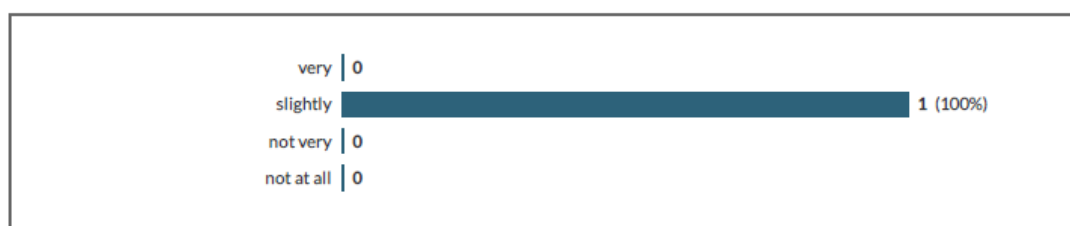
3. How helpful do you think this guide will be for you?



3a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response	
The information contained is quite relevant and considered very useful inapproaching Dissertation/Thesis	743838-743829-78487449

4. How easy was it to navigate through the module pages?



4a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

Navigating through the module pages was a bit cumbersome.

743838-743829-78487449

5. How helpful did you find the 'Introduction' video?



5a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

I could not open the videos due to connectivity problems so I relied on the transcripts which were clear enough.

743838-743829-78487449

6. How helpful did you find the 'Introduction' video transcript?



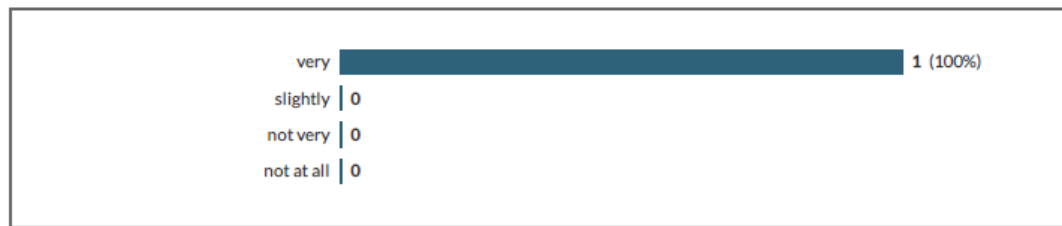
6a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

From the onset, it gave an insight into what to expect from the module which was quite useful.

743838-743829-78487449

7. How helpful did you find the 'Doing this module' section?



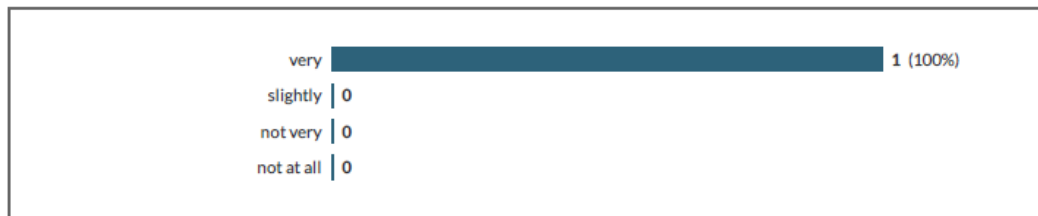
7a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

It helped to clarify the difference between "research question" and "hypothesis"

743838-743829-78487449

8. How helpful did you find the 'Identifying a topic' section?



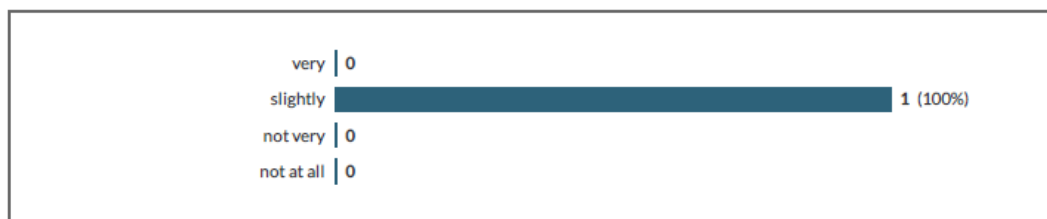
8a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

It helped to clarify ideas about arriving at a dissertation topic. Equally actually working through the process, made the feeling that I actually "own" the idea very energizing.

743838-743829-78487449

9. How helpful did you find the 'Identifying a research question or hypothesis' section?



9a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

A bit confusing at first, but clearer as one worked through.

743838-743829-78487449

9b. How helpful did you find the 'Quiz' section?



9bi. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

It helped to align thought on how best to frame the research topic

743838-743829-78487449

10. How helpful did you find the 'Making a choice' section?



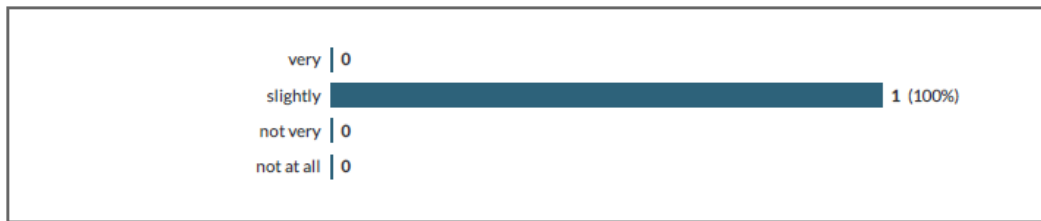
10a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

The explanatory notes in arriving at a choice of the topic were not quite clear

743838-743829-78487449

11. How helpful did you find the 'First draft' section?



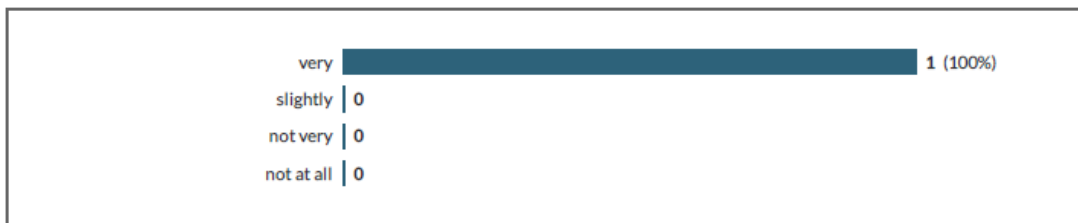
11a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

Maybe because I was working alone, arriving at this point was not easy
.....took a lot of thought and brain searching.

743838-743829-78487449

12. How helpful did you find the 'Second draft' section?



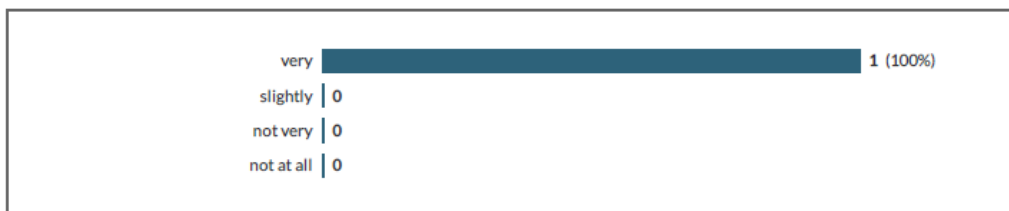
12a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

At this point, the concept being transmitted was easy to grasp.

743838-743829-78487449

13. How helpful did you find the 'Final draft' section?



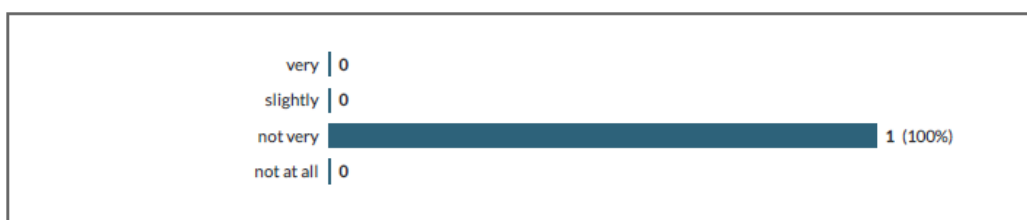
13a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

It was easy to work through, with the example provided to guide.

743838-743829-78487449

14. How helpful did you find the 'So what? Question' section?



14a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

It left me with more questions than answers. [743838-743829-78487449](#)

15. How helpful did you find the downloadable Module 2 'Identifying your research project' form?

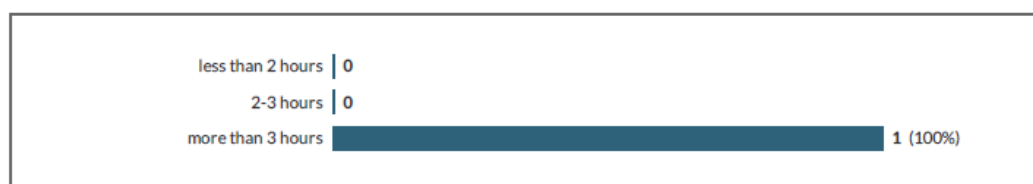


15a. Please explain your answer.

Showing 1 response

Can't say anything here because I did not use it, though downloaded it [743838-743829-78487449](#)

16. How long did it take you to complete the module?



17. How did you study the module? For example, did you complete all the sections in one sitting? Did you study them in the suggested order?

Showing 1 response

I studied the modules in one sitting.

743838-743829-78487449

18. Did anything about the module surprise you?

Showing 1 response

Under ideal conditions, for a module that is to help me write my dissertation, it contained too much information and was too long.

743838-
743829-
78487449

19. Do you have suggestions for improvements to the module?

Showing 1 response

Please, can the volume of information contained be reduced, while retaining the essential.
In summary, the information contained very useful but too long, and over-loaded.

743838-743829-
78487449