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## **Assignments and Dissertations**

Some Practical Guidelines on  
How to Write Assignments and Dissertations and Use Key Resources

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### **Writing Assignments**

The title page should list the assignment question which has been set. It should state the Module title, your name and student number. The following page should be the table of contents.

The assignment should have an introduction, a body and then the conclusion. The introduction should clearly state what your definition is of the topic and its description. It should be written in a way that it arouses interest and should be informative.

The body should contain the development of a particular point of view, your views on the topic; you should compare and contrast different theories, opinions and ideas, for example. Present your own arguments and beliefs about a topic.

Analyse, evaluate and give your own opinion and present evidence. You can mention the discoveries that you have made whilst researching the topic. Has your thinking changed as a result of this research? What is your standpoint now after learning about the subject in detail?

The conclusion presents your findings of the study of a particular topic and you may suggest how and what can be done to make improvements and conclude your investigations.

### **Literature Review**

A literature review surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources such as dissertations, conference proceedings relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory. It provides a description, summary and critical evaluation of beach work. The purpose is to offer an overview of significant literature published on a topic.

It should be an overview of a subject, issue and theory under consideration and state the objectives of the literature review.

### **Quantitative Data**

This is based on meanings derived from numbers such as in tables, diagrams and statistical methods. The emphasis is on measurement and testing and numbers are involved.

## **Qualitative Data**

The meaning is expressed in words and the collection of data uses a variety of formats and is not standardised. This data is analysed by means of identification of concepts and descriptions.

It can be in the form of an interview, through observation such as what people do and say, it can be through participant observation where the researcher becomes totally involved in the situation which is being researched. It can be through nonparticipant observation where the person is detached and does not take part at all.

It can be through the use of a case study of an organisation, which may include quantitative questionnaires in conjunction with descriptive evidence such as interviews and observations.

## **Data Collection**

Techniques: Surveys carried out through questionnaires and interviews or both, and sampling.

## **Critical Thinking and Analysis**

Critical thinking is when you compare and contrast theories with each other, or when you try to work out gaps or flaws in those theories.

You have to find information, analyse alternatives, evaluate the alternatives in relation to your aims and requirements and reach some conclusion. All of these processes are part of critical thinking; thus, critical thinking is an activity you are familiar with from everyday life, it is not something isolated to your university work. You have to question, identify trends and provide evidence to support your thinking and ideas.

For example if you are choosing a holiday say to Tunisia, you look at websites of the travel companies which offer special deals, you compare the fares that you need to pay, you check if airport transfers are included, does the travel agent offer insurance cover, are any excursions included in the price and so on and so forth. Is it half-board, is the hotel located well for transport connections, does a tour guide come in to give tips about the area etc. This is a form of critical thinking.

Critical thinking comprises:

- Interpretation – explain the meaning of the concept, the idea, the theory
- Analysis – detailed examination of the topic, dissection, scrutiny
- Evaluation – assess, appraise
- Inference – draw a conclusion, deduce, surmise
- Explanation – define, demonstrate, describe
- Self-regulation – adapt to requirements
- Using evidence impartially – be objective, unbiased, balanced