Contents

Introduction 1

Preparation and planning **7**

1 'Where do I start?' 9
2 What makes a good dissertation or research project? 19
3 Project manage your dissertation 31
4 Managing yourself for the task 43
5 Using time effectively 51
6 Working with your supervisor 57

Developing your proposal **61**

7 Understanding the assignment brief 63
8 Choosing your topic and title 67
9 Literature search and review 77
10 Principles of good research 89
11 Methodological approaches 97
12 Ethical considerations 107
13 Writing the research proposal 113

Conducting your research **119**

14 The evidence base 121
15 Working with participants 129
16 Experiments 137
17 Observations 143
18 Surveys and questionnaires 151
19 Interviews 157
20 Case studies 163
21 Interpreting your findings 169

Writing it up **177**

22 Your writing strategy 179
23 Getting the structure right 185
24 Fine-tuning your writing 197
25 Viva exams 203

Final considerations 209
References 210
Index 212

Chapter 1
'Where do I start?'

'Where do I start?' This tends to be first question students ask.

The answer depends, to some extent, on whether you have decided yet what you want to research.

Know what you want to research?

If you do, then it can be tempting to launch straight in to collecting the evidence. However, before doing so, it is worth pausing to consider:

- a range of topic options, just to be sure you have made the right choice
- the distinct skills and demands of larger-scale projects and how to manage these.

(See *Laying good foundations*, next page.)

Not yet decided on a topic?

If you do not yet know what you want to research, then don't be too concerned; it is not unusual. Start by gaining a sense of the process. Chapter 9 provides steps to help you select a topic.

The 3 basics

Research is sometimes summarised as three basic components:

1 **A question**
2 **Methods of arriving at an answer**
3 **The answer.**

Although this summary of the basics conceals the complexities of research, it can be helpful to return to these building blocks to help clarify the task and refocus your thinking if you start to lose direction.

Plus 2 more …

In addition to the 3 basics above, it is useful to add two more.

4 **Bringing out significance.** Why does it matter? What is the relevance? So what?
5 **Writing it up.** Communicating your research to others and opening it up to scrutiny.

Laying good foundations

It is generally better to lay solid foundations upon which to build your research project, rather than jumping in without thinking it through. Below, are some key aspects to consider.

Gain a sense of the 'end product'

Before starting, develop a feel for what is expected as the 'end product'. You are then more likely to produce it. (See Chapters 2 and 7.)

Gain a sense of the overall process

Getting from A to B to C

This has many advantages.

- You'll know what to expect.
- It helps you to take charge of the process and make it more coherent for yourself.
- It will help you to see where specific tasks fit into the whole.
- It helps you schedule tasks in the best order.

(See pages 35–6.)

Build your understanding in stages

The overall process can seem complicated, as there are many aspects to consider. Build your sense of the process in stages, working from the basic building blocks to a deeper understanding of a multi-layered process.

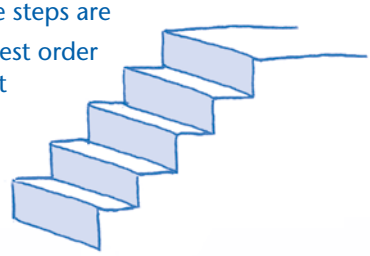
- Start with the 3 + 2 basics (page 9).
- Gain an overview of the tasks (page 11).
- Develop a more detailed overview.
- Start to consider the complexities associated with the basic processes (page 13).
- Achieve a more detailed sense of what each of these tasks entails (page 12).
- Gain a grasp of the project planning process (Chapter 3).

Sort out the steps

Tasks do not necessarily fall into sequence. As you can see from the overview of the task on page 11, you will be starting some new tasks before you finish others.

This means it is important to:

- clarify what the steps are
- work out the best order for your project
- use checklists and charts to keep yourself organised.



Plan your time – as soon as possible

- Start work on the assignment now: don't wait till near the deadline as this always comes around much faster than people expect.
- Schedule the whole process in detail. (See Chapter 3.)

Consider the self-management aspects

You will be studying largely on your own, so knowing how to get yourself through the process is an essential consideration – and one that is often underestimated. Give thought to how you will manage such aspects as solitude, motivation, maintaining momentum, gaining inspiration and keeping in touch with others. (See pages 43–50.)

Overview of the task

Chapter 3 looks at managing your assignment as a research project. It details the process as a set of steps to manage. At this point, it is useful to gain a sense of the four main parts of the task and when you would undertake each in relation to the others.

On the left, below, are the four main parts of the project task, from planning to writing up. The numbers in brackets indicate how these relate to the '3 + 2 basics' described on page 9.

On the right is a broad outline of how each of the four overarching parts relates to the others in terms of scale and timing. Each is also mapped against a start-to-finish line to indicate when, across the timeline of your research project or dissertation, you would be working on that part.

Part **Start ..... Finish**

Preparation

Get yourself organised to do a good job and to manage the practical realities.

Preparation and planning

Developing the proposal

Work out the question and how to answer it (1, 2, 4, 5).

Developing the proposal

Conducting the research

Follow your proposal to arrive at an answer (2 and 3).

Pilot

Conducting the research

Writing it up

Report to others the answer to your question, how you found out, and its significance (1–5).

Writing it up

Overview of the task

Below is an overview of what is involved in a typical research-based assignment. Tasks are organised broadly according to the four 'parts' into which this book is divided. It is likely that, as you work, you will move back and forwards between the various tasks, rather than following them in a simple sequence.

Prepare and plan ↓	Develop the proposal ↓	Conduct research ↓	Write up/Present ↓
Don't dive straight in: orientate yourself to the task from start to finish	Conduct your literature search; focus your reading and thinking towards potential topics	Fine-tune your thinking, research question and methods; raise major changes with your supervisor	Write your introduction – what questions did your research set out to answer and why?
Get a feel for the end product and process: read examples from your field	Consider the practicalities of each potential topic	Set up the conditions needed for gathering your data	Finalise your literature review, indicating how your research builds on what has gone before
Get to grips with the project management aspect of the assignment	Narrow your focus to select a specific topic; formulate research questions or hypotheses	Collect your raw materials, such as documents, texts, data	Write up your methods – what exactly did you do to arrive at your results?
Know your assignment brief inside out	Design your research: how will you answer the question or test your hypotheses?	Keep accurate records of what you do	Set out your results: summarise findings in words and in tables or diagrams if appropriate
Survey the field; find an area that interests you; generate options so that you have choices	Review the literature, writing this up. Read broadly, keeping details for citations and references	Keep accurate records of what happens/what you find out; compare these with previous research or theory	Discuss what you found, analysing it critically; draw out its significance and any emerging issues
Build your relationship with your supervisor	Refine your question and decide on your approach and methods; ensure the project is feasible, ethical and meets the brief	Organise your material or data so that you can see what you have found out	Draw conclusions, synthesising your findings with your understanding of previous research
Self-management: give serious consideration to how you will keep yourself on track	Prepare materials and record forms; pilot your methods and materials, if relevant	Refer back to previous research to make sense of your findings	Write the wrap-around sections such as the abstract, references, and appendices
Organise support: for ideas, social contact, and motivation	Discuss a draft of your proposal with your supervisor	Select the most salient findings and examples	Fine tune your drafts until your assignment flows well
Start to schedule everything	Finalise your proposal; submit for formal approval if required	Set out your findings so that the salient points stand out clearly	Prepare for a viva or presentation, if required

The basics v. The complexities

In practice, the experience of completing a large-scale assignment is more complex than suggested by the '3 + 2 basics' outlined on page 9. Below are some of the practical realities associated with each of the 'basics', as experienced by students.

The basics 3 + 2 *– the heart of the matter*	**The complexities** *– the practical realities as experienced by students*
1 A question: what do you want to find out?	'There seem to be a lot of other things that you have to sort out before you get to the point of deciding on a "question".' 'I don't have anything in particular that I want to find out.' 'I have lots of questions: how do I decide between them?' 'I have a brilliant question, but my supervisor says it isn't feasible.' 'How can I choose a topic if I don't know what is known already?' 'How do you start to find a "question" if you haven't got one?' 'How big a question does it need to be for me to have to spend so long researching it?'
2 A way of finding out the answer: the methods	'The lectures did cover methods, but I was only paying attention to *what* people found out rather than *how* …' 'They gave us an outline to follow for previous projects/experiments, but for this assignment, I have to plan it all out myself …' 'I don't understand why I can't just ask friends, family and people what they think about the subject – they'd be happy to help. I don't like to ask strangers to be participants.' 'I have great ideas of my own: why have I got to include other people's theories?' 'How much reading is enough anyway?' 'Methodology? Methods? What is the difference?'
3 An answer	'"The answer" sounded so short, but seems to need a lot of analysis and discussion …' 'What kind of answer takes 1000s of words to write?' 'What if I don't get the right answer?' 'I am investigating an issue – so what would a "question" and "answer" be like?'
4 The significance: 'So what?'	'I have shown what happened, but what does it mean?' 'I have found out why this occurs, but that opens up even more questions.' 'Does this have any relevance to other researchers in my field?' 'I made this amazing discovery, but is there any practical application?' 'How does this change anything? It is so little compared to what is published already …'
5 Writing	'I have a mass of information, but how do I organise it into something coherent?' 'I know the answer, but getting it down in words seems harder than the research.' 'I am only half way through and am already nearly at the word limit …'

Do I have the right skills?

How prepared am I already?

In considering some of the 'complexities' raised on page 13, you may wonder whether you have the necessary skills. It is likely that you do have a great deal of relevant experience and skill to draw upon: courses are usually carefully designed to ensure that previous assignments and current coursework provide a good foundation for this level of challenge.

If you can check off ☑ most of the items on the list below and the skills on page 15, then you are in a strong position for this kind of assignment.

Previous academic experience

Typically, by now, you would have:

- ☐ completed many smaller-scale assignments
- ☐ developed a range of study skills (see page 15)
- ☐ developed skills in independent study
- ☐ built your knowledge base in the subject
- ☐ become familiar with broad theoretical frameworks in your subject
- ☐ been introduced to specialist journals or texts
- ☐ seen how evidence is collected and put under scrutiny within your subject discipline
- ☐ been introduced to specialist research methods within your subject.

Building on existing study skills

At every new level of study, there is a greater level of difficulty and/or complexity. This means that you are expected to build on pre-existing study skills, fine-tuning and adapting them to suit new contexts.

At earlier stages of study, many of the skills you need are common to most types of study. As you move to higher levels of study, the skills relevant to your academic work tend to become less generic and increasingly specialist.

Nonetheless, there are strategies and approaches common to most large-scale assignments. These are not usually covered in detail as part of a course of study at this level as it is assumed that the skills would have evolved through previous study. However, many people find that they have gaps in these skills, or anxieties about what is required, or want a road map to help navigate the demands of the assignment.

Specialist research skills

Every academic discipline focuses on a specific branch of knowledge and investigates particular kinds of issues. Each draws on different types of original source material or raw data as its evidence base and uses distinct methodologies and techniques to find, analyse and make use of the evidence.

Training in these discipline-specific ways of thinking and working will form part of your course. You are likely to receive guidance on:

- ethical issues relevant to your subject
- recognising good quality sources, materials or data
- gathering your own data in ways that are recognised as sound within the subject
- interpreting source materials and data
- relevant statistical methods
- using statistical software packages
- using specialist equipment
- reporting your findings or writing about your material in ways that fit the culture of the subject discipline.

These may be introduced to you at the same time that your dissertation or project is set. If not, you may need a specialist text that looks in detail at methods used within your subject.

Do I have the right skills?

SELF-EVALUATION

Typically, by the time you are set larger-scale assignments, you would have developed a good base of skills and self-knowledge through earlier, shorter assignments. If you can check off ☑ most of the following list with well-grounded confidence, then you are starting with good foundations.

1 Self-management skills

- ☐ Knowing how and when you learn best, and organising your study accordingly
- ☐ Personalising your learning in order to play to your learning strengths and preferences
- ☐ Keeping yourself motivated
- ☐ Setting priorities
- ☐ Keeping yourself organised
- ☐ Resilience and good coping strategies
- ☐ Asking for support and help when needed.

2 Academic skills

- ☐ Understanding academic conventions that apply within your subject
- ☐ Conducting online searches
- ☐ Reading at a reasonable speed with good reading strategies and comprehension
- ☐ Analysing reading material and data using critical thinking skills
- ☐ Interpreting and presenting numerical data
- ☐ Recognising quality evidence for your subject
- ☐ Making relevant notes as you read
- ☐ Synthesising information from many sources
- ☐ Developing a good line of reasoning within your own work, supported by evidence
- ☐ Structuring your thinking, organising concepts
- ☐ Organising your ideas when writing
- ☐ Writing clearly and precisely in academic style
- ☐ Citing and referencing sources correctly.

3 People skills

- ☐ Offering support to others without sharing your work in ways that are not permitted for the course
- ☐ Contributing to group seminars and classes
- ☐ Presenting information to a given audience, typically your tutor or other students
- ☐ Answering questions about your work.

4 Task management

- ☐ Understanding the role of the assignment title
- ☐ Being able to identify the question implicit within the title, as well as the key issues it raises
- ☐ Producing pieces of work that are closely focused on the assignment title or question
- ☐ Identifying component parts of assignments
- ☐ Managing your time to meet deadlines
- ☐ Presenting numbers and charts as required
- ☐ Structuring your writing to designated formats
- ☐ Writing up work in the required style and format
- ☐ Fine-tuning drafts and editing your work, checking for errors and correcting them.

What if I need to develop these skills?

You will develop and fine-tune these skills over time as you work on your research project. However, it is preferable to have a good foundation in these skills before you start such a large assignment.

If these study skills are new to you, or if you have a gap in your recent studies and feel that these skills might be rusty, see Cottrell (2013), *The Study Skills Handbook*, to help you get started.

What kinds of skills will I need to develop?

What kind of skills will I need?

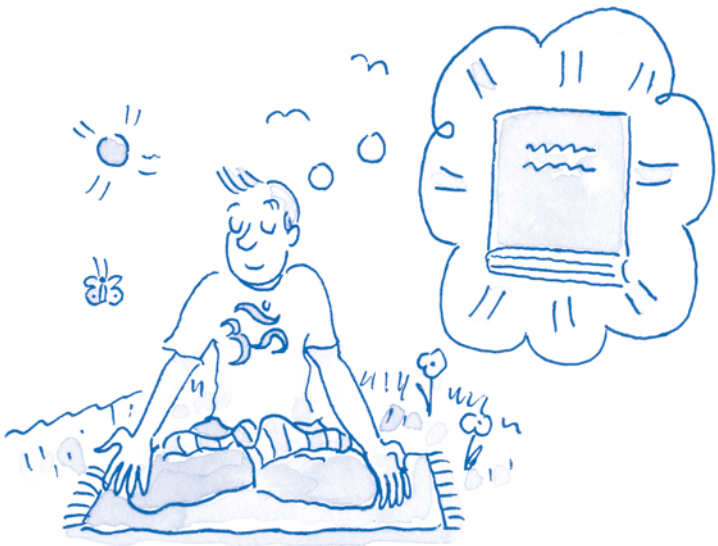
Long assignments are demanding in terms of word length, scale of operation, breadth of reading, depth of thought and quality of research. That requires you not only to fine-tune existing skills, such as those outlined on page 15, but also to learn new skills, from academic skills through to project management.

As with any increase in challenge, you will probably find that research projects test your personal skills and qualities to the limit. This means that preparing well for the task ahead, and keeping yourself going, over the longer term, are just as essential as academic ability.

1 Self-management skills

Managing yourself well is usually the key to completing a larger assignment well. This skill tends to be the one that is least understood or valued and, consequently, it is most easily overlooked. It is where the greatest risks often lie. 'Self-management' involves a range of skills, all addressed in Part 1, and related to:

(a) Developing the right mindset
(b) Maintaining high levels of motivation
(c) Nurturing your intellectual curiosity
(d) Managing time effectively.



2 Academic skills

For research assignments, the generic skills typical of these assignments include:

(a) being able to read widely and wisely, to help develop an expert knowledge base
(b) knowing when you have found the right topic
(c) working intelligently with existing theory, research methods and knowledge in the subject domain
(d) being able to synthesise ideas effectively
(e) being systematic in your approach
(f) thinking critically about your own work
(g) transforming 'information' into 'knowledge'
(h) communicating your work in writing, using appropriate conventions
(i) discussing your work and answering questions, such as through a viva exam.

3 People skills

Although your assignment will involve a great deal of independent working, it also calls for good 'people' skills. In the first instance, this means developing a working relationship with your supervisor or tutor. Maintaining contact with peers can be harder but can be invaluable. Your project may also mean working directly with a range of participants or clients.

4 Task management skills

In the case of dissertations and extended research assignments, this means skills related to project management. That includes such skills as:

(a) understanding the brief and elaborating the task requirements
(b) project managing the assignment, forward planning so as to manage time, deadlines, resources and risks
(c) understanding the project both as a whole and in terms of its component parts.

Skills for research-based assignments

SELF-EVALUATION

What skills do you bring already?

- Conduct an audit of your skills for research-based assignments, using the checklist below.
- Rate your current skills on a scale of 0–5, where 0 = 'none yet' and 5 is 'excellent'.
- Identify ☑ whether you need to develop further. If so, follow up the relevant chapter or pages.

Self-management skills		Current skill level 0 – 5	Develop further? ✓	Pages
1	Developing the right mindset			45; 49
2	Nurturing my own intellectual curiosity			46; 49
3	Envisaging myself as a researcher			47; 130
4	Maintaining high levels of motivation			45; 46; 48; 50; 55
5	Managing time effectively			51–6; 180–2
Academic skills		**Current skill level 0 – 5**	**Develop further? ✓**	**Pages**
6	Understanding what is meant by 'research'			19–30; 88–96
7	Awareness of different approaches to research			97–106
8	Reading background literature to develop my knowledge			77–86
9	Writing up a literature review			86–88
10	Selecting an appropriate topic as the subject of research			46; 67–76
11	Formulating a suitable question title and/or hypothesis			75–6; 115–16
12	Drawing upon relevant theoretical frameworks			82–3; 86
13	Selecting a research methodology			97–106
14	Choosing research methods			119–68
15	Gathering, selecting and organising material/data			119–68
16	Thinking critically about material and findings			169–70
17	Synthesising material and ideas			86; 169–74
18	Structuring my material appropriately in writing			185–96
19	Communicating my work well in writing			200–1
20	Discussing my work verbally such as in a viva exam			203–8

Skills for research-based assignments

People skills		Current skill level 0 – 5	Develop further? ✓	Pages
21	Working effectively with my supervisor or tutor			57–60
22	Giving and receiving support from peers			49–50; 55
23	Working with participants			129–36
24	Working with children/vulnerable groups as participants			134
25	Gathering data from surveys			151–6
26	Conducting interviews			157–62
27	Understanding the ethical issues			107–12
Task management skills		**Current skill level 0 – 5**	**Develop further? ✓**	**Pages**
28	Being able to pause and reflect constructively			46; 71–2
29	Clarifying the assignment brief			63–6
30	Project management skills			31–42
31	Understanding the overall process of such assignments			10–13
32	Maintaining a sense of the project as a whole			10–13; 21–3; 31–3
33	Understanding the component parts of the process			32
34	Managing resources			37–8
35	Managing risks			39–42; 111
36	Forward planning and scheduling tasks to meet deadlines			33–6
37	Preparing a proposal			113–18
38	Organising myself for writing			179–84
39	Preparing for a viva exam			203–6
Other skills relevant to my project		**Current skill level 0 – 5**	**Develop further? ✓**	

Index

abstract 35, 180, 186, 193
academic discipline, knowing your … 23, 26
academic integrity 20, 28, 39, 40, 41, 90, 95, 107, 109, 112, 170
academic skills 6, 15, 16, 23
action research 102
ambassadorial role 130
analysis 148, 149, 150, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171
anthropology 104
anxieties 1, 2, 47; *see* confidence
appendices 35, 90, 193
argument 35, 175, 201
articles *see* journal articles
arts, research in arts and humanities 101, 103, 105, 123–4, 141, 171, 185, 199
  see constructivism; critical theory; historical method; phenomenology
assessment criteria 39, 63, 64, 65
assignment brief 26, 27, 31, 34, 39, 63–6, 113, 115, 186, 202
attributing sources *see* referencing
audit of skills 16, 17–18

basics 9, 10, 13
benefits of your research 45
bibliography 190, 193
boredom, managing 45, 46, 49, 182; *see* challenges; inspiration; motivation; peer support
boundaries 131, 159
brief *see* assignment brief
Bristol online survey 155

case studies 163–8
catastrophic thinking 55
categorising 172, 174
causation 100, 101, 137, 138
challenge, level of 39, 40, 41, 46, 68
challenges 1, 3, 4, 23, 24
  setting yourself challenges 55
checklists 14, 15, 17–18, 23, 29, 30, 36, 37, 38, 39–41, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 66, 76, 82–3, 85, 88, 92, 93, 96, 106, 112, 115, 116, 118, 124, 128, 132, 136, 142, 143, 147, 150, 152, 153, 154, 156, 160, 161, 162, 168, 176, 184, 195–6, 199, 201, 202, 208
  using checklists 5, 33, 113
children *see* participants
citations *see* referencing
commissioned research 163, 164, 166, 168, 190, 191, 193
complaints process 111
conclusion, writing the 35, 56, 189, 192, 201
conducting research 119–76
confidence 47
confidentiality 108, 112, 132, 133, 136, 165
conflicts of interest 109, 112
consents 108, 134–5; 136, 141; *see also* permissions
constructivism 99, 105
contextualising findings 166, 167, 174, 175, 176
controlled conditions 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 139–40
  use of controls 95, 139, 140
  see empiricism; experiments; variables
controversial issues 46
course requirements 52
criminal records checks 37, 38
criteria *see* assessment criteria
critical theory 105
criticality 117
  critique of methods 96
  see journal articles
CV 45

data and datum 122
  data collection 65, 119–76
  data presentation 173
  rich data 103, 143, 157, 163
  permission to use 136; *see* permissions
deadlines, managing deadlines 39, 40, 56, 65, 181
declaration of interests 109
Deferral and Barring Service (DBS checks) 37, 38, 134
defining terms 98, 105, 145
determinism 100
diary, and planning 52
discipline *see* academic discipline, knowing your
discourse analysis 105
discussion 189, 192
dissertations 191, 202
  analysing dissertations 29
  what is a dissertation? 21
  structure 185
double-blind experiments 140
drafts 35, 41, 56, 166, 197

ecological validity 94, 104, 137
editing 35, 197, 198
elaborating the task 32, 34–5
empiricism 100, 101, 137
employability 23
employer projects 69, 91, 135, 165; *see* work-based projects
environmental protection 111, 112; *see* ethical considerations; work-based projects
essays (long essays) 1, 6, 21, 185, 199
ethical considerations 66, 96, 97, 107–12, 129, 131, 143, 144, 150; *see* consents; permissions; participants, working with
Ethics Committee 107
ethics and online research 141
ethics panel 87, 90
ethnography 104, 144
evidence
  the evidence base 20, 26, 85–6, 121–8
  poor use of evidence 27
  see sources
experiments 95, 137–42; *see* empiricism

Facebook surveys 155
feasibility 68, 145; *see also* parameters, setting; risk assessment and risk anagement
feminism 105
field-based 141
finance 37, 38, 68
finishing 56, 197–202
flexibility 33

generalisations 99, 101, 102, 137, 143, 157, 158
Google tools 141
grounded theory 103

historical method 101
humanities *see* arts, research in arts and humanities
hypothesis 66, 170, 187
  what is a …? 116
  formulating a hypothesis 116, 142
  testing a hypothesis 100, 170, 176

using the hypothesis 86

ideology 98, 105
immersion 99, 104
inclusion 110
independent study 2, 3, 7, 21, 23, 24, 41, 43, 44
individuality 98
inspiration 47, 48, 49, 55, 69, 70, 169
developing an idea 72
integrity *see* academic integrity
intellectual curiosity 46, 47
intellectual property 109, 112; *see* academic integrity
interpreting your findings 119, 147, 148, 149, 150, 157, 168–76, 196
interpretivism 99
intertextuality 99, 105
interviews 157–62
introduction 167, 187, 191
isolation 8, 41, 43, 49, 50

journal articles 79, 80, 82, 90
analysing articles 96

knowledge
contributing to 21, 69, 73–4, 86, 175, 192
knowing your field 82-3, 174–6, 205
the nature of 98, 99
see significance

laboratory-based 141, 143, 144
life history approach 104
literature review 77–8, 187
as a staged process 77–8
principles to inform the review 84
purpose 77,187
writing up 78, 87, 167, 191
literature search 34, 77–8, 79–84
log, project log 6, 95
lng assignments 1, 6, 199

management *see* project management; self-management; time management
marking criteria *see* assessment criteria
Masters level 203
materials 188, 190; *see* participants
methodology 66, 91, 96, 97–106, 153, 165, 188
analysis of methodology 96
methodological issues 90
methods 66, 83, 96, 121, 137–68, 188, 191; *see* data and datum, data collection; evidence, the evidence base; raw data
mindset, developing the right mindset 45, 55; *see* catastrophic thinking; motivation; inspiration; challenges
motivation 3, 24, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 48, 50, 55, 68
to write up 179, 180

narrative 101, 168
note-making 55, 79, 80, 142, 146–8, 170

objectivity 20, 92, 98, 101, 147; *see* empiricism; experiments
observations 143–50, 166
online *see* web-based research
opportunities 1
organisational skills 5; *see also* track, keeping track; 'To do' lists; checklists
organising your material 84, 86, 88, 171–3, 178, 183
originality 22, 25, 47, 68, 69, 70
overview, maintaining an overview 5, 32
of process 10, 11, 12,
for experiments 142
of the task 53

pacing 24, 182
paradigm *see* research
parameters, setting 75, 76, 143, 165, 168
participants 95
communicating with 131, 132, 133, 136, 152–3, 155, 156
selecting 143, 157, 162, 190
working with 110–11, 120, 129–36, 153, 157–61
children and vulnerable people 111, 112, 131, 134, 136
ethics 108, 110
materials for 132, 133, 152, 152–5
vulnerable groups 107, 111, 112, 131, 134, 136
see boundaries; consents; controlled conditions; ethical considerations; inclusion; interviews; observations; work-based projects
passing references *see* references
peer support 34, 41
learning from others 5, 49, 55
social networks 49
people skills 15, 16
permissions 37, 124, 134–5; *see also* consents
phenomenology 103, 163, 164
pilot 114, 117, 118, 120, 121, 138, 142, 143, 155
planning 7, 11, 12, 33, 40
for what might go wrong 47
podcasts 46
position, research 20, 46, 115
positivism 98
post-modernism 105
precision 90, 95, 98, 115, 138, 152, 191, 200, 202; *see* defining terms; experimentspreparation 7, 11, 12
presentation, of written assignment 66, 199
primary sources 101, 123
principles, of good research 89–96
probability 126
process 32, 34–5, 142, 145, 147, 150, 162
procrastination 55–6
project log 6, 29
project management 4, 31–42
projects, choosing *see* topic, choosing the right topic
proofreading 35
proposal 11, 12, 34, 40
developing your proposal 61–2
writing up your proposal 113–18
psychoanalytic 105

qualitative 93, 144, 151, 169; *see* data and datum, rich data
quantitative methods 93, 98, 151, 169; *see* experiments
questionnaires *see* surveys

raw data 96, 101, 121
reading, breadth of 26, 77, 78, 79, 80, 115, 164
keeping reading manageable 80
using your reading 172, 181
recommendations, making 167, 168, 190, 192
record keeping 95, 142, 143, 145–8, 154, 155, 161; *see* precision
reference tools 28, 79
referencing 66, 79, 109, 181, 184, 190
keeping records for 79, 95
making passing references 84, 198
reflection 3, 5
reliability 94, 152
replication 69, 94, 151, 191; *see* scientific approach
reports 183, 185, 202
research *see* methods; methodology; position, research; proposal)
basics 4–5, 9, 10, 13
design 90, 91, 92, 137, 164–6, 170
flawed design 170
gathering information 119–76
good research 20, 25, 26, 89–96
models of research 29
paradigms 97, 98–9
projects 19, 22
purpose 23, 70, 85, 164, 186
what is it? 20
researcher
behaviours 140, 144, 148, 149, 150, 153, 156, 157, 159, 160
ethical behaviours as 107, 109, 110
impact 99, 102, 103, 151
presenting yourself as a researcher 130, 136, 153, 156, 158, 159
the role of 97, 102, 103
see declaration of interests; ethical considerations; methodology

resource management 37, 39
results 35, 189, 191; *see* interpreting your findings
risk assessment and risk management 39–42, 111, 131
routine, developing a routine 54, 180

safeguarding 111
safety 111, 112, 131, 133
samples, selecting 125–8, 145
Sample Size Calculator 122
scale 4, 22, 122
scheduling 10, 36, 53, 54, 59
schools of thought 82
scientific approach 98; *see* controlled conditions; empiricism; experiments; generalisations; objectivity; precision; replication; validity; variables
security 111
selecting materials 80, 81, 82–3, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 165, 173, 176, 178
  see samples, selecting
self-management 3, 5, 8, 10, 15, 41, 44
  developing the right mindset 45, 198
semiotics 105
significance *see* knowledge, contributing to
  'so what?' 13, 20, 35, 147, 163, 169, 175, 189, 192, 206
  statistical 126, 142, 145
skills
  academic 6, 14–16
  for research-based assignments 17–18, 23
  in writing 177
Skype 161
social life 49, 55
sources 96, 165; *see* primary sources
  secondary sources 123
  specialist sources 81, 82, 84
  using source materials 172–6, 181
stages, working in stages 10
starting, getting started on the project 9, 51, 53, 70
  settling down to study 53
sticking with it 55
structuralism 105
structure 27, 29, 66
students' experiences 1, 8, 13, 24, 44, 62, 74, 120, 178, 194
study/life balance 55
subjectivity 92, 99, 101, 103, 143, 157
submitting your work 35
  submitting the proposal 63, 64, 113, 118
summaries 193, 198
supervisor 8, 57–60
  supervision checklist 60
  expectations 58
  making use of 39, 40, 41, 59, 109, 178
  what supervisors look for 25
  working relationship with 57
support 49, 50
  asking for help 28, 59
  in the workplace 50
Survey Monkey 155
surveys 151–6
synthesis 26, 86, 174, 176

task management skills 15, 16; *see* project management; time mangement
terminology 6, 9, 200; *see* defining terms; precision
theory
  testing theory 98, 143
  theoretical perspectives 97
  drawing on theory 90, 105, 147, 163, 175
  see literature review
theses, doctoral 126, 185, 203
thesis statements 114, 115
thinking, clear thinking 8, 169, 178; *see* defining terms; precision
time management 50, 51–6, 180
  allocating time to tasks 52
  and pacing your work 24, 45, 51, 54
  see scheduling; routine, developing a routine
title 34, 65, 75–6
'To do' lists 6, 33
topic 65
  good topics 68
  choosing the right topic 26, 27, 34, 35, 46, 67–74, 76, 145, 164–5
  evaluating topic options 71, 73, 76
  choosing in the context of your field 82–3
  see inspiration
track, keeping track 3, 5
triangulation 101, 166

validity 94, 152
  see ecological validity
variables 94, 95, 98, 100, 139, 141, 143; *see* controlled conditions; experiments
  dependent and independent variables 139–40
verification 95
viva exams 66, 203–8

web-based research 141, 155, 160, 161
word limit 13, 24, 63, 65, 178, 198
work-based projects 102, 144, 163, 164, 166, 168; *see* employer projects
workplace and study 50, 102, 135
writing *see* abstract; conclusion, writing the; drafts; introduction; literature review; proposal; structure
writing strategy 179, 180–4
  accuracy 200; *see* defining terms; precision; writing style, use of language
  writing up your research 56, 87, 166, 177–216
  writing up sections and chapters 185–96
  fine-tuning 182, 197–202
  getting started 11, 12, 72, 181, 182
  from models and examples 184
  the process of writing 177
  structure and organisation 167, 183, 184, 185–95, 202
  synopses 181
  for your supervisor 181
  thinking through writing 72, 170
writing style, 197, 199, 201, 202
  use of language 26, 27, 66, 87, 88, 96, 117, 167, 200–1