Dissertation Checklist

Writing a dissertation is arguably the most important part of any degree course. This checklist should only be used as a guideline, and any instructions your supervisor gives you should overrule the points found here. You should also consult your unit handbook. This checklist could be used at any point in writing of your dissertation.

Focus on - Language, Style and Formatting

Aspects to consider:		✔️

1.	**Line spacing**
	  o Font type or size,
	  o Alignment (e.g. justified, left aligned)
	  o Heading / subheading formatting (e.g. bold / underline)	

2.	**Spelling and grammar**
	  o Run spelling and grammar checks
	  o Check spelling of unusual names (e.g. references) and subject-specific terminology manually
	  o Acronyms are written out in full the first time they are used. Alternatively, include a list of acronyms before your introduction
	  o Check for mistakes highlighted in previous assignment feedback
	  o Proofread you work	

Aspects to consider:		✓
3.	**Formal language** ○ Writing is in a formal style and to an appropriate audience (with terms defined as necessary, and assumptions about prior knowledge are appropriate) ○ Avoid use of contractions (e.g. can't / won't)	
4.	**Writing style** ○ Information taken from multiple sources, and this information has been synthesised ○ Show critical analysis and evaluation of the content covered by sources	
5.	**Chapters, headings and sub-headings** ○ In text signposting to other chapters / sections are correct ○ Chapters are titled ○ All sections have appropriate headings and subheadings ○ Sections and sub-sections are sequentially numbered (e.g. 1.0, 1.1, 2.0, 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2, etc)	
6.	**Use of tables, charts and images** ○ Includes a title and identifying number (e.g.: "Figure 1.2; chart of disposable income per household, 2007-2013") ○ Permission to use any copyright protected materials has been obtained, and sourced images are appropriately referenced	
7.	**Versions to submit** ○ Ensure you save and submit your final dissertation as a PDF in order to 'lock' images and text boxes in position. ○ The printed version should be properly bound.	

Focus on - Structure

	Aspects to consider:	✔️
8.	**Cover page** ○ Structuring is the aspect most likely to change between disciplines, so be sure to use any guidance from your school in parallel with this checklist.	
9.	**Table of contents** ○ Cover page contains all required information (may include name, unit code, title, submission date, word count) ○ Contents page lists all headings and subheadings ○ Contents page links to correct page numbers after adjusting margins, line spacing and addition, resizing and movement of images	
10.	**Table of images / figures / charts** ○ If applicable, include a list of tables and a list of figures used in your dissertation (a mini-contents for your tables/images) ○ Table page list links to correct page numbers after adjusting margins and line spacing	
11.	**Abstract or executive summary** ○ Provides a complete overview of your whole dissertation, including methodology and results. ○ Should normally be no more than one side of A4 paper	
12.	**Introduction** ○ Identifies your research area (i.e. what "gap" your dissertation fills) ○ Provides an outline of your dissertation structure ○ Includes research questions (if necessary, see the below point for more information on what this should include) ○ Define key terms and terms used in a specific manner in your dissertation	

Aspects to consider:	✔

13.	**Research questions, aims & objectives** o Ensure research questions are explicitly stated o Ensure research questions are answerable (and answered in results/conclusion sections) o Include a hypothesis (your expected answer to your research questions) when appropriate
14.	**Literature review** o Organised into sections using headings and sub-headings (point 5 of language, style and formatting) o The review is well-organised (this is usually by theme; with related topics together, or chronologically; in order of publication) o Develops from generic to specific information o Provides the information necessary for a reader to understand the larger context of your topic (theories, prior research, etc) o Covers the most recent controversies and developments in your selected area of study (both research- and theory-based)
15.	**Methodology** o Uses appropriate methods to gather information o Describes and provides rationale for the methods of data collection and selection of your sample (stratification) o Clearly identifies how methods used answer research questions (usually influenced by your literature review) o Addresses ethical concerns, and outlines measures taken to follow ethical guidelines (this may be a separate document).
16.	**Results** o Clearly displays the findings of the research (using tables and figures if appropriate)

	Aspects to consider:	✔️
17.	**Discussion** ○ Discussion relates to (and provides basis for answers of) research questions ○ Discussion draws on theories/prior research as outlined in literature review	
18.	**Conclusion** ○ Provides a summary of your research ○ Answers research questions (and makes recommendations for changes to practice/theory) ○ Includes any limitations of, or possible improvements to, your study ○ Considers areas for possible further research	
19.	**References** ○ Use of other sources (books/journals and tables/figures) correctly referenced in-text ○ Use correct format for reference list – guidance can be found at http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/guides/a-guide-to-referencing, or by contacting your Academic Liaison Librarian	
20.	**Appendices** ○ All other materials relevant to your dissertation included in the appendix ○ Items appropriately labelled/referred to in main text	

Further information

Study Hub@Library provides a range of opportunities for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information, visit the **Study Hub Website**.

Other related Study Hub guides in the reading series include:

- Word fundamentals
- Format your assignment
- Format your dissertation