# Top Ten Tips for Dissertation

1. Find out who your Academic Liaison Librarian is

You will know who to contact if you need support for research

1. Attend a Library Dissertation Bitesize session

These sessions have been designed to get you started with your dissertation and is jam packed full of useful information and things to consider

1. Start Small

Sometimes one of the hardest things to do is to get started! So, my advice is make your first task an easy one that you can tick off the list – maybe it is create some keywords for searching with, (possibly as a mind map), maybe its read that chapter that was recommended by my tutor or print off the articles suggested for reading … Whatever that small task is, once you’ve done it – congratulations! You’ve made a start! There are also videos on the pathways and top tips for searching on your subject guides.

1. Have a Plan

Each stage of your project will take time. Make sure you have a rough plan in place to give you the time to do it all. I would suggest that you start early – research always takes longer than you think it will, and that you make sure you have given enough time for proof reading and editing as well. The last thing you want is to run out of time on an extended research assignment

1. Begin with Library Search

Go to your university library homepage – you will be able to do a broad search across a wide range of resources in one go. Use the filters to narrow your results. Use keywords and combine them with AND, OR & NOT terms. Attend an introductory bitesize on how to use the library search to learn about all these features. You will find it is a great place to begin your research. And begin with what we call a background or scoping search. By starting broad, you will be able to see the amounts and types of information on your wider topic and be able to narrow down from there.

## Reference as you go!

This may seem obvious, but we have all been there, where we have read something key to the argument we are making and ah! Where was that? Where did I find that? My recommendation is you have a system to record items as you go – it can be as simple as a photo of the cover and publication page, to using a reference management tool to a full bibliographic reference that you write down. Whatever your system, keep a track of the items you look at! The study hub has fantastic referencing guides that you can access – so do look there for more information on this!

1. Be critical

Essentially think more and read less. Make sure you don’t lose sight of your focus when reading – how relevant is the item to your research? If it isn’t relevant, then do you want to be spending time analysing it? Yes, it is also necessary to maintain an open mind and be flexible in your project, so you can change it as needed – but always keep a focus in mind. A good way of thinking about this is to ask yourself the question – what would you like someone reading your dissertation to understand by the end of it?

1. Don’t compare

This research journey is your own. Do not compare your progress with others – it could overwhelm you and cause anxiety. Stick to your plan, be true to your own topic and remember, any work you do that doesn’t make it into the final cut is not wasted! It all adds to the wider context and your greater knowledge of the subject.

1. Enjoy it!

This is your opportunity to use the skills and knowledge you have gained so far on the course and to apply it to a topic that interests you! Choose something you are genuinely interested in and the rest will fall into place and visualise how proud you will feel once you have completed it!

1. You are not in isolation.

If you feel you are struggling at any stage of the process or need a pointer to get back on track - then ask for help. You have the subject expertise from your personal tutor, you have the research expertise of the librarians and the academic skills expertise from the ASK team. There are opportunities to engage with all these people throughout the process, via sessions, 1:1 appointment, drop ins and emails. Never be afraid to come forward for assistance.