Writing up your University Assignments and Research Projects

A practical handbook

Neil Murray and Geraldine Hughes



Open University Press

Contents

Acknowledgements	viii
Foreword A guide to the book's icons: what do they mean?	ix xii
Part 1: The fundamentals of academic writing	1
1 What are the key functions in academic writing?	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Defining terms and ideas	4
1.3 Describing	9 18
1.4 Comparing and contrasting 1.5 Classifying	26
1.6 Explaining causes and effects	31
1.7 Developing an argument	36
2 How should I structure my writing?	45
2.1 Coherence: the flow of good writing	45
2.2 The three main parts of a writing project	46
2.3 Citation, referencing and paraphrasing	67
2.4 Using footnotes	80
3 What do I need to know about writing style?	85
3.1 Writing clearly and concisely	86
3.2 Level of formality (register)	94
3.3 Using gender-neutral language	96
3.4 Reading other research projects	97
4 Approaching your writing project: tips and strategies	99
4.1 Planning carefully	100
4.2 Deciding on your writing approach	100
4.3 Sourcing and selecting information	102
4.4 Recording information/making notes	105

vi Writing up your university assignments and research projects

4.5	Drafting	111
4.6	Defining terms	112
	Supporting your claims	113
	Acknowledging alternative perspectives and counter-	
	arguments	114
	v	
Part 2: Put	ting together your research project	117
.5 Under	rstanding the research and writing process	119
5.1	What is a research project?	119
	What is the difference between a thesis and a dissertation?	120
	The basic requirements of a research degree	121
	Deciding on a research topic	123
	Choosing and using your supervisor: what exactly is their	
	role?	124
5.6	Writing a proposal	126
	Adopting the correct mindset	129
5.8	Studying independently	129
5.9	Attending research seminars, conferences etc.	131
5.10	Understanding disciplinary differences	131
5.11	The upgrading process (PhDs only)	131
5.12	Familiarity with 'Codes of Practice'/Rules and Regulations	132
5.13	Ethical considerations	132
5.14	The importance of finding your own 'voice' and why it	
	can be challenging	134
5.15	Getting down to writing	136
6 What	are the different components of a research project?	137
6.1	Title page	138
6.2	Abstract	139
6.3	Acknowledgements ,	141
6.4	List of contents	143
	List of acronyms and abbreviations	143
	Introduction	144
6.7	Literature review	145
6.8	Methodology	148
	Results/data	153
	Analysis and discussion	167
	Conclusions	169
6.12	Bibliography	170
6.13	Annendices	176

7 And when it's all over: publishing and presenting your	177
research	
7.1 Introduction	177
7.2 Journal articles	178
7.3 A book	180
7.4 Conference presentations	182
7.5 A final note	182
Part 3: Toolkit	183
8 Punctuation basics: a brief guide to punctuation use	185
8.1 Introduction	185
8.2 Capital letters	186
8.3 The comma	186
8.4 The semicolon	189
8.5 The colon	190
8.6 Parentheses	191
8.7 Inverted commas	191
8.8 The hyphen	193
8.9 The apostrophe	194
9 Glossary of key terms	197
10 The academic word list	203
11 List of prefixes and suffixes	209
12 Appendix	215
12.1 Citation styles	215
12.2 Sample table of contents	218
12.3 Sample list of figures	223
12.4 Sample list of maps	224
12.5 Sample list of photos	225
12.6 Sample list of tables	225
References	227
Index	229

į

į

) 1 3

7 .8.9.1.3.3.4.5.8.3.7.9.0.6