

# Centre for Academic Development

## The structure of a dissertation: The 'science' model

### Your research question

This will become your title

### Abstract

- 200 - 300 word summary of the whole of your dissertation
- Include a brief summary of literature, methods, results and conclusions
- Often easier to write last

### Introduction

- The context / issue / problem
- Research territory - overview
- Specific research area – focus on methods of other research in the area
- The gap in existing research – and justification for your research
- Aim

### Literature review

- What is known already ie the research literature in fields related to your question
- How it is known (ie look for methods)
- Organised by topic / research areas

### Methods

- What you did
- Why you did it the way you did

### Results / findings from your primary research

Explain what you found. Think about how best to communicate it: eg

- Charts / tables
- Quoted comments
- Boxed mini case studies
- Diagrams / flowcharts

And always explain the main trends or findings in writing

## **Discussion**

- How what you found relates to the aims of your project, and the literature you read.
- Critical assessment of your methods (how what you did may have affected outcomes, what improvements to suggest)

## **Conclusions**

- Take-away points from your research
- How these findings are relevant to the wider context / real life
- Suggestions for future research

## **Reference list**

- All the sources you referred to in your dissertation, including any references for figures and any sources referred to in the appendices.
- Correctly formatted using your subject's preferred referencing style

## **Appendix (if needed)**

- Working tools (eg questionnaire)
- Raw data (eg summary tables)