

# Centre for Academic Development

## The structure of a dissertation: The 'social 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

### Findings AND discussion organised by theme

You move directly from presenting your findings to discussing how they compare with other research findings in the wider literature. Your section headings are usually thematic reflecting your research themes or questions:

#### Theme 1

- Findings
- Discussion of these findings relating to the literature

## Theme 2

- Findings
- Discussion of these findings relating to the literature

## Theme 3

- Findings
- Discussion of these findings relating to the literature

## Conclusions

- Take-away points from your research
- How the findings may improve practice / policy / our understanding of the issues
- 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)