Research Dos and Don’ts

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| **Action** | **Do** | **Don’t** |
| **Lectures and seminars** | Attend all research methods lectures and seminars, even though you will find some more useful than others. For example, even if your work is interpretive you have to justify why it is this type of study, and this means that it is useful to attend seminars focused upon quantitate techniques. Doing this provides depth to your understanding of and justification for your own approach. | Fail to keep notes or undertake the reading recommended within the lecturers and seminars. It is also useful to keep a research journal in which you can clarify and piece your ideas together and this helps you to remember the reasons, justifications and approaches that you have used throughout your research, which aids the writing up of your project. |
| **Time management** | Think carefully about the times when you both think and work best. Plan your days around these times. Be aware of the deadlines, meetings and the requirements for your research methods courses. Look carefully at your assessment requirements and plan around these. Keep up with deadlines. Use a calendar, diary or a planner to support your work. | Let time slip by or fail to meet any deadlines such as for project proposals or for the literature review. Make sure you attend meetings and use the notes to support the planning process. Falling behind can be stressful which might mean that it can then be more difficult to put as much into reflecting upon your efforts. It also could mean writing up at the eleventh hour where you aim for volume instead of quality. |
| **Referencing** | Keep up to date and track all of your references. Keep them together and record them within your bibliography. | Forget to record all of your sources and relate them to the various phases of your literature. Always, if you can, use reputable sources and do not cite Wikipedia. |
| **Methodology and methods** | Remember that your writing should justify your approaches to your research. As you do so, emphasise the elements of your research paradigm and provide a clear link between the way in which your methodology supports your methods. | Jump to conclusions about the nature of the methodology for your study. Consider all of the alternatives, as well as their ramifications for your project. For example, would it be more appropriate for your study to be literature based, empirical or focused upon a case study? |
| **Writing** | Ensure your writing style holds the reader’s attention, is easy to understand, lucid and legible. Use the grammar and spelling checker. Make sure that the way in which you write is suitable for the intended audience. | Fall into the mistake of writing in a long and conceptually complicated way. Although this type of writing may seem more academic, it may simply confuse and obfuscate your dialogue. |
| **Meeting the standards required** | Remember that advice and support is always important in meeting the standards. Try and see your supervisor regularly. Work as a study group with critical friends. Read and re-read your work. Do not lag behind. Take care when you construct your sentences. Proof read your work and respond to feedback. | Write extracts and then not re-read them. Remember that you have to read, re-read and amend your text. Do not aim for volume but look for quality. If you hurry your work, inevitably it will influence its quality. |
| **Ethical issues** | Make sure that you are fully aware of ethical issues relating to your research, particularly in terms of informed consent and confidentiality. Either follow or construct a research ethics framework or guidelines to support your research. | Fail to respect objectivity, honesty and confidentiality as you construct your research. It is important that your ethical approaches underpin the values of your thesis. |