

Successful Study Guide

Successful Dissertation Presentation

This leaflet summarises the information on presentation of your finished dissertation in the Successful Dissertations book in the Successful Study Guide. This book also includes information on Dissertation Proposals and the Essential Elements of Dissertations.

Remember that you can get lots of study tips and resources from the Successful Study Guide in Solent Online Learning.

What should a dissertation look like?

We can offer you general advice on what is the standard format and appearance of a dissertation. However, you want to make sure you get it exactly right, so please, before you go much further ...

... check your faculty's guidelines for writing and presenting dissertations.

The standard Solent University dissertation cover has a rectangular hole or 'window' through which it should be possible to read the following details from the title page:

- The award for which the project is submitted
- The academic year of submission
- The name of the author
- The title of the work

You have to position the window carefully in the centre of your title page. You could create a moveable text box on the page in order to do that, or you could use the dissertation template you will find in the 'Successful dissertation writing' tutorial in the Successful Study Guide.

Format

- **Font**
The standard font for Southampton Solent University is Trebuchet MS.
- **Spacing**
Set your line spacing to 1.5 lines.
- **Indents or breaks**
It is current standard to leave a space of one line between paragraphs, rather than indenting the first line. A good way to do this is to set 12pt spacing after a line. Some departments may want you to indent as well as leaving a line space. Check with your supervisor.
- **Margins**
The left hand margin should be set at 3.2cm (1.25 inches) and the right hand margin about 2.5cm (1inch). At least 3.8cm (1.5 inches) should be left free of text at the top and bottom of each page.
- **Section headings**
Sections headings should be left aligned, bold and numbered. The numbering should be the same as given in your contents page. Make sure you are consistent in your numbering of headings and subheadings.

Remember that there may be some variation in your department's requirements. Check these with your supervisor or your department's guidelines.

Presentation

- Use white A4 paper of a reasonable thickness (not too thin and not thick like card)
- Single sided (print on one side of the paper only)
- Your paper should be bound and covered - plastic comb binding is the most common method.
- Your faculty should provide you with the standard Solent University front and back cover.

Numbering dissertation sections

Numbering the sections makes it easy to know where you are in the dissertation at any one time. It also means your reader can use the contents page to find any particular part of the text they are interested in.

Give all major sections a consecutive number using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.), so for example you may have:

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Methodology
4. Results
5. Discussion
6. Conclusions

Number sub-sections using decimal points, e.g.

1. Introduction
2. Literature review
3. Methodology
 - 3.1 Interviews
 - 3.2 Questionnaires

Page numbers

As far as page numbering goes, there are four sections to your dissertation:

1. Title page - Your title page should have no number.
2. Pre-ample - The pre-ample is everything between the Title page and the Introduction: Abstract, Acknowledgements, Contents plus the List of Tables and Figures. These pages should be numbered using small case Roman numerals (i.e. i, ii, iii, iv, etc.).
3. Main body - The main body is everything from the Introduction up to (but not including) the appendices. The main body is numbered using Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc.).
4. Appendices - The appendices are numbered using the letter name of the appendix and an Arabic numeral. (i.e. A-1, A-2, B-1, B-2). This means that you need to create a section break for each appendix and manually add the letter name into the footer.

Numbering figures and tables

In academic writing 'figure' is used to talk about any graph, chart, drawing or picture.

Any figures or tables you use must be labelled and formatted correctly:

1. Number figures and tables separately.
2. Number them consecutively, using Arabic numbers (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc.) in the order that they appear in the text.
3. Each figure or table should have a title, e.g.:
"Table 1: Numbers of respondents by category"
"Figure 1: Photograph of Christian Dior"
4. Check very carefully that the numbering and page numbering are all correct in your list of tables and figures.
5. Always provide a source for any figure or table that was not created by you, and give a full citation for the source in your reference list.

Remember that if you include a figure or table, you must refer to it in the body of your paper at the point where it appears.

Numbering your appendices

The sequence of appendices should be given using capital letters of the alphabet (A, B, C, etc.). They should be listed in the contents page by their letter and, wherever possible, each appendix should be given a heading in the form 'Appendix A', 'Appendix B', etc., as well as a descriptive title. For instance:

"Appendix A: Copy of survey questionnaire"
"Appendix B: Demographic of participants"

Binding

Generally, dissertations must be bound. This can range from comb binding with a plastic front and back cover that you can do yourself, to professional binding with a soft or hard back cover. Generally the choice of which to use is yours.

The library has binding machines available for self service use. Alternately, the library also provides a professional binding service.

This service is available from room ML014 or telephone 02380 319411 for more information.