# Dissertation Checklist by Dr Jo Cormac [Video Transcript]

This is a checklist to make sure you haven’t forgotten anything for your dissertation.

## Choosing a topic.

When choosing your topic make sure that it is feasible. Read to see what is already out there. If there is not enough research on your area and you intend your dissertation to be literature-based you may struggle.

You also need to make an original contribution to the literature. This does not mean reinventing the wheel, but it does mean putting forward a new perspective on something. This could be a new argument based on the literature you have read, it could mean applying someone else’s theory to a new situation, or it could mean conducting your own primary research.

Whatever you choose, remember to get approval from your supervisor. They will advise whether the study is feasible.

## Role of supervisor.

When you have been assigned a supervisor, make sure you meet with them regularly.

Try to be proactive in organizing times to meet.

Prepare for tutorials. Think about what you want to discuss. Do not expect your supervisor to give you the answers.

## Refining the topic.

Your supervisor will help you refine the topic. Make sure you have a broad aim and narrower objectives or research questions that will help you reach that aim.

Do your objectives or research questions reflect what you want to find out? Are they clear?

Method**.**

Next, think about the method you have chosen. Is it feasible? Or will you run out of time or resources?

Have you justified why you’ve chosen this method over others?

Have you considered any problems with your methodology and how you will get round them?

## Sources.

Using reliable, relevant, and current sources is crucial to writing a good dissertation.

Check whether you have read widely enough. Could you have missed something?

Have you criticized your sources for bias/currency/evidence/assumptions and anything else that might be appropriate? It may be helpful to watch the skills hub video on evaluating information for ideas.

Make sure you keep a full record of your sources. There is nothing worse than wanting to reference an idea and realizing you can’t remember where you read it.

## Writing.

When you’re ready to write up, check that your writing is formal, clear, and objective. Have you looked at the Skills Hub videos on writing style?

Write as you go along. Do not leave it all to the end. Otherwise you may forget what you’ve read and your ideas.

Save each draft carefully and in various locations.

## Critical Analysis.

Check that you have argued a case (based on evidence) through each of the chapters.

Do the chapters link together to build up a broader argument across the whole thesis?

Have you provided clear logical reasons for your argument?

Do the reasons build towards a logical conclusion?

## Practicalities.

Finally, check you know when any intermediate deadlines are (for example for your dissertation proposal) and final deadlines. Plan to meet these well in advance.

Allow plenty of time for proofreading, printing, and binding.

If your supervisor is allowed to read a draft of your work make sure you give them enough time to read it.

Check guidelines for presentation – fonts, margin sizes, layout of title page, abstract, acknowledgements, contents, and list of figures.

If you have checked off all of these things you should be well on your way to being a dissertation superhero!

Thank you.