Single Honours Geography Dissertation Handbook 2009-2010

GEO2310: Human Geography Practice
GEO3301: Dissertation
Table of Contents

This guide covers the background information you will need before you start your dissertation in the Single Honours Geography and Geography with European Studies degree programmes. It is intended for students who are registered for the GEO2310: Human Geography Research Training module. This guide should be of considerable help to you during your dissertation research and contains the following main sections:

Section 1: Aims, learning outcomes & requirements 2
Section 2: Dissertation planning & the proposal. 10
Section 3: Ethical considerations, safety & fieldwork 14
Section 4: Progress monitoring & advice 20
Section 5: Dissertation presentation & layout 23
Section 6: Regulations & procedures 32
Section 7: Three final pieces of advice. 35
Appendix 1: Dissertation proposal guidelines. 37
Appendix 2: Members of staff & subject areas 40
Appendix 3: Risk forms 43
Appendix 4: Ethics form 45
Appendix 5: Dissertation progress form 50
Appendix 6: Specimen front page 52
Appendix 7: Example table of contents 53
Appendix 8: Example list of figures 54
Appendix 9: Dissertation marking criteria 55
Section 1:
Aims, learning outcomes & requirements

This section discusses: the aims and outcomes, and scope of the dissertation, what makes a good dissertation, and how you might come up with and present an idea for researching.

1.1 Aims

The point of the dissertation is to give you an opportunity to display your skills in tackling specific geographical issues in some depth. The essence of the work is that you are able to demonstrate your ability to undertake your own independent and original piece of research. The dissertation must be independent and original in all its phases including design, data construction, data processing and analysis and data interpretation and dissertation write-up. The aims of the dissertation are for you to develop:

1. Knowledge of a specific geographical topic
2. An understanding of the challenges of empirical geographical research
3. The ability to deal with practical research problems (e.g. constructing, manipulating, analysing and interpreting data sources)
4. Skills in designing research and linking its subject-matter to other bodies of geographical knowledge
5. Skills in dealing with the complex inter-relationships of real-world processes
6. Transferable skills in inter-personal communication, data construction and analysis, report writing, and effective time management.

1.2 Intended Learning outcomes

On satisfactorily completing the dissertation you should be able to:

Knowledge & understanding

1. Explain in depth the nature of your research problem and its relevance to the field(s) of study and to the relevant published literature.
2. Describe the results and analyse them in terms of the original aims.
3. Present substantive conclusions and indicate directions for future research in the area.
4. Discuss critically the shortcomings of the research methods.

Discipline-specific skills:
1. Plan, design and execute a piece of rigorous geographical research, including the production of a final report.
2. Undertake effective field work, with due consideration of safety and risk assessment (where applicable).
3. Work safely in a laboratory and with awareness of standard procedures (where applicable)
4. Prepare effective maps and diagrams using a range of appropriate technologies.
5. Employ appropriate technical and/or laboratory-based methods for the analysis of spatial and environmental data (where applicable).
6. Employ where appropriate social science/geographical survey techniques for the construction and analysis of data.
7. Construct, interpret, evaluate and combine different types of geographical evidence and information.
8. Recognise the ethical issues involved in debates and enquiries (where applicable) and undertake fieldwork with due consideration to ethical concerns.

**Intellectual skills:**

1. Define and defend the purpose of the dissertation.
2. Define its place and function within geography.
3. Identify, formulate, analyse and resolve research questions/problems.
4. Demonstrate its philosophy and methodology.
5. Demonstrate a rigorous pattern of experimental conception and/or data construction.
6. Demonstrate an appropriate approach to analysis.
7. Provide a critical interpretation of data and text.
8. Abstract and synthesise relevant information.
9. Demonstrate a rational synthesis.
10. Demonstrate a relevant and realistic conclusion.
11. Develop and sustain a reasoned argument.
12. Judge critically and evaluate evidence/previous research.
13. Assess the merits of different theories, concepts, explanations and policies.
14. Demonstrate an appropriately high level of literacy, graphicy, numeracy and conceptual sophistication.
15. Realise the dissertations limitations within the specific field of research.
16. Make clear, logical and appropriate decisions.

**Transferable skills:**

1. Plan and execute a piece of primary research.
2. Undertake independent research (e.g. in library, archive, laboratory, and field), effectively, responsibly and with consideration of ethical issues.
3. Construct, manipulate, analyse, interpret geographical data/source material, and communicate findings using numeric and computational techniques where applicable.
4. Communicate research problems and ask relevant questions.
5. Liaise effectively with public and private bodies where appropriate.
6. Structure a major piece of research work, and present it competently and clearly (e.g. write coherently, create and use diagrams, figures, appendices using appropriate computer and information technology).
7. Demonstrate competence in working independently (i.e. personal motivation, decision making, awareness, responsibility, and management skills, including setting and work to deadlines).
1.3 Nature of study

There are generally no restrictions on the type of geographical study that you can undertake in completing your dissertation research. Your dissertation should draw from areas of study within one (or more) of the systematic branches of the discipline (e.g. tourism geography, cultural geography). Studies involving the construction and analysis of original data (e.g. questionnaires, interviews) or source material (e.g. travel writing, visual images, film) are most suitable. Students should undertake fieldwork to construct this data/source material whether this is in an archive, library or field location. Students should make clear the sources of data that have been constructed, analysed or interpreted (see section 6.2). Students must use the appropriate qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies for their research. Any dissertation must be an original piece of research and therefore must be more than a mere compilation of existing information.

1.4 Requirements

2nd YEAR

You are required to produce a word processed dissertation proposal (limit: 2000 words) as part of the GEO2310: Human Geography Practice module. See Section 2 for further details.

The submission deadline for this is the 7th May 2009.

FINAL YEAR

You are required to produce a dissertation (GEO3301) of no more than 10,000 words (excluding bibliography, tables and appendices). Your dissertation is important as it counts for 25% of your final degree. NB. Writing more than 10,000 words will result in marks being deducted.

The submission deadline for this will be the last Thursday of the Spring Term of the Third Year.

1.5 Dissertation content

Your written dissertation should:

1. Define and defend the purpose of the dissertation.
2. Define its place and function within geography.
3. Demonstrate its philosophy and methodology.
4. Demonstrate a rigorous pattern of experimental conception and/or data or source construction.
5. Demonstrate an appropriate approach to analysis and/or interpretation of data /sources.
6. Demonstrate a rational synthesis.
7. Demonstrate a relevant and realistic conclusion.
8. Demonstrate an appropriately high level of literacy, graphicacy, numeracy and conceptual sophistication.
9. Realise its limitations within the specific field of research.

It is important that you bear the above in mind when designing, implementing, and reporting on your dissertation research. You can use the criteria above and learning outcomes stated in Section 1.2 as a list against which you can check your dissertation. Does your dissertation show evidence of, or demonstrate these features?

**What makes a good dissertation?**

1. A good problem.
2. Set in its academic context.
3. A clear statement of aims, research questions and objectives.
4. A logical research programme.
5. A clearly defined and appropriate methodology.
6. The construction of adequate and appropriate data/source material to address the research question(s).
7. The application of adequate and appropriate analytical and/or interpretative techniques to the data/source material.
8. A clear statement of findings based on the analysis of this data and its relation to its academic context.
9. A well presented, well structured and clearly written piece of work.
10. Conclusions that relate to the stated aims and research questions, and show the dissertations’ original contribution to geographical (and perhaps wider) literatures.

The assessment of your dissertation is based on the degree to which your report meets these criteria. Details of marking criteria are provided in Appendix 8.

As you will appreciate after reading the sample dissertations, dissertations are by no means identical in their structure. They can be pursued and written according to the spirit as well as the letter of the advice that follows. Please discuss your ideas and concerns about this advice with your postgraduate seminar leaders, with staff whose interests you share, with your tutor and (eventually) with your dissertation adviser. You will not necessarily get a better grade by taking the following advice by the letter, or constructing a dissertation topic like the ones used as examples below. Your topic and/or approach may not fit certain aspect of what can seem like, but isn't meant to be, a single way of doing things. Always start off with that blue skies thinking - ‘In an ideal world, I’d love to do a dissertation on...’

### 1.6 Getting started

Your dissertation should be framed within a broad area of study (*a research topic*). Within this you should identify a *research problem*, this is a more specific, smaller issue within the topic. The research problem should lead to the identification of *research questions*. These are specific questions that you ask in relation to your problem, i.e. how you approach the problem.

For example:
### Topic: Disability and housing.

**Problem:** ‘Intentional communities’ and social inclusion/exclusion.

**Questions:**
What are ‘intentional communities’? What organisations run intentional communities? How do these organisations justify and explain the need for disabled people to live together in these communities? What do other organisations and individuals say about these communities? What critiques and alternatives are there? What is the history of the ‘Intentional community’ idea? Where are these communities found now? How many people live in them? How might it be possible to learn more about them, from written sources, from visiting these communities, from talking to and/or working with people running and living in them? What ethical issues need to be considered when planning and doing this kind of research? Do these communities enable disabled people to be more or less active members of wider society?

---

**In choosing a topic you need to consider:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it interesting?</td>
<td>Are you interested in your topic in both a personal and an academic sense? How can the topic motivate you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it realistic?</td>
<td>Is there enough time? Are the data available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it financially viable?</td>
<td>Can you afford the transport and materials?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where can I do it?</td>
<td>Can you research at a fixed location, or is there only a limited choice of sites?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need equipment?</td>
<td>Does the department have it? Will it be available?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it practical?</td>
<td>Is there time available to construct the data that you need? What other commitments (work, holidays) do you need to consider? Do you need permission for access to field sites, or unusual data sources? Do you need assistance in the field? Is the time required for analysis reasonable and realistic (i.e. will there be sufficient access to the necessary facilities?)? (check with advisor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety?</td>
<td>Are there any risks that need to be identified in the field or laboratory work? Do you need assistance in the field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical issues?</td>
<td>Are there ethical concerns associated with this research? How will I deal with them?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Identifying a research topic**

You should choose a dissertation which reflects your interest in the subject and which attempts to address current debates in geography. Examples can often be gained from your module lectures or by reading recent journal issues (e.g. in *Area, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Progress in Human Geography, Professional Geographer,* and the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*).

Perhaps the most difficult part of the dissertation process is identifying a problem to address. Once you have identified a suitable research topic you need to decide what particular aspect of the topic you are going to investigate. This requires you to be familiar with the other research that has already been done in the field. Your dissertation must be set in the context of this existing research. This means that you need to carry out preliminary research in the library,
checking journals, review articles, abstracts and databases to gain an understanding of the literature in the subject area and recent research before you start your own research.

The library web pages have helpful information guides to using online databases and electronic search engines (http://www.ex.ac.uk/library). You should familiarise yourself with these as soon as possible when undertaking your research for your dissertation. If you are having problems using the web based bibliographic resources ask the helpdesk staff in the library. Your personal tutor/module lecturer/dissertation advisor will also be able to direct you to wider reading.

Flowerdew and Martin (1997) suggest the following tips for generating research ideas:

- Think about your own outside interests: can they generate a research topic?
- Be on the look-out for ideas in the media: newspapers, radio, television etc.
- Follow up an idea that arose in a lecture or field class.
- Read articles or books on a topic that interests you.
- Talk to organisations or individuals working in your area.

It is also a good idea to examine the ways in which the authors of the academic articles that you like and use – and the dissertations that you read for the Human Geography Practice seminars - discuss in the introductions their reasons for doing that research. You will be expected to supply similar explanations and justifications, and should notice that there is more than one way of doing this.

**Research questions**

Research questions usually arise out of some kind of context: a discussion of a recent academic debate, a topical issue as recently reported in the press, and/or (sometimes) personal experiences and concerns. At the beginning of your research proposal and dissertation, it is important to ’set a scene’ – i.e. describe one or more of these contexts – and for your research questions to emerge out of this scene, in a logical and compelling way. What are the reasons for asking the questions that your dissertation will address? And what kinds of questions are best to ask? The following advice should be useful:

- Ask questions that look as though they will have interesting, unknown answers (see 1.6 above).
- The best questions are relatively easy to answer but allow you to make an original contribution to the literature in a particular area of human geography.
- You don’t have to come up with these questions on your own: it’s better to address questions that others have asked and consider important (and with which you agree).
- Research questions can come from academic, popular and/or personal sources.

Having said this, it isn’t necessary to present a list of questions that your dissertation will answer. You could present a problem that your dissertation will address, or a relationship that you wish to explore. Research questions and research aims can, as you will see below, be interchangeable.

**Research aims and objectives**

You are required to state your research aims and objectives in your dissertation proposal. You will also need to state these clearly and succinctly in your final dissertation. Your research
aims should set out clearly the dissertation’s main research question(s). Your research objectives are the operational steps, or specific tasks, by which these aims/questions will be achieved/answered. A clear statement of aims and objectives is important because these determine the direction of your research. The type of information you require to address them determines the methods you need to use and the way you analyse the data/source material generated. The conclusions should show how you have achieved/answered the original aims/questions via these objectives. So, be wary of starting your research with ‘woolly’ aims and objectives as these can lead to rambling discussions that fail to reach any firm conclusions!

1.8 Recommended Reading

You should not need to read any academic books telling you ‘how to do a dissertation in geography’. The best advice you can get about doing your dissertation here and now will come via the Human Geography Practice lectures and dissertation seminars, and through discussions with your tutor, staff members whose interests you share (see them in office hours to discuss ideas), and your (eventual) dissertation adviser.

There is however useful academic writing about writing research proposals, whose sections (re. methods and ethics, for example) can be fleshed out by reading relevant chapters in the recommended texts and reading lists provided in the Human Geography Practice module.

Writing research proposals:¹

Human Geography Practice recommended texts:

¹ NB if not in the library, the short chapters by Kelly (2004), Schutt (2006) and Silverman & Marvasti (2008) can be viewed online via http://books.google.com. Cahill (2007) makes a different argument: that research questions should be determined in consultation with the people with whom you wish to do the research. This approach is appropriate for some topics more than others.
Finally, given that it will be important to convince your readers that your dissertation research will address an important issue in human geography, and provide an original contribution to debates in human geography, you will need to read recent review articles and chapters which summarise the current state of play in appropriate areas of geography, and point out new approaches and new work that needs to be done. If your dissertation relates to an issue that has been covered in another module, you should consult that module’s reading lists. If you are fishing around for an appropriate area (or areas) of human geography that your topic could fit within, useful reviews can often be found in edited collections of research into a particular issue (e.g. the geography of music), and in journals which commission such reviews: e.g. Progress in human geography or Geography compass. Exeter’s library subscribes to the former, and should soon be subscribing to the latter. [If you need a specific Compass articles before then, please contact Ian Cook (i.j.cook@ex.ac.uk) who edits the Cultural Geography section of the journal]. In addition, academic journal articles and book chapters often undertake short literature reviews in their introductions and call for new research in their conclusions, so these are also worth reading. Please note that you may need to undertake quite a lot of reading here, and that it’s more convincing to argue that your research is new and original if you base your arguments on its newness and originality on very recent articles!
Section 2:
Dissertation planning & the proposal.

This section explains what the procedures are for submitting your dissertation proposal and the assigning of a Dissertation Adviser.

2.1 Dissertation Proposal

The dissertation proposal forms part of the second year practical module; your dissertation proposal counts as 30% of your mark for GEO2310: Human Geography Practice.

It cannot be stated strongly enough that you should begin to plan your dissertation as soon as possible. During the Spring Term and over the Easter Vacation you should work on your proposal, checking the ideas, potential literature sources and field areas. There will be dedicated dissertation-planning seminars in the Spring term, which you should attend. You can also seek help and advice from academic staff, and expect to gain some advice from your tutor (see Appendix 2).

Geography with European Studies students

You must complete an assignment as an alternative to the dissertation proposal while in your second year. The mark for this alternative assignment contributes 7.5 credits towards the Practical Module, and has the same deadline as the second year dissertation proposal. The alternative assignment comprises a 2000 word literature review on the topic that you plan to investigate during your year abroad. The review should result in the identification of potential research themes. The aim of this assignment is to ensure that you begin planning your research before you go abroad.

You have to submit your dissertation proposal when in your European destination, following the same criteria and format stipulated for dissertation proposals submitted by second year students (Section 2.2). The proposal must be posted to the Human Geography Dissertation Tutor: Dr Ian Cook, School of Geography and Archaeology and Earth Resources, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter EX4 4RJ arriving no later than 7th May 2009. You will carry out your dissertation field work during your year abroad and will be assigned an adviser by Ian Cook in May 2009.

2.2 When must I submit my dissertation proposal?

Your dissertation proposal should be hand-in to Tracy Reeves in the Departmental Office between 9am – 1pm and 2pm - 5pm on 7th May 2009.
2.3 What happens then?

Based on your dissertation proposal, you will be assigned a Dissertation Adviser, who will assess the proposal, and also arrange to meet with you in weeks 4-9 of the Summer Term. The Dissertation Adviser will give comments on the proposal, as well as guidance on any possible modifications. The assessing and marking of your proposal is part of the approval process. Your topic may be approved without changes, with some modifications or rejected. In the event that your proposal is rejected, you will be asked to re-work your ideas and re-submit your proposal by Friday of Week 9 of the Summer Term. This will give the advisor time to consider the new dissertation proposal and discuss it with you before the end of term. You may be assigned a new Dissertation Advisor. However, the mark for the original proposal will be carried forward.

2.4 Preliminary ethics self-assessment form for undergraduate dissertations, & Risk Assessment and Working with 3rd parties form

Before commencing on your proposed dissertation ‘fieldwork’ (i.e. any research undertaken outside of the University) you must complete a Working with 3rd parties and Risk Assessment and a Preliminary ethics self-assessment form for undergraduate dissertations (see Section 3 & Appendix 3 & 4). These two forms must be handed in with your dissertation proposal. These forms must be counter-signed by your Dissertation Advisor, who will keep copies on record. The Department will not support research that is deemed to pose an unacceptable risk or have unethical practices. If you subsequently change topics, you will need to complete new Risk, Working with 3rd parties and Ethics Assessment Forms. Failure to submit these two forms will be reported to the Head of Department and the dissertation research will not be supported by the Department. If your research requires approval from the School Ethics Committee you will not be able to start work on your dissertation until you have this approval. See Section 3 and Appendix 3 & 4 for details.

2.5 Can I change topic once I have submitted the proposal?

Yes, but there are a series of procedures that must be followed. If you decide to change topic after submitting your proposal, you must contact the Human Geography Dissertation Tutor (Ian Cook: i.j.cook@ex.ac.uk) as soon as possible. Any substantial change of topic has to be formally agreed with your advisor. If necessary, a new dissertation proposal has to be submitted and assessed as soon as possible, following the guidelines in Appendix 1. NB. Although this new proposal does not form part of the assessment it is nonetheless extremely important. It will help to ensure that you have thought through the design of your new dissertation research and that it is a relevant and feasible study. It will enable the Dissertation Adviser to provide advice and monitor your progress. You will also need to complete new Working with 3rd parties and Risk Assessment and Preliminary ethics self-assessment form for undergraduate dissertations forms.

In exceptional situations you may feel you have a case for changing your advisor. In these situations a written request has to be submitted to Dr Cook as soon as possible to ensure successful completion of your dissertation. You must talk to your current advisor before request-
ing a change of advisor. If you file such a request you must not miss any appointments with your current advisor, including filing a progress report. Please note that a change is not guaranteed and that changes of advisors are made only in exceptional circumstances. If you feel that the relationship with your current advisor has irretrievably broken down, see your tutor and/or the Human Geography Dissertation Tutor immediately.

2.6 Access and pilot issues

It is easy to plan a research that is impossible to do, if appropriate permissions are not sought before the research proposal is submitted or, at the latest, before the research starts. It is therefore essential to seek prior permission for access to land, archives, organisations, communities or other sources of data before your field work or research is undertaken (see Appendix 4). A standard letter will be made available on request to explain that you are carrying out work that is an essential part of your degree and not related to any official investigation on the part of the University.

Depending on the type of research that you intend to undertake, it can be a good idea to undertake a preliminary pilot project, to test the viability of an approach or data source which you are unsure about.

2.7 The Myrtle Murray Award

Students carrying out fieldwork abroad can apply for financial support through the Myrtle Murray Award. This is a significant cash award to assist travel abroad for the purpose of study. It is usually awarded during the Summer Term and you are advised to consult the notice board on the third floor of the Amory Building for details regarding the application procedure and closing date (usually during the Spring Term).

2.8 Summary of actions to be taken

Your dissertation should occupy your thoughts over the following year or more according to the following timetable:

Before the end of Spring Term:
Decide on a topic and discuss this with seminar staff, your tutor and/or an appropriate member of staff (i.e. a person with whom you share an interest; see Appendix 2).

By the end of the Summer Term:
Meet with your Dissertation Adviser and discuss your proposal.
Complete an Ethical and Risk Assessment forms and counter sign them with your Dissertation Adviser (see Section 3).

Over the Summer holidays:
Undertake research.

By the end of the Autumn Term:
1. Meet your Dissertation Adviser to discuss progress and what to do next.
2. Attend group supervision meetings to discuss common issues
3. Analyse your data and plan your dissertation

_During the Spring term and Easter break:_
1. Meet your Dissertation Adviser to discuss progress.
2. Attend group supervision meetings to discuss common issues
3. Write and submit your dissertation.
3.1 Ethical considerations in dissertation research

All students have to submit a preliminary ethics self-assessment form for undergraduate dissertations with their dissertation proposal. You may also be required to submit a formal application to the School Ethics Committee if your research raises ethical considerations. See appendix 4 for details.

Much research in human geography involves people, either directly (as subjects who will be interviewed or surveyed) or indirectly (as members of a broader community in which research in being undertaken). It is essential that you consider the ethical implications of research that you are undertaking and take all possible action to ensure people are not harmed, worried or inconvenienced by your research. You should always ensure that you gain permission to access private land and property and that any investigations that you propose to conduct are fully explained. Good ethical research practice also ensures that the environments involved in your research are not harmed.

As a broad rule you should ensure that you keep to the following guidelines in designing your research and constructing your data:

3.1.1 Guidelines for research involving people

- The student must carry identification including information that allows a potential participant to contact the Department if she/he wishes, in order to ensure that the work is bona fide. Students who require letters of introduction and identification should ask their dissertation adviser before the last week of the Summer term.
- All participants must be assured at the outset that information they provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. The student must adhere to this throughout the research process including production of the dissertation. At no stage should it be possible to link information with individual participants. Participants may, however, give their consent for this confidentiality to be waived so that, for example, quotations may be linked with individual consent.
- Personal and/or sensitive questions should not be asked unless they are directly necessary for the research.
- No data may be stored electronically in a way that allows individuals and their information to be identified. Names and addresses should not, therefore, be placed on computer file.
- All participants in the research must be involved voluntarily. A participant may withdraw at any time and must be allowed to do so. No pressure to continue as a participant must be applied.
• The purpose of the research must be explained to each participant at the outset and she/he must not be misled.
• Dissertations involving observation of behaviour without interaction with the people observed (e.g. counting the number of people using a particular service) obviously cannot obtain the consent of all observed. However, such observation could cause suspicion or distress if the observation is unexplained. You should think very carefully about your observation site, and if possible explain and seek consent from someone in authority for that area – this could be the local police station or the manager of a shopping complex, for example.
• You may be required to submit your research to the School Ethics Committee for approval prior to commencing your work.

3.1.2 Additional guidelines for research involving young or vulnerable people

There are particular considerations for those intending to work with young or vulnerable people. You are advised to think very carefully about undertaking research that involves talking to young or vulnerable people due to concerns about their safety. You will have to gain the approval of the School Ethics Committee before commencing any research involving young or vulnerable people.

3.1.3 Access to private land and property

Dissertation students must not attempt to conduct investigations on private land/property without the permission of its owners. This applies to land and all other types of property (e.g. shops, leisure services, means of transport). If the property/land is publicly owned permission must be obtained from the relevant authority/management. If requested to do so, a student must leave the land/property immediately and without protest.

3.1.4 Guidelines involving respecting the environment involved in your research

You should ensure that you carry out your research in a manner that will not cause harm or adverse transformation to environments involved in your research.

3.1.5 Ethical Assessment Form

As mentioned above, you are required to submit a preliminary ethics self-assessment form for undergraduate dissertations with your dissertation proposal. This will establish whether you need to complete a formal application to the School Ethics Committee.

For further guidance on ethical considerations in research see:


3.2 Safety and Fieldwork

This section explains the safety considerations that you need to take when undertaking any sort of fieldwork. Fieldwork is considered any work undertaken as part of your dissertation. The Department will not support subjects for dissertations that involve working situations
with unacceptable risks. You should read this section carefully and take action on any safety issues that might arise. You are advised to consult the SoGAER Safety Handbook for further information on Health and Safety.

Download from [http://sogaer.exeter.ac.uk/safetyhandbook.shtml](http://sogaer.exeter.ac.uk/safetyhandbook.shtml).

These notes are intended to alert you to the need to take particular care to ensure your own safety when undertaking dissertation fieldwork. They do not claim to be comprehensive, covering every possible situation, but all students are strongly urged to take careful note of them now!

3.2.1 Assessment of potential dangers

Before commencing any fieldwork, you are strongly advised to make your own assessment of any potential dangers/hazards and decide upon a suitable method of working. This should be discussed with your Dissertation Adviser. It may be necessary to revise your assessment of dangers or hazards as your field work progresses. At the back of this handbook you will find a Risk Assessment Form (Appendix 3). You should discuss any foreseeable risks with your Adviser, complete the form, both of you should sign it and s/he will keep a copy on record. If you subsequently change topics, you will need to complete a new Risk Assessment form. Failure to submit a satisfactory Risk Assessment Form will be reported to the Head of Department, and the dissertation research will not be supported by the Department.

NO STUDENT SHOULD GO INTO A DANGEROUS OR HAZARDOUS LOCATION, OR UNDERTAKE DANGEROUS TASKS (where ‘hazardous’ refers to locations where potential dangers may frequently arise, and ‘dangerous’ refers to locations where dangers are always present)

3.2.2 Preparation for field work

Before starting your field work, you must leave information about your intended programme and itinerary with a parent or another responsible person. You should leave a record of:

- Date and time of departure
- Method of travel to the field location, and around the site once there
- Proposed itinerary (give O.S. grid references where appropriate)
- Any potentially hazardous technique or operation to be used and where it is proposed to use it.
- Expected time of leaving the field location and estimated time of arrival home.
- Contact details

Equipment and Clothing

Human Geography research takes students to a variety of different fieldwork locations using a range of research methods. There is therefore a wide variety of fieldwork equipment and clothing requirements. Failure to anticipate basic requirements for your fieldwork could put you at risk in addition to losing research time which might otherwise be avoided. You should ensure in advance that you have suitable clothing and equipment for your proposed field work.

**Equipment:**
The equipment required for constructing and analysing data and source material used by Human Geographers is often very familiar to students. Most will be familiar with voice recorders,
good quality microphones, photocopiers, transcribing machines, still and video cameras, DVD or video players, computers with appropriate software, internet access, printers and burners, etc. which could be used in dissertation research. You will, however have to carefully and imaginatively assess what equipment will be needed to conduct your research well, and how you can gain access to it through buying or borrowing.

Always try and think about potential pitfalls when using any piece of equipment. For example, if it is powered by batteries, always ensure you have spares with you just in case they run out in – say – the middle of an important interview. Or, if you are using a computer in an archive or to back up digital photos or voice recordings, always ensure you back up your files on a memory stick or other external storage device.

If you borrow unfamiliar equipment, make sure you know how to use it properly by experimenting with it yourself – and/or asking a technician if it’s borrowed from the Department - before the research is formally underway. For example, try out the voice recording capabilities of your mobile phone or MP3 player by interviewing friends or family, backing up the file on a computer, and listening to the recording to assess whether it is clear enough for you to be able to transcribe it.

Supplies of food and drinks should be taken when working in the field over a lengthy period, unless easily available nearby. Although it is unusual in human geography research, if you are working in remote environments, you must carry a map and compass (and know how to take a bearing), a whistle, a watch, a torch, and in potentially cold environments, you must carry an emergency survival blanket.

Clothing:
Clothing suitable for the climate in the place(s) where your research will take place and at the time(s) of year it will be undertaken must be worn. Extra clothing should be carried in climatically unpredictable areas where there is risk of exposure. In hot weather, the risk of sun-burn must be considered. Always wear footwear appropriate to the terrain and weather conditions you are likely to encounter. If necessary, wear appropriate safety clothing (the hard hats and high visibility vests worn by people showing you around a building site, for example).

3.2.3 Working alone

Although your dissertation research must be the work of a single person, fieldwork often needs to be undertaken in company. When undertaking fieldwork in unfamiliar or remote locations, another person (or more) may be able to help if any difficulties arise. Never place yourself in situations where your safety could be compromised, for example, by accepting an invitation into an unfamiliar person’s house to conduct an interview. If you feel the slightest bit nervous about such situations, do not get into them for the sake of your research! Working in a public place, with known people, and/or in company can reduce risks of personal harm. NB although it is recommended that you conduct your research in company, you alone should do the research. Just as you cannot ask someone else to sit an exam for you or write your essays, you should not ask or let anyone else (to) do any of the data construction, reading or writing for your dissertation.

3.2.4 International Distress Signs

If you plan to work, or find yourself, in remote and hazardous locations, you will need to be aware of internationally recognised distress signals as follows:
On mountains and other terrestrial locations, give six long flashes/blasts/shouts/waves in succession & repeat at one-minute length intervals. [NB always ensure that someone else knows in advance where you are going]

At sea, using a whistle or a torch, send the Morse-code SOS signal (3 short blasts/flashes – 3 long – 3 short), pause, then repeat, etc. Alternatively, use red flares, orange smoke, outstretched arms, raised and lowered slowly and repeatedly, or an oar, with a cloth tied to it, waved slowly from side to side. [NB always inform the coastguards of your activities before commencing work]

3.2.5 Fieldwork locations where special care should be exercised

Bear in mind that working near busy roads, near railway stations, or at airports can involve hazards. Any dissertation research undertaken in or near such locations should be carried out with due regard to safety. Door to door calling to deliver questionnaires and ‘one to one’ interviews are situations which can sometimes involve an element of risk. As mentioned in section 3.2.3, it is the Department's clear advice to find another person to join you, and always leave clear information about your whereabouts and expected time of return. Make sure the person with whom you leave this information knows that you have returned.

Other potential hazards can be encountered in remote mountainous terrain, remote moorland, cliffs, caves, quarries, tunnels, pot-holes, spoil heaps, tips, land-fill, sludge lagoons, freshwater lakes and pools, rivers, reed beds, bogs and marshes and sea-shores. You are strongly advised to make a judgement about the potential hazards encountered in your proposed fieldwork location, if necessary to seek expert guidance, and at all times to take appropriate action.

These notes are intended to alert you to the need to take particular care to ensure your own safety when undertaking dissertation fieldwork. They do not claim to be comprehensive, covering every possible situation, but all students are strongly urged to take careful note of them now!

You are advised to consult the SoGAER Safety Handbook for further information on Health and Safety (download this at http://sogaer.exeter.ac.uk/safetyhandbook.shtml).

3.2.6 Disease and immunisation

Students intending to work with plant material, soils, or near farm animals, must ensure that your tetanus immunisation is up-to-date. Bear in mind that agricultural areas may harbour disease. Also, remember that some plants and animals native to the UK are poisonous. In some overseas locations, this risk can be greater. Freshwater may be a source of pollution and contain bacteria. If in any doubt about a potentially poisonous substance, take advice from the National Poisons Information Service (http://www.npis.org/NPIS/uknpis.htm).

3.2.7 Overseas Fieldwork

Many students decided to undertake fieldwork overseas. Students should ensure that any overseas fieldwork is planned meticulously to ensure that the research aims of their dissertation can be fulfilled. Students should also ensure that in the planning of overseas research attention is placed on personal safety and health.
Getting local contacts in the field location and establishing a programme of field research prior to your arrival in the field will help overseas research to run as smoothly as possible.


For further information on this issue (and for a useful guide to further reading), see:

Section 4:
Progress monitoring & advice

4.1  What can I expect from my Dissertation Adviser?

The dissertation is your own piece of independent research. You should, therefore, expect to undertake the necessary activities - thinking and doing - independently. Your Dissertation Adviser's principal responsibility is to monitor your progress. S/he can be expected to do the following:

• offer (with other staff members,) advice and answer questions on the process of designing, undertaking and writing your dissertation at any time during the third year, e.g. on appropriate methodologies, logistics, resources, chapter structure, writing style;
• read your Dissertation Progress Reports to ensure that you are making progress, give advice if sufficient progress is not being made, e.g. tell you that you need to 'get cracking', and alert the Human Geography Dissertation Tutor (Ian Cook) if unsatisfactory progress is being made;
• offer a standard amount of formal supervision time to each student in the form of pre-arranged individual and group supervisions, plus drop-in advice as necessary.

You cannot expect your Dissertation Adviser to:

• tell you what to do (this is your dissertation, s/he will help you to develop your ideas);
• give mini-lectures about things that you should have found and read about yourself;
• read draft copies of dissertation chapters (don't even ask!).

4.2  What will your Dissertation Adviser expect from you?

4.2.1. That you attend formal Dissertation Progress Monitoring Meetings.

You must have a minimum of three individual meetings with your Dissertation Adviser, at which your progress will be formally monitored and recorded on a Dissertation Progress Report Form (see Appendix 5).

Monitoring meeting 1: by end of week 9 of the Summer Term to discuss your dissertation proposal.

Monitoring meeting 2: in week 3 of the Autumn Term of your final year to discuss your 400 word progress report and to complete a Dissertation Progress Report Form.

Monitoring meeting 3: in week 3 of Spring Term of your final year to discuss your 400 word progress report and complete a Dissertation Progress Report Form.
You will also be invited to a limited number of group supervision meetings in your third year in which all of the students advised by your Adviser will meet together to discuss common issues and concerns (e.g. research experiences, data analysis, chapter planning).

4.2.2. That you complete all required forms – especially those concerning research ethics and risks - and follow the advice given.

See section 2.4 above.

4.2.3. That you make progress on your dissertation

As far as possible you should aim to complete your dissertation fieldwork by the end of the Summer vacation this year. When you return to University, you will be invited to Dissertation Progress Monitoring Meetings during the Autumn and Spring Terms (see above) to discuss dissertation progress with your Adviser. S/he will contact you to arrange these meetings and will make records of what is discussed on a Dissertation Progress Report Form (see Appendix 5).

Failure make satisfactory progress on your dissertation, including non-attendance at Dissertation Progress Monitoring Meetings will be reported to the Head of Department.

4.2.4. That you keep them informed of any change in direction/topic

If you have to substantially modify your research or choose to embark on a different topic during the vacation, you must discuss this with your Dissertation Adviser at the time (your Adviser will be at work in the summer and able to respond to emails!). You should not be surprised if your research doesn’t quite pan out exactly as you expect, but students tend to struggle if such changes lead to them giving up their research in the summer, or doing it in a half-hearted way. Good preparation, planning and determination are required to get good research done during the Summer holidays. This preparation should equip you to cope with changes as they happen. But please don’t hesitate to contact your adviser in the holidays if you need some advice about coping with these changes. It is extremely difficult and stressful to embark on a new dissertation at the beginning of your final year.

Any significant changes to your dissertation topic will have to be discussed with your Adviser and with the Human Geography Dissertation Tutor (Ian Cook). For new topics, you will be required to submit a new research proposal and will be allocated a new Adviser. This new proposal is not assessed but is nonetheless extremely important to your research. It will help to ensure that you have thought through the design of the research and that it is relevant and feasible. It will also enable your new Adviser to provide advice and monitor your progress.

4.2.5. That you keep an archive of your research of your research data

You should keep a paper and/or electronic archive of all of your research information, including, for example, field notebooks, completed/returned questionnaires, correspondence with subjects, recordings of interviews, transcripts or notes on source material and draft copies of your dissertation chapters.

The School Examination Board and/or the External Examiner reserve the right to consider this archive as part of your dissertation module assessment. Failure to provide this archive (or to keep an adequate archive) if asked, may result in loss of marks.
4.3 When must I submit my completed dissertation?

Your completed dissertation must be handed in on the last Thursday of the Spring Term in your Final Year. Failure to meet this deadline (without permission) will be dealt with severely and the Board of Examiners will normally impose a penalty of a reduction by one class of the mark awarded. It is the student’s responsibility to bring any potentially extenuating circumstances to their Adviser’s attention.
Section 5: Dissertation presentation & layout

This section provides advice on how to organise and set out your dissertation, as well as when and how to submit it.

5.1 Word limit and page format

Your dissertation should not exceed 10,000 words (excluding title page, contents page, acknowledgements, abstract, list of figures, appendices, tables and bibliography) and should be formatted as instructed in the table below. Dissertations that exceed the word limit will be penalised (see Section 6.4) Dissertations must be word-processed with double line spacing on single sides of A4 and all pages must be clearly numbered in the top right-hand corner. The binding will require a 1 cm space down the left hand margin of each page so you must make sure that your margins are sufficiently wide for this. Students bear the costs of their dissertation’s illustrations, typing, paper, outer cover, and binding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word Limit</th>
<th>10,000 words (excluding title page, contents page, acknowledgements, abstract, list of figures, appendices, tables and bibliography).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top &amp; Bottom Margin</td>
<td>2 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Margin</td>
<td>Minimum 3.5 cm to allow for binding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Margin</td>
<td>2.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Spacing</td>
<td>Double line spacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Font</td>
<td>12 point Arial or Times New Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Numbers</td>
<td>Top right hand corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>Printing on one side of A4 paper only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Structure and contents

As you will see from the dissertations that you read and discuss in the Human Geography Practice module, there are a variety of ways in which a good dissertation can be organised on paper. Many students follow advice about chapter structures to the letter; even when that advice squeezes some of the life out of what they have learned and want to convey. One of the most important considerations in planning the write-up of a dissertation is how you are going to engage your reader in what you have learned; how you are going to convey what was interesting about your research; how you are going to write a page-turning account. But, at the same time, you have to consider how are you going to include all of the required elements of a good dissertation (e.g. research questions, the literature you have read, the methods you employed, the ethics of your research, your findings, etc.) in that account. There are various models that can be used to plan dissertations in more conventional ways (see below), but if these...
don't work for you or your research, discuss possible alternatives with your Adviser. Below two conventional dissertation models are discussed. You could choose to use one or other model for your dissertation, or could use the advice given about their contents in a looser way: like a checklist of what's expected in an alternatively-organised dissertation. Whichever option you take, you should take it because it enables you to make the most convincing argument.

There are two standard models that can be drawn on to conventionally structure a dissertation. These are shown in the table below as Model 1 and Model 2. If you choose one or other of these, or decide on an alternative structure, you should ensure that your dissertation has a clear and logical structure, and that it incorporates all of the components listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODEL 1</th>
<th>MODEL 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title page</td>
<td>Title page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy of Ethics Form</td>
<td>Copy of Ethics Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of figures</td>
<td>List of figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>List of tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Literature Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Chapters</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Analysis and interpretation of results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whatever structure you choose for your dissertation, you will have to include the sections above which have a white background in that order. Alternatively structured dissertations can only experiment with the sections in white type, bearing in mind that all dissertations needs some kind of introduction and conclusion (it has to start and end somewhere, so your marker can assess if and how you managed to do what you set out to do).

Title Page

The title of your dissertation should be both interesting – it is the first impression that you give to your marker – and provide some impression of the serious issues that it will explore. It is not a good idea to give your dissertation a title that asks a question that seems only to have a yes or a no answer. Neither is it a good idea to have a long winded factual title along the lines of ‘An investigation of a, b, c and d, in this part of the world using the a combination of research methods and concluding that...’, or a short but strange catchy one like ‘Fish’. Some combination of the two – a catchy title of a few words taken from press coverage or an interview that you discuss, for example – followed by a subtitle containing few key academic terms along the lines of ‘something, something and something else’ usually works better. Look for inspiration and ideas in the titles of the academic studies that you read. What kinds of titles do you like best?

Your title page must include the title of your dissertation, your name, the date it was submitted, and a signed acknowledgement stating that:
This acknowledgement must be taken very seriously. See Section 6 for information regarding the School and University disciplinary policy against plagiarism and collusion, and Appendix 5 for an example title page.

Ethics Form (see Appendix 4)

A copy of the Ethics form approved by your adviser and/or the Department’s Research Ethics committee should be included here.

Contents page

Appendix 8 provides an example of a Table of Contents. First, you must provide a list of chapter, section heading and subheading titles with their assigned page numbers. This will help your reader to navigate their way through the dissertation. After this, as illustrated in Appendix 9, you must provide separate lists of any figures and/or tables and the pages on which they can be found. This will allow your reader to quickly find the illustrations you have used if they need to refer back to them later on in the dissertation.

Lists of Figures and tables

‘Figures’ include all maps, diagrams, and photographs included in the dissertation. ‘Tables’ are considered and numbered separately. In all cases, an explanatory title should be provided next to the figure or table number.

All figures and tables must be numbered. Tables are numbered separately from figures. For example, using the numerical system, ‘Figure 4.1’ would be the first figure cited in chapter 4 and ‘Table 3.2’ would be the second table cited in chapter 3.

All tables and figures should be closely integrated with, and referred to, in the text, using appropriate phrasing, for example:

‘The site is located in the Rocky Mountains (see Figure 4.1)’ or ‘Table 3.2 provides a summary of the data from...’

Do not write, for example:

‘The location of the site can be seen in the map below’ or ‘A summary of the results can be seen in the table on page 31’.

It is not sufficient simply to put text and illustrations side by side hoping that the reader/examiner will make the connection. Explain why they are there and how they contribute to
the argument that you are making. If they do not contribute to your argument, don’t include them.

Some kinds of figures require additional considerations:

a) Maps and diagrams:
Maps should normally be prepared with one dimension equal to the height of an A4 sheet and, if necessary, may be folded. Maps and diagrams must either be drawn by hand in black ink, or be computer generated (in the latter case colour may be used). The photocopying of some material may be possible (please seek advice in the Rodney Fry Map Library, drawing office or computer unit as appropriate). Maps should have adequate scales and keys. Each map or diagram should have a frame, with a figure number and title outside the frame. The source of the information must also be given (and listed fully in the Bibliography), e.g. ‘Figure 1.1: Public Drinking Spaces Visited, 1980-1998 (source: Kneale, 1999)’.

b) Photographs
Photographs, digitised images and colour photocopies may also be used if necessary, and these should also be given a figure number, title and source, e.g. ‘Figure 1.1: Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta (photo: author).’

NB. please ensure that all of your figures are clear and of sufficient size and resolution for your reader to be able to make out text and important features. Figures that are small, fuzzy, and difficult to make out can detract from, rather than support to, your arguments.

Acknowledgements

You may wish to acknowledge people / institutions who have helped you during the process of conducting and writing your dissertation.

Abstract

The abstract should not exceed 200 words and should be a brief summary of what your dissertation set out to do and how it does this. Look to journal article abstracts for inspiration here.

Introduction

This chapter should:

♦ describe the circumstances and/or contexts out of which your research question(s)/aim(s) have emerged (these should reflect contemporary academic, topical and/or personal concerns, but whether you call them ‘questions’ or ‘aims’ is up to you: choose one term and stick with it)
♦ outline the research question(s) / aim(s) that your dissertation tries to address;
♦ outline the objectives through which you have tried to address them;
♦ indicate why this should be of interest or concern to academic geographers, and how your findings promise to contribute something new and original to geographical scholarship;
♦ outline how you have organised your dissertation chapters to address these question(s)/aim(s) and to make that case in a convincing and academically-sound manner.
A note on chapters, sections, subsections and the use of subheadings.

At the start of each chapter, it is a good idea to include a brief statement stating what it is about to help the reader work out where they are in the dissertation, and where they are going. A chapter could begin, for example, with ‘This chapter discusses the results of...’ A short summary at the end of each chapter can be equally valuable to help the reader keep track of where they have ended up and where they are going next. A chapter could end, for example, with ‘This chapter has discussed the...’ and then say ‘This leads on to...’ Your adviser may describe this process as the ‘topping and tailing’ of chapters.

Between these tops and tails, your chapters will need to be divided into sections and subsections. These can help you to organise and decide where to place various aspects of the argument you want to make in a logical order (e.g. different bodies of literature in a literature review chapter, or different themes identified in your data in an ‘analysis’ chapter). They can also enable your reader to navigate through the chapter with greater ease. Sections and subsections should be used in a logical and consistent manner. A balance must be achieved between over- and under-division of chapters. Too many sections and subsections may break up the flow of your argument and make the chapter appear bitty or fragmented. Too few may make it more difficult for your reader to work out where they are in their argument and where they are going next.

To signpost the different levels of heading and subheading you should number and title each of them in a specific way. The Table of Contents example in Appendix 8 shows how this system works. For example, chapter 3 could be divided into sections 3.1, 3.2, and so on, each with different titles; and section 3.2 could be divided into subsections 3.2.1, 3.2.2, and so on, each with a different title. Numbering things this way can allow you to refer your reader to previous arguments by saying, for example, ‘In section 3.1, I tried to show...’

Literature Review

This chapter should:
♦ show what academic concepts (e.g. ‘social exclusion’), studies (e.g. ‘Powers’ (2006) examination of.’), theoretical perspectives (e.g. ‘For political economists, ...’), and/or bodies of work (e.g. ‘In historical geography, ...’) can usefully be drawn upon to make sense of the kind of question(s)/aim(s) you are pursuing;
♦ show, through critically reviewing relevant academic reading, that your research is making an argument through this literature (i.e. taking up particular ideas, challenging others, responding to appropriate calls for new work, because they are appropriate).

Please bear in mind here that:
♦ an uncritical dissertation is one uses a literature / approach has been taken by others in an unquestioning way;
♦ this is related to a derivative dissertation, which involves an uncritically chosen literature / approach illustrated by a slightly different example which, as a result, cannot raise any critical questions about that literature / approach;
♦ you should therefore read around your topic - looking for elements that will need to be combined to do it well - rather than get disappointed that you cannot find an academic
study that more or less matches what you want to do (if you do find such a study, ask your tutor, seminar leader, or Adviser how can you make sure that your own study is different enough to be original).

Methodology

This chapter should:

♦ show that the questions/aims that you began with, and the academic ideas that could help to make a better sense of them, require particular kinds (and combinations) of research methods in order to address them in a convincing way;

♦ show that you have read enough of the literature on research methods (both general and specific arguments) to know both how to choose appropriate (combinations) methods, and how to use them to construct the right kinds of data and analyse them systematically;

♦ show how you tackled practical methodological issues such as how you negotiated access to appropriate sources of data and/or field sites, or made adjustments to your research design as circumstances changed;

♦ explain your research design (which may have, for example, involved two phases in which you need to do one thing before you can do another, and/or be undertaken in particular places and times);

♦ outline how the analysis of the resulting data was undertaken and how it explains the organisation of the following Analysis/Results chapter(s).

Analytical chapter(s) (Model 1)
or
Results, Analysis and Interpretation of Results (Model 2)

Model 1
In some Human Geography dissertations (primarily qualitative studies), it is common for the data and its interpretation to be presented together. This can be undertaken in a single longer chapter divided by different themes that emerge out of the analysis of that data, or a series of shorter chapters each dealing with one theme. These themes may be answers to your research questions/aims (i.e. theme 1 addresses question/aim 1) or may cross-cut your research questions/aims (i.e. 'Three major themes seemed to arise in relation to...'). Whichever approach you take, you should use your appropriately analysed data/source material to support and illustrate your argument, e.g. by using quotations, maps, tables, figures, diagrams, images etc. You may also find it useful in places to refer back to, and pick up ideas from, your literature review.

Model 2
In other Human Geography dissertations (primarily quantitative studies), it is common for data and its interpretation to be presented separately. Here, data generated through your research can be presented in the form of maps, tables, graphs and/or diagrams. The interpretations of this date then follow in a separate chapter.

For further reading on this topic, see:
Conclusion

In this final chapter you should:

♦ Tie everything together: questions, readings, research, findings, etc.

♦ Show how your findings address the specific questions/aims of the dissertation. and how they feed back into the broader literature your reviewed earlier in the dissertation. How does what you have found out make an original contribution to that literature? What implications do your findings have for research in this area?

♦ Show your understanding of the limitations of your research (i.e. what you can and can’t conclude given what you have been able to do). Dissertations are small pieces of research done well, and can’t usually come to big conclusions. Modest conclusions are fine. Undergraduate dissertations often raise as many questions as they answer. Research could always have been done differently. With the benefit of hindsight, if you had your time again, how might you have done things differently? If you had more time and resources, what would you do to develop this research further? Knowing what you know, what research do you think needs to be done next?

The ‘hourglass shape’ of a good dissertation

Dissertations should be as broad in their conclusions as they are in their introductions, but should be funneled through a small piece of research done well. The opening chapters of a dissertation should place a particular problem or question in a wider academic (and often popular) context (e.g. disability and housing). A methodology discussion begins to narrow things down to a specific study. That study answers specific questions in depth. But the conclusion of a good dissertation returns to those wider contexts with something new to say to them. Dissertations should not finish with the answers to the specific research questions (e.g. ‘intentional communities are ‘bad’ or ‘good’). They should not come to a sharp point.

Referencing and the bibliography

You must refer to all references in a consistent and recognised fashion using the Harvard system. The following example demonstrates our preferred practice:

There is only one detailed book on the subject of dissertations (Ravenhill, 1954), although more recent research papers have touched on the subject (Simon Turner, pers. comm.). Williams (1990, p.10) for example claims that ‘all good dissertations should contain some element of tourism research in a warm country’. Adams and Ray (2001), Brown (1991a; 1991b; 1999), Brown et al. (1994) and Robinson (1991) do not mention dissertations.

In this example, the references are listed alphabetically in the bibliography as:
Bibliography

Internet resources:
These citations (e.g. Adams and Ray, 2001) should comprise the author(s) (if known), the full title of the work (i.e. page header), the title of the complete work (if applicable) in italics, the full http address, and the date of visit. The aim is to provide the information necessary to enable the reader to appreciate the theme of the page and to access it directly from the address provided in the reference.

Paper resources:
Ravenhill (1954) and Brown (1991b) shows the form used for books/theses; Robinson (1991) shows the form for referring to chapters in edited volumes, and Williams (1990), Brown (1991a) and Brown et al. (1994) shows the format for journal articles. The Brown et al. (1994) reference indicates the format for multi-authored papers. If there is more than one paper by the same first author they should be listed with single authored and oldest papers first, followed by progressively more recent single authored papers. Multi-authored papers should come after the single authored papers (and in chronological order, i.e. oldest first). Note that all the authors names of multi-authored papers are listed in the bibliography (the et al. abbreviation is restricted to use in the text.)

Personal communications:
Simon Turner (pers. comm.) refers to information gained from a personal communication (e.g. a letter, email or verbal conversation) with someone.

Quoting:
Note that if you quote material in your text you should give the page numbers in the reference, as is given for Williams (1990) above. You should also place parentheses around the quoted section.

NB: references in the bibliography do not count toward the overall word count.
Appendices

Appendices are used to include information that helps the reader understand your research more fully. It should not contain any further argument or material that is not directly related to your research questions. You should ensure that if the material is important enough it should go in the main analytical chapters and not be ‘dumped’ in the appendices.

Appendices might include:
- An example of your questionnaire, transcribed interview, focus group schedule
- A Glossary of Terms
- A list of key dates/policies/people

NB: material in the appendices does not count toward the overall word count.

5.3 Checking your work

Before submission, the whole text of your dissertation should be checked carefully for typing errors. You should also check that you have listed all your references and that all tables and figures are clearly presented and referenced.

5.4 Handing in your completed dissertation

Your dissertation must be handed in between 9.00am – 1pm and 2pm – 5.00pm on the last Thursday of the Spring Term of your Final Year.

You will need to submit one copy of your dissertation, which will be retained in the Department for one year. You are required to submit an copy on CD Rom.

You will be responsible for binding your dissertation. You should ask the Print Unit on campus to complete this task for you. Please ask them for thermal binding. This process takes a few minutes. The last time for binding at the Print Unit is 4pm.

See Section 6 of the Handbook for details of late or non-submission procedures.

Your dissertation archive
You should keep an archive (i.e. portfolio) of all your dissertation research information for inspection by the School Examination Board and/or the External Examiner (Section 4.2). Failure to maintain and provide this archive on request could result in loss of marks.
Section 6: Regulations & procedures

This section describes the Department’s and University’s procedures submission of the dissertation. The section draws attention to regulations concerning late submission, plagiarism and collusion, and penalties for exceeding the word limit.

6.1 Your dissertation must be handed in between 9.00am- 1pm and 2pm - 5.00pm on the last Thursday of the Spring Term of your Final Year. You will receive information after the Christmas vacation detailing the exact procedure.

You need to submit one copy of your dissertation and one electronic copy on CD Rom which will be retained in the Department for two years. After that time you may recover your dissertation by sending the appropriate postage and packing fee. Otherwise, if space is required, dissertations may be disposed of. We reserve the right to reveal your dissertation mark to future student cohorts although this will be anonymous. If you wish your mark to remain confidential, you must inform the Dissertation Co-ordinator in writing.

You should sign a disclaimer that, except where referenced, the dissertation is your own work (see Appendix 7 for details). This is to avoid plagiarism and collusion.

You should keep an archive (i.e. portfolio) of all your dissertation research information for inspection by the School Examination Board and/or the External Examiner. Failure to maintain and provide this archive on request could result in loss of marks. This is to assist investigation of suspected plagiarism.

6.2 Plagiarism and collusion

You are reminded that the failure to reference the published and unpublished work of other academics may result in a charge of plagiarism. This is effectively passing off someone else’s thoughts, ideas, writings and work as your own. People can be guilty of plagiarism if they copy, without proper attribution (i.e. acknowledging by referencing the author appropriately), from a book, scholarly article, lecture handout, electronically-stored text or another student’s work.

Collusion is aiding or attempting to aid or obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another candidate in this University or elsewhere or any other person. In the case of a dissertation this might include obtaining unauthorised help with preparation of the report or with field/laboratory work. It is not permissible for candidates to construct common data or to share
data with others in Exeter or elsewhere without specific authorisation and such practice will be deemed collusion and subject to penalty as academic misconduct.

It is recognised that an important skill developed during the course of your dissertation research is the forging of contacts with various people within and outside the Geography Department. Some of these contacts may offer you practical assistance. If you are in any doubt you should seek guidance from your Dissertation Adviser on what may be deemed inappropriate aid.

You may seek assistance from parents, siblings, friends or other students in field and other forms of data construction for health and safety reasons (see section 3.3 on lone working) or where a technique requires two persons to undertake it, for example when surveying physical features. However, where another student at this University or elsewhere is involved in the assistance, common data cannot be constructed and data are not to be shared.

If you intend to work with any other people in any phase of your dissertation, you must discuss this with your Dissertation Advisor and outline the nature of this help. If necessary you will be requested to seek written permission from the Dissertation Co-ordinator before proceeding to work with other people. In particular, if you are planning to undertake a dissertation as part of a programme organized by another company or organization, (e.g. an overseas expedition) the details of your dissertation must be discussed with and authorised by the Dissertation Co-ordinator.

N.B. Failure to adhere to the above guidelines will be taken as evidence of collusion.

The dissertation forms a major part of your degree and any breach of University Regulations will be considered very serious. Please note that both plagiarism and collusion are very serious offences, which can result in the outright failure of your degree. You are directed towards the Undergraduate Handbook for further details of University regulations and procedures concerning academic conduct.

For further details of definitions and procedures concerning plagiarism and collusion can be found in the University’s Teaching Quality Assurance document (web address: http://www.admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/plag1.htm).

6.3 Late or non submission

The procedures for late submission are set out in the Undergraduate Handbook. Late dissertations, or parts of dissertations, are not be accepted by Staff and should not be handed to them. Any late work should be handed to the Departmental Secretary together with a Late Submission form that you must complete. This form will allow you to state any mitigating circumstances that the Department may take into consideration. Where there are no mitigating circumstances the University policy for late submission penalties are applied:

- work up to two weeks late will receive a maximum of 40%.
- work submitted more than two weeks late will receive a mark of zero.

N.B. Late submission due to problems with printers or loss of material through mismanagement will not usually be considered reasonable mitigating circumstances (see Section 7).

If events or circumstances beyond your control arise during the course of your final year that will delay submission, a full written account should be given ahead of the submission date to
the Chair of learning and Teaching. Please see Tracy Reeves for details. The Department will then consider these circumstances.

*In the event of non-submission, you will normally be deemed to have failed this part of the examination.*

6.4 Penalties for exceeding the word limit

Your dissertation should not exceed 10,000 words (excluding title page, contents page, acknowledgements, abstract, list of figures, appendices, tables and bibliography). Dissertations that exceed the word limit will be penalised as follows:

- 5% for up to 2500 words over the limit.
- 10% for more than 2500 words over the limit.

6.5 Summary of dissertation process and timetable*

*European studies programme students see section 2.1 for details of process.*
Section 7:
Three final pieces of advice.

One specific intended learning outcome of the dissertation (see Section 1.2) is to develop competence in working independently, including management skills, such as setting and working to deadlines. Poor management skills frequently result in the rushed production of the final dissertation report, because important bits of information are lost or destroyed, or there is insufficient time to print out a satisfactory final copy. If you have managed your dissertation effectively, you will have kept back-up copies and left enough time to cope with any problems that might arise during report production. Consequently, late or incomplete submission due to problems with printers, or loss of material through mismanagement, are not usually considered a reasonable excuse.

The following pieces of advice should help to prevent these problems arising.

1. Keep at least 3 back-up copies at all times.

Always remember to keep back-up copies of your dissertation and the data you have constructed! You should keep at least three copies of relevant files, e.g. one on hard disc, and two on separate floppy discs stored in different places. This will reduce the risk of loss of important text and data through carelessness, mismanagement, malfunctioning, theft, fire and so forth.

2. Store text and data in manageable files.

The dissertation text and diagrams are likely to take up a large number of bytes/disc space. Some images may be too large to store on a single floppy disc (e.g. digital camera photographs). In addition, you may have difficulty printing out images stored in certain formats. The entire text of a dissertation will probably be too big to store or print as one file, or may overload systems when you come to print out. You should store components of your dissertation as separate files (e.g. chapter 1, chapter 2, bibliography, tables, figures) and print them separately. Labels should indicate clearly the version of the text on the disc. This will reduce the mistake of printing out superseded versions. Print out draft versions of text and diagrams well in advance, so that you can identify potential problems with production, formatting and printer compatibility.

3. Allow plenty of time for editing and printing.

Do not leave printing to the last day. Do not underestimate how long it will take to print, check and collate the final version of your dissertation report. You need to give yourself enough time in case printers are in heavy demand or your printer breaks down. Allow plenty of time (i.e.
days not hours) to check over the report and correct any problems with formatting, pagination and so forth.
Appendix 1:
Dissertation proposal guidelines.

The dissertation proposal must be typed and submitted to Tracy Reeves on 7th May 2009 between 9.00 – 1.00 and 2.00 – 5.00. Three copies are required, two of which can be black and white photocopies. The work will be marked and one copy returned to you with comments. A grade will be awarded which will count towards the GEO2310: Human Geography Practice module.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Copies to submit</th>
<th>Three copies in total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One copy should be the original and two copies may be black and white photocopies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Proposal</td>
<td>See below: Dissertation Proposal checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top and Bottom Margin</td>
<td>2 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left and Right Margin</td>
<td>2.5 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Spacing</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Font</td>
<td>12 point Arial or Times New Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Limit</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dissertation proposal structure

The dissertation proposal should be organised with the following section headings.

1. Title
2. Abstract
3. Introduction
4. Review of the relevant literature
5. Methods
6. Ethical issues
7. Dissemination policy
8. Timetable*
9. References*
10. Completed ethics form*
11. Complete risk form*

Dissertation proposal content

Given that this is your first attempt at dissertation writing, the advice given on pages 24-31 is relevant for most of the sections in your dissertation proposal. Obviously, when you hand in your final dissertation, these sections will be much more detailed and accomplished. The proposal will be your first tentative go at putting these kinds of ideas and together, in a way that
shows that you have thought through your dissertation research in enough detail to give yourself and your adviser confidence that it will work. A lot of work needs to go into this proposal - lots of reading and the making of tentative contacts with those who can help you with the research by giving permissions, allowing access, etc. - but it will have a tentative air ('This research aims to', 'I hope to...', 'The methods best suited to such a project are...').

Advice on completing the various proposal sections was given in the first lecture of the dissertation block. Much of the advice was copied and adapted from earlier sections of this Handbook, as follows:

1. Title
"The title of your dissertation should be both interesting – it is the first impression that you give to your marker – and provide some impression of the serious issues that it will explore. It is not a good idea to give your dissertation a title that asks a question that seems only to have a yes or a no answer. Neither is it a good idea to have a long-winded factual title along the lines of 'An investigation of a, b, c and d, in this part of the world using the a combination of research methods and concluding that...'; or a short but strange catchy one like 'Fish'. Some combination of the two – a catchy title of a few words taken from press coverage ... – followed by a subtitle containing few key academic terms along the lines of 'something, something and something else' - usually works better. Look for inspiration and ideas in the titles of the academic studies that you read. What kinds of titles do you like best?" (p.24).

2. Abstract
"The abstract should ... be a brief summary of what your dissertation sets out to do and how it does this. Look to journal article abstracts for inspiration here" (p.26).

3. Introduction
"This ... should [briefly]: ... [a] describe the circumstances and/or contexts out of which your (proposal) question(s)/aim(s) have emerged ...; [b] outline the research question(s) / aim(s) that your dissertation [will] ... address ... [c] outline the objectives through which you [will] ... address them; [d] indicate why this should be of interest or concern to academic geographers, and how your findings promise to contribute something new and original to geographical scholarship; [e] outline how you [plan] ... these question(s)/aim(s) ... in a convincing and academically-sound manner" (p.26).

4. Review of the relevant literature
"This ... should: [a] show what academic concepts (e.g. ‘social exclusion’), studies (e.g. ‘Powers’ (2006) examination of...’), theoretical perspectives (e.g. ‘For political economists, ...’), and/or bodies of work (e.g. ‘In historical geography, ...’) [will] ... be drawn upon to make sense of the kind of question(s) / aim(s) you are pursuing; [and b] show, through critically reviewing relevant academic reading, that your research [will make] an argument through this literature (i.e. taking up particular ideas, challenging others, responding to appropriate calls for new work, because they are appropriate)" (p.27-8).

5. Methods
"This ... should: [a] show that the question(s)/aim(s) ..., and the academic ideas [outlined] ..., require particular kinds (and combinations) of research methods in order to address them in a convincing way; [b] show that you have read enough of the literature ... to know how to choose appropriate ...methods, how to use them to construct the right kinds of data, and how to analyse them systematically; [and c] show [that you know how to tackle] ..."
practical methodological issues such as how [to] negotiate... access to appropriate sources of data and/or field sites ...” (p.28).

6. Ethical issues
In general, you will need to explain how the confidentiality and privacy of your research participants will be preserved, and how your research will not be harmful to those involved. But, ethical issues often depend on the topic and the method(s) used, so an ethical statement will have to be tailored to your proposal. See the issues raised on pages 14-15 above and read and refer to the research ethics chapters in the recommended texts on pages 8-9. All research projects have ethical issues to tackle and it is essential that you think these through at the earliest stages of your work.

7. Dissemination policy
How will you communicate your findings to relevant audiences? These will always be academic (it’s for your degree), but sometimes – for good reason (often ‘ethical’) – you may also want to write them with/for other publics: e.g. research participants, policy-makers, ‘the public’ (talks, reports, exhibitions, etc.) as appropriate to your proposed research.

8. Timetable
How much time will be devoted to each stage of the research, and what dates can you give? Be really careful about this – try to think of everything and be cautious about how much time it takes to, for example, recruit people or transcribe and interview. Timetables are usually presented as lists.

9. References
List all ‘in text’ references in full, using the Harvard referencing system. See pages 29-31.

10. Completed ethics form
See Appendix 4. This form asks you to consider the nature of your research and any ethical implications is has. After your proposal is marked, you may be required to submit a formal application to the School Ethics Committee.

11. Completed risk forms
See Appendix 3. Please complete these to the best of your ability and submit them with your dissertation proposal.
Appendix 2:
Members of staff & subject areas

Members of staff in the department are part of one or more research groups which, together, claim expertise in a number of key areas. Below is an outline of these research groups, who is in them, and what kinds of research they do. If your research idea fits in with the topics listed, that is good news. You can follow up some leads and identify who to talk to about it. For details on the research interests of individual members of staff, check their personal web-pages at [http://www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/geography/people/index.shtml#aca](http://www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/geography/people/index.shtml#aca) If your research idea does not fit these groups and their themes, all is not lost. You may have had an idea in a lecture, seminar or tutorial. If so, approach the lecturer, tutor, PhD student, etc concerned. Any idea can become a dissertation topic, and staff are used to - and like - supervising dissertations on topics they don’t know much about. Please bear in mind that dissertation supervision is something that staff enjoy doing! It is fascinating for us to see how students turn their ideas into fully fledged projects into finished dissertations.

Human Geography research groups

In human geography, research groups concentrate on the broad areas of *Historical-Cultural Geography, Society-Nature, Governance, Ethics and Social Justice* and *Climate Change and Sustainability*. In addition to the teaching staff, the Human Geography research groups include research fellows working on a variety of externally funded projects plus research postgraduates and masters students. The research groups meet regularly to encourage research activity, and all human geographers come together weekly for seminars and reading groups.

Group members work at both the Devon and Cornwall campuses of the University. Some are in more than one group. You can only be supervised by those based in Exeter.

1. Historical-Cultural Geography

*Exeter-based members:*

David Harvey, Sean Carter, Ian Cook, Roger Kain, Mark Paterson, Nicola Thomas, John Wylie.

*Description:*

Historical Geography is a long-standing area of research activity in Exeter. Well-established specialisms such as the history of cartography have been augmented in recent years by work informed by developments in critical theory and cultural geography, including issues of landscape and identity, power and authority and geographies of imperialism, colonialism and postcolonialism.
Research themes:
- Landscape and regional identities
- Envisioning Englishness
- Celtic Geographies
- Geographies of heritage
- Ancient monuments and notions of the past
- History of Cartography
- Geographies of religion
- Geographies of colonialism and imperialism
- Gender and Historical Geography
- Space and identity in films
- Oral histories of landscape change
- Historical Geographies of costume
- Historical Geographies of Field Exploration and Science

2. Society- Nature

Exeter-based members.
Paul Cloke, Stewart Barr, Henry Buller, Ian Cook, Mark Goodwin, Jo Little, John Wylie.

Description:
Geography at Exeter has long been one of the leading research departments in the country investigating issues of nature, society and rurality and offering a wide range of expertise and research interests in rural social science. The Society-Nature research group is organised around three broad and interlinked research themes. The first, Nature/Society: Human/Non-human, explores dimensions to nature/society interaction within the rural context and beyond, including biodiversity strategies and genetic modification, animal agencies and animal welfare, ethical relations within the food chain and the shifting constructions and co-constructions of rural natures. The second, Culture, Identity and Community, examines the politics of rural change, the construction and representation of rurality and the performance of rural identities, including gender and youth, drawing on issues of cultural identity and practice and the meanings of countryside as social space. The third, Rural and Agro-Food Sustainability, works predominantly in the areas of food relocalisation, sustainable lifestyles, and rural development.

Research themes
- Socio-Natural constructions of rurality
- New Agro-Food Geographies
- Embodiment and Performance in Nature
- Technologies of practice in the countryside
- Animalian ruralities
- Nature, landscape and the rural environment
- Farm economies in transition
- Rural Identities
- Agriculture and the environment
- Rural governance and citizenship
- Rural policy
- Touristic constructions of the rural
3. Governance, Ethics and Social Justice

*Exeter-based members*
Mark Goodwin, Stewart Barr, Ian Cook, Sean Carter, Paul Cloke, Keith Woodward

*Description*
This research group seeks to take forward recent research within human geography in the three inter-linked areas of governance, ethics and social justice. This will allow a focus on new intellectual currents around the notions of ethical geographies and also prioritise a link to continued post-structural investigations of governmentality at an individual and community level. Members of the group also have interests in the ongoing debates on the role of geography in public policy, and have actively researched issues of governance, policy and state restructuring.

*Research themes*
- The shifting geographies of governance
- State theory and state restructuring
- Nationality, identity and diaspora
- Environmental behaviour and policy
- Sustainability and environmental governance
- Homelessness and geographies of care
- Ethical consumption
- Geographies of ethics and charity
- Direct action, activism and social movements

4. Climate Change and Sustainability

*Exeter-based members*
Stewart Barr, Suraje Dessai, Chris Fogwill, Chris Turney

*Description*
The School is currently developing a new research group which integrates natural and social science research on the related issues of climate change and sustainable development. These incorporate research on climate prediction; climate modelling; environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change; risk perception and communication; socio-technical adaptations to climate change; the politics and policy of climate change; sustainable lifestyles and behavioural change; climate and sustainability policy; energy policy and regulation; the media, art and culture of climate change; and sustainable communities, mobilities and planning.
Appendix 3:
Risk forms

**Working with third parties & Risk, health and safety assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The working with 3rd parties and risk assessment involved in the dissertation research should be discussed with your Dissertation Adviser and you should both sign the form.

1. Working with 3rd parties

Are you planning on working with a 3rd party or getting help with your dissertation in any form?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes, outline the nature of this help:


Advice given by dissertation advisor and/or co-ordinator concerning issues arising from this help:


2. Risk Assessment

You Dissertation Adviser should identify areas of work in the following risk categories:

A. Those in which work may not be undertaken without senior supervision.
B. Those in which work may not be started without Dissertation Adviser’s advice.
C. Those with risks (other than categories A or B) where extra care must be observed, but where it is considered that workers are adequately trained and competent in the procedures involved.

**Risk category applied**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of work:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

List hazards in advance.
The nature of any risks must be defined, and reference made to any instructions and/or safety notices. Advice should include any safeguards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Dissertation Adviser</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of Student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4: Ethics form

Guidance Notes

This form must be completed for every Undergraduate Dissertation Proposal in the Department of Geography, University of Exeter Streatham Campus. It is used to identify whether a full application for ethics approval by the SoGEAR Ethics Committee needs to be submitted. If a full application is required, Appendix 4 of the SoGAER Ethics Guidelines should be used (Appendix 5 is an illustration of a full ethics application).

See  http://www.ex.ac.uk/sogaer/EthicsGuidelines.pdf

Before completing this form, please refer to the University Code of Practice on Ethical Standards for Research Involving Human Participants and/or Animals.

See  http://www.ex.ac.uk/admin/academic/ethics2/

For undergraduate dissertations the allocated adviser is responsible for exercising appropriate professional judgement in this review.

This form must be completed before potential participants are approached to take part in any research.

Please complete and submit two copies of this form with your full dissertation proposal. The form will be checked by the allocated dissertation adviser. One copy will be kept by the dissertation co-ordinator, the second copy will be returned to the student. The student should retain this copy and submit it with the final dissertation (bound in at the beginning following the title page).

Any dissertation proposal that is submitted without the appropriate ethics form will be considered incomplete and a late work penalty will apply unless evidence of mitigating circumstances is submitted (see Undergraduate Handbook for details).

If you have answered ‘no’ to all questions you must still submit two copies of the form with your dissertation proposal.

If you have answered ‘yes’ to any of the questions in Section III, you will need to describe more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. This does not mean that you cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the SoGAER.
Research Ethics Committee. You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal using the ethics approval application forms in Appendix 4 of the SoGAER Ethics Guidelines.

Appendix 4 can be obtained from the School web site: http://www.ex.ac.uk/sogaer/EthicsGuidelines.pdf

If you have answered ‘yes’ to any of the questions in Section III you must submit Appendix 4 with your dissertation proposal (two copies). There is no word limit for these forms. At the first meeting with your dissertation adviser you will be able to discuss the ethical dimensions of your research. You may find you wish to re-draft your application to the Ethics Committee following your discussion with your adviser. You may do this is consultation with your adviser before submitting your ethical approval application forms to the SoGEAR Research Ethics Officer.

You must submit your final Ethical Approval Forms to the SoGEAR Research Ethics Officer (Dr Nicola Thomas) by the Thursday of week 10 in the Summer Term. You must have discussed your application with your adviser prior to this date.

If you answered ‘yes’ to question 11, you will also have to submit an application to the appropriate external health authority ethics committee, after you have received approval from the SoGAER Research Ethics Officer.

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University’s Code of Practice on Ethical Standards and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct over the course of the research should be notified to the SoGAER Research Ethics Officer and may require a new application for ethics approval.
Ethics self-assessment form

Section I: Project Details

1. Project title

Section II: Applicant Details

2. Name of student

3. Email address

4. a. Contact Address
   You may be contacted by the Ethics Committee during the vacation regarding the outcome of your application

4. b. Telephone Number
   A member of the Ethics committee may wish to discuss your application or offer advice by phone.

Section III: Research Checklist

Please answer each question by ticking the appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the study involve animals or participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (e.g. children, people with learning disabilities, victims of abuse)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (e.g. pupils at school, members of self-help group, residents of nursing home)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, sexual, physical and/or psychological abuse, drug use)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Will blood, hair or tissue samples be obtained from participants?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing on animals or vulnerable people (e.g. children)?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section IV: To be completed by the allocated dissertation adviser**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissertation Adviser's name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Adviser: please tick the appropriate boxes:**

- The student has ticked ‘no’ to all questions in the checklist (section III) and is not required to complete an Ethics Approval application.

- The student plans has ticked ‘yes’ to one question or more in the checklist (section III) and is required to submit an Ethics Approval application form to the SoGEAR Ethics Committee

**IF A STUDENT HAS TICKED ‘YES’ TO ANY QUESTION THE STUDY SHOULD NOT BEGIN UNTIL ALL THE FOLLOWING BOXES ARE TICKED:**

- The student has read the University’s Code of Practice
- The topic merits further research
- The student has the skills to carry out the research
- The participant information sheet or leaflet is appropriate
The procedures for recruitment and obtaining informed consent are appropriate

The student has completed an application form to the SoGEAR Ethics Committee

The student has gained the approval of the SoGEAR Ethics Committee for their work.

Comments from adviser

Student
Signed
Date

Adviser
Signed
Date

Please ensure that full ethics applications to the SoGEAR Ethics Committee are submitted to the SoGEAR Research Ethics Officer by the Thursday of week 10 in the Summer Term.

Adviser: please retain a copy of this form for your records. Please return the signed original to the student

Student: please retain the original signed copy of this form to submit with your bound dissertation in your final year
Appendix 5:
Dissertation progress form

400 word Progress report to be completed by the student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of adviser</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topics discussed

Action to be taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of student</th>
<th>Name of adviser</th>
<th>Date of meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6:
Specimen front page

Title of your dissertation

Your Name

I certify that this dissertation is entirely my own work and no part of it has been submitted for a degree or other qualification in this or another institution. I also certify that I have not constructed data nor shared data with another candidate at Exeter University or elsewhere without specific authorisation.

(insert your programme, i.e. Arts, Science) with Honours in Geography at the University of Exeter ......................(your signature)

March 2010
Appendix 7:  
Example table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>HEADING</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ANALYTICAL CHAPTER</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2</td>
<td>(Level B head)</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1</td>
<td>(Level B head)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2</td>
<td>(Level B head)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2.1</td>
<td>(Level C head)</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ANALYTICAL CHAPTER</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ANALYTICAL CHAPTER</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>(Level A head)</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDICES
Appendix 1: title
Appendix 2: title

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Appendix 8:  
Example list of figures

A separate 'List of Tables' should be formatted as below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Title of Figure 1.1, including source of material where applicable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Etc.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 9: Dissertation marking criteria

The aim of the dissertation is to give you the opportunity to display your skills in tackling specific geographical issues in some depth. The essence of the work is that you should demonstrate your ability to undertake your own independent and original piece of research. The specific aims and learning outcomes of the dissertation are set out in Sections 1.1 and 1.2. Your overall performance in the dissertation is assessed on the degree to which these aims and learning outcomes have been fulfilled, evidence for which is provided by your report.

The success of your dissertation is assessed on evidence of depth of knowledge, understanding and analysis. In essence, you should demonstrate that you know enough about the subject area to understand and identify a worthwhile topic and design an appropriate methodology for its investigation. Your depth of knowledge and understanding determines your ability to analyse, interpret, discuss and draw conclusions from your results. In order to communicate effectively the findings of your research, you need to produce a report that is structured logically, well-written and presented, with appropriate illustrations and referencing. Your goal is to produce a dissertation that resembles, in terms of methodological and analytical rigour, and quality of presentation, a published academic paper or report in your chosen field of study. It is expected that all dissertations should be well-written, structured logically, thoughtfully presented, and include effective illustrations, with full and accurate referencing.

Table 1: Dissertation assessment criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% &amp; degree class</th>
<th>Topic: identification &amp; definition of worthwhile topic</th>
<th>Methods: appropriateness &amp; implementation</th>
<th>Presentation: communication skills, use of terminology</th>
<th>Analysis: appropriateness, accuracy &amp; depth</th>
<th>Discussion: relating of own findings to other relevant research &amp; drawing of conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%+ strong 1st</td>
<td>Excellent all criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-79% sound 1st</td>
<td>Excellent in three criteria, at least good in others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69% 2.1</td>
<td>Good in at least three criteria, at least moderate in others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% &amp; degree class</td>
<td>Topic: identification &amp; definition of worthwhile topic</td>
<td>Methods: appropriateness &amp; implementation</td>
<td>Presentation: communication skills, use of terminology</td>
<td>Analysis: appropriateness, accuracy &amp; depth</td>
<td>Discussion: relating of own findings to other relevant research &amp; drawing of conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59% 2.2</td>
<td>Moderate in at least three criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49% 3rd</td>
<td>Weak in at least three criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39% - fail</td>
<td>Unacceptable in three or more criteria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your dissertation will be classified according to the extent to which it fulfils the five main criteria. The following words are used to describe fulfilment of criteria: excellent, good, moderate, weak and unacceptable. To gain a given class, your work must be at the appropriate standard for that class, with respect to a minimum of three criteria (i.e. excellent in three criteria for first class, good in three criteria for 2.1 etc.). This system allows some compensation of weaker aspects by stronger elements.