What do I need to think about?

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| **Chapter 2: The Social Research Process** |
|  | Why is it important to think about social research as a process? |
|  | How is the knowledge produced by social research different to common sense? |
|  | What type of data might you like to work with, and what sorts of research does that tend to produce? |
|  | Why do we do social research? |
|  | How can theory be used in the research process? |
| **Chapter 3: Getting Started** |
|  | What areas of research are you interested in and what might the aims and objectives look like? Taking into account the dissertation requirements, including the handbook, do these areas of research seem feasible for this type of research project? |
|  | Are you clear about how you work most effectively, and how this may differ in relation to an extended piece of work? |
|  | What writing strategies might be useful to you? |
|  | Do you understand how to create a dissertation timetable which also takes into account your other commitments? |
|  | Are you clear about supervisory expectations and how to get the most out of the supervisory relationship? |
|  | Do you know what your ‘plan B’ might look like? |
| **Chapter 4: Developing a Research Idea** |
|  | How might you develop your methodological awareness? |
|  | What types of things make for a good social science research project or dissertation? |
|  | What sorts of areas of research are you interested in? |
|  | How might you develop these interests into ideas that might be suitable for dissertation-style research? |
|  | What might a rationale for your research idea look like? |
|  | How might different approaches to research quality be relevant to your research ideas? |
| **Chapter 5: Conducting a Literature Search** |
|  | What key terms might be associated with your research idea? |
|  | What sorts of methods might be used to locate relevant literature? |
|  | What are the most relevant search engines available to you? |
|  | How might the challenges associated with searching the literature impact on your project? |
|  | What means of recording and storing identified items of interest are available at your institution? |
| **Chapter 6: Reviewing the Literature** |
|  | What types of literature review could be suitable for your project? |
|  | Why is your project an interesting thing to do? |
|  | Can you identify the key themes in the literature? |
|  | Can you use the literature to identify a knowledge gap? |
|  | How might you use the literature to position your research aims and objectives? |
| **Chapter 7: Building your Project** |
|  | Do you understand what the terms research strategy, research design, and research method refer to, and why they are important in your dissertation? |
|  | Do you understand how these areas might fit with your research project? |
|  | Are you aware of the limitations of different research designs, strategies, and methods, in addition to the positive aspects? |
|  | Are you clear about how different strategies, designs, and methods may fit with your research aim(s) and objectives? |
| **Chapter 8: Ethics** |
|  | Are you clear about the ethics requirements in your department? |
|  | Do you understand the key features of ethical practice including: informed consent; harm; deception; privacy; anonymity; and confidentiality; and how you might negotiate them in your dissertation? |
|  | If you plan to do internet research, such as using social media, do you know how issues of privacy and consent might apply to your project? |
|  | Are there any ethics requirements or guidance that are specific to your discipline? |
|  | Are you clear what constitutes plagiarism and academic malpractice, and how to avoid them? |
| **Chapter 9: Writing a Research Proposal** |
|  | Are you clear about why you need a research proposal? |
|  | Do you know where to locate the institutional requirements regarding your dissertation proposal? |
|  | Do you understand the key characteristics of a research proposal? |
|  | Are you clear about how important a well-constructed proposal is for helping to structure and guide your dissertation? |
| **Chapter 10: Sampling** |
|  | Do you understand the different types of sampling and how to identify which is appropriate for your project? |
|  | Are you clear about the different approaches that can be used to gain access to your sample? |
|  | Are you aware of the different techniques that could be employed to increase your sample size if required? |
|  | Do you recognize the challenges of representativeness and the issues involved when trying to generalize from your sample? |
| **Chapter 11: Collecting Quantitative Data** |
|  | Do you understand how the quantitative data collection fits with the rest of your dissertation? |
|  | What are the benefits and limitations of using primary and secondary data collection in a dissertation? |
|  | Are you clear about the difference between questions, concepts, variables, and data and why these are important in the process of collecting data? |
|  | What is the most effective way to administer your questionnaire? |
|  | Do you know how to prepare the data you have collected for analysis? |
| **Chapter 12: Collecting Qualitative Data** |
|  | What sorts of research aims and objectives are particularly suitable for qualitative data collection? |
|  | What are the benefits of using interviews for dissertation research? |
|  | What are the key steps in building an interview schedule? |
|  | What sorts of challenges might you encounter when conducting a qualitative interview? |
|  | Where can participant observation be conducted? |
|  | Why are issues of access important in participant observation? |
|  | What roles can you take ‘in the field’? |
|  | What are you trying to capture when writing field notes? |
| **Chapter 13: Analysing Quantitative Data** |
|  | Do you understand the different levels of measurement and how this affects how you can present your data? |
|  | Are you clear about good practice in relation to presenting data? |
|  | How do you decide which measures of central tendency are useful to use with the data you have collected? |
|  | Do you know the difference between descriptive statistics and inferential statistics and which are most appropriate to use in your dissertation? |
|  | Do you understand what is meant by statistical significance? |
|  | Are you clear about how to describe your data in your discussion section? |
| **Chapter 14: Analysing Qualitative Data** |
|  | How might your proposed method of analysis impact on your research questions, literature review, and methods of data collection? |
|  | Are there any ontological and epistemological assumptions associated with the type of analysis you might choose? |
|  | Do you understand the key points of technique needed to carry out your analysis, or do you need more specific instructions? |
|  | Can you find any other research papers that follow your proposed method? |
| **Chapter 15: Working with Documents** |
|  | What sorts of indirect data might be associated with your topic of interest? |
|  | How might you make the most of the advantages of indirect data in your research? |
|  | What sorts of difficulties do you think you might encounter in the process of your project if you made use of indirect data? Try to identify the gaps in your knowledge. |
|  | Do you understand the process of content analysis? Consider whether it is likely to be appropriate for your data. |
|  | Do you know of any research in your chosen field that has made use of indirect data? Think about how you could carry out your research in a similar way, and what you can learn from their experiences. |
| **Chapter 16: Evaluating your Project** |
|  | Why is the process of evaluation important in social research? |
|  | Critically reflect on the principles of originality, rigour, and significance for your research. |
|  | Use the key criteria to ask yourself important questions about the research process. |
| **Chapter 17: Writing up** |
|  | Do you understand the structure of the dissertation? |
|  | Are you clear about the need to ensure you address your aims and objectives? |
|  | Are you aware of the key principles of academic writing and the craft of writing? |
|  | Do you know the amount of work your supervisor can look at, and how often you can see them? |
|  | Are you clear about the submission process? |