

# Student Voice



*Your dissertation project is a very exciting and daunting concept when considering the university experience, and when at university it quickly becomes the main point of academic discussion because it is something every course has in common!*

*My experience generally met my expectations, but there are still many things I would have liked to have known prior to beginning my final year. For my course (Psychology at the University of Lincoln), though it seemed daunting at first, the dissertation made up the equivalent of two modules, and even this was split into multiple assignments within the project. This means that although your independent project is a fantastic chance to boost your grade and develop expertise in an area, it isn't the be all and end all of your degree!*

*My main regret with my dissertation is that I rushed very quickly into a project idea, with the hope of getting ahead to make it easier for myself! Whilst this was incredibly helpful short-term, the lack of in-depth research completed prior to sorting forms and collecting data became an issue further down the line. It is also important that you pick an idea you care a lot about where possible!*

*I had no idea what I wanted to do for my dissertation, and in hindsight I wish I'd stressed less as many of my friends felt the same way! Have a read up on what research lecturers are working on, as it may spark some interest for you too, and could also provide insight into who you may like as a supervisor. The lecturers who supervise your dissertation vary wildly in their approach to support, therefore if you have the opportunity to get to know lecturers in advance I urge you to take it, because your supervisor can be incredibly important in shaping your dissertation experience. Whilst finding a lecturer that has knowledge of the area you're interested in is important, it is also important to find an approach that works for you.*

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*Some supervisors will prefer to take a step back, leaving you to work independently and find your own voice in the project, and only providing support if you come to them prepared with questions. Others however may be very involved, helping you to build a collaborative idea that interests them and giving detailed instructions regarding the approaches they believe you should take.*

*Writing a dissertation is a great experience, and will likely be the biggest, most personalised and most unique assignment you do at university, which takes time! Often students struggle to work efficiently for the whole year where deadlines are all placed at the end, and an engaged supervisor may help to provide you with goals as you go along. Equally though, some students prefer the independence around their studies and extra curriculars, and in some cases are able to get the majority completed over the summer!*

*It can be hard to not have high expectations for how this final project will go, and I know from my experience that I did not feel happy about the piece I would be submitting at the time. I kept noticing minor flaws and I kept wishing I had done parts differently. This seemed to be a common feeling amongst my friends at the very least, but just because it wasn't how you thought it would turn out does not mean it won't be good! In mine and my friends case, we ended up doing much better than we had convinced ourselves in the running up to the grade release.*

*Regardless, whether you're excited by the thought of starting a substantial independent project at university, or absolutely terrified, remember that it's what you make of it! Many don't know what their area of interest will be right up until the choosing of supervisors, and that's okay!*



*University of Lincoln Graduate*

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