



The Final Week Dissertation Guide

Submit with confidence, and avoid costly mistakes.

This guide walks you through **exactly what to check, fix, and think about in the final 7 days** before submitting your dissertation.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Your dissertation doesn't have to feel impossible in the final week. Most of the stress comes from not knowing what to check, fix, or prioritize. This guide is designed to give you a clear, step-by-step path so you can finish with confidence, not panic.

Think of it as a roadmap: it doesn't make your dissertation perfect, but it does help you make it:

- **Clear** – your argument makes sense
- **Coherent** – everything flows logically
- **Credible** – references, methodology, and data are trustworthy
- **Complete** – nothing critical gets left behind

How to use it effectively

1. **Start small.** Don't try to do everything at once. Pick one step or section and focus there. Progress is progress, even if it's tiny.
2. **Ask yourself the questions.** Each step has a few guiding questions. Use these to spot weak spots or things you've missed. More than a test, they are a compass.
3. **Check off tasks.** At this point, it's all about moving forward. Mark tasks as you finish them so you can actually see your progress.
4. **Adapt it to your situation.** Some steps might not apply perfectly to your dissertation. Skip, repeat, or adjust them as needed. Your dissertation is unique, and your checklist use should be too.
5. **Use it to reduce stress, not add it.** Looking at a big dissertation can feel overwhelming. Zoom in on the next small thing you can do. This guide helps your brain stop spinning and start moving.

For more resources and tips on how to improve your study skills and achieve academic success, join our online community!



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STEP 1

Does your dissertation actually **make sense**?

Editing commas or formatting, can only do so much if your core argument doesn't work. So first, let's check the core argument.

Ask yourself:

- What is my dissertation trying to prove or explore?
- Does my conclusion clearly answer my research question?
- If someone only reads my intro + conclusion, would they understand my argument?

To do's:

- Read only your introduction + conclusion back-to-back
- Write your argument in one sentence
- Check that every chapter supports that sentence



If your chapters feel disconnected, **check the clarity** of your **arguments**.

STEP 2

Fix your **structure** and improve your **overall flow**

Now take a moment to make sure your work feels clear, structured, and easy for someone else to follow

Ask yourself:

- Does each section logically lead to the next?
- Am I repeating ideas in multiple places?
- Are my headings clear and consistent?

Do this:

- Read the first paragraph of every section only (flow test)
- Add linking sentences between sections
- Remove duplicated ideas



Your goal: the reader **never feels lost.**

STEP 3

Eliminate referencing mistakes

This is one of the most common areas where students lose marks.

Ask yourself:

- Have I properly credited every idea that isn't mine?
- Is my referencing style consistent?

Do this:

- Pick 5 random citations → check they exist in your bibliography
- Scan your bibliography → remove uncited sources
- Check formatting consistency (Harvard, APA, etc.)



If you're **unsure about one citation**, your marker will be too. That costs marks!

STEP 4

Strengthen your methodology and credibility

Markers want to understand your thinking process behind the dissertation, not how perfect it is.

Ask yourself:

- Did I explain why I chose this method?
- Have I acknowledged limitations honestly?
- Would someone else understand how to replicate this?

Do this:

- Add 1–2 sentences explaining why your method fits your question
- Add a short limitations paragraph
- Ensure your results match your methods



Remember, most studies have limitations, so calling yours shows you understand the scope of your work.

STEP 5

Make your data **easy** to **understand**

Your reader should never struggle to interpret your visuals.

Ask yourself:

- Can someone understand my charts without explanation?
- Have I clearly explained what each figure shows?

Do this:

- Add titles + labels to every table/figure
- Mention each figure in the text
- Double-check numbering (Figure 1, 2, etc.)



If your reader has to **guess** what a chart means, you **lose clarity** (and marks).

STEP 6

Clarity before complexity

Good academic writing is clear, not complicated.

Ask yourself:

- Am I trying to sound smart instead of being clear?
- Are any sentences hard to follow?

Do this:

- Break long sentences into shorter ones
- Replace vague words (“things”, “very”, “a lot”)
- Remove unnecessary filler words



Clear writing = **higher marks.**
Always.

STEP 7

Proofread with a strategy

High-performing students check intentionally, so avoid skimming at all costs.

Do this:

- Change font/size temporarily (forces your brain to notice errors)
- Read it out loud or use text-to-speech
- Check for:
 - spelling
 - grammar
 - formatting consistency



If you feel tired, **try gamifying** it thinking that you are hunting for mistakes.

STEP 8

Meet every university requirement

One of the most common pitfalls to avoid.

Do this:

- Check word count (including/excluding references, verify rules)
- Confirm formatting (font, spacing, margins)
- Remove your name if anonymised marking is required
- Export as correct file type (usually PDF)



Formatting might not feel exciting, but it's one of the **easiest ways to secure marks.**

STEP 9

Protect yourself from plagiarism issues

Even small or accidental mistakes with referencing or copying someone else's work can cause problems, so it's important to check carefully.

Do this:

- Review Turnitin/similarity report
- Fix poorly paraphrased sections
- Ensure all quotes are clearly marked



If a sentence feels "too close" to the source, **rewrite it.**

STEP 10

Submit **without** **risking** everything

This is where avoidable
disasters happen.

Do this:

- Open your final file after exporting (check formatting didn't break)
- Upload the correct file
- Save confirmation receipt/email
- Keep a backup (cloud + laptop)



Submit **hours early**, not
minutes before.