**Setting the scene for BA/MA writers**

**1 Identifying the procedures: how are things organized?**

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| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| *General questions* |
| * Where can I find information on the assignment?
 |  |
| * Do I need to register before getting started?
 |  |
| * Should I fulfil the task individually or in a group?
 |  |
| * In case of group work, should it be a collaborative product or does each individual's input need to be assessable?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Time Planning* |
| * How much time is set for the assignment (in hours or credits)?
 |  |
| * When is the final version due?
 |  |
| * In the case of a Bachelor’s or Master’s thesis: if I want to graduate on … (date), when is the final version due? When is the pre-final version due? Are there circumstances to keep in mind such as holidays or the absence of my supervisor?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Topic* |
| * Am I free to choose a topic or should I select a topic from a list?
 |  |
| * Should I link the content to a course?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Supervision* |
| * Are there fixed moments for supervision and completion?
 |  |
| * Could I discuss issues and drafts with my supervisor or professor? If so:
 |  |
| * where can I find a supervisor?
 |  |
| * how often can I meet my supervisor/teacher?
 |  |
| * what issues can I discuss with my supervisor: ideas, literature, research plan, outline, drafts?
 |  |
| * do we discuss in writing or in person?
 |  |
| * when can I meet my supervisor: at fixed times or should I take the initiative to make an appointment?
 |  |
| * does meeting my supervisor require any preparation? Do I hand in a draft or questions? What are the deadlines for this?
 |  |
| * will we need a report of the meeting? Who will take notes?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| * Is additional support available, for example, at a writing centre, a language centre, study centre, academic centre, study advisors, or counsellors?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Handing in and assessment* |
| * How should I hand in texts: electronic version or print/hard copy? Is a cover needed? Where to mail, bring, or post?
 |  |
| * How are they assessed: in writing or orally, grades or otherwise (for example, good, average, fail)?
 |  |
| * Are there any requirements for resits?
 |  |
| * Will I get feedback? Will there be opportunities to discuss it with the supervisor or professor?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |

**2 Identifying the process: what am I expected to do?**

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| **Making a plan: what to do in the planning phase?**  |
| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| *Procedure* |
| * What supervision can I expect?
 |  |
| * How much independence do I have?
 |  |
| * How much time do I have to make a plan?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Making a Plan*  |
| * Is a strong definition of the topic needed or should the topic be rather broad?
 |  |
| * Should I formulate a research question?
 |  |
| * Should this question be deduced from literature or could there be a different source?
 |  |
| * Should I work out the theoretical/scientific use?
 |  |
| * Should I work out the practical use?
 |  |
| * Should I formulate sub-questions?
 |  |
| * Does my research plan need hypotheses?
 |  |
| * Is it useful to make a table of contents and a time schedule?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |

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| **Carrying out the research: what is expected in the execution phase?**  |
| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| *Procedure* |  |
| * What supervision can I expect?
 |  |
| * How much independence do I have?
 |  |
| * How much time do I have for the research?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Literature research* |
| * Purpose of the literature study: for example, to yield a research question, yield hypotheses, yield a model for analysis, or to answer a question?
 |  |
| * Should I or can I search for literature myself?
 |  |
| * How much literature should I search for?
 |  |
| * According to what method?
 |  |
| * What kind of literature? What are good sources?
 |  |
| * Which theories should I be sure to include?
 |  |
| * How do I analyse my information (data).
 |  |
| * Should I do more than summarize the literature? If so, what?
 |  |
| * Should I give a representative summary or select what I need for my argument?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Empirical research*  |  |
| * Should I follow a particular research method, e.g. interviewing, document analysis, observations, survey?
 |  |
| * Should I find data myself or can I use a data set?
 |  |
| * How do I analyse my information (data)?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |

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| **Writing the text: what is expected in the writing phase?**  |
| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| *Procedure* |  |
| * What supervision can I expect?
 |  |
| * How much independence do I have?
 |  |
| * How much time do I have for the writing?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Writing the text* |  |
| * Should I make an outline?
 |  |
| * Submit draft chapters?
 |  |
| * Should I ask for feedback on my products?
 |  |
| * What type of feedback can I expect, e.g. detailed and/or general, oral and/or in writing? On which aspects of my process and/or product?
 |  |
| * Should I write self-evaluation (self-reflection) reports?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |

**3 The product: content, structure, style, and finishing the text**

|  |
| --- |
| **Requirements for the research plan and preliminary reports**  |
| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| * What is the goal of the research plan or outline?
 |  |
| * What elements should it contain?
 |  |
| * Should the plan be written in full or only as an outline?
 |  |
| * What will/won't the supervisor/lecturer evaluate?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |

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| --- |
| **Requirements for draft and final versions** |
| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| *General* |
| * What type of text, e.g. essay, paper, report, summary?
 |  |
| * What are minimum and maximum lengths?
 |  |
| * Submit in what format (electronic version, print/hard copy, is a cover necessary, where to mail, bring, or post)?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Content* |
| * How strictly is the content evaluated?
 |  |
| * What will/won't the supervisor/lecturer evaluate?
 |  |
| * What elements should it contain?
 |  |
| * What is the function/purpose of the elements, for example of the introduction, the theory section, the discussion?
 |  |
| * What information to put in – all the elements or not?
 |  |
| * What are argumentation requirements for this text type in my discipline? When is the support sufficient?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Structure* |
| * How strictly is the structure evaluated?
 |  |
| * What will/won't the supervisor/lecturer evaluate?
 |  |
| * Is there a set order for the elements?
 |  |
| * How to express the coherence between the elements?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Language/style*  |
| * How strictly is the style evaluated?
 |  |
| * What will/won't the supervisor/lecturer evaluate?
 |  |
| * How visible or subtle should the structure be?
 |  |
| * How concise or wordy should my text be?
 |  |
| * How exact or how vague?
 |  |
| * How complex or simple?
 |  |
| * How vivid or dry?
 |  |
| * How formal or colloquial?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |
| *Finishing* |
| * How strictly is the finishing evaluated?
 |  |
| * What will/won't the supervisor/lecturer evaluate?
 |  |
| * What system should I use for citing sources, e.g. APA, MLA, Vancouver, Chicago, et cetera?
 |  |
| * What layout should I use?
 |  |
| * How should I present figures, pictures, graphs, tables, and such?
 |  |
| * Are there conventions to follow for margins, line spacing, font, et cetera?
 |  |
| * …
 |  |