Dissertation Template 2:

Quantitative research project

**Example**: Predictors of attitudes towards same sex marriage. A comparative study of European countries.

**Title page**: Tile of project, your name, registration number, course/degree title.

Example:

* Predictors of attitudes towards same sex marriage. A comparative study of European countries
* Kitty Nichols
* Registration no 1234567
* Sociological Studies
* University of Shefftown.

**Contents**: List of chapters and page numbers.

This is a straightforward section and there are often tools and technology on the computer programs you are using to write up the dissertation which do this for you (for example within *Microsoft Word* the creation of a contents page can be found under the ‘Reference’ tab). A top tip here is to **ensure that you are consistent**; this includes making the font the same throughout and using line spacing effectively.

Finding your Way: Ensure that the page numbers in the document match those listed in the contents page.

**Literature review chapter(s)**: This sets out the existing work in this area and what has previously been identified, as well as highlighting any gaps in the literature.

Here you will review any qualitative and quantitative research/literature that is pertinent to your project. Once again, it is usual to organize this chapter using sub-sections. Breaking the chapter up into themes helps you to organize your own thinking and convey the main arguments clearly. It is likely that these sections will be guided by your literature searching.

**Methodology**: This includes a discussion of the methods chosen and the theory behind these, as well as justification for your decisions. Drawing on methods literature throughout, this section also discusses the sample and any ethics. There is more to a dissertation than the communication of results. It is just as important to show the examiners that the methods underpinning your research are appropriate.

In a quantitative dissertation, this chapter might be bigger than usual; as you will need to
explain the various techniques, tools, and analysis you employ to interrogate the data.

Furthermore, you will also need to introduce and explain the data set that you will be
using, carefully justifying why this has been chosen, and aligning this with your
research aims/objectives.

Example:

* Using The European Social Attitudes Survey (open access online).
* Logistic regression predicting support of same sex marriage legislation by country of residence and socio-economic characteristics. (Using the model to establish whether people disagree or agree with same sex marriage. Looking into which country they are from and also into factors such as religion, class background, gender, ethnicity, age etc. to explore outcomes.)

**Findings chapter(s)**: This provides both a description of the data and the presentation of it.

Within a quantitative dissertation the findings chapter is where you present data and the technical information. You might think of this as describing the findings (providing hints at the content of the next chapter where you will discuss this in more detail). Put simply, this chapter is a display of your data, with descriptors of what is happening.

**Discussion chapter**: This is where you interrogate the models and data.

Finding your Way: Remember not to assume that the reader will definitely know all about your quantitative data or this specific data set, so make the descriptions clear.

This chapter demonstrates and presents analysis of your data; moving beyond the description from the previous chapter, and instead focussing on interrogating the data. It is important here that you construct this analysis drawing upon the theories and concepts outlined in the literature review (remember the overall argument needs to be nicely connected throughout the dissertation). This section should systematically address your research questions.

You might want to divide this chapter into sub sections in order to make the argument clear and to emphasize key points.

**Conclusions**: This draws the conclusions together stating clearly what the work has identified and how the research questions were addressed. It is also likely to reflect on possible areas for future research.

Finding your Way: Remember that contributions can vary, these can be substantive or theoretical. Discuss what you think your contribution is with your supervisor before you start writing.

Included in your conclusions should be:

* **Final conclusions:** Make it clear how you have addressed your research questions, and what the contribution of your research might be to academia and society.
* **Limitations:** Note the most significant challenges or critiques of the research, also noting why these are not a problem overall!
* **Future directions:** What research might come next, and what else might be done in this area, perhaps on a bigger scale or in a different context.