# ***Argument & Critique***

# **Author Guidance for Research and Analysis**

# **Choice of Topic**

* Make a significant contribution to the Libertarian agenda.
* Show initiative in choosing the topic e.g. is it an old chestnut, or a topic showing some originality?
* Ensure that the rationale accurately justifies the research question in terms of the findings of, and gaps in, existing research.
1. Demonstrate the context of the study.

# **Research Design**

1. Provide a clear statement of the research question or the problem which is to be analysed.
2. If there are aims and objectives, make them clear and consistent.
3. Ensure that the caveats on the research are clearly expressed at the outset.
4. Ensure that the inclusion criteria are acceptable and clearly stated.
5. Ensure that potentially confounding variables are competently handled.
6. Ensure that the epistemology, perspectives, theories, models, concepts, methodology and methods are consistent with one another and with the research question or aims and objectives.
7. Ensure that the chosen methods are adequate to capture sufficient material to answer the research question or problem, e.g. where appropriate, did the student seek to interview the relevant people such as perpetrators, victims, officials, service users, officials, campaigners, or observe appropriate settings, etc
8. Ensure that the legitimating measures are sufficient and consistent with the research methodology, e.g. consensual research design, field diaries, daily logs, peer debriefing, participant validation, transparency, video/ audio/ photographic record, signed records, validated typology, statistical tests, electronic provenance, disclosed interview schedule, control group, double blinding, validity, reliability, representativeness.
9. Document the methods and summarise the design features.

# Ensure the research covers the full range of the area you claim to cover.

# Ensure that the research answers the question you claim to answer.

1. Aim to produce research findings that are useful in a broad range of settings.

# **Search and Review of the Literature**

* Use adequate search strategies, including a comprehensive scan of journals, use of databases, etc.
1. Document the search strategies.
2. Explore and critically appraise the relevant literature.
3. Ensure that all references in the text of the manuscript are relevant, complete, correctly cited and included in the references at the end of the manuscript.
4. Ensure that all references at the end of the manuscript are relevant, complete, correctly formatted and included in the text of the manuscript.
5. Correctly source all citable ideas in the manuscript.
6. Refrain from making claims which are inadequately referenced.

# **Ethics**

# Deploy recognised ethical principles.

# Aim to handle ethical dilemmas competently.

# Demonstrate an awareness and appropriate furtherance of the rights of research subjects and other stakeholders.

# Provide transparency for the research participants [unless covert research rests on some other form of ethical justification] and for the readers of the manuscript.

# Address the requirements of relevant codes of practice and legislation addressed e.g. the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Imformation.

# Consistently apply the ethical obligations arising from the theoretical and/or methodological approach.

# Document the appropriate permissions/approvals and consents.

* Demonstrate an awareness of the place of the research in a social context.
* Ensure that the work and contributions of others is acknowledged and referenced properly.

# **Structure**

# Organise the manuscript in a clear format, taking the reader through a developing argument.

* Provide an introduction outlining the argument and a summary or conclusion establishing that the argument was soundly based.

# **Analysis**

* Demonstrate that the data has been appropriately handled, e.g. have methodological problems such as population attrition and detection bias been competently handled?
* Ensure that sufficient relevant literature has been critically appraised.
* Logically apply the evidence from the literature search and from the primary research, to the argument. Avoid fallacies of composition.
* Consider the strengths/limitations of the methods within the analysis.
* Explore alternative interpretations and respond to them.
* Place appropriate caveats on the results and conclusions.
* Ensure that the conclusions reasonably follow from the argument.
* Discuss the wider implications of the findings.
* Make the conclusions and ‘lessons learned’ clear and relevant.
* Logically draw the implications for reform of policy and practice and provide support in evidence and argument.
* Draw clear and relevant recommendations for further research.

# **Presentation of Manuscript**

1. Keep the word count within the allowed limit of 8,000 words, including: abstract, references, appendices, figures and tables.
2. Conform to appropriate standards of syntax, grammar, punctuation and typographical accuracy.
3. Present the findings clearly.
4. Referencing must be consistent and accurate within the Harvard system
5. Include an abstract of 150 to 200 words, at least 5 key words and a biographical note of 25-50 words.
6. Use single line spacing.
7. Use font, Times New Roman, size 12.

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