**Teaching and Learning Centre podcasts: the DISSERTATION SERIES**

**Managing your research project – KEY POINTS**

**Research question**

* Your research question is the specific formulation of what you are seeking to find out. It is ***not*** the same a research topic. Clear, well-formulated research questions are important because they guide your literature review, your choice of data/materials, and your methods for data collection and analysis.
* Check the clarity, scope, and relevance of your research question(s) with your supervisor.

**Managing your research project**

* Managing your research project involves foreseeing how the various aspects of your project will come together in a coherent way and the various tasks you’ll need to complete to hand in your dissertation on time.
* Try writing a detailed research proposal: write out a few sentences\* on what you will investigate, what you aim to find out, and why this is potentially useful. Write about the data you plan to gather or use, why those are appropriate, and what you propose doing with them. Try to write a reasoned justification and potential limitations of what you are proposing.

*\*See the research proposal worksheet available for download with the podcast.*

* Make a plan! And be sure that it includes all your research-related tasks, and how much time you have to devote to them. Consider factors and stages like access, practical arrangements, pilot studies, data collection, data analysis, and even a Plan B – just in case.
* Factor in the academic calendar and the dates when your supervisor, and other sources of support, will be available. In most cases, there is no supervision available during Easter and summer break.

As you work on your research project and dissertation, you may find that you want to revisit or revise your focus. For example, the data you wanted to analyse may not be available, or you might discover a new idea or direction as you review the literature. This could cause you to re-consider how you frame your project and how you formulate your research questions. This is normal! As you learn more, you are better informed to make decision about what to investigate and how to do it. However, be sure to discuss any major changes you’re considering with your dissertation supervisor.