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Bryan Greetham

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Preface

Like dissertations, a large part of this book is about thinking. As I've said a number of times throughout it, dissertations are set as assignments to give teachers a window into the minds of their students, to see *how* they think, not just *what* they think. It is for this reason that I have avoided burdening the text with too many references. Not only does this tend to break up the text, making it difficult to read with any fluency, but if these arguments are to show you how to think, they should be convincing enough on their own merits without appeals to outside help.

Of course, dissertations are also about more practical matters. All of these are here too. Indeed, every aspect and every stage of producing a dissertation is explained in these pages, from generating your first ideas about what you might like to research, to binding and submitting your work. You will learn how to get the most out of your relationship with your supervisor, how to generate your best ideas and develop them into interesting, original research projects, how to plan your research, manage your time and read and take notes more effectively, and how to work with primary and secondary sources, choosing from the complete range of quantitative and qualitative research techniques.

And, of course, it is also about writing – the most difficult form of thinking. You will learn how to plan every detail of each chapter, how to construct sound arguments, use language consistently and deploy your evidence convincingly, and how to convey your ideas simply and economically with a light effective style to produce a memorable, thought-provoking piece of work. Then, finally, you will learn how to revise and edit your dissertation, so that the quality of your work and the extent of your achievements really shine through.

I hope you find this book not just helpful, but perhaps most of all a source of insights and inspiration, from which you will gain confidence. Researching and writing a dissertation is a daunting challenge. But it is only daunting because it is new, something you've not done before, not because it is beyond you.