## **Contents**

List of figures and tables		VII
Glossary		
Acknowledgements		xiii
How to use this book		xiv
PART I	Preparing the ground	1
1	Introduction	3
	Being proud of your dissertation	4
	Scope and terminology	5
	What is qualitative research?	6
	What is desk-based research?	7
	Why do desk-based research?	9
	Advantages and disadvantages of desk-based research	10
	The Research Triangle	11
	The Metaphorical Tent	13
	Summary	16
	Further reading	16
2	Choosing a topic	17
	What is research?	17
	The importance of identifying a topic	19
	Finding a suitable topic	20
	Where will I get my data from?	22
	The size, scope and focus of your project	23
	How to narrow down the focus of a desk-based project	24
	The Metaphorical Tent	25
	Summary	25
	Further reading	25
3	Keeping a research journal	27
	What is criticality and why is it important?	27
	What is a research journal?	29
	Why keep a research journal?	30
	What does a research journal look like?	33
	More key terms	34
	The Integrated Reflective Research Cycle	35
	Summary	37
	Further reading	37

## Doing Qualitative Desk-Based Research

4	Writing a strong research proposal	39
	The purpose of a research proposal	39
	What does a research proposal look like?	41
	The elements of a research proposal	43
	What makes a strong proposal?	47
	Tools for writing a research proposal	48
	Summary	50
	Further reading	50
PART II	Assembling the structure	51
5	The importance of your research question	53
	Why is a research question so important?	53
	How to move from a topic to a research question	54
	What makes a good research question?	56
	How do you write a good research question?	58
	Criteria for assessing a research question	59
	Can a research question be changed?	60
	A final word about your research question	61
	Summary	62
	Further reading	62
6	Context, background and introduction	63
	What does a whole dissertation look like?	63
	What does an introduction to a dissertation look like?	66
	Motivation	67
	Rationale	67
	Background and context	68
	Relevance	68
	Your research question	69
	Summary of what comes next	70
	Summary	70
	Further reading	70
7	Selecting high-quality data resources	71
	How to use the internet to find data resources	73
	Written	73
	Visual	79
	Audio	81
	The challenges of deciding which data resources to use	82
	How to identify appropriate, high-quality data	83
	Triangulation	86
	Sample size	87
	Summary	87
	Further reading	88

## Contents

8	Literature review	89
	The role and purpose of a literature review	89
	The difference between a literature review as a whole dissertation	91
	and a literature review as part of a dissertation	
	Steps involved in a literature review	92
	Characteristics of a strong literature review	95
	What is the difference between analysis, evaluation, description	98
	and synthesis?	
	Finding those 'peachy' quotes	100
	Some practical tips for carrying out a literature review	100
	What makes a strong reference list?	101
	Summary	102
	Further reading	102
9	Desk-based methodologies	103
	What do we mean by the term methodology?	103
	Epistemology	106
	Ontology	109
	Subjectivism and objectivism	109
	Validity, reliability and generalisability	111
	How to write a strong methodology section in a dissertation	112
	Understanding methodology using a hierarchy of objectives	113
	Summary	116
	Further reading	116
10	Ethics	117
	Ethics in research	118
	Some key ethical principles for research	120
	Four key ethical principles in desk-based research	121
	Self-care in research	125
	Summary	126
	Further reading	126
11	Data analysis and techniques	127
	Inductive and deductive reasoning	129
	Four common techniques of data analysis in qualitative research	130
	How to select the most appropriate way to analyse your data	137
	Some possible analytical tools	138
	Back to literature	138
	Summary	139
	Further reading	139
12	Writing conclusions and recommendations	141
	How to write strong conclusions and recommendations	141
	Using criteria to write a strong critical evaluation of your study	143
	Sam, Rajesh and Emma's findings	144

## Doing Qualitative Desk-Based Research

	Writing a good abstract	147
	Finalising a good title	148
	Summary	149
	Further reading	149
PART	III Keeping your tent stable and secure	151
13	Getting the support you need	153
	The role of supervision	153
	How to get the most from supervision	156
	How to use feedback to good effect	158
	The role of a critical friend	160
	The value of a study group	161
	Accessing other types of support	162
	Getting the support of others to help you to manage stress	163
	Summary	164
	Further reading	164
14	Managing desk-based research	165
	Planning your project	166
	Goal setting	170
	Effective time management	171
	Dealing with difficulties to build resilience	173
	Practical aspects of project management	173
	Reassessing your motivation	175
	Some general strategies for managing stress	179
	Graduation day!	180
	Summary	181
	Further reading	181
Refere	ences	183
Index		191