1. Do a Literature Search

- Find out what has been written on your topic. A good starting point is the list of references from a recent article/book on the topic. Then use other bibliographical sources including abstracts, databases and the web. If you decide that a text is relevant, write down the bibliographical details in full—as the item will appear in your list of references or bibliography. Software such as EndNote, is a useful tool for tracking reading, organising references and it can automatically generate a reference lists.

2. Find the Literature

- First check whether the material is available in print or online through GMIT Libraries. If the literature you require is not available through GMIT libraries or freely on the web you may be able to spend some time working in a library which has more comprehensive holdings on your topic such as NUIG or you can use our Document Supply Service.

3. Read the Literature

- Record the author and the title and take notes (you should already have the other bibliographical information, as per step one). Your aim is to determine how the topic is approached and what is said about it. As you take notes, ask yourself the following questions for each source: What type of source is it? - What is the methodology? - What definitions are used? - What is the theoretical basis? - What evidence is used to support the research? - What are the conclusions?

4. Write Short Summaries

- For each relevant source, aim to write a one paragraph summary similar to an abstract.

5. Organise the Summaries

- Try to identify similarities and group them accordingly. The headings under which the summaries are grouped will vary, depending on the topic and the subject.

6. Write each Section

- Each section of your literature review should deal with a specific aspect of the literature.

7. Decide on the Order of Presentation

- This would typically be from the most important to least important, or from established to more debated theories.

8. Write the Conclusion

- The conclusion should include a summary of key agreements/disagreements in the literature and a summary of the overall conclusions drawn. If the literature review is part of a dissertation or thesis, you should also indicate your own area of research. This might include identifying a gap in the research, finding drawbacks with previous research or suggesting to develop previous knowledge.

9. Write the Introduction

- The introduction should include a clear statement of the topic and its limits. You should indicate why the research area is important, challenging or relevant in some way.

10. Proofread and Edit

- The literature review is an important part of your research. Make sure it is methodical and precise.