# **Choosing a dissertation topic**

This worksheet accompanies the [Skills@Cumbria Choosing a Dissertation tutorial](https://stream.cumbria.ac.uk/ap/Skills/Dissertation_2023/Choosing_a_dissertation_topic/story_html5.html) and aims to help you choose a topic area for your dissertation or research project and refine your topic to a working title.

If you are studying a health-related course, you may be asked to use a tool to formulate your research question such as [PICO](https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/MyCumbria/Documents/Library/PICO-searching-form.docx) or [SPIDER](https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/media/MyCumbria/Documents/Library/SPIDER-searching-form.docx).

1. **Finding your research ikigai**

Your research ikigai is the ‘sweet spot’ at the intersection of:

* **What you love** – a subject you are passionate about
* **What is needed** – an area where further research is warranted
* **What is possible** – what can be done with the time and

Use the Venn diagram below to make notes for each circle and see if there is a topic that falls under all 3.

**What is needed**

**What you love**

**What is possible**

1. **Mindmapping a topic**

Use the space below to create a mindmap for a general topic area that draws your interest. Start with a broad subject area in the middle of your mind map and use the branches to consider the subtopics and possible areas that fall within. Which of these branches are you more drawn to? Which have potential as research topics?

1. **Gap statements**

Your research project might address an area that needs further research, also known as a gap in the literature. Complete the sentence below define the gaps in the literature in your chosen subject area. You can produce multiple gap statements if it helps.

The current research does not………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Further research is needed into………………………………………………………………………………………………

1. **Question lists**

If you have a general topic in mind but you need to narrow the focus, or you need to work your topic into a research question, use the space below to brainstorm a list of all the potential questions that could be asked about the topic.

1. **Developing a working title**

The title of your dissertation or research project needs to make clear the focus of the research in a concise way. Include keywords associated with your topic and any parameters or limits on the scope of your research. Use the space below to test out some possible draft dissertation titles.