

# **PART I**

## **Documentary research**

# SECTION 1

**Subject definition**

## **1. SUBJECT DEFINITION**

### **1.1. Introduction**

- What is documentary research?

Documentary research is the process of identifying, collecting and processing information on a given subject, using reliable sources.

- What is the purpose of documentary research?

It's an excellent way of expanding your knowledge. It meets a need: presentation, dissertation, study, thesis or simple curiosity.

- How do you carry out documentary research?

The overabundance of information and the diversity of media make this a complex exercise, requiring a rigorous and organised attitude.

### **1.2. Choice of the subject**

Your prior knowledge and personal interests in the subject, as well as its relevance to the teaching programme to which it relates, are fundamental factors that should guide your choice.

### **1.3. Title of the subject**

It involves questioning the subject in all its dimensions, formulating it in a short sentence, selecting the important concepts and looking for synonyms.

### **1.4. List of key words relating to the subject**

This stage should enable you to set out the problem, identify the documentary requirements and select the keywords needed to search the documentary sources.

### **1.5. Gathering basic information**

In order to ensure that the results are consistent with requirements, all documentary research must be prepared. This preliminary work is carried out in two phases:

- **Subject analysis**

To begin with, it is essential to question your information needs by analysing the subject and defining the scope of your research.

To do this, we recommend using the QQQOCP (WWWWWH) method: this is an empirical questioning method that helps to refine the subject of the research as much as possible. It attempts to answer the questions WHAT, WHO, WHEN, WHY, WHERE and HOW.

It is a mnemonic for remembering all these simple questions, which can be used to **identify, clarify and explore** a subject in **greater depth**:

**WHO?** = Who are the actors and people involved?

**WHAT?** = What are the aspects that interest me?

**WHEN?** = What period is concerned?

**WHERE?** = Is the subject limited to a specific geographical area?

**HOW?** = What approaches or points of view should be considered?

**WHY?** = How important is this subject in the current context?

- **Development of a research strategy**

The aim is to identify and prioritise the resources likely to provide the information you are looking for.

As these resources vary according to the subject, the previous stage enables the most relevant resources to be targeted.