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Preface

How will you succeed in your degree and the world of Business?

Much depends on your success as a professional communicator. The professions seek graduates who present themselves well as speakers and writers. Knowledge is not enough, number crunching is not enough – the bottom line is good communication skills.

In the Bachelor and Master of Commerce, we expect you to show that you can speak, write, think and make soundly based judgments. We expect you to learn independently, by making good use of all available resources, including this online guide.


The Communication Skills Guide is tailor-made for the Business School at The University of Adelaide. Because the lecturers in each pathway have designed the types of assignments described here, the Guide tells you what they expect and how you can meet their standards. The Guide is for you. Use it!

Professor Lawrence Abeln
Dean, Business School.

Acknowledgements

The Communication Skills Guide is an initiative of the Business School and the Professions Learning Centre aimed at integrating communication skills across all courses in the Bachelor and Master of Commerce programs.

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The University of Adelaide

Established in 1874, The University of Adelaide is one of Australia’s oldest and most prestigious universities and is widely recognised as the centre of academic learning in South Australia.

With over 20,000 students enrolled in 2012, including over 5,500 international students, Adelaide University is large enough to offer a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses and many opportunities for postgraduate research yet it is small enough to provide personal interaction with teaching staff. An innovative and forward looking university, Adelaide has produced three Nobel Prize winners and many Rhodes Scholars. Its research is at the leading edge of knowledge and it consistently ranks among the top universities in Australia in winning research grants. The University leads the country in the award of National Competitive Grants and amounts won through Cooperative Research Centres (CRCS) per full-time equivalent academic staff members.

The University believes the best teaching integrates research and emphasises active, small group discovery to cultivate the making of new knowledge. Courses are constantly revised to keep pace in the rapidly changing world of technology and business practice. The University of Adelaide’s staff are appointed from around the world for their internationally recognised qualifications and reputations. Major international scholars teach both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. High technology, state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms contain modern computing equipment and international data networks. These facilities are complemented by an outstanding teaching and research library of over 2 million print volumes, and hundreds of thousands of electronic books, journals and databases that are remotely accessible.

Graduates from the University of Adelaide are career ready and possess globally recognized qualifications that meet workplace demands and employer expectations. Most graduates take up positions in Australia and overseas, or enter postgraduate programs, within six months of graduating. Adelaide graduates win scholarships to the best and most prestigious Universities around the world. For more than 50 years, the University’s international students have attained the highest positions in government, in business and in academic institutions in Europe, North America, Asia, and the Pacific. The University’s extensive support services cater for students’ cultural, sporting and social needs. Life on campus offers a range of clubs, activities and services which aim to make the overseas education experience of international students both enjoyable and rewarding. Find out more at http://lifeoncampus.org.au/clubs/

Adelaide is a modern, leading edge university that maintains a long and proud tradition of excellence in education and liberal values of enquiry - qualities that characterise great institutes of learning.
Every educational situation has particular expectations and ways of doing things. At university, students are expected to be independent learners. It is up to you to find out what you need to know and to organise your time for classes, for reading outside of classes and for submitting assignments on time. Section 2.3 in this Guide lists some strategies for becoming more independent. This doesn’t mean you are on your own. The lecturers, your tutors and various resources available in the University are there to support you. However, it is up to you to use these resources effectively.

Your lecturers will provide you with a course outline and specific expectations about the course assignments, as well as information about the content of the course.

Your tutors are your first point of call if you are not clear about the content or the course expectations. Use your tutorial times to clarify any aspects that are confusing.

Use the Undergraduate Hub and Postgraduate Hub websites to find information relating to your study plans, enrolment, withdrawals and course additions as well as services offered by the Professions Hub including mentoring programs, access to Program Advisers and computing facilities.

Your Course Outlines and assignment handouts tell you exactly what is expected for each of your assignments. These must be read very carefully alongside the Communication Skills Guide to ensure your assignments meet the assessment criteria against which you are graded.

MyUni is the University of Adelaide’s online learning environment. It is used to support lectures, tutorials and workshops at the University. MyUni provides access to various features including announcements, course materials, discussion boards and assessments for each online course of study.

Your Communication Skills Guide is a handbook for Business School students to use when preparing an assignment. It is in two parts:

**Part 1** gives detailed information about how to structure particular assignments, such as academic essays and oral presentations, and what to include in those types of assignments. Part 1 also gives guidance on professional writing.

**Part 2** examines aspects of university assignment work, such as academic argument, good style, and referencing. It also has a section on differences in learning and teaching styles, a list of academic skills and where you can get help.

The Professions Learning Centre (PLC) is a unit that provides academic skills support for students within the Faculty of the Professions. For more information, see the next page.
Learning Support within the University

Professions Learning Centre (PLC)
The PLC offers academic skills support for both undergraduate and postgraduate students within the Faculty of Professions. This is done through discipline-specific workshops embedded in core courses that help students to develop the skills required for success.

www.adelaide.edu.au/professions/hub/pg/plc

Writing Centre
The Writing Centre, located on level 3 East of Hub Central, provides a range of practical advice on reading, writing, note-taking, and referencing techniques for success at university. The Centre supports both undergraduate and postgraduate students across all faculties at the university. A drop-in service is available 10:00 am - 4:00 pm during semester teaching weeks. Additional resources and information can be found by visiting their website at:

www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/

Maths Learning Centre (MLC)
The MLC, also located on level 3 of Hub Central, offers a drop-in service from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm during semester teaching weeks, swot vacs and at selected times during mid-semester breaks. Students encountering challenges with maths and/or statistics in their studies can drop in for help. For more information, visit www.adelaide.edu.au/mathslearning/

Barr Smith Library
If you need research assistance beyond the initial orientation to the library catalogue and database systems, contact the Business specialist librarian, Qing Liang at:

qing.liang@adelaide.edu.au
Part 1:
Assignment Tasks/Types of Text

All call outs in boxes refer to a section in the guide where the task is explained in detail.
1.1 Short Answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyse the question</td>
<td>The question is answered completely and appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select relevant information</td>
<td>The content is all relevant to the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think critically and analytically</td>
<td>The answer shows understanding of how key aspects relate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information is questioned and a point of view argued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin with a proposition</td>
<td>The proposition shows understanding of the question and indicates the points to be covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present an argument</td>
<td>The argument is logical and concise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose**
To write a concise and logical answer to a question.

**Audience**
Your assessor. However, this format is also practice for presenting persuasive answers to issues or problems for business colleagues or superiors.

**Structure**

**Introduction**
An establishing sentence shows the reader you understand the question and indicates the position you will take (see example). In other words, the core answer to the question is in this sentence.

**Argument**
This part of the answer defines the key terms in the question and provides justification for the argument with the ‘What’ and the ‘Why’.

**What:** Provide the relevant information to answer the question. You may include brief examples.

**Why:** Most questions require an explanation section where you show the relationships, consequences or reasons for the answer you give.

**Conclusion**
A concluding sentence is only needed if the argument is long and complex.

**Style**
The answer may have only one paragraph. If longer than half a page, consider more paragraphs. The writing should be impersonal to give the answer generality and suggest impartiality. However, in some instances, the nature of the assignment task may require a more specific response where students are asked to relate elements of a scenario to concepts and theories.

**Steps**
1. Underline the key terms in the question.
2. Decide whether the question asks for a simple description (Describe... or What is...?) or some analysis and explanation (Discuss, Comment, Explain or Analyse).
3. Establish the meanings of the key terms and identify information that will answer the question.
4. Write an establishing sentence that shows you understand the question and indicates your position.
5. Present information and justification for your answer. Include brief examples if they will help to make your point(s) clear.
6. Check that all the information included is necessary to your answer - no padding.
Tip
Rote learning is not sufficient for short answers. You will need to think about how the different facts relate, their purposes and their consequences, and answer the question. See the example below.

Example
Question: Discuss the conditions under which cash accounting provides useful financial information.

Answer
Introduction
Establishing sentence (including point of view)
Cash accounting provides useful financial information only under restrictive conditions.

Argument
What (explanation)
Pure cash accounting maintains records of an entity’s cash flow. It ignores all liabilities and only recognises one asset – cash. Modified cash accounting methods keep the daily records on a cash basis, but augment the end-of-period results for a few significant non-cash items such as inventories or equipment.

What (explanation)
The main aim of accounting is to provide financial information for use in making economic decisions. The accountant normally presents this information in terms of an entity’s financial position and changes therein as represented by assets, liabilities and owner’s equity.

Why (implications of the facts)
When non-cash assets and liabilities are a significant part of an entity’s operation, then the cash accounting method will not provide the information needed for making economic decisions.

Conclusion
(logical conclusion drawn – restates argument based on what has been presented)
It follows that the cash accounting method will provide useful financial information when an entity’s operations are conducted mainly in cash terms, with relatively small or constant carry-overs of inventory and equipment from one period to the next.
1.2 Academic Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure the essay</td>
<td>The proposition states your position and is followed by the main points to be covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The proposition shows understanding of the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The argument presents your ideas with evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The conclusion summarises the points made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present an argument</td>
<td>Evidence is provided to support your opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Your position remains clear throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opposing views and evidence are considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference thoroughly</td>
<td>The source of each claim made is acknowledged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Harvard system is used consistently to cite sources and to list references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly and concisely</td>
<td>Arguments are clear and concise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar and spelling are accurate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions
An essay is a formal presentation of an argument.
An academic essay refers to the most recent and significant research and literature in presenting an argument.

Purpose
To persuade an audience of your point of view.

Audience
Your lecturer or tutor will assess the clarity of your argument and how well you justify your position and acknowledge your sources.

Structure
Proposition
State your point of view on the topic.

Introduction
Outline the main points you will discuss.

Presentation of Points
Each paragraph should contain one main point, which is proven, developed or illustrated.

Conclusion
Summarise or restate the main issues and the conclusion.

Language and Style
Essays have a formal tone to indicate impartial analysis, and good style is important. Your writing should be clear and concise, using your own words. Acknowledge sources when others’ words or ideas are used. Avoid skimpy paragraphs and overlong sentences and paragraphs.
Steps

1. Underline the key words in the assignment question and roughly draft an argument, using what you know. Plan what further information and evidence you need to read.

2. Read critically and analytically about the topic: interpret, compare information, work out relationships, check relevance to the topic. Note your sources, being sure to record the page numbers.

3. Rearrange or redraft your argument as further ideas are found to support or counter your position. With each draft refine your ideas.

4. Check that your argument flows well, is introduced in the first paragraph and reiterated in the last.

5. Proofread, and cross-check references in the essay and the reference list.

Hints

- It is often best to write (or rewrite) the introduction last, when you know exactly what position you have argued in the essay.
- Use direct quotations for concise definitions but otherwise paraphrase to show your understanding.
- Make sure you have taken a position; not just presented others’ ideas.

Useful References


1.3 Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selecting and organising information</td>
<td>Compare and contrast different authors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group authors who draw similar conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note areas in which authors are in disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highlight gaps in research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclude by summarising what the literature says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructing your argument</td>
<td>Provide background or context for the issue/argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find relevant materials to support the argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine which research makes significant contributions to the understanding of the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyse and interpret pertinent literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the review</td>
<td>Provide an overview of the subject under consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divide literature into categories (those supporting, against or providing alternative views)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explain how each work is similar to or varies from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclude as to which pieces are best considered in the argument and make the greatest contribution towards the understanding and development of the argument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose
To present an argument insightfully and critically with regard to existing work in the discipline.

Audience
Your lecturer or assessor. You have to convince them that you have read widely, critically evaluated what you have read and synthesised information to support your own argument.

Structure

Introduction
> Provide the background or context of the issue.

Argument
> Place each work in the context of its contribution to the understanding of the subject under review.
> Describe the relationship of each work to the others under consideration.
> Identify new ways to interpret, and shed light on any gaps in previous research.
> Resolve conflicts amongst seemingly contradictory previous studies.
> Point the way forward for further research.

Conclusion
> Restate the arguments that best contribute to the understanding of the issues being discussed.
> Do not introduce new material.

Style
A literature review is written in academic language. One of the fundamental qualities of academic language is that it attempts to be objective. Criticisms of other authors’ works need to be fair. It is important to maintain a respectful, scholarly tone when you are discussing the work of other authors. You need to avoid strong or emotive language. This is especially true of the author’s work you criticise.

Steps
1. Read widely, critically and analytically about the topic: interpret, compare information, work out relationships and check the relevance.
2. Take all the critical comments you made in your readings and structure an academic opinion.

3. Indicate a clear relationship between your argument and the evidence. Link sentences within the paragraphs to indicate these relationships and connections. Summarise each section to draw conclusions.

4. Support your arguments with facts and theory from the literature. Use examples, citation and quotations where appropriate.

5. Account for differing opinions rather than ignore them. Present evidence and also make some attempt to acknowledge opposing viewpoints. Make your preferences clear rather than ‘sitting on the fence’ or leaving it to the reader to draw conclusions.

6. Make sure that the sections of the review are clearly connected. Write an outline statement in the introduction which makes the order of the arguments clear, and give reasons for ordering the material in that particular manner.

7. Include in-text citations wherever necessary and a reference list at the end of the review.

**Useful References**


1.4 Critical Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Read and understand the main points of the article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note the outline of the author's argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analyse the findings or argument of the article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decide the appropriate criteria to evaluate the article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide a critical evaluation of the article based on the selected criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Is the article recent or still relevant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who is the intended audience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does the article make an original contribution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the argument logical?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is the evidence valid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the findings presented and described clearly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Could the data be interpreted differently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the conclusions reached valid?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there any omissions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing the review</td>
<td>Provide all the publication details that the reader will find useful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide a summary of the article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Describe several points with which you agree or disagree and provide evidence that supports your position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Refer to other aspects of the article that might be worth commenting on such as appropriateness of language, use of illustrations and graphics and organisation of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be selective about the information and evidence that you include in your review as there is usually a word limit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Purpose
To read, evaluate and present a critical evaluation of an article so that your reader understands the key content of the article and your response to it.

Audience
Your lecturer or assessor. You have to convince them through your writing that you have critically read and evaluated an article using the criteria indicated in the table above.

Structure

Introduction
> Provide a context for the article.
> Provide the title of the article and name of author.
> Identify the author by profession or standing if appropriate. Include some indication as to why the subject is important. Identify the purpose of the article.
> Give an indication of your overall impression of the article in general terms.

Body
> Summarise and analyse the contents of the article.
> Make clear by frequent reference to the author of the article when you are presenting the author's views, and not yours.
> Evaluate the article.

Conclusion
> Summarise the previous discussion.
> Make a final judgement on the value of the article.
> Comment on the future of the issue/topic or implications of the views expressed.
Style

A critical review is a summary of an article that you have read, therefore paraphrase and use quotations sparingly. Do not plagiarise. Be consistent in the use of tense: choice of simple present, simple past or present perfect is preferred.

Steps

1. Take a quick overview of the article.
2. Read the article without taking notes in order to gain an overall idea of its aim and main idea.
3. Read the article again and highlight important ideas and make brief notes in the margin.
4. Check your notes to ensure that they include the main aim of the paper (analyse, evaluate, argue, criticise, etc.), its methodological approach as well as findings or conclusions.
5. Evaluate the content and begin writing your critical review.

Useful References

Brandt, C 2009, Read, research and write: academic skills for ESL students in higher education, Sage, London.
Virgo, G 2005, Writing an academic assignment: preparing a model essay on globalisation, Pearson Education, Frenchs Forest, NSW.
1.5 Oral Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select and organise information</td>
<td>Relevance of information and coverage appropriate to the time available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brief introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce group members and overview of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smooth transitions (from topic to topic and from one group member to another)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Argument is well-organised, using transition words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short conclusion or link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project confidence and enthusiasm</td>
<td>Good posture, calm appearance, eye contact with entire audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal reference to notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak clearly</td>
<td>Clear speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steady pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate intonation and emphasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explanation or definition of new terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No jargon or complex sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use audio-visuals effectively</td>
<td>Powerpoint slides should not be crowded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equipment should be used with ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information selected should assist audience understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond to the audience</td>
<td>Counter arguments explained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Own argument summarised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Active listening and focused response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Purpose**

To present a persuasive argument or report on a topic.

**Audience**

Consider your audience to determine how much and how you will present. Choose vocabulary and information to suit their background.

**Structure**

**Introduction**

> Include the title, context or relevance, and overview of the main points.

**Argument**

> Present your point of view clearly.
> Include evidence and examples.
> Briefly consider alternative arguments and evidence.

**Conclusion**

> Restate the argument, perhaps with summary of counter argument.
> Do not introduce new material.

**Style**

The vocabulary and language used should match that used by the audience in similar settings. Avoid an overload of information and new terminology. Use transition phrases and words to communicate shifts in coverage of content and refer back to earlier information to help the audience follow the presentation.
### Steps

1. Read critically and analytically about the topic: interpret, compare information, work out relationships, check the relevance.
2. Form an argument and organise the evidence.
3. Structure your talk with an introduction, argument and conclusion.
4. Select your main points and list them as headings on slides. Make sure the print is large enough for your audience (at least 24 pt).
5. Make one key point per visual unless the audience is very familiar with the subject. Organise material into categories and contrasts (before vs. after, problem and solution, advantages vs. disadvantages, beginning to end, etc.). Do not include more than three or four points under one heading.
6. Prepare your main points on cue cards if you need prompts. Do not read from your cue card or from a prepared script. Use the PPT slides to jog your memory.
7. If it is a group presentation, decide who will present which parts, and how.
8. Go through your presentation together to see how long it takes and to make a smooth changeover between each person.
9. Rehearse your presentation several times: both by yourself and with your group members. Keep within the allocated time.

### Tips

- You may like to memorise your opening and other transition phrases to improve flow.
- Avoid reading notes; scripted speech sounds unnatural and stops you from making eye contact.
- Practise so you need only refer to headings and dot points.
- Don’t worry if your language expression varies a little from your original notes.
- More detailed notes can be on the table but only for reassurance and emergency.
- Don’t block the audience’s vision. Limit the time your back is to the audience.
- Make sure you know how to operate the equipment; practice operating it ahead of time; have back up files saved.

### Useful References

1.6 PowerPoint Slides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choose a clear, uncluttered layout</td>
<td>Plenty of space around print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slides centred on the screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At least 24 point font</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper and lower case font style used appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistent style; avoiding distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present effectively</td>
<td>Text and illustrations are well-designed and effectively used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Text and illustrations effectively assist audience understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highly effective use of equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pointer used without fuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye contact with audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steady pace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition**

PowerPoint slides are visual summaries that support an oral presentation.

**Purpose**

To assist an audience in understanding an argument, a report or other information.

**Audience**

Classmates and assessor or, in the workplace, clients or a committee.

**Structure**

**Introduction**

Focus attention and state what the presentation is about. Present key information to be covered.

**Main Points**

Present the key points on one or more slides, depending on the time available. Transitions from one topic to another, or one member to another, must be effective and without disruption.

**Conclusion**

Briefly summarise what has been covered and comment on broader implications.

**Style**

**Language**

Choose simple language. The main points should be headings, with support as dot points. Keep the points consistent in their grammar (e.g. all noun phrases).

**Font size**

Use 24 point or bigger, if it’s in a large venue.

**Font choice**

Use a font that is clear and ‘sans serif’, for example Arial, to lead the eye on. Upper and lower case are easier to read than all capitals.

**Colour**

Choose contrasting colours for print and background, such as black or blue on white. Avoid red and pale colours.
Steps

1. Identify the essential points of your presentation.
2. Choose an appropriate font, size and colours. Type your first slide to introduce your topic (centre it on the page).
   This may be a question, a title or a brief statement.
3. Prepare a single slide as an overview. Create a slide for each of the main points, listing the sub points under each.
   Avoid crowding the slide with too much information.
4. Your final slide should restate your position or conclusion.
5. Include a simple graph, table or concise quote if it supports your point.
6. Check well before your presentation that your equipment is working and placed so that you can face the audience without blocking the screen.
7. Practice using your slides to support your delivery of content.
8. Direct attention to points on slides, either by using a laser pointer or appropriate custom animation to emphasise and reinforce particular information.

Tips

➢ Check the spelling and grammar of your slides before you finalise them.
➢ Check your timing. Have a practice run through your slides. Use the points as a prompt for what you say and to give you confidence in speaking to the points. Don’t rush.
➢ It is tempting to look at the slides, not at the people! Practise looking at the audience and keep a steady pace.
➢ If you run out of time, don’t speed up in an effort to cover everything. Simply summarise your remaining points and go to the conclusion.

Useful References

1.7 Conducting Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenting as a professional</td>
<td>Be confident and well prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shake hands and introduce yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses interviewee's name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seat interviewee appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summarise focus of interview and areas to be covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning</td>
<td>Make questions open-ended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure the order of questions has a clear logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clarify with follow-up questions as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confirm understanding by paraphrasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Speak clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid speaking too fast or too slowly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use eye contact effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>Ask if interviewee wants to add anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thank interviewee and confirm the next step</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definition
An interview is a formal meeting where specific information is sought from a person through oral questioning.

Purpose
To gain specific information or to assess a person's suitability for a position or role.

Audience
The audience is the person being interviewed (the interviewee). The interviewer will want to impress on the interviewee that the organisation for which he or she works is efficient and considerate, and the information given will be treated professionally.

Structure
There are two structures to consider. One is the structure of the total interview, which encompasses the arrival and departure of the interviewee or interviewer; the other is the structure of the questions, which fits within the structure of the interview.

Greetings
- Shake hands, introduce self.
- Confirm interviewee's name, check preferred name.
- Invite the interviewee to be seated.

Introducing the question
- Summarise what the interview is about.
- Indicate the order of areas to be covered by the questions.
- Outline expected outcomes and duration of interview.

The questions
- Begin with general questions.
- Make questions gradually more specific.
- Ask follow-up questions as required.

Closure to the questions
- Inform the interviewee when questions are finished.
- Ask if the interviewee would like to add or ask anything.
Closure to the interview
>
Thank the interviewee and say what the next step will be.

Language and Style
Interviews are formal but friendly so that the interviewee is at ease and prepared to respond openly and honestly to the questions.

Steps
1. Make sure that the interviewee knows the purpose, the time and the place of the interview and has plenty of time to prepare.
2. Be clear on what you want to find out from the interviewee.
3. Write open-ended questions that will elicit this information. Open-ended questions require more than a yes or no answer. They often begin with ‘What’, ‘How’, ‘Which’, ‘When’, ‘Where’ or ‘Who’.
4. Put the questions in order, with the more general, background questions at the beginning.
5. Prepare the interview setting so that the chairs are at the same level, at an angle, and not facing the light.
6. Greet the interviewee and follow the structure above. Vary the order of your prepared questions if the answers naturally move into different questions.
7. Note answers, and check that all questions have been covered by the end of the interview.
8. After the interview, fill out your notes so that you have the answers clearly recorded.

Hints
Pace your questions to give yourself and the interviewee time to think, to add information and to ask for clarification.

Useful References
Corfield, R 2009, Successful interview skills: how to prepare, answer tough questions and get your ideal job, 5th edn, Kogan Page, London.
Friesen, BK 2010, Designing and conducting your first interview project, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
King, N & Horrocks, C 2010, Interviews in qualitative research, Sage, Los Angeles.
1.8 Professional Reports

**Definition**

In the workplace, reports are often required as a formal account of a situation. They are produced after consideration of all relevant factors, and analysis using relevant concepts in the field. The recommendations and their implementation are then based on this analysis, using business language appropriate to the audience.

In the academic context, reports similarly require research and analysis to demonstrate your learning and ability to apply course concepts and theories that lead to feasible recommendations.

**Purpose**

To inform senior management or a client about a particular issue(s) and offer recommendations for future decision-making.

**Audience**

Your audience may be the managing director of your company, its shareholders, people in a government department or rival firms, or indeed potential clients. Your audience and their needs will influence what you put in your report, and how you present it.

**Length and structure**

The length of a Professional Report varies according to the problem. Concise reports for managers rarely extend beyond three pages, while reports that have been prepared by consultancies may extend to 30 or 60 pages or more. Thus, two structures are presented. The first is commonly used for full length and consultancy style management reports while the second structure is more suitable for concise reports to management on a specific problem.

**Skills Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan and manage tasks</th>
<th>The report is on schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All relevant aspects are considered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research information</th>
<th>Appropriate sources are consulted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sufficient sources are consulted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sources of data are well-documented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organise information</th>
<th>Appropriate headings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated structure, i.e., arguments and conclusions match purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative views are considered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Writing the review | Arguments are easy to understand and succinct |

**Structure of a long report**

- Title page: Report title, author name, course and tutorial, tutor’s name, date
- Executive summary: Brief statement of purpose, argument and recommendations
- Table of contents: All sections and appendices listed and numbered; page numbers provided
- List of illustrations, tables, figures: Lists of these, numbered correctly, page numbers provided
- Introduction: Context, background; purpose and scope of report; explanation of report organisation
- Body of report: Analysis and discussion under headings
- Conclusion: Summary or restatement of main issues. Basis for recommendations. May indicate ‘next step’. May comment on the limitations of the research (such as generalisability, availability of data)
- Recommendations: Most important first; based on conclusions; specific; practical
- References: Harvard System with in-text citations related to reference list
- Appendices: Additional information such as interview schedule used, relevant company documents, spreadsheets and statistics
Language and Style

Reports are written in appropriate business language. The analysis and discussion in your report should therefore have an objective tone. Your writing should be clear and concise and display appropriate style, based on the report’s purpose and the audience’s needs. Your voice and words should be your own. Use headings to guide the reader.

Steps

1. Identify the data you will need to collect to satisfy the given purpose, and how you can obtain that information.
2. Read critically and analytically about the topic: interpret, compare information, work out relationships, check relevance.
3. Form an argument and organise the evidence for and against. Develop your recommendations.
4. Outline your report sections (check whether all sections are required).
5. Write a draft: develop your argument; provide evidence for your argument; present alternative views; justify your argument; build logical links; avoid plagiarism; cite sources correctly; write clearly and concisely; format the report.
6. Check that your argument and recommendations meet the purpose; check structure, language and style; check flow of argument; copy-edit; cross-check references in report and reference list.
7. Prepare appendices, place in order of referral from your text and also number in that order.
8. Final preparation: proofread; check that all report elements are present and in the correct order; check grammar and spelling.

Hints

> Be clear whether you are stating your opinion or the views of others, e.g. ‘The manager indicated that’ … and ‘The findings suggest that …’.
> Where appropriate, use direct quotations from research to illustrate key points or to provide definitions. Avoid excessive use of quotations.

Useful References

Allen, J 1998, Writing in the workplace, Allyn and Bacon, Boston.
Silyn-Roberts, H 2005, Professional communications: a handbook for civil engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers, Reston, VA.
1.9 Executive Summaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure the written report*</td>
<td>Background information is brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Key arguments are summarised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations clearly relate to the arguments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format as required*</td>
<td>Page headed Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No more than one A4 page in length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single-spaced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placed before the table of contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly and concisely</td>
<td>Summary reads easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contains key points and limited details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar and spelling are accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No acronyms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Some academics may use different criteria or format. Always confirm with your lecturer what they require and write your executive summary accordingly.

Definition
An executive summary is a concise and complete summary of the essential content of the report.

Purpose
To provide the most important information about a report so that the reader, perhaps a manager, can decide whether the content of the report is relevant. Busy managers and clients may base a decision on reading only the executive summary.

Audience
An executive summary is for a client, a firm’s senior management, or an academic with an interest in the report.

Structure
Why?
Background problem and purpose of the report.

What?
Arguments to support the recommendations.

So what?
Most important recommendations and their implications.

Language and Style
Clear, concise and in a formal tone. The length will vary according to the scope of the report, but for the Business School, the preference is for no more than one single-spaced A4 page.

Steps
1. After completing your report, draft an overview of its essentials, using the above structure. Avoid copying and pasting sentences from the report.
2. Check that no new information has been introduced and delete any non-essential information or words.
3. Read the executive summary aloud to make sure that the meaning is clear and it is easy to read. Rewrite awkward sentences.
4. Proofread for spelling and grammar.
5. Title the single page Executive Summary and place it before the table of contents.

Hints

> The executive summary is often considered the most important part of a report. The content must therefore be clear, logical and accurate.
> It should be written last when you know exactly what you have discussed and recommended.
> The executive summary should stand alone. Do not refer to an appendix or use acronyms.
> Do not introduce any idea in an executive summary that is not in the report. The report itself must also stand alone.
> Do not use headings within an executive summary.

Useful References

1.10 Case Study Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure the written report</td>
<td>Background information is relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Issues are logically ordered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations clearly relate to the issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the main issues</td>
<td>Key issues are identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interrelationships are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A full grasp of the situation is shown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyse the issues</td>
<td>Each issue is discussed using relevant concepts and principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insight is shown in analysing the information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss alternatives</td>
<td>Possible solutions are considered and the most suitable one(s) chosen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support your recommendations</td>
<td>Recommendations are consistent with situation, well-supported and practicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly and concisely</td>
<td>Arguments are explicit and succinct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate headings are used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar and spelling are accurate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Definition**

A case study report presents an analysis of the problems and issues facing a particular company, with recommendations of a plan of action and justification of that plan.

**Purpose**

To persuade an audience that your recommendations are feasible, desirable and the best available.

**Audience**

A case study report is for a client or a firm’s senior management who are seeking a way forward.
Language and Style
Case studies should be written in appropriate business language so that your analysis and discussion have an objective tone. Your writing should be clear and concise, and be in your own words. Use headings to guide the reader and include tables or diagrams that make the case clearer.

Steps for Case Study Analysis
1. Gain a feel for the case by skim reading the abstract, introduction and conclusion. Ask:
   > What sort of organisation does the case concern?
   > What is the broad nature of the industry?
   > What is going on in the external environment?
   > What issues does management appear to be facing?
2. Read the case a second time, identifying key facts and clarifying the main issues. You will need to ‘read between the lines’, interpreting and connecting the case facts, and deducing the issues yourself.
3. Consider whether any figures provided can be further analysed for new insights; for example, you might plot data or calculate rate of change.
4. Identify and apply the appropriate analytical tools (e.g. SWOT analysis; PESTEL; Porter’s 5 forces etc.).
5. Identify the concepts and theories that explain the issues or problems.
6. Consider different short term and long term solutions and weigh up their comparative advantages and disadvantages. How practical are the solutions? Think through implications of solutions.
7. Decide on a preferred course of action and consider any possible criticisms, so you can defend your recommendation.
8. Explain how the recommendation will be implemented and what resources will be required.

Steps for Writing Case Reports
1. Write a draft using the structure described previously. Check whether specific guidelines are provided in your course outline.
2. Consider whether there are alternative ways of examining the data provided.
3. Read through the draft and reorganise, rewrite or delete to improve the flow of the arguments and to ensure every recommendation is well supported.
4. Check that your headings are relevant and helpful for the reader.
5. Decide whether diagrams or tables should be included in the report or the appendix.
6. Proof read your final draft; check grammar and spelling.

Hints
> There is generally no single correct solution to a case’s issues. Consider alternative solutions before deciding on one direction.
> Case analysis involves the application of sound principles. Consider which of the concepts and principles already introduced in your course apply in the case.

Useful References
Cottrell, S 2008, The study skills handbook, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK.
1.11 Formal Letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop message logically</td>
<td>Context in introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One idea per paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use correct conventions</td>
<td>Address and date are correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate greeting and close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Left aligned and blank space balanced on page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name/ title/ signature are correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enclosures/ cc are listed appropriately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Write clearly and concisely | The point of the letter is obvious |
|                            | Appropriate tone: tactful and inclusive      |
|                            | All necessary details included               |
|                            | Direct and concise use of language           |
|                            | Logical development of ideas                 |

Purpose

Is your letter to inform, persuade or seek information? The purpose of your business letter will affect its tone and length.

Audience

Consider carefully to whom your letter is addressed. Your audience will influence the tone and language you use. When you write a business document, you must assume that your audience has limited time in which to read it and is likely to skim. Your readers have an interest in what you say insofar as it affects their working world. They want to know the “bottom line”; the point you are making about a situation or problem and how they should respond.

Language and Style

The purpose and audience will determine the level of formality used. Your writing should be clear and concise, taking account of the letter’s purpose and the audience’s previous knowledge and needs. Business writing varies from the conversational style often found in email messages to the more formal, legalistic style found in contracts.

Steps

1. **Plan your letter**: think about purpose and audience, the main message, how best to convey your message, and the appropriate tone for the purpose.
2. **Write a draft**: give your reason for writing the letter; present the necessary facts completely and logically; finish the body with any action required, e.g. request, statement of outcome.
3. **Revise**: check information; consider audience and purpose; check language and style; check flow of argument; copy edit.
4. **Final preparation**: proof read; check that all letter layout and content elements are correctly presented; check grammar and spelling.

Sample Business Letter

See following page.
Marylin French  
Senior Consultant  
Inter-Office Solutions  
24 Prie Street  
Adelaide, SA 5005  
Australia  

20 Jan, 2014  

Mr. Rodney Giles  
Manager, Customer Support  
CRM Group Inc.  
12 Hampstead Road  
Clearview, SA 5085,  
Australia  

Dear Mr. Giles  

Pilot implementation of the 1 to 1 Customer Relationship Management Program  

This is further to our meeting of last week at which we agreed to hold a series of meetings over the next two months to review your experiences with the pilot implementation of the 1 to 1 Customer Relationship Management Program.  

As discussed at that meeting, the objectives of our review sessions will be to ..............................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  

As agreed, meetings will be held every second Tuesday from 9:00a.m. until noon, and the location will alternate between our two offices  ..........................................................................................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  

As discussed, at the end of the process ......................................................................................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  
..........................................................................................................................................................  

I trust I have covered all the points that we discussed. If you have any questions or would like to add anything please give me a call at 8261 2067.  
We look forward to seeing you at the 11 February meeting.  

Sincerely,  

Marilyn French  
Senior Consultant  

End.  


Useful References  
Allen, J 1998, Writing in the workplace, Allyn and Bacon, Boston.  
James, N 2007, Writing at work: how to write clearly, effectively and professionally, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.  
Silyn-Roberts, H 2005, Professional communications: a handbook for civil engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers, Reston, VA.
1.12 Formal Emails

**Skills** | **Criteria**
--- | ---
Develop message logically | Use the subject line to summarise the message
 | include enough contextual information so that the recipient knows what the message concerns
 | Keep message brief and to the point
 | include a request for action if appropriate
Use formal conventions | Use a formal font, 12 point (don’t use all capital letters/uppercase/oversized fonts)
 | Lay out message for readability (use spaces and breaks between paragraphs and long sentences)
 | Begin with an appropriate greeting and end with a suitable closure
 | Any attachments must be mentioned in the email
 | Do not forget to add attachments
 | Add Cc if others should be informed
 | Use appropriate punctuation and check grammar and spelling
 | Do not use emoticons (☹,☺) or acronyms (2L8-too late, AAMOF-as a matter of fact)
 | Do not be over-familiar with the recipient (use a title or form of address)
Write clearly and concisely | Make the point of the email obvious
 | include all necessary details
 | include only information relevant to the topic
 | Use direct and precise language
 | Use appropriate tone: tactful and inclusive

**Purpose**

The purpose of a professional email is to provide information or to ask a question. The email is an electronic version of a written memorandum and is an accepted form for business, educational, social and personal purposes.

**Audience**

An email to a professional should maintain formality unless the professional is also a personal friend. When the professional is a friend, it is best to maintain formality for any professional communication.

**Language and Style**

Your writing should be formal, clear and to the point. Use first person. Proofread to avoid errors, as correct communications always impress and errors disrupt the message.

**Steps**

1. Type in the email address, but leave the Subject until the email is completed.
2. Address the recipient by a title: Dr., Prof., Mr. Giles, Ms., Rodney (first name if already familiar), etc.
3. Type your message, mentioning any attachments.
4. Finish with a closing decision, brief reminder, hope or apology.
5. On the next line, type your first and last names unless the receiver knows you well.
6. Proofread your email and ensure any attachments are included.
7. Use two or three words to describe the Subject.
8. Select cc to any others who may be involved, then send.

**Hints**

- An email already includes the sending date and your contact details. The subject alerts the receiver to the topic.
- For less formal emails, you can begin with “Dear Fred”, or even “Hi Fred” for a colleague.
- Do not tag the email as ‘urgent’, unless you know the receiver would agree that it is urgent.
- Be aware that any email can be traced to the sender, so take care in what you send.
Sample Formal Email

To: rodney.giles@crm.inc.au
CC: 
BCC: 
Subject: 2nd Customer Relation Management Program Meeting
Attachment: CRM_minutes.doc

Dear Rodney,

This is to inform you that the next meeting for the Pilot Implementation of the CRM Program will be on 11 February. As discussed in the meeting last week, the objective of our review sessions will be:

Review and assess the overall effectiveness of the program;
Identify and document the strengths and weaknesses of the program; and
Propose customer-focused solutions to address areas of weakness

As agreed, meetings will be held every second Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. until noon, and the location will alternate between our two offices, the first to be convened at Inter-Office on 11 February 2014. Fred Johnson of your CRM group is to act as the meeting coordinator and recording secretary throughout the process.

Please find attached the minutes of the last meeting. If you have anything to add or have any questions, please call me at 8261 2067.

Thank you and regards,

Marilyn

Marilyn French
Senior Consultant
Inter-Office Solutions
24 Pirie Street,
Adelaide, SA 5005
Australia
Phone: 8261 2067
e-mail: marilyn.french@inter-officesolutions.au


Useful References

James, N 2007, Writing at work: how to write clearly, effectively and professionally, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW.
## 1.13 Memos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop the message logically</td>
<td>Subject title clearly indicates the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Opening paragraph gives main ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One idea per paragraph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use memo conventions</td>
<td>To, From, Date, Subject at the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The business’s format is used if there is one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The memo can be made public so should contain nothing personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write clearly and concisely</td>
<td>The point of the memo is obvious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All necessary details are included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Only information relevant to the topic is included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct and precise language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Definition

A memo (short for memorandum) is a formal written text sent as a record within an organisation.

### Purpose

A memo is to record work-related information, a concern or a query.

### Audience

Your audience will be a colleague or colleagues at any level within an organisation.

### Language and Style

Your writing should be formal, clear and to the point. Use first person. Avoid errors, as correct communication always impresses and errors disrupt the message. Memos are now often sent by email. If by email, the identifying details will be contained in the headings.

### Structure

- ‘Memo’ or ‘Memorandum’ at the top indicates that this communication is official.
- The memo is headed with the following information: Subject, To, From, Date.
- The content provides all relevant details. Make the focus clear in the first paragraph, then use a paragraph for each of the other main points.
- Sign off with your name.

### Steps

1. Type in the identifying details.
2. Address the recipient(s) by name. If it is to a committee or a division, include its name first, e.g., Marketing Section: Jane, Mike, Stu, Stephanie.
3. State the main point of the memo in the first paragraph.
4. Elaborate, if necessary, one main point to a paragraph.
5. Sign off with the name by which your colleagues know you. Include an initial if you might otherwise be confused with someone else.
Hints
>
> Use as a guide the format and style of memos sent within your organisation.
> Organisations often have paper or templates set up for memos or a format for their employees to use.
> You will need a way to file for later reference the memos you send and those sent to you.

Useful References
Part 2: Component Skills

All call outs in boxes refer to a section in the guide where the task is explained in detail.
2.1 Differences in Learning Styles

Attitudes to knowledge and learning depend on context. This context can vary in a number of ways ranging from different levels within an education system to different cultures.

In some contexts students are expected to conserve knowledge by reproducing information and ideas. Memorisation and imitation are suitable learning strategies in such ‘correctness’ oriented contexts.

In other contexts, while some degree of memorisation or basic comprehension may still be required, there is also the aim to critically analyse and reshape information into an argument that represents a student’s evaluation of knowledge.

When a student with experience in one academic context begins to study in another academic context, a different style of learning is required.

In other words, if you are more familiar with aiming to simply comprehend and remember what you learn, you will have to make adjustments to match academic expectations.

International students often face major changes in academic expectations. The table below summarises some of these changes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From: Dependent</th>
<th>To: Independent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Viewing a teacher as an instructor of content</td>
<td>Seeing a teacher as a facilitator to your interaction with content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not speaking up out of respect</td>
<td>Taking the initiative in discussion and asking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting information to be true</td>
<td>Critically analysing information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful References


It takes time to change from one learning style to another. The following sections (2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) may help you to make the necessary adjustments.
2.2 Academic Expectations

Text books and reading
Find out in the first week how the lecturer expects the text book(s) to be used and how the texts relate to the lectures, tutorials and assignments. Before reading, refer to the course outline and the learning objectives for the topic. Use these as your reading purpose. Use the text book headings to predict what a section might be about, and check your prediction against what you read. This approach keeps you active in your reading. When reading journal articles, use the abstract to get a summary of the entire article.

The terms used in business often have a different meaning to everyday English usage, e.g., event, equity and balance or market, selling and advertising. Be aware of terms that have a technical meaning and refer to definitions in text book glossaries.

Lectures and Note Taking
Check availability of PowerPoint slides on MyUni as a supplement to your own note-taking.

Aim to actively process what you hear and use headings and numbered or dot points to note main points and key supporting information. Review, rework and reduce your notes regularly as you learn more about each course topic. Such on-going revision enhances your learning and exam preparation.

The tutors have been carefully selected and trained to help you develop your knowledge and analytical skills. Your tutor is the person to approach with any content questions.

Class Discussion
The purpose of class discussion is to develop knowledge and analytical skills and to raise any questions. The objective is also to learn from the knowledge and experience of classmates and not only that of the lecturer.

There is rarely one “right answer” to any question and lecturers will expect you to give your viewpoint and to question what you read and hear. They do not want you to simply reproduce what you have heard or read. Many students, particularly international students, find this new and difficult at first. You will need courage to speak up with a different point of view at first, but the more you do it, the easier it will become.

MyUni
MyUni is the University of Adelaide’s online learning environment. Every enrolled course of study has an online presence in the form of a MyUni course. Most commonly used are the Announcement and Send Email features. Many lecturers also upload course information and assessment requirements, as well as lecture notes. Some lecturers also use the quiz, discussion board and group features. In most cases MyUni does not replace face-to-face lectures, tutorials and workshops, but is used to enhance your learning by allowing you to access information and course materials online at a time and place that suits you.

Assignments and plagiarism
To achieve a high grade you must focus on what is important in assignments; work out exactly what a question means, and be careful to answer the core question, without including extra information. Many assignments include the marking criteria which set out clearly what your marker will be looking for. Refer to these criteria often as you prepare your assignment.

It is essential that you acknowledge the sources of the ideas you use in assignments and that you do not copy from texts without citing the source. Section 2.13 of this Guide shows how seriously plagiarism is regarded in Australian universities and what it means to acknowledge sources, both within your writing and in your list of references. The same section also explains how to use your own words to avoid copying a source.
2.3 Independent Learning

As a student at The University of Adelaide, you are expected to develop independent learning skills. While lecturers and tutors are available to help you, their time is limited and they will not be able to give you all the help you might want. Here are some strategies for becoming self-reliant:

- Form small study groups to check your note-taking in lectures and to ensure you pick up the most important points.
- Use topic notes in the course material and the key points in lectures and tutorials as a guide to what you need to learn and to follow up in your textbooks and assigned readings.
- Work through any problems with your group first before you make a time to see your tutor.
- When you are having problems understanding content, be specific; tell your tutor what you do understand, as well as what you don’t.
- If you are having problems understanding concepts in first year Business and Economics courses, visit the First Year Learning Centre and talk to a Study Coach.
- Find out more about Peer Networking and Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) from www.adelaide.edu.au/professions/hub/profconnect
- Use other sections of this Communication Skills Guide. It is written especially to help Business students develop their academic skills.
- Attend transition workshops on academic skills offered by the Professions Learning Centre; some workshops may also be offered within your courses.

Useful References

2.4 Group Skills

Group work in your study program assists in the development of the skills that employers are looking for. In your work life, you will be expected to: be flexible, be able to compromise, have the ability to negotiate and have organisational skills. Thus, group work in your study program not only enables the development of all these abilities, but also specialised skills that relate to form a meaningful whole.

Working Effectively in a Group

> Get to know everyone in the group.
> Ensure that all group members feel comfortable with each other.
> Make sure that everybody knows everyone’s name and contact details.
> Leave no one out of the discussion (involve people who are naturally quiet, include people who do not have English as their first language, consider everyone’s needs and expectations).

Contributing as a Group Member

> Listen carefully to others.
> Show that you are listening by using body language.
> Find ways of encouraging other group members to speak (especially the quiet ones).
> Take responsibility (don’t leave everything to one person).
> Relate your ideas to the ideas of others.
> If you disagree, don’t just reject other people’s ideas (suggest alternatives).
> Be ready to compromise.

Group Assignments – Making the Most of your Group

Groups may operate more effectively with the allocation of roles (chairperson, time keeper, task manager, etc.). Roles can be rotated for each meeting.

Getting organised

At your first meeting:
> Decide who will take notes.
> Decide who will organise meetings.
> Decide who will keep the meetings to a time limit.
> Decide when and where you will meet.
> Decide what to do if someone doesn’t turn up or pull their weight.
> Exchange phone numbers and email addresses.
> Decide who will be responsible for contacting all members.
> Decide who will keep and email notes of decisions made at each meeting.

Getting to work

> Analyse the task so that everyone agrees on what they have to do.
> Work must be allocated fairly so that everyone has the same amount of responsibility.
> During allocation, consider people’s ability and previous experience.
> Work out a timeline that shows each task (the date by which it must be completed and the person or people who are responsible for doing it).
> Although each person is responsible for a section of the task, all group members must meet regularly and discuss the work as a whole.
The group must produce an assignment that is cohesive and coherent. Often group assignments result in papers that are disjointed as sections written by different people are put together without ensuring that the discussion flows logically. To avoid this, all group members must read the assignment as a whole and identify content that is not relevant, is repetitious, or affects the logic of the argument.

Ensure that the task is completed with plenty of time for revisions and editing. The assignment needs to read well as a whole.

Proofread and check all parts of the assignment the week before it's due.

Note
If you’re unsure about the task, topic, or assessment, or if the group isn’t working, don’t just hope for the best. Go as a group to your tutor or lecturer immediately.

Useful References
Brick, J 2009, Academic culture: a student’s guide to studying at university, Macmillan Education Australia, South Yarra, Australia.
2.5 Project Management

Project management is a skill that no student can go without. Most university students need to balance personal commitments and possibly part-time work with multiple assessments and study. On entering the workplace, graduates from all disciplines find that they need to manage many projects at the same time and often with limited resources. Thus, project management has become a standard work skill.

Project management skills allow a person to cope with many and various tasks by focusing on the planning, implementation, control and coordination of the project from beginning to end, while also meeting time, quality and budget constraints.

Defining a Project

A project is defined as a specific, finite task to be accomplished (Meredith and Mantel 1995). A project can be identified by a number of attributes:

- **Purpose**: a project is usually developed to achieve a clear goal or objective (e.g. written assignment, consultancy report or marketing plan).
- **Life cycle**: a project has a beginning, middle and end.
- **Interdependencies**: projects nearly always interact and affect other projects.
- **Unique**: a project always incorporates one or more elements that make it unique.
- **Conflict**: as projects compete for resources (time, money, skill, equipment) there is invariably conflict.

Project Stages

Each project has a life cycle with a beginning, middle and an end over a finite time span. Each stage will consume different levels of various resources. A project life cycle generally follows four main phases (see Figure 1). When multiple projects are operating at one time, it becomes clear each needs to be planned, monitored and documented carefully. Obviously, multiple projects place added pressure on timelines, resources and the quality of outcomes. There is a variety of tools and methods that can be used to plan and monitor complex projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Planning</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Finalisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the need for the project</td>
<td>4. Define in detail the outcomes, standards and resources requirements</td>
<td>7. Execute work packages</td>
<td>10. Ensure completion of all deliverables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Establish the goals and objective</td>
<td>5. Estimate time and cost, sequence activities</td>
<td>8. Establish control mechanisms</td>
<td>11. Document project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify the risks associated with the project</td>
<td>6. ‘Chunk’ work into manageable work packages</td>
<td>9. Monitor progress</td>
<td>12. Review and evaluate progress and outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Phases of a Project Lifecycle

Gantt Chart

This planning tool is simple in its construction and very easy to read (see Figure 2). Haynes (1997, p. 31) describes a simple way to create a Gantt chart:

- List the actions required to complete the project.
- Estimate the amount of time you will need to complete each of the actions.
- List the actions down the left (Y) axis of the chart and the time intervals, perhaps in days, along the bottom (X) axis of the chart.
- Draw a horizontal line across the chart for each of the listed actions, starting at the beginning date and finishing at the completion date.

At any time place a vertical (date) line through the chart and observe the current progress of tasks (i.e. completed, in-progress, yet to begin). Using this method one can quickly see the minimum amount of time necessary to complete a total project, the sequence of actions to undertake, and the steps to be carried out simultaneously.
Other simple planning tools that can assist you in your project planning and management include:

- A diary and notebook to record your thoughts, log actions such as phone calls and document your progress.
- Special purpose filing structures such as bibliography files.
- Progress reports or whole project reports.
- Use of an “Action Planning Worksheet”, as illustrated below.

![Gantt Chart](image)

**Figure 2: Gantt Chart**

Personal Time Management

Good project management also relies upon personal time management. Time is possibly an individual’s most unique and valuable resource. Being aware of personal time-management issues is a sure way of staying on top!

Here are some hints:

- Understand your energy cycle. Know when you work at your best and, if possible, allocate important actions during this time.
- Set priorities. Attribute one of the following values to each of your daily tasks and actions, (a) must do, (b) should do, and (c) would like to do.
- Understand how you set priorities. Generally, personal value judgements based on timing (i.e. deadlines) and relativity (i.e. compare one task against another) are the best way to set priorities.
- Apply time management techniques such as:
  - Using an action worksheet, Gantt Chart, Weekly worksheet, Daily plan
  - Keeping a diary of events/tasks
- Be aware of ‘time-wasters’ such as:
  - Disorganisation
  - Procrastination
  - The inability to say no or refuse a task
  - Visitors
  - Telephone calls
  - Meetings
  - Junk mail/email.

Useful References


Project management software, e.g. Microsoft Office Project 2010 ©.
2.6 Aiming High for Assignments

The first list includes the minimal requirements that all students must meet to pass assignments. The second list of characteristics is a guide for students aiming for higher grades. Be sure that you have read your course assignment descriptions thoroughly, because some of these may be considered requirements for a pass.

Passing assignments requires, at least:
1. Satisfactorily answering the set question.
2. Adequately structuring the answer.
3. Including sufficient relevant references.
4. Using your own words with appropriate referencing as required.
5. Evidence of interpretation and analysis.

High grades for assignments require that:
1. All information is relevant to the set question.
2. Claims are consistent with the argument and justified with references and logic.
3. Presentation is as required: type size, line space, margins, headings, referencing, cover page.
4. The argument is clear and developed logically to unify the assignment.
5. The assignment shows depth of critical and analytical thinking.
6. The literature has been interrogated, not just accepted.
7. All references are complete, accurate, and consistent.
8. Topic choice (where applicable) is adventurous but appropriate.
9. A number of credible sources has been consulted.
10. The executive summary summarises the findings and recommendations.
11. There is no repetition in the paper.
12. Alternative arguments are considered.
13. The conclusion does more than repeat the introduction – it synthesises the argument.

Useful References
2.7 Academic Argument

Assignments and Arguments

In secondary and tertiary education there are many types of assignments that require an argument. An argument, here, means the logical presentation of a position, or point of view; in other words, highlight your voice in the academic debate about a topic. The position must be informed by evidence from the literature, from research, from examples and concepts, and be presented with careful reasoning. Opinions without sound evidence and clear justification have little value.

A clearly supported argument is required in an academic essay, a short answer essay, a professional report, and a case analysis. Each of these types of academic assignments require you to gather and analyse information and data to form a point of view about that information, then present that position along with a logical line of reasoning to support it. For reports and case analyses, recommendations are the key outcome of this process.

The amount and type of evidence required for the different types of assignments varies. For example, the argument in short essay answers is based on general concepts and examples; professional reports require arguments based partly on data and information the writer has gathered in the workplace, while the argument in a case analysis is based on accepted concepts, theory and insights related to the particular case.

Components of an Argument

Well-structured writing is writing that a reader can follow easily. It will provide a context for the reader and include headings and signal words and phrases, like “However,” “As a result” and “A further example of this...”, to alert the reader to the way the argument fits together.

Despite their differences in length and types of evidence, all arguments have the same basic structure:

> An orientation that gives the reader the context of the argument.
> An outline of the position taken, to prepare the reader for what follows.
> Discussion that sets out the arguments for the position, one by one.
> A conclusion that brings closure to the whole.

The length of the assignment will affect how much is written for each component. A short answer essay can orient the reader and state the position taken in a single sentence, while a case analysis may use several paragraphs to summarise the context and several pages to set out the main issues. Closure can be achieved in a short answer with one sentence, and in a case analysis or a management report with a listing of the recommendations.

In some assignment answers, the different components of an argument may be combined, particularly in a short answer, where the context and conclusion are obvious or assumed by the reader. In lengthy assignments, the reader (for students this will be the marker) needs the expected components in the expected order, and signal words and phrases to more easily follow the argument.

Criteria for Assessing an Argument

The strength of an argument rests on the logic of the discussion and the quality of the evidence provided in the discussion. It is not enough for the writer to present one side of a case and then the other. The writer must take a position and argue for it. If length permits, as in a professional report or an essay, opposing positions should be discussed, along with reasons why the chosen position is preferred.

The quality of the evidence will be judged by its relevance, the authority of its source, how complete it is and how convincingly it is used. When selecting evidence, a writer must maintain an analytical and critical approach to what is read, to how it is read and to how different evidence fits together. This approach is discussed in the next section (2.8).

An academic essay must have the sources of its evidence thoroughly documented, both within the text and at the end with a reference list. The Harvard reference system is usually preferred. Care must be taken to use the system consistently and to ensure that all references listed are actually cited in the text.
The following table can be used to check that an argument is well written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argue logically</td>
<td>Connections are clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The argument is well structured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alternatives are covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide evidence</td>
<td>Evidence and examples are relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence has authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence is convincing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference sources</td>
<td>All sources are acknowledged within the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reference list is complete and consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All sources cited are in the reference list and all items in the reference list are cited</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful References

2.8 Analytical and Critical Thinking

A Questioning Approach

The sign of a good student is the questioning approach taken to the area under investigation. The approach must be both analytical and critical - ‘analytical’ in pulling apart the elements of the ideas and examining how they operate on each other, and ‘critical’ in always looking for what is not obvious or for different points of view.

An analytical investigator, whether a student or a professional, is always asking questions of the ideas being considered:

- Are there other concepts and principles that I should consider?
- Are the terms being used appropriately and consistently?
- Are the examples given consistent with the points being made?
- Is there another way I can think about the data and the issues presented?
- Is the conclusion drawn the only one possible from the data presented?
- How do these ideas relate to the ideas I have already encountered in lectures, texts and articles?

To be analytical you need to examine the relationships between what is in a text or a situation. To be critical you need to identify what your source takes for granted or leaves out. Ask yourself:

- Who is writing this? Is this source reliable? (accurate and balanced)
- When was this written? Is the information up to date?
- What areas does this source cover? What does it leave out or dismiss?
- Why is this being written? For whom? How is this information biased?

Developing a Questioning Approach

This approach is fostered in some learning environments, but is discouraged in others. Where students have been expected to accept everything they read in their texts and hear from their teachers, the skill of questioning has not been developed. In fact, students who have studied in such environments have been rewarded in exams and assignments by remembering and reproducing exactly what the texts and teachers have stated. They are likely to feel that they will receive poor grades if they present alternative views; they may feel they have no right to question the sources and information provided and to explore other ways of viewing a situation, or they may feel insecure about not having the ‘right’ answer. It is important for students to realise that at university, as in the workplace, success will only be achieved if this questioning approach is developed.

It takes practice to develop a questioning approach to study. At first, you will need time to practise posing the two sets of questions listed above. The time taken to use the questions can lead you to being more selective in what you read and more incisive in developing your arguments.

The analytical questions involve the listener or reader in relating what has just been read or heard with what has already been understood. How does the information or view presented relate to what you already know? The critical questions should be considered before reading a particular source and when choosing to use a source for evidence. Knowing that a source has limitations does not mean that you have to leave it out. It may be the best source available or widely used, in which case, you will include it but state its limitations. It is worth developing the habit of thinking about how what you have just read or heard relates to what you already know. This approach will help you to remember what you have just encountered, and also help you to organise and integrate it into your existing knowledge.

It may be helpful to jot down in the margin of lecture or reading notes a question mark or the actual questions you have when you notice inconsistencies or weaknesses in arguments. It is often these questions that your lecturer is seeking in class discussions.
Checking your Approach

All good assignments are clear and logical in their arguments. Each section will move easily to the next, and the reader will be in no doubt about what the writer’s point of view is. There will be a balance of long and short sentences. The ideas will be in the writer’s own words; evidence will be given to support the writer’s claims and the sources of this evidence acknowledged.

If the writer has been analytical and critical in his or her approach, the assignment, unless it is a short essay answer, will contain original ideas and will give some consideration to alternatives to the writer’s own views. A student who has been questioning what has been read and understood will see new connections between concepts and data, will identify weaknesses in others’ arguments and the evidence provided, and will recognise fresh possibilities in familiar situations. These original ideas will be firmly based in the accepted concepts, models and ways of operating in the commercial world. You can check your questioning approach using the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being analytical</td>
<td>Have I identified considerations that have been left out?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I seen how other writers use words differently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I found some weaknesses in arguments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I recognised inappropriate examples or illustrations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I seen new connections between ideas and sources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning critically</td>
<td>Have I recognised the writer’s particular interests and purposes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I considered how the place and date of the ideas influence what has been said?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I seen whose points of view were not considered? (e.g. of producers, women, the environment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Useful References

What is Academic Style?

The overriding characteristic of a good writing style is that it is easy for the reader to understand. What is easy for one reader to understand, however, may not be easy for another. The writer therefore needs to know who the audience is and be aware of their background and expectations. The vocabulary and language structures that are easy for your marker or a manager to understand will be those with which they are familiar – those of your text books, the literature, and the commercial workplace. As you become more familiar with this vocabulary and ways of structuring texts, you will find it easier to use these terms and forms. While you are learning, it is helpful to refer to the literature in the area for examples and models.

Apart from the particular structures and vocabulary of your particular field, there are several characteristics of good style that are common to all formal writing, in whatever field.

> The writing is clear
> The argument is easy to follow
> The language is impersonal
> There are few errors

Several techniques to achieve each of these are described below.

Clear Expression

Contrary to what many students believe, good writing is not complicated. The writer’s aim should be to express, rather than impress. That means short sentences rather than long convoluted ones, and familiar words rather than obscure words used simply to impress. The best writers are those who get their message across directly and concisely.

Another aspect of direct, concise writing is the writer’s use of their own words so that the writing flows effortlessly and feels authentic. Only use a quotation instead of your own words if the quote states an idea in a way that captures the meaning in a special or precise way. Always acknowledge a quote or use of another’s idea with quotation marks and by citing the source.

Punctuation is the third element of writing. The purpose of punctuation is to make the meaning clear: a full stop ends a complete idea; a comma divides up a list or separates out a part of a sentence; a colon (:) signals that elaboration will follow; a semicolon (;) divides two ideas that the writer wants connected. Too much punctuation halts the flow of the ideas and confuses the reader.

Finally, paragraphs and headings assist the reader by dividing up chunks of meaning, signaling that the writer is moving on to a new idea. Too many headings or very short paragraphs interfere with the reader’s efforts to tie ideas together; too few can cause an overload. A long paragraph needs to develop a single main idea to be easily understood. Signal words and phrases (words that signal relationships, such as “However” and “As a result”), and using synonyms and summary phrases help to build cohesion within and across paragraphs.

Clarity of Argument

The centrality of argument in academic writing and its characteristics are spelt out in Section 2.7. The clarity of the argument is based primarily on clear thinking, which can be assisted by representing the argument diagrammatically. Representing the main proposition in the centre or top of a diagram, then labelling subsidiary boxes with titles for each supporting argument can help to conceptualise how your ideas fit together and how they might be organised as paragraphs. Then under each box title, list the points to be made for that idea. Counter arguments can be noted in smaller subsidiary boxes. This diagram can be a valuable reference point in organising the whole assignment and in staying on track during writing.

At all times, the writer must consider the reader. Clear, direct first and last paragraphs help the reader by, first setting up a clear expectation as to what is to follow, and at the end consolidating all that has gone before. Language markers that signal how the different ideas and illustrations link together are also valuable guides to the argument for the reader.
Impersonal Language

Impersonal, formal language is used to imply impartiality in the analysis and presentation of an argument or content. It involves avoiding 'I', 'we', 'this author' and 'this writer'. Instead, wording such as the following can be used.

An analysis of the existing costing system of the company shows that …

The following discussion presents …

This paper explores the relationship between …

Without Errors

The first impressions that a report or an assignment conveys to a management group, a client or a course marker will influence their approach to the argument and the ideas contained in it. Errors encountered in the first few pages give the impression of carelessness. While it is very difficult to produce a piece of writing that is completely error free, students should put in place practices that reduce the errors in their work. Habits developed as students not only earn marks at university, but continue to impress in the workplace.

The most important habit that a student can foster is to proofread final drafts at least twice: the first time to ensure that the argument flows smoothly from sentence to sentence and between paragraphs; and the second, to check spelling. Reading for fluency of argument can lead to the reordering, deleting and rewriting of sections and the insertion of signal words and phrases. Most writers find they need to proofread a hard copy rather than on screen, as thorough proofreading requires word by word reading to ensure that the correct word (e.g. ‘there’ instead of ‘their’, ‘product’ instead of ‘produce’) has been used. Spell checkers do not identify these as errors.

Proofreading should always be done with a dictionary and a thesaurus on the desk. If any sentence sounds ungrammatical, try rewriting the sentence in another way or as two sentences. It is helpful to ask a friend to read awkward sentences. If you often have trouble with English grammar, keep a list of your sentences that are incorrect and on the adjoining page, the same ideas expressed correctly so you can refer to them later as models. You may need help from the Writing Centre to identify the type of errors you make and how to correct them.

Useful References

2.10 Vocabulary and Grammar

Correct grammar and spelling in writing make a good impression. Poor grammar and spelling can not only interfere with the message, but also suggest gaps in the writer’s background and a careless attitude to detail.

There are many paths to producing correct writing:

> **Self improvement - spelling:** Be professional! Know the correct spelling of the names and vocabulary related to your courses.

> **Self improvement - grammar:** Deal with your grammar problems one at a time.

> **Careful proofreading:** One of the most effective ways to do this is to place a ruler under each line as you read for meaning and correct spelling.

> **Spell checkers** are useful but not foolproof.

> **Grammar checkers** invite you to check a sentence for meaning.

> **Feedback:** take note of the comments on your assignments and prioritise language areas for improvement.

**Useful References**


2.11 Instructional Words

The following terms frequently appear in assignment and exam questions:

Account for: Give reasons for
Give an account of: Describe
Take into account: Consider; think about
Analyse: Divide into parts and discuss each part and how they relate
Argue: Systematically support or reject a position by presenting reasons and give evidence for acceptance or rejection
Assess: Decide how important something is and give your reasons
Assume: First accept that something is true
Classify: Arrange into groups or classes
Comment on: Explain why something is important
Compare: Describe the ways two things are alike
Concept: An important idea
Concise: Short, brief
In the context of: Referring to; inside the subject of
Contrast: Describe the ways two things are different
Criteria: The standards, the questions you would expect to be answered
Critique: Discuss, pointing out faults and advantages
Deduction: The conclusion or generalisation you come to after looking carefully at all the facts
Define: Provide clear, concise, authoritative meanings
Describe: Relate; tell; give an account of
Determine: Find out; ascertain; establish; identify
Discuss: Give both sides of an argument and then your own opinion (A word of warning: ‘Discuss’ is often used loosely by lecturers when they actually mean ‘Describe’, so ask your lecturer which is intended.)
Distinguish between: Describe the difference between two things
Elaborate: Yes or No is not enough; answer fully with reasons and examples
Evaluate: Decide and explain the significance or importance of something
Examine: Look at closely and carefully; thoroughly inspect
To what extent is x true? Explain in what ways x is true and in what ways x is not true
Factors: The circumstances bringing about a result
Function: What something does; its purpose or activities
Identify: Point out and describe
Indicate: Show; explain
Illustrate: Give examples or diagrams that prove your answer is correct
Implications: Results which are not obvious; long term, suggested results
Limitations: The shortcomings, what is not useful or relevant in something
Integrate: Incorporate into; draw upon
Interpret: Develop your own explanation of what something means or represents
List: Provide an itemised series of points (often expressed in point form)
Outline: Give an organised description in which you state the main points but omit detail
Prove: Confirm or verify by stating and evaluating evidence, or by logical reasoning
With/by reference to: Base discussion on required input or focus
Reflect on: Same as consider; discuss
Relate: To make or show a connection between things
Review: Re-examine, analyse and comment briefly on the major points
Role: The part something plays, how it works, especially in conjunction with other things
State: Formally set out a position
Summarise: Give the main points of detailed information
Support: Provide information and evidence to strengthen an argument
Synthesise: Draw together ideas from different sources into a cohesive whole
Validate: Give the evidence and facts to prove a statement or point of view

Useful References

2.12 Presentation

All lecturers and markers look for writing that is easy to understand. They therefore want writing that has all the characteristics of academic style as described in 2.9: writing that is clear, impersonal and without errors.

For all major assignments, both formative and summative, the preferred layout is in 12 point Times Roman, with 1.5 line spacing, 5 centimetres left-hand margins and headings. Where an Executive Summary is required, it is to be single-spaced and no more than one A4 page in length.

All assignments must be submitted with a completed and signed cover sheet, which can be downloaded from: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/professions/hub

Referencing Style

There are several different author-date referencing styles. The preferred style is the Harvard referencing style. Check to ensure you know which style your lecturer requires.

When using a referencing style the main concern is to be consistent. When using the Harvard system you will sometimes need to include further depth or explanation to your main text. This extra information should be included as an appendix and appropriately referred to within the main text.

The Harvard system always includes a reference list at the end of the document to provide full details of all sources cited within the text. If using EndNote through the University of Adelaide, ensure you select the ‘Harvard UoA’ option. It is the only acceptable form.

Footnotes

In the Harvard system of referencing, the use of footnotes is limited to further explanations or extensions, comments or sub-arguments that the writer wishes to include. If they were included in the text, they might disrupt the continuity or distract the reader. Footnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout the essay with superscript Arabic numerals, and placed at the bottom of each page or at the end of the text. Generally, the rule is to avoid footnotes and endnotes when using the Harvard system and to use appendices instead.
2.13 Plagiarism and Using your Own Words

Plagiarism is the use of another author’s words or ideas without acknowledgement. Avoiding plagiarism is important to good writing, and essential at University. This section explains the common misunderstandings and behaviours that can lead to plagiarism. However, the issue of plagiarism is also a matter of being a careful writer, so take special note of the last part of this section.

Plagiarism Defined

The University states that ‘Plagiarism is a serious act of academic misconduct’. The University’s Academic Honesty Policy provides more detail at www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/230/

Section 2.1a of the policy highlights two examples of plagiarism. The first is presenting work that is not your own without appropriate acknowledgement or reference to the original source.

This means that you have used someone else’s words, phrases and passages in a way which is very similar to their original form, and have presented them as your own without acknowledging this with an in-text reference. If you copy down phrases and passages straight out of your source material, you might think that it is easier than the more difficult task of writing your own words. After all, paraphrasing requires time and effort. Or you might think that the author has used language in a way that expresses the idea better than you could. However, lecturers want to know if you have understood the task and what you have read. You can only show this by using your own words and using references to support what you are saying.

The second form of plagiarism is directly copying phrases and passages without using quotation marks, an in-text reference and a page number.

If you take notes from your reading in the form of copying word for word phrases, sentences or paragraphs, and don’t properly record that these were in fact someone else’s words (with quotation marks and a reference), then you might forget their source when you write up your assignment and present them as your own ideas.

Related Forms of Cheating

These are explained in a straightforward manner in Section 2.1a and 2.1b of The Academic Honesty Policy. Firstly, you must not hand in any work that is written for you by another person. Secondly, you must not submit work that you have copied from another student. Thirdly, two students must not hand in the same piece of work for individual assessment.

Copying the work of another student can occur deliberately or through misunderstanding what is considered to be plagiarism. However, for whatever reason, copying the work of another student is considered cheating and both students can be penalised.

Students must not hand in the same piece of work that someone else is also handing in, for separate assessment. This does not include group work that is assessable as a group; this includes assignments that you might have worked on together. It is quite acceptable for you to work together discussing assignments; for example, interpretation of the question, problems, possible solutions and so on, but you must not prepare your spreadsheets or your written work together and hand it up as independent work. Make sure your writing is your own.

If you are in doubt about what is expected for an assignment, please ask your lecturer or tutor.

Assignments are routinely submitted to Turnitin, which is a plagiarism detection database connected to MyUni. The penalties for plagiarism can be severe. You can fail an assignment, which might cause you to fail the whole course. Further disciplinary action may be taken by the Board of Conduct under Academic Dishonesty procedures.

Avoiding Plagiarism

The following examples of how to use your own words when writing assignments are based on pages 18 and 19 of Carlopio, J & Andrewartha, G 2008, Developing management skills: A comprehensive guide for leaders, 4th edn, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW. Please note that an actual assignment would include analysis and comment by the student writer as well as draw on other sources.
Original passage
This book takes the view that a core feature of excellent management skills across all cultures is honest, transparent, ethical behavior. Ethical behavior involves the development of a principle-based knowledge of what is right and wrong and doing what is right.

Formulating and following a clear set of ethical values is considered a prerequisite for developing management skills. It is not sufficient to have a commitment to a set of ethical values. It is also necessary to have a level of self-awareness that can identify your own unconscious and subtle prejudices and biases in management practice.

What Not to Do!
This paragraph just strings together quotations and does not use the student’s own words sufficiently.

According to Carlopio and Andrewartha (2008, p. 18), ‘a core feature of excellent management skills across all cultures is honest, transparent, ethical behaviour’. This requires ‘formulating and following a clear set of ethical values’; in other words, knowing ‘what is right and wrong, and doing what is right’. However, ‘commitment to a set of ethical values’ is not enough without ‘a level of self awareness that can identify your own unconscious and subtle prejudices and biases in management practice’ (Carlopio & Andrewartha 2008, p. 19).

This next paragraph includes examples of plagiarism because it rearranges chunks of the original sentence structure and does not use quotation marks – see above for where they should be.

It is the view of Carlopio and Andrewartha (2008, p. 18) that honest, transparent, ethical behaviour is a core feature of excellent management skills across all cultures. A good manager needs to know what is right and wrong so that they can formulate a clear set of ethical guidelines. In order to follow these guidelines, they must have a level of self awareness that helps them to know any unconscious and subtle prejudices and biases that they may have (Carlopio & Andrewartha 2008, p. 19).

Good Examples
This next paragraph uses a good combination of quoting and putting things in the student’s words.

Carlopio and Andrewartha (2008, p. 18) believe that ‘honest, transparent, ethical behaviour’ is not only essential for quality management but that it is also universal across cultures. They maintain that through understanding ‘what is right and wrong, and doing what is right’ one can develop a set of ethical values to underpin one’s management practice (2008, p. 19). They believe that this alone, however, is not enough and that one must also be self-aware in order to prevent any bias or prejudice from creeping into the way one manages.

The following paragraph makes good use of the student’s own words.

Carlopio and Andrewartha (2008, p. 18) believe that in implementing a set of ethical management guidelines, one must not only commit to doing the right thing but also bridge the gap that may exist between knowledge and behaviour. They point out that self-awareness is the key to preventing possible bias or prejudice from influencing one’s management practice. Indeed, ‘honest, transparent, ethical behaviour’ is a cornerstone of quality management that is shared by all cultures (Carlopio & Andrewartha 2008, p. 19).

As you can see in these two examples, Carlopio and Andrewartha are acknowledged right at the beginning as the source of these ideas and the reader is left in no doubt that the ideas continue to be theirs with phrases like, ‘They maintain...’, ‘They believe...’, and ‘They point out...’.

Using Your Own Words
A good strategy for learning to put information from another text into your own words is to write without the other text in front of you. To do this, you will need to have taken relevant notes in your own words, with the appropriate references. You can then write your assignment using your notes rather than the original text.

At all times you need to decide what is relevant to your assignment topic and be aware of where the ideas are coming from. Mapping out your ideas and showing how they relate by drawing a diagram before you begin to write can keep your ideas separate from those of the writers who are contributing to your argument.

In taking notes from other sources, it is essential that you keep the details of your sources. When you copy directly from your source, make that clear in your notes, along with the page number of the quote. If you are noting rather than quoting fully from a source, you will already be on the path of putting the ideas in your own words when you turn these brief notes back into sentences.
Using the Ideas and Words of Others

There are three ways of using the ideas, research findings and words of others in your writing. They are:

> Quoting
> Paraphrasing
> Summarising

Whether you are quoting, paraphrasing or summarising, you must always cite your references.

Useful References


2.14 Referencing: The Harvard System

Whenever you use the ideas and arguments of other writers, you are obliged to make reference to the writers and their work. You need to make clear which words and ideas you have “borrowed” from others, and which are your own. By acknowledging the work of others, you avoid plagiarism.

The other main purpose of using references is to show the reader where the evidence comes from, to give your argument credibility or so that an interested reader may verify that information and consult the source independently. It is therefore important to give all the necessary information, and present it in a clear and concise way.

The Harvard system

This method is widely used in the Social Sciences and is the style used in the Business School for writing essays, reports and short answers. One of the advantages of this system is that the reader can immediately see the source and date in the text.

In-text References

In the Harvard system all references, regardless of the type of source material used, appear in brackets in the text each time you use ideas that are not your own. Only the author’s surname(s), the year of publication and page number(s) (if necessary) are stated:

Example 1
Position power is eroding in many organisations; therefore, leaders must derive their influence from values (Huey 1994). A reference must be included every time you quote (use exact words), paraphrase (use your own words) or summarise (refer to main points) someone else’s theory, point of view or data. If you are in doubt as to what should be referenced and what can be considered common knowledge, be cautious and reference.

Direct Quotations

Direct quotations of less than 40 words use quotation marks and are written as part of your sentence or paragraph.

Example 2a
Carlopio and Andrewartha (2008, p. 18) believe that ethical management is ‘the core foundation of the development of management skills.’

Quotations longer than 40 words should be introduced with your own words and then indented and written in single spacing.

Example 2b
Carlopio and Andrewartha (2008, pp. 18-19) believe that, A core feature of excellent management skills across all cultures is honest, transparent, ethical behaviour. Ethical behaviour involves the development of a principle-based knowledge of what is right and wrong and doing what is right. Formulating and following a clear set of ethical values is considered a prerequisite for developing management skills.

Use of ‘and’ or ‘&’

Use ‘and’ when author names are part of the sentence (as in examples 2a and 2b). Use ‘&’ when names are in brackets (as in example 3) or in the reference list.
Page Numbers

It is necessary to include page numbers when you are quoting or paraphrasing a particular passage, list or figure from your source. You must include the page number if you are summarising ideas found on a particular page.

Example 3

Besides failing to give recognition to others, analysers typically ‘find it hard to accept positive recognition’ themselves (Carlopio & Andrewartha 2008, p. 86).

When you are summarising main ideas, general views or general areas of research that do not come from one page only, the page number is not included in the citation.

Example 4

Goleman (2001) and Gosling and Mintzberg (2003) emphasise the importance of self-awareness as the starting point for effective change.

Author’s Name as Part of the Sentence

Sometimes who you are citing is as important as what you are citing. If an author’s name is mentioned as part of your sentence, you do not need to repeat it in the in-text citation. Only the date (plus the page number, if relevant) appears in brackets, as Example 4 also illustrates.

More often, however, a student will need to focus on what authors have said. This allows the student to integrate the ideas of others as evidence to support their own argument and line of reasoning and to retain their own voice. The author name is included in brackets in the citation made immediately after the idea.

Citing Several References at the Same Point in the Text

When citing several sources at the same point in the text, use alphabetical order, separate the authors’ surnames with semicolons and put the complete set of references in brackets.

Example 5

Leaders must clarify and understand their own belief systems in order to transmit good organisational values to others (Anderson 1997; Bennis 1989; Kouze & Posner 1999).

Two or More Publications in the Same Year by the Same Author

If your sources include more than one publication in the same year by the same author(s), then a lower case letter (a, b, c) should follow the date to make a distinction between the publications. The order of letters used follows the alphabetical order of the titles of the publications.

Example 6


Secondary References

When you read a source by one author (Author 1) who refers to an idea by a second author (Author 2) and you want to use Author 2’s idea, you are making a secondary reference. You must mention both authors in your in-text citation but will only list Author 1 in your reference list because it is the primary source you consulted.

Example 7

This is consistent with the external value dimension that characterises most Asian cultures (Trompenaars 1999 cited in Carlopio & Andrewartha 2008).

(In this example, Carlopio and Andrewartha are Authors 1 and Trompenaars is Author 2. Carlopio and Andrewartha will appear in the reference list but Trompenaars will not).

No date/ No Place of Publication

Use ‘c.’ if you can determine an approximate date, ‘?’ after a possible date, and ‘n.d.’ when no date can be determined.

Use ‘n.p.’ where a place of publication is not provided.
## Reference List

The Harvard system requires a reference list at the end of your assignment. It is arranged in alphabetical order by author surname. For every different source cited in the assignment there must be a corresponding detailed entry in the reference list at the end of the assignment.

If using EndNote through the University of Adelaide, ensure you select the ‘Harvard UoA’ option. It is the only acceptable form.

The basic elements of a reference list entry include name, date, title, publisher and place of publication. Slight variations apply depending on the type of source used.

The following index provides examples of different types of sources.

### Basic format for books:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Books example</th>
<th>In-text reference</th>
<th>Reference list entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book with single author</td>
<td>Porter (1980) argues that...</td>
<td>Porter, M 1980, <em>Competitive strategy</em>, Free Press, New York. Where more than one place of publication is given, use the first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book with two or three authors</td>
<td>According to Carpio and Andrewartha (2008), ...</td>
<td>Carpio, J &amp; Andrewartha, G 2008, <em>Developing management skills</em>, 4th edn, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book with four or more authors/editors</td>
<td>As research indicates, The management of human assets involves... (Beer et al. 1984, p. 52),...</td>
<td>Beer, M, Specter, B, Lawrence, PR, Quinn, MD &amp; Walton, RE 1984, <em>Managing human assets</em>, Free Press, New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book by an organisation/government department or institute</td>
<td>Environmental sustainability is also a key challenge (WCED 1987).</td>
<td>World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) 1987, <em>Our common future</em>, Oxford University Press, Oxford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encyclopaedia or dictionary without author</td>
<td>The Macquarie Dictionary (2004, p. 399) defines stress as a disturbing physiological or...</td>
<td>No entry is required in the reference list because the name and date have been provided in the in-text citation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Basic format for journal articles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal/magazine/newspaper articles example</th>
<th>In-text reference</th>
<th>Reference list entry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal article with a single author</td>
<td>It is clear there is a marked difference in the way males and females... (Fletcher 1999).</td>
<td>Fletcher, C 1999, ‘The implication of research on gender differences in self-assessment and 360 degree appraisals’, <em>Human Resource Management Journal</em>, vol. 9, no. 1, p. 39.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal article with two or three authors</td>
<td>Gosling and Mintzberg (2003, p. 54) warn that ‘the separation of management from leadership is dangerous’.</td>
<td>Gosling, J &amp; Mintzberg, H 2003, ‘The five minds of a manager’, <em>Harvard Business Review</em>, November, pp. 54-63.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Basic format for electronic publications:

**Author's surname, initial(s) year date, Title, date viewed, online location of source. (Page numbers included where available)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Electronic publications example</strong></th>
<th><strong>In-text reference</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reference list entry</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal article from full text database</td>
<td>Stevenson (2012, p. 71) argues that a paradigm shift is required as social forces and rapid technological advancement in communication combine to challenge long-held notions of social hierarchy.</td>
<td>Stevenson, BW 2012, ‘Developing an awareness and understanding of self-organization as it relates to organizational development and leadership issues’, Emergence: Complexity &amp; Organization, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 69-85, viewed 5 November 2012, (Electronic Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Emails/Interviews (personal communication) | Allegations of wrong-doing made by Johnson (2012, pers. Comm. 5 May) demonstrate how... | Allegations of wrong-doing made by Johnson (2012, pers. Comm. 5 May) demonstrate how... ...

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**For in-text citations:**

A finance lease is a lease that transfers to the lessee substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership (AASB 2009, AASB 117, para. 4).


It is intended that ‘[g]eneral purpose financial reports shall provide information [that is] useful to users for making and evaluating decisions about the allocation of scarce resources’ (AASB & PSASB 1990, SAC 2, para. 43).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country or region</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Increase over 2005 (%)</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Increase over 2005 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>1820</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong, China</td>
<td>1554</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>-11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>898</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan, China</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>871</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit: 100million USD

An example of referencing a diagram:
Figure 2: Gross Domestic Product and Its Growth, 2002-2006
Acknowledgments

The material for these sections on referencing was compiled with the assistance of Barr-Smith librarians, Qing Liang and Lucy Zuzolo, and from several sources:

Learning connection learning guide 2004, University of South Australia, Adelaide.
Writing Centre 2011, *Harvard referencing guide*, University of Adelaide, viewed 03 Dec 2012,