



**Harper Adams
University**

Guide to Essay Writing 2019/20

A word cloud of terms related to essay writing, with words of varying sizes and colors. The most prominent words are 'written' (green), 'adapting' (red), 'writing' (blue), 'message' (yellow), and 'Harper Adams' (blue). Other words include 'technical', 'plagiarism', 'tense', 'citation', 'learning', 'font', 'unseen questions', 'high grade', 'study course', 'essays', 'University', 'reference', 'skills', 'word', 'guide', 'academic integrity', 'reader', 'career', 'marking criteria', 'example', 'instruction', 'seen questions', 'font', 'message', 'technical', 'learning', 'plagiarism', 'tense', 'citation', 'high grade', 'study course', 'essays', 'University', 'reference', 'skills', 'word', 'guide', 'academic integrity', 'reader', 'career', 'marking criteria', 'example', 'instruction'.

seen questions font message
unseen questions technical
learning plagiarism
citation tense study course
high grade essays writing
University reference skills word guide
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marking criteria example instruction

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1.0 Introduction

Effective written communication skills will be of great importance to you both at University and in your career. The purpose of this document is to help you to develop these skills by acting as a handy reference during your course.

Effective written communication depends on adapting your writing to the circumstances, to the nature of the message and, above all, to the requirements of the reader. For this reason, you will need to use many different forms of communication in your career. You may need to write business or technical reports, essays, business letters, memos, instruction manuals and so on. This guide concentrates on only one of these, essay writing. However, the principles set out here apply to many other types of communication. Further guidance on report writing may be found in the Harper Adams Report Writing Guide.

Using this guide.....

This guide has been divided into sections to examine all the elements of essay writing. It will consider:

Essays for coursework and examinations: essential differences

What tutors are looking for in an essay?

The essay writing process: research, planning, style of writing, proof reading

Writing essays for examinations with exemplars

What is an essay?

An essay is a written response to a given problem or question. It calls upon you to organise information to support a structured argument and to communicate the argument clearly and concisely.

How does an essay differ from a report?

“Essays are an intellectual exploration of a topic involving looking at different arguments and evidence and developing the writer’s perspective.” (Plymouth University, 2011, p1)

“A report is a statement of an investigation or of any matter on which definitive information is required.” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2008)

To compare reports and essays, look at Table 1 which outlines the main differences between the two styles of presentation.

Table 1. Differences between Essays and Reports

<p>Report</p> 	<p>Essay</p> 
Formal structure	Structure can be left to the discretion of the writer but normally has in paragraphs, an introduction, main text and conclusion
Defined sections with headings, including, as required: Methodology, Results/findings, Discussion/evaluation (See Section 2: Layout)	Does not contain subheadings (Some essays will contain subheading- consider your tutors advice and industrial/ publication standards when deciding this). Different points are written as paragraphs
Commences with a Summary or Abstract before the Introduction	Commences with an Introduction; there is no Abstract or Summary
Systematically defines and analyses a subject or problem	Discusses, explains, analyses, interprets or evaluates a topic
Used to communicate the results or findings of a project/piece of research, scientific research or business reporting	Used to develop points or arguments in depth via a sequence of paragraphs (discursive writing)
Different sections may require different styles of writing throughout, depending on their purpose, but represent a continual 'argument'	Same writing style is generally maintained throughout and should contain a narrative and argument
May include tables, figures and illustrations	Often though not exclusively, no illustrative material accompanies prose
Information may be recorded in bullet points in sections where relevant to do so; should be linked by prose	Written as a narrative in continuous prose, synthesized together in paragraphs
Contain a conclusion and may make recommendations for future actions	Very unusual to make recommendations although conclusions will be drawn

A Guide to Report Writing is available separately

2.0 Difference between Coursework and Examination Essays

Although they follow a similar structure, there are differences between what is expected of an essay for a piece of coursework and what is expected in the time-limited situation of an examination. These differences are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Differences between Coursework and Examination Essays

	Coursework	Examinations
Structure	Introduction, main body and conclusion in both essays.	
Questions	Set in advance by module leader. Deadline given.	<p>Either seen or unseen questions.</p> <p>Seen- You will plan these prior to the exam. You have the opportunity to read around the topic.</p> <p>Unseen- You have to think quickly and choose wisely. Answer questions using knowledge gained during revision.</p>
Length	Word or page limited defined by the assessment brief. More detailed with time to read around the topic.	Generally shorter. Depending on marks allocated and question set.
Referencing	Extremely important to cite in essay and complete <i>Reference</i> section at end.	May not be as important (check with module tutors). Examination marking scheme (Appendix 1) suggests use of independent study is associated with higher marks.
Accuracy	Extremely important. Marks deducted for poor spelling, grammar and punctuation (check the marking guidance on the assessment brief). Also see Appendix 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3.	University Marking Policy means all students are treated more sympathetically during stresses of examination conditions. But for the highest marks spelling, grammar and punctuation are important.

3.0 What tutors are looking for in an essay

One of the best ways to understand what is required in an essay is to look at the marking criteria on the assessment brief and generic marking schemes (See Appendix 1, 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3).

The O.E.D. (2008) defines the word **discursive** as ‘*moving from subject to subject*’; translating this into an essay means that the **narrative** which is the ‘*written account of connected events*’ should flow seamlessly from one paragraph to another. This means that the essay should be coherent and well-constructed so that one paragraph containing an explanation or argument leads logically into the next. One of the key skills that should be demonstrated is that of **critical analysis** so that points are not merely described but are also analysed.

In addition to the mark scheme, Figure 1 summarises some pointers to a good essay.

Answer the question.	A clear, logical structure is essential.	Give your own analysis, not mere description.	We want to see a fresh, original approach.
Clear, consistent references are essential.	Base your essay on extensive relevant reading and research.	Indecisive ‘it’s a bit of both’ essays are disappointing.	Argue your case, with your own point of view.
Use commas properly. Learn how to deploy semi-colons.	We want to see evidence of independent thought.	Try to avoid formulas, clichés, and the obvious approaches.	Have a clear, relevant introduction and conclusion.
It’s important to know the difference between “it’s” and its alter ego, “its”.	Don’t allude to anything you’ve read without giving a reference for it.	Avoid a purely ‘journalistic’ style, in academic essays.	Don’t waffle. It’s not cunning, it just suggests you’ve got little to say.
Illustrate your points with up-to-date examples.	Construct your sentences carefully.	Use the internet – but with care and discrimination.	Don’t fill an essay with irrelevant historical detail.
Use electronic resources to find material (see library website).	Check your spelling and punctuation. Seriously.	Ensure your essay is the required length.	Bring the subject to <i>life!</i>

Figure 1. Pointers to good essay writing

4.0 Academic Integrity

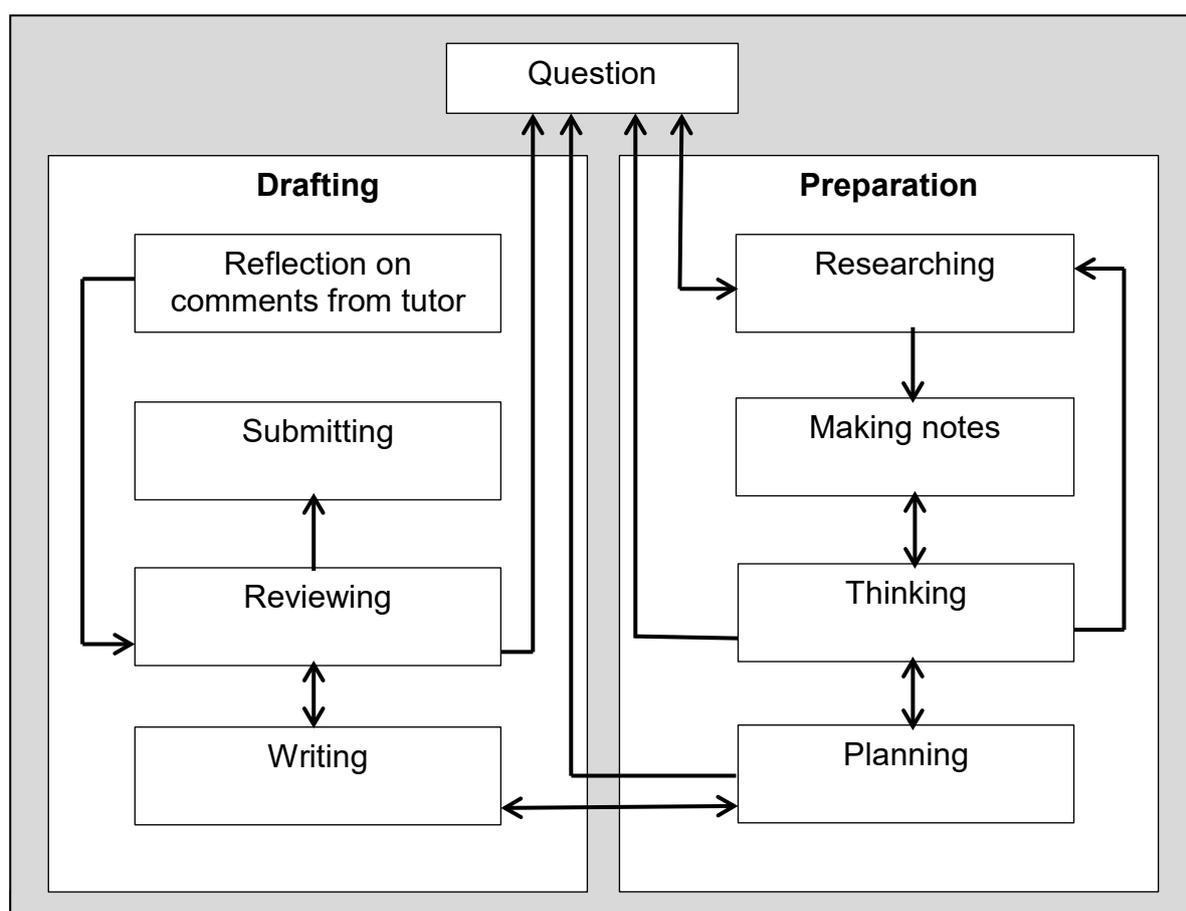
The work you produce for assessment should always meet integrity standards. This means work you produce should;

- Be in your own words (with the exception of quotations)
- Be paraphrased effectively to communicate ideas and principles of others, but in such a way that the original words are not used verbatim
- Acknowledge, in the form of citations, when you are drawing on the work of others
- Include accurate information when citing in text (see Harper Adams Guide to Referencing)
- Include a reference list providing full details of cited sources (see Harper Adams Guide to Referencing)
- Have not been previously submitted for another assessment

5.0 The essay writing process

This section goes through the whole essay writing process – from the initial stage of understanding an essay title, through researching, to the organisation of an essay and the final stage of proofreading.

Figure 2 shows that the writing process is not linear and is much more complex than just a beginning with an analysis of the question and ending with a consideration of your tutor's comments. It involves frequent revisiting of earlier stages, checking and reflecting: much depends on a constant referring back to the question.



(Source: Openlearn, not dated).

Figure 2. The multiple stages involved in essay writing

Essays are an opportunity for you to deepen your understanding of a subject and show your ability to research a topic, weigh up arguments and organise your thoughts. These thoughts then need to be expressed in a logical coherent manner. They need to arrive at a conclusion which follows naturally from the evidence and/or arguments you put forward. Most essays have a word limit so you will need to be selective in the material you choose to include. You must think through the topic and spend sufficient time considering your essay structure in order to achieve a good grade.

6.0 Stages in writing an essay

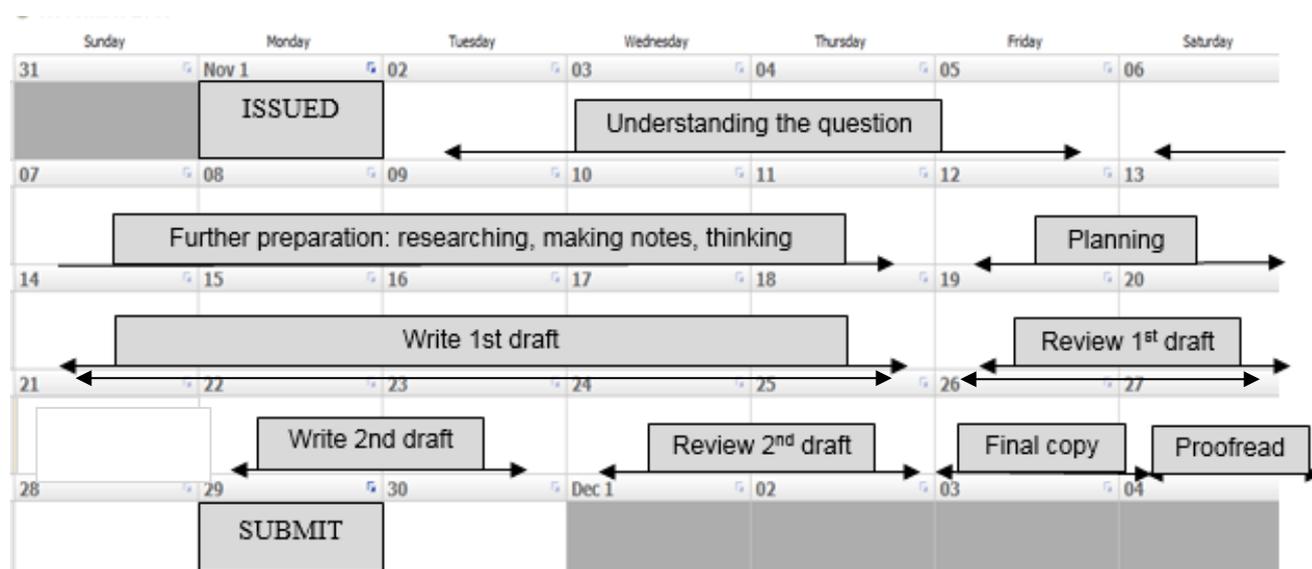
The first place to start is to plan your time up to submission or end time in an examination.

6.1 Managing your time

Coursework essays: work back from your submission date listing set deadlines in a diary/planner for each stage in the writing process.

For example: you have been given an assignment brief for this essay question: “Discuss the extent to which a so-called Hard Brexit will benefit the UK dairy industry by 2025”

A suggested time plan for this essay is shown below in Figure 3.



(Source: Gabbitas, 2011)

Figure 3. Suggested time plan for an essay

Examination essays: make sure you are familiar with the rubric (information on the front of the exam paper) which states:

- how many questions you will need to answer
- total time for exam

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a rough idea on how long you are going to spend on each essay or other sections of the paper prior to the actual examination. Planning your time is therefore essential in addition to practising exam papers. In addition, make sure you are familiar with the examination marking scheme for discursive essays (Appendix 1). See Section 7 for further details.

6.2 Understanding the question

This is the MOST important stage of the essay writing process. Remember, failing to answer the question is the most likely cause of poor marks. The essay question must be “taken apart” word for word to ensure you are clear on what the tutor is asking for.

There are four main steps in order to understand your essay question fully; start your journey below.

Step 1 – identify the academic instruction word(s)

Examples include: *discuss, explain, evaluate, analyse*.
See Appendix 2 for a list of academic instruction words and their meanings.

Step 2 – identify the topic and focus

Step 3 – rewrite the question in your own words

Step 4 - move from the question to the library: developing a plan of action

Before going to the library and/or accessing the internet you MUST have produced a plan of action with specific tasks to keep research focused.

Select your search terms carefully when searching databases and the internet. For guidance refer to <https://www.harper-adams.ac.uk/university-life/library/study-skills/page.cfm?id=7>. The assessment brief and essay title will provide a number of key terms to act as a starting point when searching literature.

Example Question:

Explain what is meant by ‘soil quality’ and outline the threats to soil quality in the UK. Using examples identify the government policies in place for protecting soil as a valuable resource and describe some methods used to protect soil quality.

Step 1 - identify the academic instruction word(s)

Explain what is meant by ‘soil quality’ and outline the threats to soil quality in the UK. Using examples identify the government policies in place for protecting soil as a valuable resource and describe some methods used to protect soil quality.

Step 2 – identify the topic, focus and knowledge in each part of the question

- Explain soil quality
(topic: soil quality)
- Outline the threats to soil quality in the UK
(topic: threats to soil quality / focus: in the UK)

- Identify *UK government policies in place for protecting soil* – using examples (topic: policies in place for protecting soil / focus: UK government policies)
- Describe *methods to protect soil quality* (topic: **soil quality** / focus: *methods to protect*)

Step 3 - rewrite the question in your own words
--

Provide an answer that offers a detailed and exact explanation of the principles of soil quality.

Cover the main threats to soil quality in the UK making sure the basic structure is presented.

Find and list only the UK government policies in place for protecting soil using specific examples.

Give the main features of several methods used to protect soil quality.

Step 4 - move from the question to the library: developing a plan of action
--

Select useful search terms for the specific question:

soil quality; soil protection; soil management; / policies; legislation; / soil erosion; pollution; / United Kingdom; UK; England; Wales etc.

1. Read widely (skimming) about soil quality (look for references regarding width and depth of threats, policies and protection).
2. Look for references for your topic area of soil quality with regards to threats and protection. Remember to use creditable **academic sources**
3. Find and record examples of government policies put in place to protect soil **and** methods used to protect soil quality.

6.3 Research

Guidelines

When you have read the question and taken it apart, check the guidelines given in the brief:

- How long should the essay be?
- What is the deadline?
- What other requirements are there (presentation, referencing, bibliography, etc.)
- Have you been issued with any marking criteria?

Key terms/ definitions

What are the key words you are going to be using which will need defining?

Selecting materials

Keep the question in mind as you start to select materials. Start with basic reading:

- lecture notes
- handouts
- relevant chapters in core texts
- journals in reading list
- grey literature (literature not controlled by commercial publishing ie special interest groups, local authorities, professional associations, organisational bodies such as DEFRA)

More detailed texts

When you are familiar with the basics, go on to more detailed texts

- wider sources in module reading list
- references in handouts
- references in core texts/ journals.

Ensure that these are credible texts – generally, peer reviewed rather than popular articles in journals and recognised academic sources rather than unverified internet pages. Also consider the currency of the source, is the information still in date/ relevant?

Be selective

Keep the question in mind, and check that the material you read and note down is relevant to it.

Useful Tips

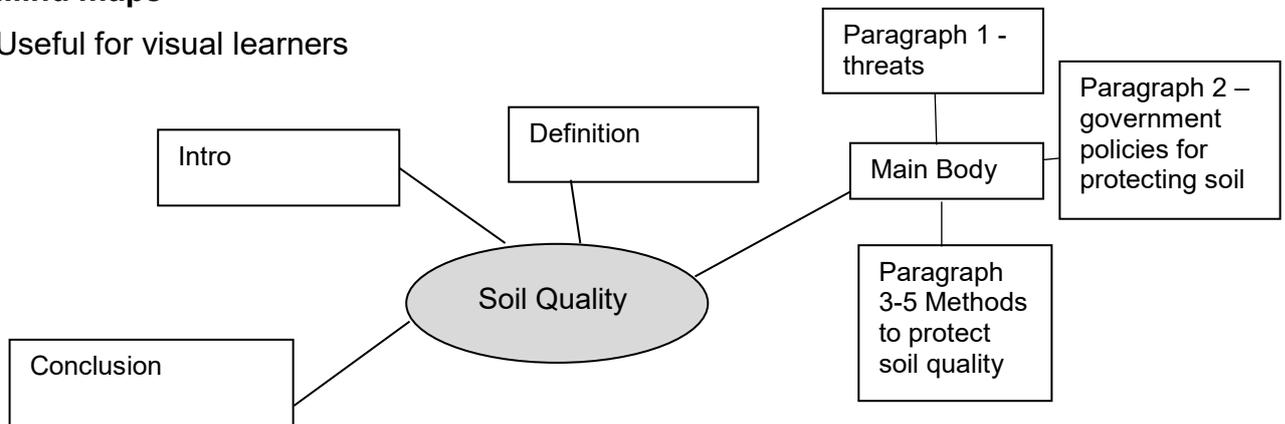
- (1) Write your notes on a separate piece of paper or index card for each reference. This allows you to sort them out into a logical order later on to match the structure of the report.
- (2) For each reference, write down full details of author, title, chapter, date, etc. This can save lots of time when you come to write your reference list, as you will not have to go back to the original documents.
- (3) Consider the use of audio to text software and/ or note apps on phones/ tablets to record information. A list of helpful free apps is available from learner support.
- (4) Alternatively, use the electronic record system in WORD ('references' tab).

6.4 Planning

The next stage is to effectively plan your essay so that it has a coherent and logical structure. Five suggested methods of organising your material include: mind maps, grid of pros and cons, index cards, post-it notes and linear notes.

- **Mind maps**

Useful for visual learners



A dedicated software package called 'MindGenius' can be used on campus computers for mind-mapping.

- **Grid of pros and cons**

Assign pluses and minuses to aspects of the essay question.

- **Post-it notes**

Use post-it notes of different colours and shapes with your key words or ideas on. Move the post-it notes around on a wall or large piece of paper to organise.

- **Index cards**

Write a separate card for each key word.

Add: Important phrases, quotations and cross-references to your notes

Arrange: Arrange cards in various sequences until you find the one that works best

Number: Number the cards once happy with the order.

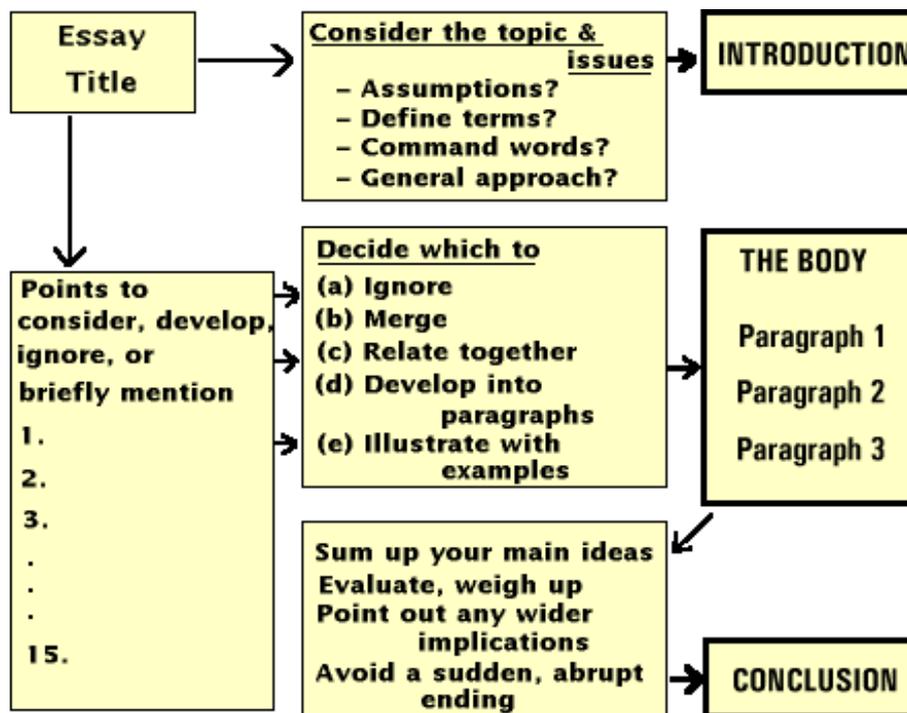
- **Linear notes**

Intro: Soil quality is (definition)

Main Body: Threats to soil quality in the UK are.....
UK government policies for protecting soil
Example 1, 2, 3 etc
Methods to protect soil quality
A, B, C etc

Conclusion: To conclude...

The information in Figure 4 can help you to formalise your essay structure:



(Source: BIZED, 2010).

Figure 4. Suggested model for an essay plan

6.5 Writing

Introduction

The 'introductory' paragraph(s) are one of the most difficult aspects of writing an essay. If you are clear at the outset exactly what the question is asking, what you want to cover and the importance of the topic you will assure the reader that you have thoroughly planned your essay. Make sure you include the:

- interpretation of the question (what is it getting at?)
- structure of your answer, the map the reader is going to follow.

Main Body

Go back to your plan and check what main ideas and points you need to cover and the order you are going to put them in – remember this can be changed later. Select an idea/point for a paragraph and start writing ensuring you:

- have a clear topic sentence which picks up on an issue already highlighted in your introduction
- develop the topic of the paragraph through analysis, criticism and discussion
- make reference to evidence and examples that illustrate and support the points you have made
- complete the paragraph by connecting it to the next.

Conclusion

Your conclusion should show that the essay has achieved something and this can be done by returning directly to the essay question. Use phrases like 'In conclusion..' or 'To conclude..' to restate your argument or discussion, using one sentence to sum up each paragraph in the essay. Your conclusion will:

- Usually be one paragraph of 5-6 lines
- Sum up main points in essay
- Refer back to question and provide an answer or say why you are unable to reach a definite decision
- Not include new material
- Make sure this is a logical summing up of what has been discussed and analysed.

6.6 Drafts and editing

- When you have completed your first draft, read your essay aloud to yourself or use Natural Readers (<http://www.naturalreaders.com/index.htm>) to make sure spelling and punctuation are as accurate as possible. Assignments are expected to be more accurate than essays written under examination conditions. You may need to improve or change sections.
- Asking a friend to read your work for constructive criticism is also worthwhile. Even experienced writers draft and re-draft their work.
- Finding your own style or 'voice' is important and needs practice. Try to make your writing style 'flow' so the reader enjoys your skilful writing.
- Use the checklist in Appendix 3 to help you edit your final draft.

6.7 Learning from your essay

As you plan, research and write your essay it is helpful to ask yourself several questions about your progress and record the answers on paper or electronically (blog/diary/learning log) to support you with future writing tasks i.e.

- Did the task take longer/less time than estimated?
- Was the task more difficult to complete than you first thought?
- Which stages of writing your essay were challenging and why?
- If you were asked to complete the same task again would you do anything different?
- Were there any tasks that you completed with ease?
- How did you find the researching process? What search mechanisms worked well?
- In what ways were you able to use the marking criteria to support your work?

7.0 STYLE

7.1 Introduction

Do not be frightened by the use of the word “style”. Style simply means the way you use words and sentences in your writing. The style of effective essays is direct, simple and straightforward. This is easy to say but more difficult to achieve: as George Bernard Shaw once wrote: “I am sorry to have written such a long letter but I did not have time to write a short one” (Shaw, not dated). Some rules to help you follow.

7.2 Words and sentences

George Orwell wrote some helpful rules for scientists who write. In summary he wrote:

“Never use a long word where a short one will do.
If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out” (Orwell, 1999).

Some examples of word savings are shown in Table 3

Table 3 Superfluous Words and alternatives

Superfluous words	Better English
on account of the fact that	as
in order to	to
at the present time	now (NOT nowadays!)
on the occasion of	when
with the result that	so that
in the college environment	in college
it is apparent therefore	thus
forward planning	planning

(Source: Gabbitas, 2010).

7.3 Useful words and phrases

It is important to use a variety of words and phrases throughout your essay to keep the reader interested in your writing. A list of common words and phrases used to introduce paragraphs, ideas and references can be found in Appendix 4.

7.4 Use of paragraphs

In order to maintain and make obvious a clear structure, be aware of the nature of the paragraph as the basic structuring unit in the essay. Basically, every paragraph should represent and flesh out a heading or sub-heading in the outline. The paragraph is the building block of the essay. Therefore:

- A paragraph should be at least a third to half a page in length, but not too long or the reader will get lost.

- It should have what is known as a topic sentence, near the beginning, that announces the theme of the paragraph. The paragraph should not deviate from this theme or introduce any new themes
- The first sentence should somehow be linked to, or contrast with, the last sentence of the previous paragraph.
- The first paragraph should announce clearly the theme of the essay. In the first paragraph also you should define your version of the title and make it clear. If the marker knows from the beginning what you are going to do, s/he can bear it in mind and be aware that you are sticking to the point and developing it, because s/he will know what the point is.

The main thing is to make each paragraph a solid unit that develops a clearly announced sub-theme of the essay. This way the intended outline that is behind it will be obvious (not too obvious: do not write subheadings before every paragraph) and the marker will not have that terrible lost feeling.

7.5 Tense

Essays are normally written in the past or present tense and impersonally.

e.g. It is recommended that.. NOT I recommend that..

e.g. The experiment showed a wide variation.. NOT My results show a wide variation..

7.6 Use of figures and tables

Although more common in reports than essays, tables, diagrams and photographs could be inserted into spaces which you leave in the text. Whenever you use a table, diagram or image in your essay you must:

- cite the source e.g. (Source: Smith, 1989)
- use your own caption (title), not the original one (captions go **ABOVE** a table and **BELOW** a figure)

Refer to the HAU Guide to Referencing (2017/18) and HAU Report Writing Guide (2017/18) for further information. Seek advice from your tutor as to whether figures or tables may benefit particular types of essay writing.

7.7 Font type and size

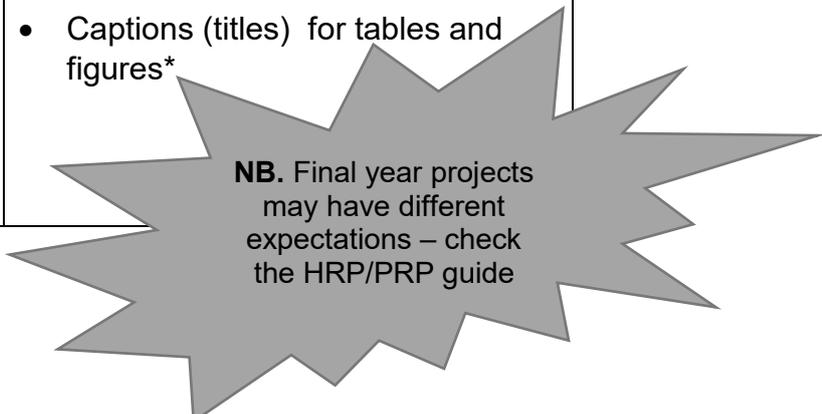
You should always follow the guidelines in your assignment brief or those issued by your tutor. However, where no specific guidance on font type and size is issued it is recommended that Arial 12 is used.

7.8 Word Count

Table 4 Words included in the word count of an Essay

Count in	Do not include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction (text only) • Main body (text only) • Conclusion (text only) • Text displayed in tables and in other formats such as Speech Bubbles, Word Clouds, Snips etc* • In text citations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference list • Appendices • Data in tables* • Results in tables* • Any figures (graphs, charts, diagrams)* • Headings and Subheadings (Introduction, Conclusion etc.)* • Captions (titles) for tables and figures*

*These items are not always appropriate in an essay. Check assessment brief or with tutor for the required style.



8.0 Essays in exams

In examinations, answers are often required to be written in ESSAY format. HAU has a percentage marking scheme for discursive essays which is a guide to how the marks are allocated – see Appendix 1.

Before you start to write an essay, always construct a plan. This can take the form of:

- a) headings, sub-headings etc.
- b) mind mapping

TIMING

Work out how long you have got to do each essay. Assuming equal weighting for each question, if you have two hours to do three essays that is 40 minutes per essay. You should spend 10 minutes planning, 5 minutes reviewing and checking at the end and 25 minutes writing. If you have done a good plan, 25 minutes will be ample to write a

coherent logical essay which includes the main points in the right order, explained and exemplified.

Your essay should consist of three identifiable parts:

- Introduction
- Main Body
- Conclusion

Introduction (Usually ONE paragraph)

Your introduction should:

- demonstrate that you have understood the question by defining the academic instruction word in the question e.g. Analyse, Explain, Describe, Examine
- define the main concept / jargon or unusual words
- explain where the essay is going and how it is going to get there (the process the essay will follow)
- introduce the topic.

Main body

This will consist of as many paragraphs as necessary – usually determined by the number of words in the essay. A 1000 word essay would have approximately 5 paragraphs in the main body.

One point = one paragraph

In each paragraph:

- ensure that everything written is relevant – do not ‘waffle’
- avoid simple narration, i.e. stating information without offering reasons, examples, explanations or conclusions, etc.
- try to analyse points raised in each paragraph
- demonstrate careful consideration of the point by adopting a tone of balance and moderation – avoid a ‘soap box’ approach.

Structure of the paragraph:

A well-structured paragraph has three identifiable parts:

- the Topic Sentence: the sentence that tells us what the paragraph is about
- the Controlling Idea : the general theme of the paragraph
- Expansion: all the supporting evidence and examples, analysis

Additionally, points should be illustrated wherever possible with examples and information should be cited for the top marks.

Conclusion (Usually ONE paragraph)

Your conclusion should:

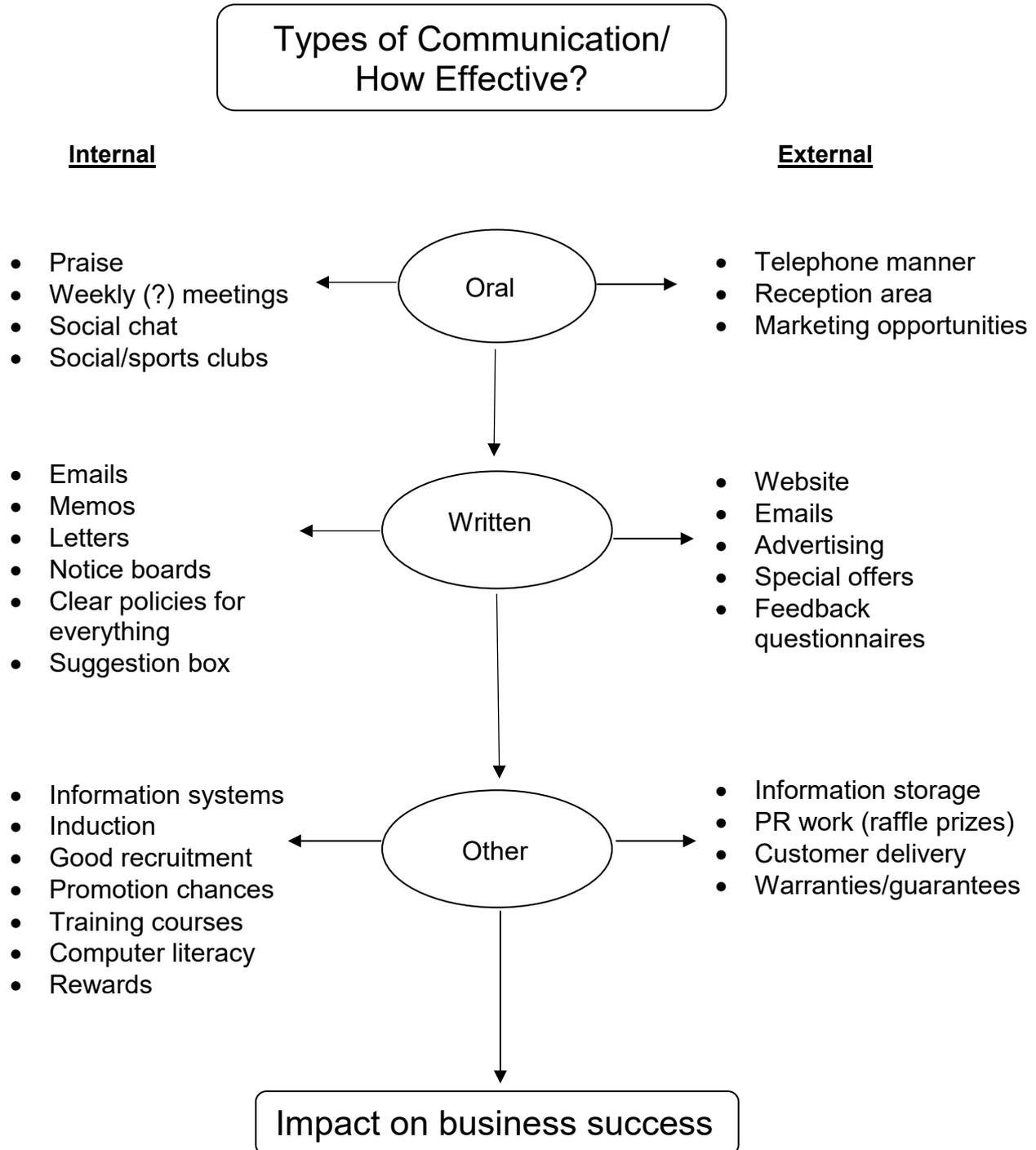
- sum up the main points of the essay
- refer back to the question and provide an answer (NB. Some essays may not reach a definite conclusion on one side or the other – you may have to ‘sit on the fence’)
- avoid introducing new material. Do not use the conclusion to introduce new/extra information
- have a logical development and summing up of what has already been discussed and analysed.

8.1 Example of an exam question with plan and possible answer

Example question:

‘Discuss the extent to which effective communication is essential for business success’

Plan



Possible answer

'Discuss the extent to which effective communication is essential for business success'

Effective communication is essential for the success of any business. However, there are many methods of communication which can impact on business success. Communication can be internal and external to the organisation (Smith, 2016). The extent to which these methods impact equally on the success of a business has been previously questioned (Jones *et al.*, 2014). This essay will discuss how effective communication is essential for business. First oral communication will be explored, followed by written communication and finally any other points considered essential for good communication in any business. This essay will also consider how these methods of communication impact on business success.

Oral communication in a business will be internal and external (Smith, 2016). In the business possible ways to communicate effectively would be by managers/team leaders giving praise to make employees feel valued in the business. Workers will feel a sense of involvement and belonging if managers conduct weekly meetings, provide minutes and allow social interaction, possibly encouraging sports or social clubs. This will reinforce a positive ethos in the working environment and could help to increase staff motivation and even productivity if appropriate for the business. External communication is also very important to the success of a business (Walker, 2002).

Important external communication is essential and telephoning forms a significant proportion of this in most businesses (Mars, 2017). A good telephone manner is one way a company can make sure customers feel valued by the business. Training can be given and an enquiry sheet completed by the telephonist to ensure that enquiries are promptly dealt with.

Having considered oral and written communication both internally and external to the business it can be seen that effective communication is essential for the success of any business. Even very small points can be critical for marketing or customer satisfaction and these will impact significantly on business success and outcomes. Everything works towards ensuring that the business runs smoothly and is viable.

Introduction (usually one paragraph)

- Responds to the title
- Introduces key themes
- Explains where the essay is going and how it is going to get there (the process the essay will follow)

Main Body (one point per paragraph)

- Set the scene i.e. you have separated your points into those that occur internal and external to the business
- Next you should tackle each of the points mentioned above in the plan to help answer the question successfully.
- Remember to prepare your reader for what is to come in the next paragraph i.e. the second paragraph finishes with introducing external communication and then start the next paragraph with an example of external communication.
- Continue in this way covering all the main points ensuring you stay within the word limit.

Conclusion (usually one paragraph)

- Finish with a conclusion that restates the question and summarises what you have found out
- Make sure it does not include any new material at this point

References

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Appendix 1. Examination marking scheme for discursive essays

100 - 90	<p>Learning has been demonstrated to be exceptional in terms of the level and scope of the learning outcomes¹.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer based on an exceptional understanding of relevant knowledge. • Comprehensive evidence of extensive study and original thought - beyond that which was explicitly taught or signposted by lecturers². • Highly critical, detailed and insightful argument that shows a deep understanding of the complexity and limitations of ideas presented. • Exceptional presentation and structuring of ideas, beyond what is normally expected in the context of the task and level of study.
89 - 80	<p>Learning has been demonstrated to meet the learning outcomes with an outstanding level of understanding, demonstrating both breadth and depth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer based on an outstanding understanding of relevant knowledge. • Excellent evidence of study and original thought - beyond that which was taught or signposted by lecturers. • Highly critical, detailed and insightful argument that shows an excellent understanding of the complexity and limitations of ideas presented. • Excellent presentation and structuring of ideas within the context of the time constrained situation.
79 - 70	<p>Learning has been demonstrated to meet the learning outcomes, with an excellent level of understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer based on an excellent understanding of relevant knowledge, drawing upon the major concepts, theories or points. • Evidence of some study and/or original thought beyond that provided by the taught material. • Critical argument based on analysis, evaluation and the effective application of information. • Very good presentation and structuring of ideas within the context of the time constrained situation.
69 - 60	<p>All of the learning outcomes are clearly achieved, showing a very good understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A logical and articulate answer based on very good understanding and knowledge in the discipline, drawing upon the major concepts, theories or points. • Evidence of learning reflects very good engagement with taught material. • Strong argument based on a sound grasp of the subject and an ability to combine, compare or contrast key ideas. • Good presentation of ideas within the context of the time constrained situation.
59 - 50	<p>The learning outcomes are largely achieved; there may be some limitations or limited areas of concern, but most of the key requirements have been achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A satisfactory answer based on good understanding and knowledge in the discipline, drawing upon the major concepts, theories or points. The argument may be limited in scope or depth, or may contain some errors or flaws. • Evidence of learning reflects good engagement with taught material. • Arguments made show a satisfactory grasp of the subject for the level of assessment. • Adequate presentation of ideas within the context of the time constrained situation (ideas are largely coherent, although there could be some minor issues with structure, sequence or clarity).
49 - 40	<p>The learning outcomes are sufficiently achieved; there may be some specific areas of concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers show an adequate understanding and knowledge in the discipline but with limited-evidence and explanation provided in the answer given. • Evidence of learning reflects engagement with some of the taught material. • Arguments are lacking in deeper engagement, but with a sufficient demonstration of knowledge and skill to underpin the achievement of learning outcomes. • Weak presentation of ideas within the context of the task and level of study (ideas lack coherence, and there are major issues with structure, sequence or clarity).
39 - 30	<p>The learning outcomes are not achieved; there are multiple concerns around knowledge, skills and understanding demonstrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers are very brief and/or show little understanding or knowledge in the discipline. There are multiple or significant omissions including a failure to answer the question posed i.e. irrelevant information is offered. • Evidence of incomplete engagement with taught material. • Arguments are incomplete or limited in scope and detail, and do not demonstrate knowledge and skills to underpin the achievement of learning outcomes. • Poorly presented, and difficult to follow.
29 - 20	<p>The learning outcomes are not achieved; there are substantial areas of concern around knowledge, skills and understanding demonstrated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers are very brief or show very little understanding or knowledge in the discipline. There are multiple and significant omissions including a failure to answer the question posed i.e. irrelevant information is offered. • Evidence of weak engagement with the taught material • Arguments are very limited in scope and detail, and are below the expectations of the level. • Poorly presented in the context of the task requirements, and difficult to follow.
19 - 10	<p>The learning outcomes are not achieved; there are substantial areas of concern relating to fundamental knowledge, skills and understanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers show minimal understanding or knowledge in the discipline and there are numerous substantial omissions, misunderstandings and errors, and irrelevant information is offered. • Evidence of minimal evidence of engagement with the taught material: The answers provided may have been offered without any engagement with the course. • Arguments are very limited and even incoherent, they are below the expectations of the level. • Poorly presented in the context of the task requirements, and difficult to understand.
9 - 0	<p>The learning outcomes are not achieved; significant work would be needed to reach the required standard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers show no understanding or knowledge in the discipline. Answers may be only partially complete. • No evidence of engagement with the taught material; the answers provided may have been offered without any engagement with the course. • Arguments are well below the expectations of the level. • Poorly presented in the context of the task requirements, and difficult to understand.

¹ As defined on the module descriptor.

² This may be demonstrated through citations, but also through broader evidence of having engaged with other sources, topics, themes, theories not covered by the course or reading lists, and/or current trend or events.

Appendix 2.1 Generic Assessment Criteria for Coursework (BSc/FdSc Level 4)

		Presentation, style and communication skills	Content, knowledge and understanding	Analysis, evaluation and application	Referencing and use of literature
Final Class	Context	Assessment criteria to be contextualised by module leader			
	Weighting Mark range	Assigned by tutor			
No final award classification at level 4	90-100	Exceptional presentation that conforms to guidelines and displays creativity, flair and imagination in both structure and style, using a variety of tools appropriate to the media, audience and discipline. Of publishable quality with moderate editing	Work based on an excellent understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area, obtained from specific published literature at the forefront of the discipline through wider reading, and experience	Exceptional argument based on a highly critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of complex knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Excellent application of practical, professional and/or problem solving skills.	Exceptional use of reliable, appropriate sources, selected independently. Limitations of sources partly assessed. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors
	80-89	Excellent presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a persuasive argument using a logical and coherent structure that displays a mature, articulate and imaginative style, using appropriate tools for the media, audience and discipline	Work based on a full and complete understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area. Evidence of specific knowledge from published literature obtained through wider reading, and experience	Excellent argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Very good practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Excellent use of reliable, appropriate sources, many selected independently. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors.
	70-79	Very good presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a reasoned argument using a logical and concise structure that displays a lucid and articulate style, using appropriate tools for the media, audience and discipline.	Work based on a comprehensive understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No omissions. Clear evidence of knowledge derived from outside the teaching programme.	Strong argument based on robust analysis and evaluation of knowledge, theories and concept in the subject area. Very good practical, professional or problem solving skills.	Strong use of reliable, appropriate sources with some selected independently. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , with minor omissions or errors.
	60-69	Good presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a clear argument using a logical structure that displays a fluent style, using appropriate tools that are correctly applied for the media, audience and discipline.	Work based on a good understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No significant omissions. Some evidence of knowledge derived from outside the teaching programme.	Sound argument based on good analysis, evaluation and application of knowledge, theories and concept in the subject area. Good evidence of practical, professional and problem solving skills	Very good use of reliable, appropriate sources, with a few selected independently. References complete and largely comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , with minor omissions or recurring presentational errors.
	50-59	Presentation conforms to guidelines with few errors. Accuracy and clarity of expression could be improved by minor changes to structure and/or style. Appropriate tools that are correctly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a good understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No significant omissions. Limited to knowledge derived from the teaching programme	Work partly descriptive, but logical argument based on analysis and evaluation of knowledge, basic theories and concepts in the subject area. Evidence of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Good use of relevant sources, but most not selected independently. References mostly complete and partly comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , but significant omissions or recurring presentational errors.
	40-49	Presentation largely conform to guidelines, but has moderate errors. Accuracy and clarity of expression moderately compromised by poor structure and/or style. Tools largely appropriate but may be inconsistently applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a superficial understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. Limited to knowledge derived from the teaching programme	Work mainly descriptive, but superficial argument based on limited analysis and evaluation of knowledge, basic theories and concepts in the subject area. Limited evidence of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Some use of relevant sources, but not sourced independently. References mostly complete and partly comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , but significant omissions or recurring presentational errors.
	30-39	Presentation doesn't conform to guidelines. Accuracy and clarity of expression severely compromised by poor structure and/or style. Tools inappropriate and/or incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline	Work based on an incomplete understanding of knowledge in the subject area.	Work descriptive, with little, irrelevant or illogical argument, based on limited understanding of knowledge in the subject area. Limited evidence of application of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Little use of relevant sources, but indiscriminately selected or largely unreliable or irrelevant. Limited attempt at referencing. References incomplete and confused.
	20-29	Presentation doesn't conform to guidelines. Illogical structure and/or immature and incoherent style. Tools inappropriate and/or incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a limited understanding of knowledge in the subject area, with significant errors or omissions	Work descriptive with no argument based basic understanding of knowledge in the subject area. Limited evidence of application of practical, professional or problem solving skills.	Minimal evidence of reading. Sources used are largely unreliable, inappropriate or irrelevant to the task. References are mainly incomplete and confused.
	10-19	Limited grasp of communication skills. No structure and immature and incoherent style. Tools inappropriate and incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work suggests limited awareness of knowledge in the subject area, but largely wrong, contradictory or unsupported.	Work suggests some basic understanding of knowledge in the subject area, but largely wrong, contradictory or unsupported. No evidence of application of practical, professional or problem solving skills	Very limited evidence of wider reading. No meaningful attempt at referencing.
	0-9	No evidence of academic conventions or the communication skills required at level 4	No evidence of knowledge and understanding in the subject area.	No evidence of knowledge and understanding in the subject area, or application of practical, professional or problem solving skills	No evidence of reading. No attempt at referencing.

Appendix 2.2 Generic Assessment Criteria for Coursework (BSc/FdSc Level 5)

		Presentation, style and communication skills	Content, knowledge and understanding	Analysis, evaluation and application	Referencing and use of literature
Final Class	Context	Assessment criteria to be contextualised by module leader			
	Weighting Mark range	Assigned by tutor			
D	90-100	Exceptional presentation that conforms to guidelines and displays creativity, flair and imagination in both structure and style, using a variety of tools appropriate to the media, audience and discipline. Of publishable quality with moderate editing	Work based on an excellent understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area, obtained from specific published literature at the forefront of the discipline through wider reading, and experience	Exceptional argument based on a highly critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of complex knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Excellent application of practical, professional and/or problem solving skills.	Exceptional use of a variety of reliable, appropriate sources, including peer reviewed journals, selected independently. Limitations of sources assessed. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors.
	80-89	Excellent presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a persuasive argument using a logical and coherent structure that displays a mature, articulate and imaginative style, using appropriate tools for the media, audience and discipline	Work based on a full and complete understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area. Evidence of specific knowledge from published literature obtained through wider reading, and experience	Excellent argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Very good practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Excellent use of a variety of reliable, appropriate sources, including peer reviewed journals, most selected independently. Limitations of sources partly assessed. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors.
	70-79	Very good presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a reasoned argument using a logical and concise structure that displays a lucid and articulate style, using appropriate tools for the media, audience and discipline.	Work based on a comprehensive understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No omissions. Clear evidence of knowledge derived from outside the teaching programme.	Strong argument based on robust analysis and evaluation of knowledge, theories and concept in the subject area. Very good practical, professional or problem solving skills.	Very good use of reliable, appropriate sources, including peer reviewed journals, many selected independently. References are complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> with no errors.
M	60-69	Good presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a clear argument using a logical structure that displays a fluent style, using appropriate tools that are correctly applied for the media, audience and discipline.	Work based on a good understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No significant omissions. Some evidence of knowledge derived from outside the teaching programme.	Sound argument based on good analysis, evaluation and application of knowledge, theories and concept in the subject area. Good evidence of practical, professional and problem solving skills	Very good use of reliable, appropriate sources, with some selected independently. References are complete and mainly comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , with minor omissions or errors.
	50-59	Presentation conforms to guidelines with few errors. Accuracy and clarity of expression could be improved by minor changes to structure and/or style. Appropriate tools that are correctly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a good understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No significant omissions. Limited to knowledge derived from the teaching programme	Work partly descriptive, but logical argument based on analysis and evaluation of knowledge, basic theories and concepts in the subject area. Evidence of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Good use of relevant sources, with a few selected independently. References are complete and largely comply the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> with minor omissions or recurring presentational errors.
P	40-49	Presentation largely conform to guidelines, but has moderate errors. Accuracy and clarity of expression moderately compromised by poor structure and/or style. Tools largely appropriate but may be inconsistently applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a superficial understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. Limited to knowledge derived from the teaching programme	Work mainly descriptive, but superficial argument based on limited analysis and evaluation of knowledge, basic theories and concepts in the subject area. Limited evidence of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Some use of relevant sources, but not sources independently. References mostly complete and mainly comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , but significant omissions or recurring presentational errors.
Fail	30-39	Presentation doesn't conform to guidelines. Accuracy and clarity of expression severely compromised by poor structure and/or style. Tools inappropriate and/or incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline	Work based on an incomplete understanding of knowledge in the subject area.	Work descriptive, with little, irrelevant or illogical argument, based on limited understanding of knowledge in the subject area. Limited evidence of application of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Little use of relevant sources, but indiscriminately selected or largely unreliable or irrelevant. Key reference information is largely present and understandable, but has significant presentation errors.
	20-29	Presentation doesn't conform to guidelines. Illogical structure and/or immature and incoherent style. Tools inappropriate and/or incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a limited understanding of knowledge in the subject area, with significant errors or omissions	Work descriptive with no argument based basic understanding of knowledge in the subject area. Limited evidence of application of practical, professional or problem solving skills.	Minimal evidence of reading. Sources used are largely inappropriate or irrelevant to the task. References are mainly incomplete and confused.
	10-19	Limited grasp of communication skills. No structure and immature and incoherent style. Tools inappropriate and incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work suggests limited awareness of knowledge in the subject area, but largely wrong, contradictory or unsupported.	Work suggests some basic understanding of knowledge in the subject area, but largely wrong, contradictory or unsupported. No evidence of application of practical, professional or problem solving skills	Very limited evidence of wider reading. No meaningful attempt at referencing.
	0-9	No evidence of academic conventions or the communication skills required at level 5	No evidence of knowledge and understanding in the subject area.	No evidence of knowledge and understanding in the subject area, or application of practical, professional or problem solving skills	No evidence of reading. No attempt at referencing.

Appendix 2.3 Generic Assessment Criteria for Coursework (BSc Level 6)

		Presentation, style and communication skills	Content, knowledge and understanding	Analysis, evaluation and application	Referencing and use of literature
Final Class	Context	Assessment criteria to be contextualised by module leader			
	Weighting Mark range	Assigned by tutor			
1st	90-100	Outstanding presentation that conforms to guidelines and displays originality, creativity, flair and imagination in both the structure and style of expression, using a variety of tools appropriate to the media, audience and discipline. Of publishable quality with minor editing	Work based on an outstanding understanding of a wide knowledge base from within and outside the subject area, obtained from specific published literature at the forefront of the discipline through wider reading and experience	Outstanding argument at the boundaries of existing knowledge based on a highly critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of complex knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Exceptional practical, professional or problem solving skills.	Outstanding use of variety of reliable, appropriate sources, including peer reviewed articles at the forefront of the discipline, selected independently. Limitations of sources assessed. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors.
	80-89	Exceptional presentation that conforms to guidelines and displays creativity, flair and imagination in both structure and style, using a variety of tools appropriate to the media, audience and discipline. Of publishable quality with moderate editing	Work based on an exceptional understanding of a wide knowledge base from within the subject area, obtained from published literature at the forefront of the discipline through wider reading, and experience	Exceptional argument based on a highly critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of complex knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Excellent application of practical, professional and/or problem solving skills.	Exceptional use of a variety of reliable, appropriate sources, including leading peer reviewed article, mainly selected independently. Limitations of sources assessed. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors.
	70-79	Excellent presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a persuasive argument using a logical and coherent structure that displays a mature, articulate and imaginative style, using appropriate tools for the media, audience and discipline	Work based on a full and complete understanding of selected appropriate knowledge in the subject area. Evidence of specific knowledge from published literature obtained through wider reading, and experience	Excellent argument based on a critical and perceptive analysis and evaluation of knowledge, theories and concepts in the subject area. Very good practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Excellent use of a variety of reliable, appropriate sources, including peer reviewed journals, most selected independently. Limitations of different sources assessed. References complete and comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> . No errors.
2:1	60-69	Very good presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a reasoned argument using a logical and concise structure that displays a lucid and articulate style, using appropriate tools for the medium, audience and discipline.	Work based on a comprehensive understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No omissions. Clear evidence of knowledge derived from outside the teaching programme.	Strong argument based on robust analysis and evaluation of knowledge, theories and concept in the subject area. Very good practical, professional or problem solving skills.	Very good use of reliable, appropriate sources, including peer reviewed journals, with many selected independently. References complete and largely comply the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> with minor omissions or errors.
2:2	50-59	Good presentation that conforms to guidelines and provides a clear argument using a logical structure that displays a fluent style, using appropriate tools that are correctly applied for the media, audience and discipline.	Work based on a good understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No significant omissions. Some evidence of knowledge derived from outside the teaching programme.	Sound argument based on good analysis, evaluation and application of knowledge, theories and concept in the subject area. Good evidence of practical, professional and problem solving skills	Good use of relevant sources, with some selected independently. References are complete and mainly comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , with minor omissions or errors.
3rd	40-49	Presentation conforms to guidelines with few errors. Accuracy and clarity of expression could be improved by minor changes to structure and/or style. Appropriate tools that are correctly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a good understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. No significant omissions. Limited to knowledge derived from the teaching programme.	Work partly descriptive, but logical argument based on analysis and evaluation of knowledge, basic theories and concepts in the subject area. Evidence of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Some use of relevant sources, with a few selected independently. References are complete and partially comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , with minor omissions or recurring presentational errors.
Fail	30-39	Presentation largely conform to guidelines, but has moderate errors. Accuracy and clarity of expression moderately compromised by poor structure and/or style. Tools largely appropriate but may be inconsistently applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a superficial understanding of appropriate knowledge in the subject area. Limited to knowledge derived from the teaching programme.	Work mainly descriptive, but superficial argument based on limited analysis and evaluation of knowledge, basic theories and concepts in the subject area. Limited evidence of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Little use of relevant sources, but indiscriminately selected or largely unreliable or irrelevant. References mostly complete and mainly comply with the <i>Guide to Referencing</i> , but significant omissions and recurring presentational errors.
	20-29	Presentation doesn't conform to guidelines. Accuracy and clarity of expression severely compromised by poor structure and/or style. Tools inappropriate and/or incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on an incomplete understanding of knowledge in the subject area.	Work descriptive, with little, irrelevant or illogical argument, based on superficial knowledge in the subject area. Limited evidence of application of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Little use of relevant sources, but indiscriminately selected or largely unreliable or irrelevant. Key reference information is largely present and understandable but has significant presentation errors
	10-19	Presentation doesn't conform to guidelines. Illogical structure and/or immature and incoherent style. Tools inappropriate and incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work based on a limited understanding of knowledge in the subject area, with significant errors or omissions	Work descriptive, with little, irrelevant or illogical argument, based on superficial knowledge in the subject area. Limited evidence of application of developing practical, professional and problem solving skills.	Minimal evidence of reading. Sources used are largely inappropriate or irrelevant to the task. References are mainly incomplete and confused.
	0-9	Limited grasp of communication skills. No structure and immature and incoherent style. Tools inappropriate and incorrectly applied for the media, audience or discipline.	Work suggests limited awareness of knowledge in the subject area, but largely wrong, contradictory or unsupported.	Work suggests some basic understanding of knowledge in the subject area, but largely wrong, contradictory or unsupported. No evidence of application of practical, professional or problem solving skills	Very limited evidence of wider reading. No meaningful attempt at referencing.

Appendix 3: Academic instruction words and their meanings

Analyse	Examine in very close detail. Break down an argument or information into component parts and identify ways in which these parts are related.
Analyse the extent to which...	Show judgement over the relevant importance of different arguments or events. Arguments for and against needed.
Assess	Make some kind of judgement on the relative importance of a particular aspect, discussing the influence of other factors or events that influence the topic.
Compare	Show how two or more things are similar. Indicate the relevance or consequences of these similarities.
Contrast	Set two or more items or arguments in opposition so as to draw out differences. Indicate whether the differences are significant. If appropriate, give reasons why one item or argument may be preferable.
Critically evaluate	Weigh arguments for and against something, assessing the strength of evidence on both sides
Define	Give the exact meaning of. Where relevant, show that you understand why the definition may be problematic.
Describe	Give the main characteristics or features of something, or outline the main events
Discuss	Write about the most important aspects of; give arguments for and against; consider the implications of.
Distinguish	Bring out the differences between two items.
Evaluate	Assess the worth, importance or usefulness of something, using evidence. There will probably be cases to be made <i>for</i> and <i>against</i> .

Examine	Put the subject 'under the microscope' looking at it in detail. If appropriate, 'critically evaluate' it as well.
Explain	Make clear why something happens, or why something is the way it is.
Illustrate	Make something clear and explicit, give examples or evidence.
Interpret	Give the meaning and relevance of data or other material presented.
Justify	Give evidence which supports an argument or idea; show why a decision or conclusions were made, considering objections that others might make.
Narrate	Concentrate on saying <i>what</i> happened, telling it as a story.
Outline	Give only the main points, showing the main structure.
Relate	Show similarities and connections between two or more things.
State	Give the main features, in very clear English.
Summarise	Draw out the main points only, omitting details or examples.
To what extent	Consider how far something is true, or contributes to a final outcome. Consider also ways in which the proposition is not true.
Trace	Follow the order of different stages in an event or process.

Appendix 4: Editing final drafts

Content and argument		Style	
	The text answers the central question(s) posed by the title		The text is formal (full words over contractions)
	Sufficient words have been given to the most important points		It is free of slang and colloquialisms
	All the information included is relevant to the set question		Technical vocabulary is used correctly
	The main line of argument is clear		The words used are my own
			The text is not repetitive
Research material			The text can be read aloud easily
	There are sufficient examples and evidence to prove or illustrate my points with citations		Text is written in the third person
	My own ideas and opinions are clear to the reader	General	
	Structure and grouping		Introduction is suitable
	The text is in the appropriate structure or format		Conclusion is suitable
	Ideas are suitably linked into paragraphs		Spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct
	Each paragraph is well structured		Citations & references are correct
	Ideas are presented in a logical order		I have taken account of earlier feedback I received
	It is clear how each paragraph links to the others		I have observed the word/ page limit
			I have compared this work against the marking criteria
Clarity			
	There is nothing the reader will find confusing		
	The language is clear and straightforward		
	Sentences are of reasonable length and uncomplicated		
	It is clear which sentence in my introduction summarises my viewpoint / argument		

(Source: Adapted from Cottrell, 2008)

Appendix 5: Useful key words and phrases

Establishing the importance of the topic:

- X is a common...
- X is an important...
- Recent development in...
- In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in...
- Recent developments in the field of x...
- Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in...

Highlighting a problem or controversy in the field of study:

- However, these rapid changes are having a serious effect...
- However, a major problem with this is...
- To date there has been little agreement on what...
- More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about...
- There is increasing concern that...
- Concerns have been raised by several relevant bodies...
- The issue of x has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the field of...
- The issue has grown in importance in light of recent...

Highlighting a knowledge gap in the field of study (for research):

- So far, however, there has been little discussion about...
- However, far too little attention has been paid to...
- Most studies in x have only been carried out in a small number of areas...
- The research to date has tended to focus on x rather than y...

Focus and aim:

- This paper will focus on...
- This paper will examine...
- This paper will give an account of...
- This paper seeks to address the following questions...
- This essay critically examines...
- This essay critically discusses...
- The purpose of this paper is to review recent research into the...
- This paper will review the research conducted on...
- This chapter reviews the literature concerning the usefulness of ...
- The aim of this paper is to determine...
- The aim of this study was to evaluate and validate...

Referring to literature:

General descriptions of the relevant literature:

- A considerable amount of literature has been published on x. These studies...
- In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on...
- A large and growing body of literature has investigated...

General reference to previous research:

- Many have argued that...
- Numerous studies have attempted to explain...
- Recent evidence suggests that...
- Previous studies have reported that...
- A number of studies have found that...

Reference to single investigations:

- Smith (2016) found that.....
- Smith *et al.* (2017) stated that...
- Smith (2016) showed that...
- Smith *et al.* (2017) investigated the...
- Smith (2016) studied the effects of...
- Smith *et al.* (2017) carried out a number of investigations into the...
- In 2017, Smith *et al.* published a paper in which they described... (if Smith is one of several authors)
- A recent study by Smith (2016) involved...
- A small scale study by Smith (2016) reaches different conclusions...
- To determine the effects of x, Smith (2016) compared...
- Smith (2016) identified...
- Smith *et al.* (2017) listed three reasons why...
- Smith (2016) provided in-depth analysis of work...
- Smith *et al.* (2017) discussed the challenges and strategies for...
- Smith (2016) questioned whether...

Reference other writers' ideas:

- According to Smith (2016)...
- Smith (2016) argues that...
- Smith *et al.* (2017) maintains that...
- This view is supported by Smith (2016) who writes...
- As Smith *et al.* (2017) reminds us...

Ways of introducing quotations:

- Smith (2016) concluded...
- As Smith *et al.* (2017) stated.....

Being critical!

- One major criticism of Smith's (2016) work is that...
- Many writers have challenged Smith's (2016) claim on the grounds that...

Introducing other people's criticisms:

- However, Smith (2016) pointed out that...
- Smith *et al.* (2017) argued that...

(Source: Adapted from: The University of Manchester, 2005)