

Communication Skills Guide for Business Students



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University of Adelaide 5005
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Communication Skills Guide

for Commerce Students

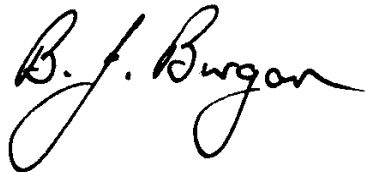
PREFACE

How will you succeed in your degree *and* the world of Commerce? 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 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 booklet, also at <http://www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/current/comskil/>

How do you write professional reports? Case studies? Executive summaries? Interview other professionals? Give convincing oral presentations? Reference appropriately? Avoid plagiarism? This *Guide* shows you how. It's a key resource for communicating effectively. Check it every time you begin to prepare an assignment.

The *Communication Skills Guide* is tailor-made for the School of Commerce at The University of Adelaide. Because the lecturers in each Commerce 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!



Assoc. Prof. Barry Burgan

Head of School
School of Commerce

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Communication Skills Program is an initiative of the School of Commerce aimed at integrating communication skills across all courses in the Bachelor of Commerce. Dr Fred Bloch and the Communication Skills Committee have been the driving forces in shaping the Program and its key resource, the *Communication Skills Guide*.

Members of the Centre of Learning and Professional Development at the University played a significant role in the Program since its inception in 1995. Christine Ingleton and Barbara Wake collaborated with the staff in providing models, workshops and expertise in learning, teaching and communication and in the production of the first edition of the *Guide*, written by Alison Southwick. This 2nd edition was prepared by Joeline Hancock.

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2nd edition



A Message from CPA Australia

The ability to communicate well helps you in many situations – at university, socially and in your career. Importantly, effective communication skills are vital in a professional environment. Being able to put your ideas across in a concise, meaningful and influential way is fundamental to your success in business.

Whether building rapport with potential clients, dealing with customers or meeting with colleagues in the workplace, the ability to communicate with maximum impact is a skill that you will need.

Finance, accounting and business professionals are taking an increasingly visible role within their organisations, working on cross-departmental projects from strategic planning to information technology initiatives. They are also sending and presenting data to diverse audiences. As a result, employers look for finance, accounting and business graduates who not only possess financial knowledge, but also strong communications skills.

The skill sets necessary for today's professionals demand superior interpersonal, writing and verbal capabilities.

- **Interpersonal** - Working with people from different areas of your organisation, you will be required to address diverse business issues. You'll also need to work well within a team, sharing the workload and completing projects successfully and within deadlines.
- **Writing** - Finance, accounting and business professionals write a myriad of communications, including financial reports, inter-department memos, strategic plans and proposals. It is important to use language that the reader will understand, avoid jargon and be persuasive where appropriate.
- **Speaking** - Just as you will be required to write on a variety of topics, you may also be asked to speak about them. It is important to convey complex information in a clear way. You'll need to know your audience, including their purpose for being there, their concerns, time constraints and attitudes, and tailor your speech accordingly. The more prepared and knowledgeable you are about your audience and your content, the more confident you'll be and the greater the impact your message will carry.

CPA Australia commends the School of Commerce at The University of Adelaide for its initiative in incorporating the communications skills program into the curriculum. It is a welcome development in providing our future finance, accounting and business professionals with the tools they need to build a successful and rewarding career.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Langdon Blight'.

Langdon Blight
Director – SA
CPA Australia

AIM communiqué

communication, *n* **1.** the act or fact of communicating; transmission. **2.** the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs. **3.** that which is communicated or imparted. **4.** a document or message imparting views, information, etc

“Friends, Romans and commerce students, lend me your ears....”

Sound familiar? Written (well most of it) by William Shakespeare, one of the great communicators.

And the reason for his success?

Not only did he understand the importance of developing excellent communication skills but also he used his skills to get his message across.

Simple in theory, more difficult in practice.

So, any program that can assist individuals to enhance their verbal, written and interpersonal skills is a real plus in the competitive employment market.

AIM recognises the value of excellent communication skills in today's fast paced business environment and strongly supports the School of Commerce at The University of Adelaide initiative to include a communication skills program into the curriculum.

This initiative will provide valuable practical information to assist you to become a better communicator and therefore better able to impart your thoughts, opinions and knowledge.

I hope I have got my message across – this program will make a difference.



John Stokes
Chief Executive Officer
AIM SA

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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 14,000 students, including over 1,000 international students from 66 countries, Adelaide University is small enough to provide personal interaction with teaching staff, yet large enough to offer a broad range of courses and many opportunities for postgraduate research. 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 member.

The University believes the best teaching is conducted within an environment of active, world class research. 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 graduate 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 1.7 million volumes and extensive CD-ROM databases.

The University of Adelaide graduates possess a qualification recognised around the world. 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. There is an extremely active Overseas Students' Association which aims to make the overseas education experience of international students both enjoyable and rewarding.

Adelaide is a modern, leading edge university which maintains a long and proud tradition of excellence in education and liberal values of enquiry - qualities that characterise great institutes of learning.

Introduction to University 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 passing up assignments on time. Section 2.4 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 written 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.

The most useful resources available for you include your School Handbook, your Course Outline and other course handouts, this *Communication Skills Guide*, The University of Adelaide Centre of Learning and Professional Development (CLPD) and various web sites.

Your **School Handbook** includes important dates for semesters, enrolment, withdrawals and course additions. It gives information about the different Commerce Pathways, the courses and their lecturers-in-charge, services from the Commerce Office, computing facilities at the School, and rules and procedures.

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 your markers are grading.

Your **Communication Skills Guide** is a handbook for Commerce students whenever you are preparing an assignment or wondering how to improve your grades. 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 cultural differences in learning and teaching (see 2.2) and a list of academic skills and where you can get help (see 2.1).

The **CLPD** is designed especially to help you meet the academic language and learning demands of your courses. What the CLPD offers and how to contact the unit are listed on the next page.

The **web sites** you will find most helpful are:

School of Commerce	http://www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/
Communication Skills	www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/current/comskills/
CLPD	http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/students/

Centre for Learning and Professional Development

LANGUAGE AND LEARNING SERVICE (LLS)

Level 2, Schulz Building, North Terrace Campus
(G3 on campus map)

The Language and Learning Service (LLS) is part of the Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD). It offers students a range of academic workshops and online resources to develop language and learning skills at undergraduate and postgraduate coursework levels.

Two Helpdesk sessions are available each day: 11:30am–12:30pm and 2pm–4pm. Issues can be dealt with briefly in the morning session; more in-depth concerns can be addressed in the 2-hour session. No appointment is needed for these sessions.

The LLS provides sessions for local and international students with language backgrounds other than English. These include a series of workshops on Academic Writing, Conversation Tutorials and a Volunteer Program for individual conversation development.

A special series of workshops each semester designed specifically for postgraduate coursework students is offered each semester at the LLS. These workshops include developing an analytical approach, writing a research paper, and presentation skills. The LLS also offers an introductory session for mature-age students to assist their transition into university.

For further information:
telephone 8303 5771
email clpd@adelaide.edu.au
website <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/LLS/>

MATHEMATICS LEARNING SERVICE (MLS)

Level 1, Schulz Building, North Terrace Campus
(G3 on campus map)

The Mathematics Learning Service offers free support for students learning or using maths and/or stats in their studies. The service can also provide basic general stats advice for research projects as well as assist with computer packages such as Excel and SPSS.

The Service includes the 'Maths Drop-In Centre' which is open 10:00am–4:00pm during teaching weeks, swot vacs and selected times during mid-semester breaks (see website or phone). There is no need to make an appointment at these times and assistance is free to University of Adelaide students. (At other times appointments can be made by contacting the Service.)

The Service also offers a variety of free bridging courses in maths and stats and workshops can be organised for small groups.

Other resources include books, videos and web-based materials.

The Mathematics Learning Service is part of the Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD).

For further information:
telephone 8303 5862
email mls@adelaide.edu.au
website <http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/maths/>

For future updates please send to:
Peter Murdoch, CLPD, Level 1, Schulz Building.
peter.murdoch@adelaide.edu.au
Last updated: 20 January 2006

Part 1

Assignment tasks /
Types of text

See ...

Boxes in the margins relate to the adjacent highlighted words and refer to a section in the book where the highlighted words are explained.

1.1 Short answers

	Skills	Criteria
See 2.10	Analyse the question	• The question is answered
	Select relevant information	• The content is all relevant to the question
See 2.7	Think critically and analytically	• The answer shows understanding of how key aspects relate • Information is questioned
	Begin with a proposition	• The proposition shows understanding of the question and indicates the points to be covered • The final sentence summarises
See 2.6	Present an argument	• The argument is logical and concise

Purpose

To write a concise and logical answer to a question.

Audience

Your assessor. However, this format is 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 below.) In a sense, the ambit of the answer 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 ‘How’.

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.

See 2.8

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. Write your answer with 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.

See 2.10

Example of an establishing sentence

Question: Discuss the relative merits of cash over accrual accounting.

Answer: The relative benefits of cash versus accrual accounting relate to the size and complexity of the entity.

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.

See 2.7

Example

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

Answer:

Cash accounting provides useful financial information only under restrictive conditions.	Establishing sentence
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.	Definition and fact
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.	Fact
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.	Fact
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.	Conclusion

Useful reference

See the School of Commerce website for examples and further advice.

See 2.1

1.2 Academic Essays

Skills	Criteria
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">See 2.6</div> Structure the essay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposition states your position and is followed by the main points to be covered • The proposition shows understanding of the question • The argument presents your ideas with evidence • The conclusion summarises the points made
Present an argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence is provided to support your opinion • Your position remains clear throughout • Opposing views and evidence are considered
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">See 2.12</div> Reference thoroughly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The source of each claim made is acknowledged • The Harvard system is used consistently to cite sources and to list references
Write clearly and concisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments are clear and concise • Grammar and spelling are accurate

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 assessor, who is an academic, 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

See 2.8

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.

See 2.7

See 2.8

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 to illustrate key points, but avoid excessive use of quotations. Make sure you have taken a position; not just presented others' ideas.

See 2.6

Useful references

Clanchy, John & Ballard, Brigid (1981 or 1997) *Essay Writing for Students*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

Webb, Carolyn & Drury, Helen (1995) *Essay Module*, in the series Writing Practice for University Students, from the University of Sydney. To use this reference, arrange a time with the Centre of Learning and Professional Development. See the CLPD website for times of workshops on essay writing.

See 2.1

1.3 Oral presentations

Skills	Criteria
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">See 2.6</div> Select and organise information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of information • Amount appropriate to the time available • Brief introduction • Argument is well organised, using markers • Short conclusion or link (if in group)
Project confidence and enthusiasm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong stance, calm appearance, eye contact • Minimal reference to notes
Speak clearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear speech • Steady pace • Some modulation • Appropriate emphasis • Explain or define new terms • Avoid jargon and long sentences
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">See 1.13</div> Use audio-visuals effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over Head Transparencies (OHTs) or Powerpoint slides should not be crowded • Equipment used with ease • Information selected assists the audience
Respond to the audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counter arguments explained • Own argument summarised • Active listening and focused response

Purpose

To present a persuasive argument or report on a topic.

Audience

Your audience will 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 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.

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, conclusion.
4. Select your main points and list them as headings for OHTs or slides. Make sure the print is large enough for your audience (at least 16 pt). Uncomplicated graphics can be included.
5. Prepare your main points on cards if you need prompts.
6. Practise standing, using OHT projector and notes. Check timing.

See 2.7

Tips

To avoid reading your notes, only write headings on the cards you hold. More detailed notes can be on the table for reassurance and emergency.

Useful references

Module 6, Effective Communication: Oral Presentations, CLPD website, The University of Adelaide.

Valentine, Nina (1993) *Speaking in Public*, Penguin Pocket Series, Australia.

See 2.1

1.4 Interviews

Skills	Criteria
Presenting as a professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appears confident and is well prepared • Shakes hand and introduces self • Uses interviewee's name • Seats interviewee appropriately • Summarises focus of interview and areas to be covered
Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions are open ended • The order of questions has a clear logic • Clarifying questions used if needed
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear enunciation and standard English • Pace is even, not too slow or too fast • Responses are acknowledged • Eye contact, with some taking of notes and referring to questions
Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirms understanding by paraphrasing • Asks if the interviewee wants to add anything • Thanks interviewee and confirms the next step

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 Seat interviewee appropriately, if you are the host
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 Questions become specific Questions to clarify answers are added 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. If you are the host 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.
8. As soon as practicable fill out your notes so that you have the answers clearly recorded.

Hints

Pace your questions so that all your written questions are answered without rushing. Give yourself and the interviewee time to think, to add information and to ask for clarification.

1.5 Professional reports

Skills	Criteria
Plan and manage tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report is on schedule • All relevant aspects are considered
Research information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate sources are consulted • Sufficient sources are consulted • Sources of data are well documented
Organise information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate headings • Integrated structure, ie arguments and conclusions match purpose • Alternative views are considered
Write clearly and concisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments are clear and concise

See 2.11

See 2.6

Definition

A formal account of a situation produced after consideration of all relevant factors. In the commerce workplace, much of the writing will be in the form of a report. The report is based on research, with evidence provided from the literature as well as from research undertaken by the investigator. The argument is drawn from professional practice, using the language of business appropriate to the audience.

Purpose

To inform senior management or a client about a particular issue, often for the purpose of 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.

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.

Structure of a Long Report

Title page	Report title, author name, course and tutorial, tutor's name, date
Table of contents	All sections and appendices listed and numbered; page numbers provided
List of illustrations, tables, figures	Lists of these, numbered correctly, with page numbers
Executive summary	Brief statement of purpose, argument and recommendations
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	Use Footnote or Harvard System, as required
Appendices	Technical information such as interview schedule used, organisation documentation, spreadsheets and statistics

See 1.6

See 2.7

See 2.12
or 2.13

Structure of a Concise Report

Title page	Report title, author name, course and tutorial, tutor's name, date
Table of contents	Lists and numbers all sections and appendices; provides page numbers
Executive summary	Brief statement of purpose Summary of discussion Recommendations
Body of report	Background information Analysis and discussion Recommendations
Conclusion	Summary or restatement of the main issues
Appendix	Highly technical information e.g. Spreadsheets, Statistics

See 1.6

Language and style

Reports have a formal tone to suggest impartiality of the analysis and discussion. Your writing should be clear and concise and display good style, taking account of the report's purpose and the audience's needs. Your voice and words should be your own. Use headings to guide the reader.

See 2.8

Steps

See 2.7

1. Identify which 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: proof read; check that all report elements are present and in the correct order; check grammar and spelling.

Hints

See 2.11

Be clear when you are stating your opinion and when the views of others, eg *The manager indicated that ...* and *The findings suggest that ...*.

Where appropriate, use direct quotations from research to illustrate key points, but avoid excessive use of quotations.

Ask your tutor which reference system is required.

Useful references

Allen, J. (1998) *Writing in the Workplace*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

Bryman, A. (1989) *Research Methods and Organisational Studies*. Unwin Hyman, London.

Winckel, A. and Hart, B. (1996), *Report Writing Style Guide for Engineering Students*, University of South Australia, Adelaide.

Windschuttle, K. and Elliott, E. (1994), *Writing, Researching, Communicating: Communication Skills for the Information Age*, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Sydney.

1.6 Executive summaries

Skills	Criteria
Structure the written report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background information is brief• Arguments summarised are the essential ones• Recommendations clearly relate to the arguments
Format as expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Page headed Executive Summary• No more than one A4 page in length• Single-spaced• Placed after the table of contents
Write clearly and concisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information is clear and concise• Summary reads easily• Grammar and spelling are accurate• No acronyms

Definition

An executive summary is a concise and complete summary of the essential content of the report of which it is part.

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.

Language and style

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

Steps for writing executive summary

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

Hints

The executive summary is often considered the most important part of a report. It must therefore be clear and have no errors.

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 management report must also stand alone.

Do not use headings within an executive summary.

1.7 Case analysis reports

Skills	Criteria
Structure the written report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background information is relevant • Issues are well ordered • Recommendations clearly relate to the issues
Identify the main issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues are identified • Interrelationships are clear • A full grasp of the situation is shown
Analyse the issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each issue is discussed using relevant concepts and principles • Insight is shown in analysing the information
Support your recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations are consistent with situation • Recommendations are well supported • Recommendations are practicable
Write <u>clearly</u> and concisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments are clear and concise • Appropriate headings are used • Grammar and spelling are accurate

See 2.7

See 2.8

Definition

A case analysis 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 analysis report is for a client or a firm's senior management who are seeking a way forward.

Structure

Title page	Report title, author's name, course and tutorial, tutor's name, date
Table of contents	List and number all sections; include page numbers.
Executive Summary	Page headed 'Executive Summary' No more than one A4 page in length Single-spaced Analyse and explain each issue in terms of the relevant theoretical material and of their advantages and disadvantages.
Recommendations	Suggest the best next step to take on each of the issues, with justification based on your analysis – no new information.
Appendices	Include additional material relevant to the case and referred to in the report.

See 1.6

Language and style

Case studies have a formal tone to indicate impartial analysis. 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 to the reader.

See 2.8

Steps for case 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 may 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. Do a SWOT analysis: list the firm's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
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.

Steps for writing case report

1. Write a draft using the structure described above. 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. Proofread your final draft; check grammar and spelling.

See 2.8

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 this case.

Useful references

Kashani, Kamran (1992) *Managing Global Marketing: Cases and Text*, PWS-Kent Pub., Boston.
Lovelock, Christopher H. (1992) *Managing Services: Marketing Operations and Human Resources* (2nd edition) Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

1.8 Precis

Skills	Criteria
Understand the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precis shows thorough understanding • Precis is logical and coherent
Select essential information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the main points are included • No new information or opinion is introduced
Write in your own words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own words used
Emphasise the main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects structure and tone of the original

See 2.11

Definition

A precis (pronounced *pray-see*) is a summary that contains an exact reproduction of the logic, organisation and emphasis of the original texts.

Purpose

To capture the essence of a text.

Audience

Your assessor. However, this format is superb practice for cutting through to what a report or article is really saying – an invaluable skill for study and in the workplace.

Structure

Exactly as the original, with the same proportions for each section.

Style

As for the original. Use first person ('I' or 'we') only if it is in the original.

Steps

1. Make sure you understand the article.
2. Select the most important points and underline or highlight them.
3. Group these main points and write sentences for them.
4. Arrange your sentences into one paragraph.
5. Check the logical flow of your sentences and that you emphasise main points only.
6. Check that you have introduced no new information or opinion.
7. If presenting an oral precis, state how it relates to the issue under discussion.

Tips

Clearly state main points and eliminate illustrations and examples.

Use your own words. Never copy complete phrases.

Nothing should be said more than once.

1.9 Professional synopsis

Skills	Criteria
Select essential information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction provides the context for your reader • The essence of the full report is conveyed • Conclusion provides an evaluation
Write clearly and concisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and precise language • Formal register and tone • Only include essential information • Clear sentences • No spelling or grammatical errors • Generally between 200 and 500 words

See 2.8

Definition

A synopsis is a concise summary of a report, an event or another task.

Purpose

To convey as concisely as possible the content of what is being summarised.

Audience

The client for whom the task is undertaken.

Structure

The context of the task: the problem and aims

The content: the key points covered

Conclusion and/or recommendations.

Language and style

Clear and concise, using formal language

Generally 200 - 500 words in length, single-spaced A4.

See 2.8

Steps

1. Determine who will read your synopsis.
2. Briefly state the problem or the task undertaken and orient the reader to it.
3. Select the main points, eliminating non-essential details and examples.
4. Conclude with the key recommendations or a summary statement.
5. Add a title that describes the task.
6. Centre the synopsis on the page. Include the date at the bottom.
7. Proofread and fix any complicated sentences or errors.

Tip

Keep in mind your audience.

1.10 Formal letters

Skills	Criteria
Develop message logically	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context in introduction• One idea per paragraph
Use correct conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addressing and date are correct• Appropriate greeting and close• Left aligned and blank space balanced on page• Name/ title/ signature are correct• Enclosures/ cc are listed appropriately
Write <u>clearly and concisely</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point of letter is obvious• All necessary details included• Direct and concise use of language• Logical development of ideas• Appropriate register and tone• Tact and inclusiveness

See 2.8

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.

- letterhead or sender's address
- date
- receiver's address
- salutation
- context
- body of letter (one idea per paragraph)
- closing
- writer's signature
- writer's name
- writer's position/title
- enclosures, copies

Fred Bloch
Doggy Avenue
BODSVILLE S.A. 5099
21.7.2004

B Neil
The Blacks
Cowandilla SA. 5033

Dear Mr B Neil

This letter is to confirm the agreement we reached at our meeting last week on 16th July regarding future auditing of your company.

XX
XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XX
XX
XX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

I look forward to receiving notification of your company's schedule.

Yours faithfully
J. Bloch
Fred Bloch
Registered Auditor
Enc: Fee schedule

Language and style

The purpose and audience will determine the level of formality used. Your writing should be clear and concise, and taking account of the letter's purpose and the audience's previous knowledge and needs. The voice and words should be your own.

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.

Useful references

Allen, J. (1998) *Writing in the Workplace*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston

Windschuttle, K. and Elliott, E. (1994) *Writing, Researching, Communicating: Communication Skills for the Information Age*, 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Sydney.

1.11 Formal emails

Skills	Criteria
Develop the message <u>logically</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject title clearly indicates the topic • Opening sentence provides the context • One idea per paragraph • Include your expectation at the end
Use formal conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal font, 12 point • Appropriate greeting and closure • Add attachments if the format is complex • Attachments are mentioned and included • Add <i>cc</i> if others should be informed
Write <u>clearly and concisely</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The point of the email is obvious • All necessary details are included • Only information relevant to the topic is included • Direct and precise language • Appropriate register and tone • Be tactful and inclusive

See 2.6

See 2.8

Purpose

The purpose of a professional email is to provide information or to ask a question. Generally you will also want to impress staff.

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. 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 name, eg Dr Bloch, Fred, Ms ..., Mr ..., Stan Merchant.
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.

To: Stan.Market@Goodsales.com.au

Subject: Proposed fees

Attachment: Fees -2004.doc

computer

.doc if sending from Mac

Stan Merchant
Best Price Company

Both names if you don't know the receiver personally

Company names if it is company business

Spaces for easy reading

As promised, I am enclosing a schedule of
the proposed auditing fees that will be
charged by our company from January
2004. I will post the finalised schedule
to you when it is published.

Spaces for easy reading

Francis Baxter
Baxter and Baxter Auditors

Both names if you don't know the receiver personally

Company names if it is company business

1.12 Memos

Skills	Criteria
Develop the message logically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject title clearly indicates the topic • Opening paragraph gives main ideas • One idea per paragraph
Use memo conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To, From, Date, Subject at the top • The business's format is used if there is one • The memo can be made public; nothing personal
Write clearly and concisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The point of the memo is obvious • All necessary details are included • Only information relevant to the topic is included • Direct and precise language • Appropriate register and tone

See 2.6

See 2.8

Definition

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

Purpose

A memo is to put on record work-related information, a concern or 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 communications always impress 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.

<p>MEMORANDUM</p> <p>To: Harry Hopper From: James Jenks Date: June 25 2004 Subject: The Ampol audit</p> <p>I spoke on the phone to Allen Aspen, the Financial Manager of Ampol SA, yesterday, the 24th June. He said that the deadline for</p> <p style="text-align: right;">James</p>

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.

1.13 OHTs and Powerpoint slides for oral presentations

Skills	Criteria
Select and organise information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides summarise key points only
Choose a clear, uncluttered layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenty of space around print • At least 18 point font • Upper and lower case font style • Consistent style, avoiding distractions
Present effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides centred on the screen • Pointer used without fuss • Eye contact with audience • Steady pace

Definition

OHTs (Overhead Transparencies) and Powerpoint presentations are visual summaries of an oral presentation, for projection onto a large screen.

Purpose

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

Audience

Generally students, clients or a committee. If your presentation is to be assessed, your marker will be a key audience member, whose requirements should be carefully considered.

Structure

Introduction	Focuses attention and tells what the presentation is about
Main points	Presents the key points only on one or more slides, depending on the time available.
Conclusion	Summarises what you have covered.

Style

Language	Choose simple language. The main points should be headings and dot points. Keep the points consistent in their grammar.
Font size	Use 18 point or bigger, if it's in a large hall
Font choice	Use a font that is clear and has serifs, e.g. Times, 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 on white or yellow on blue. Avoid red and pale colours.

Steps for preparing the slides

1. Identify the essential points of your presentation.
2. If OHPs, choose an appropriate font and size; if Powerpoint, also choose your 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 with the main points on it. If time permits in your presentation you can then prepare a slide for each of these main points, listing the sub points under each.
4. Your final slide should restate your position or conclusion.
5. Include a simple graph, table, quote or cartoon to support your main point, if there is enough time.

Steps for presenting the slides

1. Check well before your presentation that your equipment is working, and placed so that you can face the audience and the slides will be centred on the screen.
2. Organise and number your slides so you pick them up in the right order, and put them down so that you can locate them again.
3. Look at your audience while you state your topic or question. Show the first slide before or after this.
4. Change slides before you speak to them. Don't rush.
5. You can direct attention to each point on a slide using a pencil or arrow card that you shift on the slide to indicate each point. Powerpoint allows you to add each point to the screen as you go.

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 keeping 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 Reference

Information Technology Services has a Web based course for using Powerpoint on MyUni (Current students). Go to Computer Labs > ITS training > Web based courses > IT Online Tutorials > Powerpoint.



**AUSTRALIAN
MARKETING
INSTITUTE**

A bridge from academic achievement to real world experience

Completing your marketing studies and achieving your degree provides the foundation for entering an exciting and rewarding career.

Equally important is to continue that training and study within an environment, which allows the opportunity to meet and network with professionals actively involved in marketing within a wide range of commerce and industry.

The eventual transition from student to marketer highlights a need to engage with professional marketers, who have the practical experiences to impart. This activity offers valuable assistance to those entering the profession of marketing.

The Australian Marketing Institute (AMI) is a national organisation with international associations and is the largest professional body in Australia representing marketers.

Our stated mission is to lead, promote and develop the profession of marketing in Australia through:

Leadership – Provide leadership for the marketing community within government and industry
Professionalism and Integrity – Maintaining a code of professional practice and quality standards
Industry Collaboration – Liaison with Australian and international organisations with similar interests
Promotion and Representation – Developing awareness and recognition of the profession to enhance its status
Professional Development – Promoting and developing individual competencies

The Institute provides a range of professional training options and events across Australia and encourages participation by students and graduates in these activities.

Information on the AMI can be obtained from the State Secretariat at the contact number listed below or check the AMI website at www.ami.org.au

Good luck with your studies during the coming semesters.

Adrian Earl FAMI, CPM
State President SA AMI
AMI SA Secretariat
PO Box 422, Brooklyn Park SA 5032
Telephone: 08 8235 2500
Facsimile: 08 8235 1733
Email: sa@ami.org.au

Part 2

Component Skills

See

Boxes in the margins relate to the adjacent highlighted words and refer to a section in this *Guide* where the highlighted words are explained.

2.1 Skills and resources

Topic	Resource	
Cohesive writing	CLPD workshop Writing and Speaking at Uni	<p>The Communication Skills Guide is available from the School of Commerce Office with further support on the School of Commerce Communication Skills website.</p> <p>www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/current/comskil/</p> <p>The CLPD workshops run for 50 minutes each on the dates and times listed on the CLPD web site www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/LLS/ and in pamphlets available from the Student Centre and International Student Centre.</p> <p>The LLS Learning Guides are available from the CLPD, Level 2 Schulz building. or available online at www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/LLS/stud_resources.html</p> <p>The Writing and Speaking at University course is available to all students. It includes a range of online resources. Login to MyUni and select it from the list of courses you are currently participating in. myuni.adelaide.edu.au/</p> <p>Plagiarism website www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/plagiarism/students/index.html</p>
Conversation tutorial	CLPD workshop	
Critical reading	CLPD workshop	
Editing	CLPD website	
Essays	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Essay writing	CLPD workshop Writing and Speaking at Uni	
Exam revision	CLPD workshop	
Exam writing	CLPD workshop	
Executive summary	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
The footnoting system	LLS Learning Guide	
Grammar	Writing and Speaking at Uni	
Group work	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Help with your uni work	CLPD Helpdesk	
Note taking	CLPD workshop	
Managing your workload	CLPD workshop	
Oral presentation	CLPD workshop <i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Paragraph writing	CLPD workshop Writing and Speaking at Uni	
Plagiarism	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i> Plagiarism website	
Precis writing	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Punctuation	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Reading effectively	CLPD workshop LLS Learning Guide	
Referencing (Harvard)	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i> LLS Learning Guide	
Referencing (footnoting)	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Report writing	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i> LLS Learning Guide	
Review of an article	LLS Learning Guide	
Spelling	Communication Skills website	
Structuring documents	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Style	<i>Communication Skills Guide</i>	
Tests and exams	LLS Learning Guide	
Time organisation	LLS Learning Guide	
Tutorials and seminars	LLS Learning Guide	
Seminar presentation	CLPD workshop	

2.2 Cultural differences in learning styles

Students coming to university for the first time or transferring from other universities often experience major cultural differences in academic expectations. The following comments of some students after their first semester in the School of Commerce in 2003 show how they have had to shift:

- from formality to informality,
- from not speaking up out of respect or shame, to taking the initiative and asking questions,
- from dependence to independence.

WHAT STUDENTS SAY

Lectures and notetaking

At home we had classes of 20-30; here 100 or more and tutorials of 15. We had the same lecturers for our tutorials.

In Malaysia the textbook is used as the basis of lectures. We were spoon fed out of the textbook. No extraneous information. Now I know that here the emphasis in lectures is the guide to what we should study.

I'm getting better at knowing what to take down in lectures – just the points emphasised, then I use the textbook to back up what has been given in the lectures.

Tutorials

In Malaysia it's very rude to give an answer if the question isn't directed to you.

At home we were meant to have tutorials, but they ended up as lectures, with further input from lecturers, and the same number of students as in the lectures. Here we have to give arguments in tutorials.

In Malaysia, before we did a tutorial exercise, the lecturer taught us step by step how to do it, then we were given extra exercises to do ourselves. But here we are just taught very briefly during the lectures (sometimes it is too brief and we don't understand) and we need to read and understand from the textbook before we can do those tutorial exercises. We need to depend on ourselves for full understanding.

It was very hard presenting for the first time. I was very nervous.

Text books and reading

At home we would buy the textbook, but we didn't have to use it. The lecturers gave us notes, which were summaries from the textbooks. Here there's a lot to read in the textbooks.

Sometimes I need more background knowledge to understand the texts... I try to read the relevant chapter/s twice before lectures, to get background knowledge.

Assignments

Assignments are more demanding at Adelaide. We have to pay more attention to them.

At home as long as you did the assignment and passed it up, you passed.

Plagiarism

See 2.11

We were not taught to reference at home. We were allowed to copy from the text.

In Malaysia we are allowed to copy straight from the textbook and there's no in-text references required. But we need to provide the reference list or the bibliography.

Communication

At Adelaide, at first, the lectures were too fast and I couldn't understand the slang. I find it difficult to talk to Australian students, even though they're very friendly.

Source of quotations: Focus group of Transfer students, May 2003

Learning style

These students' comments reflect some of the cultural differences between learning styles expected in Malaysia and in Australia. At first you may feel very insecure about not being told exactly what to learn and in making your own judgments. It takes time to change from one learning style to another. The following sections (2.3 and 2.4) may help you make the necessary adjustments.

2.3 Academic expectations

Lectures and note taking

Take note in the first lecture what the lecturer says about how the lectures relate to the text book, to the tutorials and to the assignments, and about what is worth noting from lectures. Compare your notes with a model provided by the lecturer or with those of other students. You need to use headings and numbered or dot points.

Tutorials

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

There is rarely one right answer to any question and tutors will want you to give your opinions and to question what you read and hear. They do not want you to reproduce what you have heard or read. Many Transfer 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 give your opinion, the easier it will become.

Text books and reading

Find out in the first week how the tutor expects the text book/s to be used and how the texts relate to the lectures, tutorials and assignments. If at first you have difficulty in understanding the language, particularly the slang, you may need to read the relevant section in the text book before the lecture. 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.

The terms used in Commerce often have a different meaning to everyday English usage, for example, *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.

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. Some lecturers provide examples of assignments from previous years to help you know what they are expecting.

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 2.11 of the *Communication Skills 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. That section also explains how to use your own words to avoid copying the text.

2.4 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:

1. Form small study groups to check your note-taking in lectures and to ensure you pick up the most important points.
2. Use the key points in lectures and tutorials as a guide to what you need to learn and to follow up in your text books.
3. Work through any problems with your group first before you make a time to see your tutor.
4. When you are having problems understanding content, be specific: tell your tutor what you do understand, as well as what you don't.
5. If you are having problems understanding concepts, ask your lecturer or tutor to recommend a senior student who might be willing to tutor you. Ask the senior student if two or three of you can share the hourly cost.
6. Attend CLPD workshops on academic skills or make an appointment for individual assistance. CLPD services are free. CLPD staff cannot proofread your work, but they can help you to write academically, reference, read efficiently, etc. Visit the website at www.adelaide.edu.au/CLPD/

Use other sections of this *Communication Skills Guide*. It is written especially to help Commerce students develop their academic skills.

2.5 Aiming high for assignments

There are some obvious, minimal requirements that all students must meet to pass assignments. They are listed first. The second list of characteristics is a guide for students aiming for high grades. Be sure that you have read your course's assignment descriptions thoroughly, because some of these may be necessary for a bare pass.

Passing assignments requires, at least:

1. Answering the **set question**
2. Using your **own words**
3. **Structuring** the answer as required
4. Appropriate **referencing**
5. Including sufficient relevant references
6. Attaching a title/cover pages.

See 2.10

See 2.11

See 2.12

See 1.11

High grades for assignments require more than the essentials:

1. All information is relevant
2. **Claims are 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 unifies the whole
5. The assignment shows **critical and analytical thinking**
6. The literature has been **interrogated**, not just accepted
7. More than the minimum number of references
8. All **references** are complete, accurate, and consistent
9. Topic choice is adventurous (but appropriate)
10. Research journals as well as web sites have been consulted
11. The executive summary does summarise the findings
12. There is no repetition in the paper
13. That **alternative arguments** are dealt with
14. The conclusion does more than repeat the introduction – it synthesises your argument.

See 2.6

See 2.9

See 2.6

See 2.7

See 2.7

See 2.12

See 2.6

Based on Professor Lee Parker's 'An insight into marking', on the *Commerce* website

2.6 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 an opinion, or point of view. The opinion must be informed by evidence from the literature, from research, from examples and principles, 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 in a case analysis. Each of these types of academic assignment requires the student to gather information and data, form an opinion about that information, then present that opinion along with a carefully organised discussion of that opinion. For reports and case analyses the opinions are ultimately presented in the form of recommendations.

The amount and type of evidence required for the different types of assignment varies. For example, the argument in short essay answers rests on general principles and illustrative 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 rests on accepted principles and theory and insights into the information provided on the particular case.

Before writing a report, look at examples of reports from your field. There may be some in your texts or you could ask your lecturer for good examples to use as models for your work.

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 signals such as headings and markers, like 'firstly', 'in contrast' and 'as further support', 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 without an extra sentence, and in a case analysis and a management report with a listing of the recommendations.

In some assignment answers, the different components of an argument may be intertwined, 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 markers (word signals) 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 has been 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 (2.7).

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 the most appropriate. Care must be taken to use the system consistently and to ensure that all references listed are in fact cited in the text.

See 2.12

The following table can be used to check that an argument is well written.

Skills	Criteria
Argue logically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connections are clear • The argument is well structured • Alternatives covered
Provide evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence and examples are relevant • The evidence has authority • The evidence is convincing
Reference the sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All sources are acknowledged within the text • The reference list is complete and consistent • All sources cited are in the reference list and all items in the reference list are cited

2.7 Analytical and critical thinking

A questioning approach

The mark of a good academic or investigator is in the questioning approach taken to the area under investigation. The approach will 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 of the ideas and writing 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 been brought up 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 a '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 I already know? The critical questions should be put 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 after every lecture and each section read in a text. This approach will help you to remember what you have just encountered, and also help you to organise and integrate it into what you already know.

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

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.

See 2.6

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. An investigator 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.

Skills	Criteria
Being analytical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have identified considerations that had been left out • I have seen how other writers used words differently • I have found some weaknesses in arguments • I have recognised inappropriate examples or illustrations • I have seen new connections between ideas and sources
Questioning critically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have recognised the writers' particular interests and purposes • I have considered how the place and date of the ideas influence what has been said • I have seen whose points of view were not considered (eg. of producers, women, environmentalists)

2.8 Good style

What is good 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.

See 2.6

- 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 undergraduates believe, good writing is not complicated. The writer's aim should be to express, rather than impress, and that means short sentences rather than convoluted ones, and short words rather than long words used simply to impress. The best writers are those who get their message across without clutter or pomposity.

Another aspect of clear, direct 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, desirable way. Always acknowledge a quote or use of another's idea with quotation marks and by **citing** the source.

See 2.11

The third element of writing after sentence and word choice that makes for clear expression, is punctuation. 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 the meaning for the reader.

Finally, paragraphs and headings assist the reader by dividing up chunks of meaning, signalling that the writer is moving on to something different. Too many headings or small paragraphs interfere with the reader's efforts to tie ideas together; too few can cause an overload. A long paragraph needs to hang together well to be readily understood. Markers (words that signal relationships, such as 'first' and 'nevertheless'), careful use of pronouns, and having adjacent sentences linked all assist such cohesion.

Clarity of argument

See 2.6

The centrality of argument in **academic writing** and its characteristics are spelt out in another section. The clarity of the argument rests 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 keeping on track during the writing.

At all times the writer must consider the reader. Punchy, 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 hang 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 of events. It is the language of media reports. Impersonal language is the language of all formal writing and 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 tertiary marker will colour their approach to the argument and the ideas contained in it. Errors encountered in the first few pages give the impression of carelessness and an inability to attend to detail. 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 on spelling. 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 ('there' instead of 'their', 'product' instead of 'produce') has been used.

Spell checkers do not identify these as errors. Reading for fluency of argument can lead to reordering, deleting and rewriting of sections, the insertion of markers and word changes. While this can be easy to sort out with pencil and paper, the word processor has cut the time needed for such extensive editing enormously.

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 make times with a friend to check out sentences that concern you both. 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 **CLPD** to identify errors and to correct them.

See 2.1

2.9 Style for the School of Commerce

See 2.8

All lecturers and markers in the School of Commerce look for writing that is easy to understand. They therefore want writing that has all the characteristics of **good style** as described in 2.8: writing that is clear, impersonal and without errors.

For all major assignments, both formative and summative, the preferred layout in the School of Commerce 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.

Wherever possible assignments should be word processed or typed. If this is not possible, handwriting must be legible and with few corrections. Assignments must be handed in with a cover sheet attached. Your name, the name of the course, your tutor's name and your tutorial time should all be on the cover sheet. Plastic sleeves can be used, but do not submit each page in a plastic sleeve.

Referencing style

See 2.12

The preferred referencing styles for the School of Commerce are the:

- **Harvard** referencing style for academic essays and for short answers, and
- **Footnote** referencing *or Academy of Management Journal style guide* for Management reports.

See 2.13

The reason for students experiencing different reference styles is that both are widely used, so students need to be familiar with them. Make sure you know which style your lecturer requires, and how particular he or she is about referencing.

When using a referencing style the main concern is to be consistent. When using the Harvard system you must avoid adding depth or explanation through using a footnote. Instead you will need to include further explanation within your main text, use brackets or leave it out.

If you are using the Footnote system do not include in-text references. You may choose to provide a reference list at the end of your document using this system. However, Harvard system users must always include a reference list.

2.10 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

Criticise – 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

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 how great, valuable or important something is

Explain – Analyse in order to show reasons, causes and effects; clarify by the use of models and examples

To what extent is x true? – Explain in what ways x is true and what 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

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 – Include discussion about the following subject

Relate – Emphasise connections and associations in relation to – only a certain part of the topic is needed

Review – Re-examine, analyse and comment briefly on the major points

Role – the part something plays, how it works, especially in co-operation with others

State – Formally set out a position

Summarise – Choose the main points of a wide subject

Validate – give the evidence and facts to prove this statement

Acknowledgements

The material for this section is compiled from the following sources:

Betts, K. & Seitz, A. (1994) *Writing Essays and Research Reports in the Social Sciences*, 2nd edition, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne.

Clanchy, John & Ballard, Brigid (1981) *Essay Writing for Students: a Guide for Arts and Social Science Students*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne.

2.11 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 ways people fall into the problem of plagiarism. The issue of plagiarism is, however, also a matter of being a careful writer, so take special note of the last part of this section.

You might have noticed that each year, in both the *School of Commerce Handbook* and in *The University of Adelaide Handbook of Academic Programs Part 1*, there are sections devoted to plagiarism. You can see that the University has stated 'Plagiarism is a serious act of academic misconduct'.

Plagiarism defined

What does it really mean for you? The following (to be read in conjunction with the pages of your University Handbook) consider the definitions more closely:

- **Subsection (i)** This section details the fact that if you 'present substantial extracts... without clearly indicating their origin' you have copied phrases and passages directly without using quotation marks and without a reference. These phrases and passages might have been copied directly from your text books, books borrowed from the library, journals, articles, working papers, seminar or conference papers, lecture notes, information stored on computers or other students' work.
- **Subsection (ii)** If you use 'very close paraphrasing... without due acknowledgement' it 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 in a reference.
- **Subsection (iii)** Similar to subsection (i) in that if you 'quote directly from a source and fail to insert quotation marks' you have copied some other piece of work. Note that in this situation giving just a reference to the author is not sufficient acknowledgement.

These forms of plagiarism can arise firstly through not making an effort, and secondly, through a lack of care when you are doing your reading and research for your assignment.

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, composition is hard work. Or you might think that the author has expressed it so much better than you ever could, so why waste time trying?

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

Later in this section some guidance will be offered on how to avoid these forms of plagiarism. In the meantime, consider this. You might be tempted to use phrases, sentences and paragraphs from a source without acknowledging that they were someone else's ideas. Students often think, 'I'm sure that the lecturer won't have read that or won't remember where that idea came from'. Wrong! Lecturers know their courses inside out and are extremely well read and up to date. They are likely to recognise the source. They are also well-practised in discerning sudden changes in the style of writing when someone else's words are used.

Related forms of cheating

These are explained in a straightforward manner in **Section 4, subsections i, ii, and iii**. Firstly, you must not hand in any work that is written for you by another student. 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.

Copying the work of another student can occur deliberately or inadvertently. Do not get involved under any circumstances with deliberate copying. It is nothing more than cheating. Both parties involved can be heavily penalised.

Inadvertent copying can occur if you ask someone to hand in your assignment for you because you can't make it to the Commerce office that day. You might be the innocent victim of someone who hasn't done the assignment. Avoid handing the final copy of your assignment to anyone else. Nor should you ask others to print your assignment from your computer disk.

Please be careful with your assignments written on the computers in the Computing Lab. It's best not to leave your computer unattended with your assignment up on the screen. Make sure that when you have copied your latest version onto your floppy disk, that you remember to delete it from d: drive (formerly v: drive). Take the discarded printouts of your work home with you, rather than leaving them in the rubbish bin.

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. Students who hand in the same piece of work may both be given zero for their assignments.

A fourth and fifth form of cheating are explained in **Subsections iv, v and vi**, which deal with the same work being handed in for two different courses and cheating in exams.

In summary, we now know that plagiarism is considered to be cheating. But students usually do it because they do not know what is expected for the assignment, there are no models, nor instructions provided. If you are in doubt

about what your tutors expect for the assignment, please ask them. They are nice people and they are only too willing to help you!

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 Chapters XVII and XII of the University Statutes.

Avoiding plagiarism

The following examples of how to use your own words when writing assignments have been prepared by Carol Johnson, Head of the Politics Department. They are reproduced here, with her permission, to assist students who are having difficulty putting material into their own words.

The original passages are from a policy speech for the 1993 Federal Election by Paul Keating, Leader of the Australian Labor Party. These passages have been reproduced so that you may compare examples of good writing.

• What not to do!

This paragraph just strings together quotations and does not use the student's own words sufficiently.

Keating (1993) argues that unemployment is 'overwhelmingly, the principal concern of the Government.' While they've been able 'to achieve more economic growth than most other comparable countries', it hasn't been enough to generate sufficient employment. (Keating, 1993). Consequently, the Government's 'strategy is designed to assist recovery in business. Under Labor, business will pay a tax of 33 per cent on profits compared with 42 percent promised by the Opposition' (Keating, 1993). 'There will also be a business allowance of up to 20 percent covering investment over the future two years' (Keating, 1993).

This next paragraph includes examples of plagiarism because it does not use quotation marks - see above for where they should be.

Keating argues that unemployment is, overwhelmingly, the principal concern of the Government. While they've been able to achieve more economic growth than most other comparable countries, it hasn't been enough to generate sufficient employment. Consequently, the government strategy is designed to assist recovery in business. Under Labor, business will pay a tax on 33 per cent on profits compared with 42 per cent promised by the Opposition. There will also be a business allowance of up to 20 per cent covering investment over the future two years (Keating, 1993).

• Good examples

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

Keating acknowledges that unemployment is still 'the greatest problem we face' and the government's 'principal concern', despite his government's success at achieving high levels of economic growth by international standards (Keating, 1993, p 6). However, he argues that an ALP government would be able to increase employment by providing greater incentives for business to invest. In order to achieve this aim, an ALP government would provide generous investment allowances for business and substantially reduce the business tax rate. Indeed, Keating claims that the tax on profit under a Labor government would be 11% lower than under a Coalition government (Keating, 1993, p 6).

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

Keating (1993) acknowledges that unemployment is still a major problem despite his government's success at achieving high levels of economic growth by international standards. However, he argues that an ALP government would be able to increase employment by providing greater incentives for business to invest. In order to achieve this aim, an ALP government would provide generous investment allowances for business and substantially reduce the business tax rate. Indeed, Keating claims that the tax on profit under a Labor Government would be 11% lower than under a Coalition government (Keating 1993, p 6).

As you can see in this last example, the author, Keating, is 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 his with 'he argues' and 'Keating claims' in the second and fourth sentences. The exact page number of Keating's claim about the reduction in the tax on profit is cited. All of the information, however, is in the writer's own words.

• Some advice

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. Of course, this means that you will need to understand and remember what is in the text. At first you may only remember the gist of a section. Write down what is relevant to your assignment as you remember it, and go back to the source for further ideas, but put the source aside before you write them into your assignment, having checked how they relate to what you have already written.

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 how they relate in 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 prose.

Using the ideas and words of other

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

1. Quoting
2. Paraphrasing
3. Summarising.

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

2.12 Referencing: the Harvard system

Whenever we use the ideas and arguments of other writers, we are obliged to make reference to the writers and their work. We need to make clear which words and ideas we have 'borrowed' from others, and which are our own. By acknowledging the work of others, we avoid plagiarism.

The other main purpose of using references is to show the reader where the evidence comes from, 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. To achieve this there are three main systems of referencing to choose from:

- the Harvard system (author-date system), the preferred system of the School of Commerce for academic work
- numbered footnotes: the preferred system in the School of Commerce for reports
- endnotes: used for reports, but not by the School of Commerce.

The Harvard system

This method is widely used in the Social Sciences and is the style used in the School of Commerce for academic writing of essays and short answers. It is becoming the standard in academic writing. One of the advantages of this system is that the reader can see the source and date immediately, without having to flick through pages to the endnotes.

• References in the text

In the Harvard system footnotes should not be used for literature citations; instead all references - books and articles - appear in brackets at the appropriate place in the text. Only the author's surname, the year of publication and page numbers (if necessary) are stated:

In a recent paper (Irvine, 1995) three key issues were discussed.

The source must be clear every time you quote (use the exact words), paraphrase (use the ideas in different words) or summarise (use the main points of) someone else's opinions, theories or data. Your reference may be to a book, article, periodical, newspaper report, conference paper, working paper, personal communication or web address.

Some students have difficulty deciding just what must be referenced, and what is considered to be common knowledge. If you are in doubt, then reference.

• Page numbers

Page numbers for your references are necessary when you quote or paraphrase a particular passage, list or figure from your source.

Jones (1982, p 77) said, 'What is life without study?'

• Author's name as part of the text

If an author's name is mentioned in your text, you need not repeat it in the reference. Only the date (plus the page number of the quote, if available) appears in the brackets.

Pettigrew (1985) argues that ...

The research of Hoskin and Macve (1990) has shown that ...

• Three or more authors

If you are referring to something published by three or more authors, then give the surnames of all the authors, with the date the first time you cite the reference. If in the same text you refer to this source again, it is customary to give just the first author, followed by the abbreviation *et al.*, which stands for 'and others'.

A recent study (Fredericks, Ball and Glase, 1994) has shown that ... but it was in their experiments of 1990 (Frederick *et al.*, 1994) that it was shown ...

• **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 the suffix a, b, c, etc, should follow the year, in order to distinguish the publications.

Two significant studies in this area (Kaplan, 1984a; Kaplan, 1984b)
show that ...

• **Citing several references at the same point in the text**

When citing several references at the same point, separate the authors' names by semicolons and enclose the complete set of references in a single pair of parentheses.

Several recent studies (Brownell, 1985; Hirst, 1988; Strauss and Glaser, 1990) have
shown that ...

• **Secondary references**

When you have not read Chandler's 1965 research, but have read an account of this work in Johnson (1990), then Johnson is considered to be the secondary reference.

Both sources must be acknowledged in your reference.

Chandler (Johnson, 1990) found that ...

or, alternately

Chandler's investigation in 1965 (cited in Johnson 1990) discovered that....

or, alternately

The accounts were found to be much more complex than previously thought (Chandler, 1965 cited in Johnson 1990).

NOTE: Chandler's 1965 publication will not appear in the reference section, but Johnson's 1990 publication will be listed.

• **Different authors with the same surname**

References to different authors with the same surname should be distinguished by using the authors' initials or full names.

A recent study (Campbell, D.G. 1994) has shown that ... but Campbell, A.E. (1990) previously suggested that ...

• **Government publications**

Government publications can be referenced in a number of ways, depending on the information available about the publication. Where an author's name has been given, refer to him or her. If the work is presented as having been written by a committee, refer to it. If neither of these is available, use the name of the government department that produced the work.

Yetton P, Davis J & Swan P (1992) 'Going International: Export Myths and Strategic Realities', report prepared for the Australian Manufacturing Council, Melbourne, Australian Graduate School of Management, Sydney.

This would appear as an in-text reference as (Yetton et al., 1992).

Report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Beddall Report (1990) "Small Business in Australia: Challenges, Problems and Opportunities", AGPS, Canberra.

The in-text reference would be (Beddall Report, 1990).

Reserve Bank of Australia (1992) "Recent trends in Australian International Trade", *RBA Bulletin*, November 1992, Canberra.

or, alternately

Bureau of Industry Economics (1990) "Impediments to Manufactured Exports", Discussion Paper 12, AGPS, Canberra.

The in-text reference would be (Reserve Bank of Australia, 1992; Bureau of Industry Economics, 1990).

• **Lecture notes**

Students often include references to the lecture notes in their written work. **This is not recommended.** You should go to the material that the lecturer has been drawing on, read it and refer to it directly.

• **Lecturer's statement, an interview, or face-to-face comment**

What if the material comes from the lecturer's own research or an interview and has not yet been published? Ask him or her about this. The usual way to refer to such a source is to use the words 'personal communication', 'unpublished', or by including the source:

(Michalski, T, 1994, pers. com., 2 June)

or,

Seeley (1998, unpub.) argues that....

or, for example

In a personal interview conducted April 2004, Mr. J. Andrews proposed....

• **Web referencing**

Web addresses should be quoted as in the example below, with the name of the firm or creator and the title of the page.

Apart from the Web address you must also show the date and time of access.

The Natural Place (1998) 'The Natural Place: Environmentally Friendly Hotel

Apartments' [Http://www.thenaturalplace.com](http://www.thenaturalplace.com). Accessed 30/04/98.

This should also appear as an in text reference as (The Natural Place, 1998).

• **Reference list**

If you use the Harvard system you must include a reference list at the end of your work. It may also be called a bibliography. This is where the reader finds the full publication details of all the works referred to in your text.

The entries should be arranged in alphabetical order according to the surname of the first author. The use of either the author's initials or given name varies. Multiple works by the same author should be listed in chronological order of publication.

The date follows the name, in parentheses. If there is more than one publication in the same year by the same author or authors, the letters a, b, c are added to the date in the parentheses.

The title of the publication appears after the date, followed by the place of publication, then the publisher.

Note that the format for book references, such as White below, differs from the format for journal or newspaper references (see Adams below).

For books, the title is in italics or underlined and the publisher and place of publication included. With journal articles, the title of the article is in quotation marks, the title of the journal is either italicised or underlined, and the volume and number and usually page numbers are given. With journals, there are no publisher's details given.

Reference list example

- Adams, P (1987) 'Black and white and read no more?' *Weekend Australian Magazine*, 7-8 February, p 2.
- Dodgson, M & Rothwell, R (1991) 'Technology Strategies in the Small Firm', *Journal of General Management*, vol. 17, no. 1, Autumn.
- Ernst & Young (1992) *US Manufacturing Investment Abroad*, Ernst & Young, New York.
- Freeman, C & Perez, C (1988) 'Structural Crisis of Adjustment: Business Cycles and Investment Behaviour' in *Technical Change and Economic Thinking*, Dosi, G et al. (eds), Pinter Publishers, London.
- Industry Commission (1992) *Annual Report 1991-1992*, AGPS, Canberra.
- International Business Week* (1992) 'Little Companies, Big Exports', April 13, 1992.
- Kaspar, W (1991) 'International Factor Mobility - Australia's Challenge to be Attractive', paper delivered at an Industry Commission Seminar, March 13, Canberra.
- The Natural Place (1998) 'The Natural Place: Environmentally Friendly Hotel Apartments' [Http://www.thenaturalplace.com](http://www.thenaturalplace.com). Accessed 30/04/98.
- Matthews Committee (1990) 'Accounting in Higher Education. Report of the Review of the Accounting Discipline in Higher Education', Vol. 2, Surveys and Consultations, Department of Employment, Education and Training, AGPS, Canberra.
- The Natural Place (1998) 'The Natural Place: Environmentally Friendly Hotel Apartments' [Http://www.thenaturalplace.com](http://www.thenaturalplace.com). Accessed 30/04/98.
- Rothwell, R & Beesley, M (1989) 'The Importance of Technology Transfer' in Barbera, J, Metcalfe, S & Porteous, M, *Barriers to Growth in Small Firms*, Routledge, London.
- Webb, Carolyn (1994) 'Written and Oral Communication Skills of Students at the University of Sydney', draft paper to Working Party of Language Board, University of Sydney, 9 May, 1994.
- White, EM (1986) *Teaching and Assessing Writing*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

• Punctuation

Every reference list or bibliography you consult will have different styles of punctuation. The only rule that does not seem to vary is that the titles of books or other major works (not essays or journal articles) and the names of journals should be underlined or *italicised*.

Which style of punctuation you choose to adopt generally doesn't matter, as long as you are consistent throughout. That is, choose one style of punctuation and use that only.

• What about 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. Endnotes are not used in the School of Commerce.

2.13 Referencing: The footnoting system

The footnoting system is the referencing system preferred by the School of Commerce for report writing. This section is from the *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*, Australian Government Printing Service (1994).

Footnotes or endnotes or sometimes both are used in the note system. They are used for the following purposes:

- (a) to provide references to published or unpublished sources from which the author has derived facts, opinions or quotations, and to give cross-references to other parts of the author's own text
- (b) to add comments, explanations, examples and allusions to the work or views of other authors, to provide evidence in support of stated facts, and to include material that is relevant to the argument but would interrupt the flow of the text if included.

The idea of footnotes and endnotes is that they cause minimal disturbance to the text; on the other hand, the reader must look elsewhere (either at the bottom of the page or at the end of the article, chapter or book) to find the relevant information.

Notes are usually indicated by superior figures (small figures placed above the line of type). The numbering may begin afresh on each page or in each chapter or it may run consecutively through the whole publication. Endnotes must be numbered consecutively through each chapter or through the whole publication, depending on where they appear. Reference numbers appearing in front of footnotes and endnotes may be typeset either as superior or normal figures.

If a publication has both footnotes and endnotes - something to be avoided whenever possible - both symbols and superior figures are necessary, preferably symbols for footnotes and superior figures for endnotes. The decision about whether to use footnotes, or whether to place endnotes at the end of a chapter or at the end of the complete document, is a matter of judgment, depending to a large extent on the size of the document, the number of notes and the convenience of the intended readership.

Whenever possible, superior figures indicating notes should be placed at the end of a sentence or clause, rather than immediately after the words or phrases to which they relate. This is less intrusive to the reader.

If several facts or opinions in one paragraph are drawn from the same source, one figure or symbol at the end of the paragraph will suffice; conversely, if one item in the text is drawn from several sources, a single note should be used to acknowledge them.

If a reference adverts to a source or note quoted previously in the work, do not repeat the number of the first reference: continue on in consecutive order, possibly using an abbreviated form of the original reference.

Figures indicating notes follow any punctuation marks (except a dash). In the case of a lengthy quotation set off from the main body of the text, the superior figure or symbol should be placed at the end of the quotation, not at the point of introduction.

• **First references**

The first reference to a work must provide all the information necessary to enable a reader to locate the work. The information required is the same as that required for the author-date system, but it is presented in a different order: the author's initials or given name precede his or her surname; the year of publication follows the place of publication rather than the details of authorship. The method of punctuation using commas to separate each item of the citation remains the same. The following are typical first references:

- ¹ R. Raymond & C. Watson-Munro, *The Energy Crisis of 1985*, Castle Books, n.p. (dist. in Australia by Horwitz-Craharne, Sydney), 1980.
- ² B. Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 1, 1872-1914, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1967, p. 78.
- ³ Phillip Adams, 'Black and white and read no more?', *Weekend Australian Magazine*, 7-8 Feb. 1987, p. 2.
- ⁴ M. Blaxter, 'Social class and health inequalities', in *Equalities and Inequalities in Health*, eds C.Carter & J.Peel, Academic Press, London, 1976.
- ⁵ Beatrice Bligh, *Cherish the Earth*, David Ell Press, Sydney, in assoc. with the National Trust of Australia (NSW), 1980.
- ⁶ M. C. Egerton, *The Australian Film Industry: An Overview*, Dominion Press, Adelaide, & Cinnamon Publishing, St Lucia, Qld, 1986, p. 32.
- ⁷ J. Cocteau, *Les Enfants Terribles*, trans. R. Lehmann, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1961, p. 14.
- ⁸ Roald Dahl, *Two Fables*, ill. G. Dean, Viking (Penguin), Harmondsworth, 1986, pp. 9-41.
- ⁹ F. K. Crowley, 'Working class conditions in Australia', 1788-1851, PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 1949, p. 64.
- ¹⁰ D. G. Bowd, 'Richard Fitzgerald, 1772-1840', Paper presented to the Hawkesbury Historical Society, NSW, 1957, p. 3.
- ¹¹ J. D. Butler & D. F. Walbert (eds), *Abortion, Medicine and the Law*, Facts on File Publications, New York, 1986, pp. 23-4.
- ¹² G. Herbert, *The Australian Beef Industry: An Overview*, Australian Livestock Council, Canberra, 1987, microfiche.

• **Repeated references**

Second and subsequent references to a source need not be as elaborate as the first reference; the purpose is simply to provide the reader with an unambiguous indication of the place where the fact, opinion or quoted words are to be found. The simplest method of giving a second or subsequent reference to a work is to abbreviate the first citation:

- ¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970, pp. 228- 41.
- ² ...
- ³ ...
- ⁴ Gaskell, p.255.

• **Repeat details**

But if two or more works by the same author are referred to in a single publication, it is necessary to differentiate further:

- ¹ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970, pp. 228-41.
- ² Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Bronte*, ed. A. Shelston, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1975, p. 53.
- ³ Gaskell, *North and South*, p. 255.

• **Recurrent references**

Recurrent references to articles may be abbreviated in similar fashion:

- ¹ Gail Holst, 'Awake to the lute', *Hemisphere*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1976, pp. 26-38.
- ² ...
- ³ Holst, *Hemisphere*, p. 28.

• Reference list

In contrast to the Harvard author-date system of referencing, the use of notes renders optional a list of works cited, since the notes provide full information. However, if the author does choose to include a list of works cited or a bibliography, the principal considerations are the same as those applying to the author-date system: the needs of the reader, simplicity, efficiency and consistency.

The amount of information necessary is a matter of judgment according to the type of work. The main difference between the presentation of an entry in a bibliography and a reference appearing in a note is that in the former the author's surname is placed first. It is also customary to separate elements within an entry with full stops instead of commas. The following examples illustrate the style:

Gower, Sir Ernest. *The Complete Plain Words*. 2nd edition, rev. Sir Bruce Fraser. HMSO, London, 1973.

Guy, J. S. 'The inhabitants of Utopia'. *Literary Studies*, vol. 4, no. 3, May 1966 pp. 1-19.

McIntosh, A. L. (ed.). *Lyrical Poems of Burns*, (Edinburgh illustrated poets, vol. 6). Buchanan, Edinburgh, 1895.

• Web referencing

Web addresses should be quoted as in the example below, with the name of the firm or creator and the title of the page. You must also show the date and time of access.

The Natural Place (1998) 'The Natural Place: Environmentally Friendly Hotel Apartments' [Http://www.thenaturalplace.com](http://www.thenaturalplace.com). Accessed 30/04/2004

2.14 Referencing: notes to students

Lecture notes

Students often include references to the lecture notes in their written work. **This is not recommended.** You should go to the material that the lecturer has been drawing on, read it and refer to it directly.

What if the material comes from the lecturer's own research and has not yet been published? Ask him or her about this. The usual way to refer to such a source is to use the words 'personal communication', or 'unpublished'.

(Michalski, T, 1994, pers. com., 2 June)

Seeley (unpub.) argues that.....

Good housekeeping

Barbara Wake, from the CLPD, suggests the following good practice: Make a strict habit of recording all referencing details of all books and journals that you refer to in your research. There is nothing worse than trying to remember where you got that quotation from when the assignment is due only hours away!

The final analysis

Referencing systems seem overwhelming at first. How will you ever remember all these details? How will you remember what format to use?

The answer is: Don't worry. If you remember that the primary reason for referencing is to tell your reader where the evidence you used came from, and that you should use all the publication details available to make it as easy as possible for them to find it, then that is the most important information. Presenting it in a consistent bibliographic format will be something that you will become more confident about with practice. Be sure to keep on your desk a model of the system you are using so that you can copy or check the details of your formatting when you are finalising a text.

Acknowledgements

The material for these sections on referencing was compiled from several sources:

Anderson, Jonathon & Poole, Millicent (1994) *Thesis and Assignment Writing*, 2nd edition, Jacaranda Wiley Ltd, Milton, Qld.

Betts, Katharine & Seitz, Anne (1994) *Writing Essays and Research Reports in the Social Sciences*, 2nd edition, Thomas Nelson, Melbourne.

Bochner, Dianne & Cooper, Elizabeth (eds) (1990) *Study Skills Booklet*, South Australian College of Advanced Education, Sturt Campus.

Euson, Baden (1994) *Writing and Presenting Reports*, The Communication Skills Series, John Wiley & Sons, Milton, Qld.

Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printer, (1994) 5th edition, AGPS, Canberra.

Wake, Barbara (1995) 'Documentation of Sources', Literacy Project ACUE, University of Adelaide.

2.15 Group skills

I will pay more for the ability to deal with people than for any other ability under the sun.

John D. Rockefeller

Creating an effective group

Group members must consciously work to build and maintain the effectiveness of their group. There are three areas they need to work on:

- accomplishing the group's purposes
- maintaining and building good working relationships, and
- adapting to changing conditions in the surrounding organisation and society.

To achieve these three goals, group members must first commit themselves to do so, then accurately communicate their ideas and their feelings, provide leadership, influence other members in appropriate ways, flexibly use decision-making procedures, promote reasoned judgments through challenging each other's conclusions and thinking, face their conflicts and resolve them.

Use the following table to gauge the extent to which you contribute to a group's effective operation and how you manifest each skill.

Group skills		Level
I help maintain clear goals by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promoting positive interdependence • avoiding and discouraging distractions • evoking a high level of commitment from members 	
I communicate clearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • my ideas • my feelings 	
I assist participation of all by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributing as much as other members • listening to others • sharing the leadership role 	
I share power and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by offering my expertise and information • accepting others' expertise & information 	
I promote good decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by promoting consensus • accepting some decisions by others 	
I manage controversy by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stating my case when I disagree • encouraging others to present their views 	
I help resolve conflict by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying contrasting goals or needs • helping to find mutual solutions 	

Group assignments – making the most of your group

Get organised! At your first meeting:

- Decide who will take notes,
- Decide who will organise meetings, and
- Decide who will keep the meetings to a time limit.
- Decide when and where you will meet, and
- 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 and
- Decide who will keep and email notes of decisions made at each meeting.

Get to work!

- What is your task? Is it clear to everyone?
- What are the assessment criteria?
- How do you have to present?
- What aids will you use, such as Powerpoint, OHTs, a poster, graphs, a written report?
- How will you divide up the work equally between you?
- Where will you find the resources you need?
- How will you organise your references and avoid plagiarism?

Get it all together!

- Make a timeline of when each task will have to be completed, and when the assignment will be finished by – at least a week before the due date!

Get smart!

- Proofread and check all parts of the assignment the week before it's due.
- Decide who will present which parts, and how.
- Go through your presentation together to see how long it takes and to make a smooth changeover between each person.
- Polish your performance: make sure the introduction and conclusion are clear, and are supported by your evidence.

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 reference

Johnson, D.W. & Johnson, F.P. (1997) *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 2nd edition, Prentice Hall. (BSL 302.34 J66j.4)

2.16 Project management

Prepared by Shane Cheek, Project Manager, Commercialisation, ITEK Pty Ltd.

Project management is a skill that no student can go without. Most university students need to balance personal commitments and possible part-time work with multiple assessments and study.

On entering the workplace, graduates from all disciplines are finding 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

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

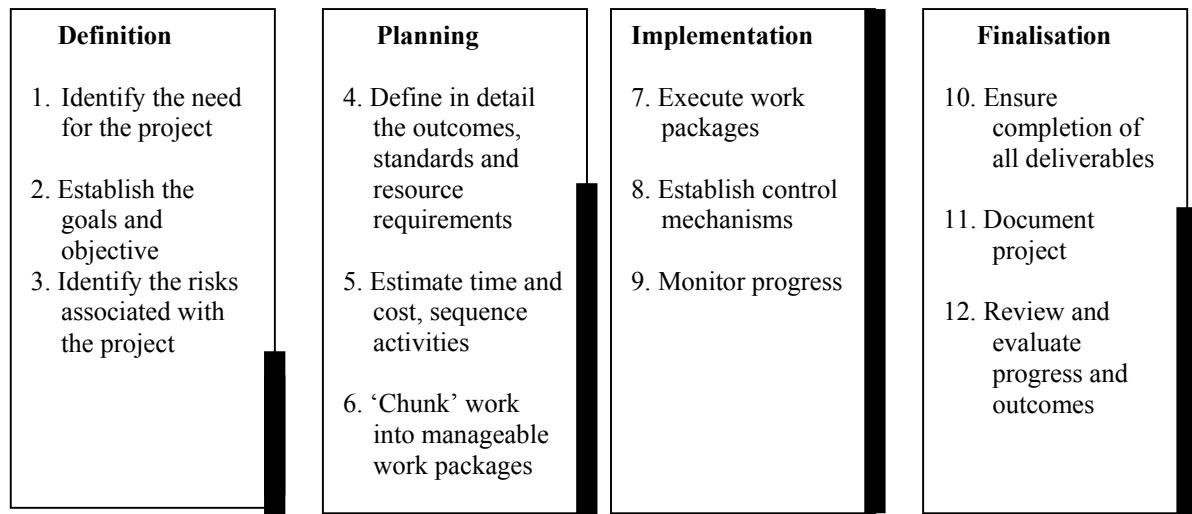
- Purpose: a project is usually developed to achieve a clear goal or objective (eg mid-term assignment, consultancy report or construction of a bridge)
- Life cycle: a project has a beginning, middle and end
- Interdependencies: projects nearly always interact and affect other projects
- Unique: a project 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 is 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 are a variety of tools and methods that can be used to plan and monitor complex projects.

Figure 1: Phases of a Project Lifecycle



* Dark bars indicate effort level.

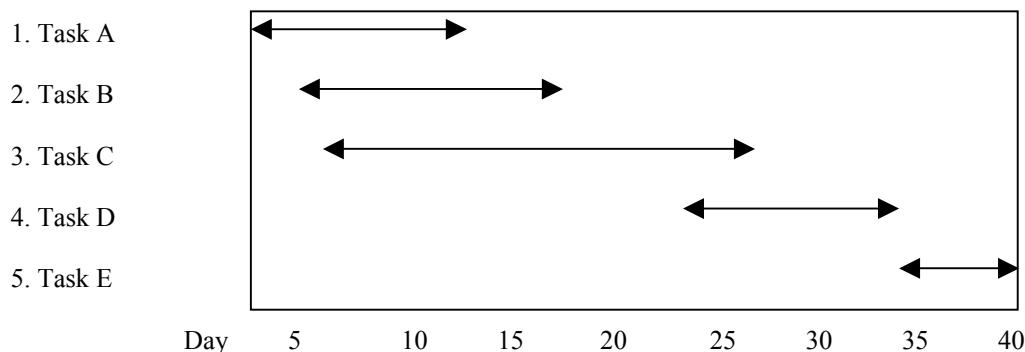
Gantt chart

This planning tool is simple in its construction and very easy to read (see figure 2). Haynes (1997, p31) describes a simple way to create a Gantt Chart:

1. List the actions required to complete the project
2. Estimate the amount of time you will need to complete each of the actions
3. 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.
4. 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 (ie 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.

Figure 2: Gantt Chart



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 reference bibliography or computer files
- Progress reports or whole project reports
- Use of an “Action Planning Worksheet”, as illustrated below.

Task	What	Resources	When	Progress
Assignment 1	Finish intellectual property paper	1. Notes from lecture 2. Borrow laptop	End of Semester (4 th June)	40% complete as at 1 st May

Personal time management

Good project management also relies upon personal 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 the 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) nice to do.
- Understand how you set priorities. Generally, personal value judgements based on timing (ie deadlines) and relativity (ie 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
 - Keep 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/E-mail.

Additional resources

Project management software, eg Microsoft Project ©.

Adelaide University Centre for Professional and Continuing Education (ph: 8303 4777) delivers training in the use of project management software.

The Adelaide University Centre of Learning & Professional Development (ph: 8303 5771) provides students with courses in time management skills.

Meredith, J R. and Mantel, S. J. (2000) *Project Management – A Managerial Approach*,. 4th Edition, Brisbane, John Wiley & Sons.

Haynes. M. (1997) *Project Management: From Idea to Implementation*,. London, Crisp Publications

2.17 Vocabulary and grammar

Correct grammar and spelling in writing make a good impression. The reader often concludes that the writer has had a sound education and pays attention to detail. On the other hand 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 fool proof.
- **Grammar checkers** invite you to check a sentence for meaning.
- **Tutor feedback:** If you want specific feedback on your writing ask your tutors to provide it.
- **Courses:** The School of Commerce recommends the following courses offered by the Humanities and Social Science Faculty:

ENGL 1104 Professional English (ESL)

ENGL 2016 English for Professional Purposes II

ENGL 3016 English for Professional Purposes III

The CLPD offers free workshops on Grammar and other aspects of writing. These workshops run for 50 minutes on the days and times listed on the CLPD web site and also in pamphlets available from the International Student Centre and the CLPD. See page 2 for more information about the CLPD.

The electronic version of the *Communication Skills Guide* has useful guidance on each of the following:

- 2.17.1 **Vocabulary** (23 pages) alphabetic list of how to use and spell tricky words
- 2.17.2 **Problem verbs** (3 pages) e.g. lay, lie; raise, rise; sat, set; hang
- 2.17.3 **Prepositions** (3 pages) e.g. in, on, above, for, about, with
- 2.17.4 **Plurals** (5 pages) usually add 's', but lots of exceptions
- 2.17.5 **Double negatives** (1 page) e.g. "They didn't learn nothing"
- 2.17.6 **The apostrophe** (3 pages) When and how should it be used?

This section (2.17) of the *Guide* is taken from the CLPD website.

Useful reference

Glazier, Teresa (1998) *The least you should know about English: writing skills: form A*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace. (Many copies are in the Barr Smith Library.)

MASTER OF COMMERCE at the University of Adelaide

Master of Commerce (Accounting), (Applied Finance), (Marketing) and (Performance Management)

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The Master of Commerce is also suited for working professionals with a background in accounting, finance, marketing, management, information technology or law, who wish to acquire a postgraduate qualification to assume a managerial position in their field of expertise.

Master of Accounting and Finance

The Master of Accounting and Finance is a unique program for graduates from any discipline. The combination of accounting and finance expands career opportunities and extends knowledge in both specialisations.

Further Information

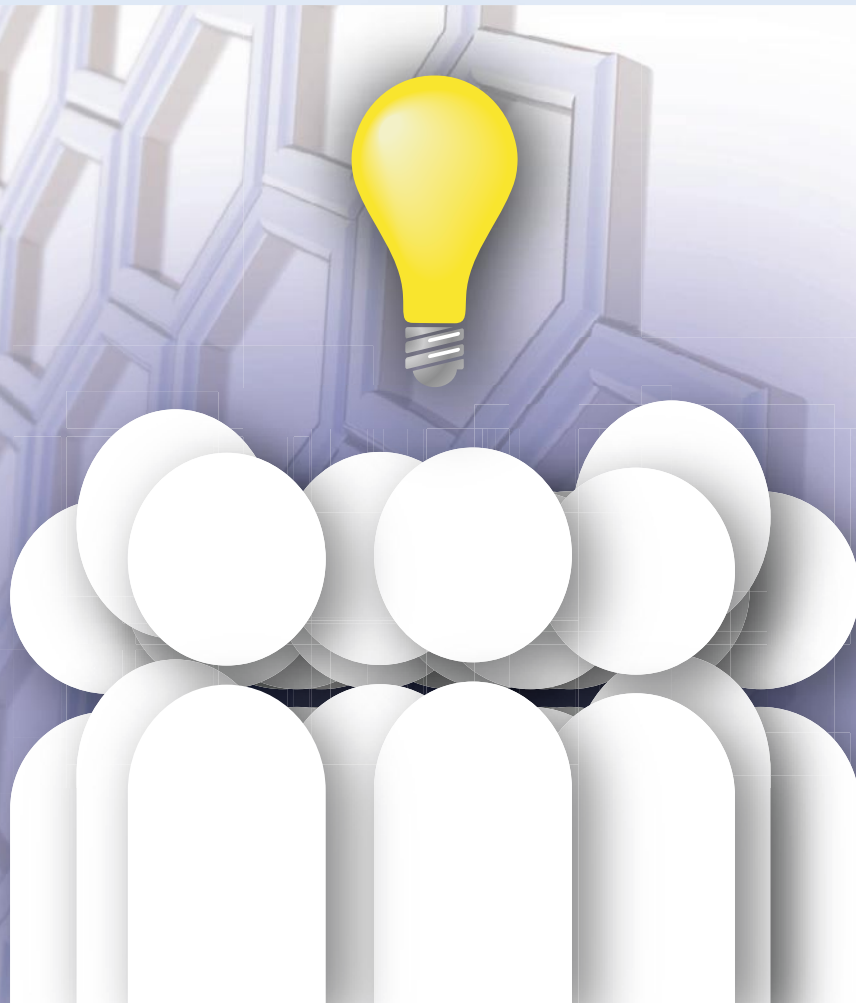
For further information regarding the program and applying to the University of Adelaide, please visit:
<http://www.commerce.adelaide.edu.au/mcom>

Information regarding VISA regulations, living expenses, English language requirements for International applicants can be found at: <http://www.international.adelaide.edu.au>

To request a copy of the information booklet on the suite of masters program, please e-mail prof.enquiries@adelaide.edu.au

The University of Adelaide

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- Stay in contact with Uni friends while making new friends and business contacts at our many informal events during the year
- Use the Commerce Alumni's website to search for fellow alumni, business contacts and employment opportunities
- Become a mentor to students or graduates, or seek mentoring support from a wide network of fellow alumni
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