**School of Nursing and Midwifery**

**Edith Cowan University**

**Assignment Writing Guidelines**

A key component to succeeding at university is achieving proficiency in academic writing. Written expression for academic assignments must be of the highest standard. Marks will be deducted from assignments for poor presentation, structure, expression, spelling, punctuation,and language usage errors. The following information outlines the accepted conventions used by the School of Nursing and Midwifery. They are based on the APA style outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition).

**Layout**

* **Paper size:** A4 white
* **Margins:**2.54 cms for top, bottom, right and left margins.
* **Font size and type:**Times New Roman size 12 or Arial size 11. Students may submit their work in blue Arial font if this has been stipulated in their Learning and Assessment Plans.
* **Line spacing:**Double spaced for assignment text and single spaced for end-text reference list.
* **Alignment:**Align left. Do not justify.
* **Page numbers:**Number pages consecutively on the top right hand corner of the page, commencing at the start of the assignment text.
* **Headers and footers:No** headers or footers other than the page numbers are required.
* **Paragraphs:**Include a first line indent equivalent to a tab key for each new paragraph.
* **Levels of headings:**

Title heading: **Centred, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**

Main heading: **Flush left, Boldface, Uppercase and Lowercase Heading**

Subheading: **Indented, boldface, lowercase paragraph heading ending with a   
 period.**

(Examples of heading levels can be found in the assignment template at the end of   
 this document)

* **Order of pages:**
  + Body of assignment text
  + References (start on a separate page)
  + Appendices (if required and start each one on a separate page)

**Other Formatting and Style Issues**

* **Academic style:** Academic writing is usually written in the third person, unless it is a reflective piece of assessment. Therefore, there is no use of first person ("I think") or second person ("you will see from the essay that...").   
  Third person style requires the writer to use relevant, accurate, and referenced paraphrases from credible and recent academic texts to support discussion, without reference to themselves or the reader in any way. Students should always refer to assessment instructions as to the type of assessment and style requirements.
* **Academic integrity:**A key part of being a student at ECU is to ensure that you complete your classwork and assessments with academic integrity. This means that you will be honest in the completion of your own work and will ensure that you give credit to all information and ideas that you integrate into your work that are not your own. Such information can be either be *paraphrased* in your own words or can be included verbatim (word for word) as a *direct quote*. Both forms require a reference to credit the original owner and to ensure that you are acting with integrity and not plagiarising.
* **Direct quoting and paraphrasing:**Direct quotes are rarely used in scientific writing. If you are allowed to include direct quotes, then use them sparingly. However,paraphrasingis the preferredoption for scientific writing and shows the marker that you have understood the ideas and concepts and accurately and appropriately integrated them into your discussion. For more information on academic integrity, paraphrasing and referencing, go to the *Learning Consultant*tab on any of your unit Blackboard sites.
* **Referencing:**ECU uses APA (6th edition) referencing system. PleaserefertothecurrentECU*Quick Guide* or the full*ECU ReferencingGuide*for instructions on how to correctlyin-textand end-textreference.*APA Style Central*is a useful on-line tool to help new students understand the principles of APA referencing and as well as how to reference various academic texts.
* In-text: APA follows the (author, year) format. Direct quotes must also include a page number (author, year, p. xx)  
  There are some variations for formatting in-text depending on the number of authors, types of authors etc. Consult the front section of the ECU Referencing Guide for more information.
* End-text: Thereferenceliststartsonanewpagewiththeheading ‘References’boldface,centred,uppercaseandlowercase.Thelistneedstobein alphabeticalorderwithahangingindentafterthefirstline.Theindividualreferencesare singlespaced. See an example end-text reference list in the assignment template at the end of this document.
* **Academic sources:**
* Referencescitedmustbefromacredibleacademic source, particularly academic journals and texts.Usethelibrarycatalogueand nursing databasestofindrecent(usuallypublishedinthelast5years)primarysourcesto supportyourdiscussion.
* Wikipediaisnotacrediblesourceforuniversitystudentsandshouldnotbe referencedinacademicassignments.
* Lecturenotesshouldnotbecited.Gotothematerialfromtheprimarysource,i.e.theprescribedtextorjournals.
* Onlinematerialmustbefromrefereedjournalsorotherrecognisedsitessuchas thosewiththesuffix‘gov’,‘org’or‘edu’inthelink.
* GoodstartingpointsforyourliteraturesearcharetheECU’s*WorldSearch*and the*NursingLibrary SubjectGuide*.
* **Abbreviations:**When there is frequent repetition, defined abbreviations are acceptable. They must be written in full on the first occasion followed by the abbreviation in brackets, for example, Western Australia (WA). However, do not start a sentence with an abbreviation. Also, avoid overuse of abbreviations as they may impact on the clarity of the expression. In nursing, there are a variety of accepted, universal abbreviations such as blood pressure (BP), respiratory rate (RR) etc.
* **Figures, graphs and diagrams:**Some of the science assessments may require the inclusion of figures, graphs or diagrams either within the text or as an appendix to illustrate specific information or summarise concepts. They need to be clearly labelled and numbered **below** the figure e.g. Figure 1. Anatomy of the respiratory system. Also state whether you have adapted or copied a figure from another source (From xxxx). They also need to be referred to and explained within your text.
* **Tables:** Tables can be a useful tool for summarising information and should be compiled by the student, not just copied and pasted. They need to be clearly labelled and numbered **above** the table. A note should also be inserted below the table to state what sources have been used for the table content. They also need to be referred to and explained within your text. Avoid placing too much text in your tables.

**Note: Always refer to your assignment instructions or ask your tutor or unit co-ordinator if you have queries regarding the inclusion of tables and figures in your assignment.**

* **Academic Skills Support:** Ifyoufeelyouneedextrahelpwithacademicreading, writing,referencing,numeracy, English languageandstudyskillsorhaveanyfurtherqueriesregarding assignmentguidelinesandassignmentwriting,youshould:
* attendoneoftheacademicskillsorEnglishlanguageworkshopsorassignment drop-insessions.Ascheduleoftopicsanddateswillbepostedonthe*Learning Consultant*tab on any of your unit Blackboard sites or the *AcademicSkills Centre*site.
* ***EnglishLanguageProficiency(ELP):***ECUhasimplementedanumberofproceduresand supportstoassistallstudentstodevelopanddemonstrateappropriatestandardsof Englishlanguageproficiency.Aspartoftheprocess,staffwillprovidestudentswith feedbackontheELPdemonstratedintheirwrittenassessments(otherthan examinations)usingtheECUELPMeasure.TheECUELPMeasureshowsastudent’s writtenELPagainsttheECUstandards.TheECUminimumstandardforwrittenELP whichallstudentsshoulddemonstrateis*moderateproficiency*(atleast)inboththe areasofSentenceStructureandWordUse.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Low proficiency** | **Developing proficiency** | **Moderate**  **Proficiency** | **High**  **Proficiency** |
| **Sentence**  **Structure** |  |  | **X** |  |
| **WordUse** |  |  | **X** |  |

DesiredECUStandardforEnglishLanguageProficiencyongraduation

FormoreinformationgotothecommunityBlackboardsite*Academic Skills Centre*.

**Submission**

• ***CoverSheet:***AllassignmentsrequireacompletedECUAssignmentCoverSheet.

Theseareavailablefromyour unit Blackboard sites or theECUwebsiteat*Studentforms*.Pleasemakesurethatyou usetheelectronicversionforTurnitinsubmissionstoavoidunnecessarysimilarity.

• ***TitlePage*:**Thisisrequiredforallassignments.Nopictures,borders,differentsizefont ortypeoffontisrequired(pleaserefertothesample assignmentbelow).Headingsareinbold; individualinformationisnot.Pleaseincludetitleofassignment,unitnumberandname, nameoflecturer/tutor,yournameandstudentnumber,submissiondateandword count.

• ***TableofContents:***Thisisrequiredformost nursing assignments where headings are included.Youareadvisedtolearnhowtousethisfacilityonyourcomputer(MacandWindowsbothhaveautomatedTableofContentsfunctions).Makesurethatyouusethe"updatefulltable"buttonasoneofthelastthingsbeforesubmissiontomakesurethatthecontentspagematchestheactualcontent.Theformattingshouldbeleftalignmentofheadingsandsubheadingswithrightalignmentofpagenumbers.

• ***MarkingRubric:***Allassessmentshaveamarkingrubricagainstwhichyouareadvised tocheckyourworktoensurethatyouhavecompletedallrequiredcomponents. The EnglishLanguageProficiencyrubricispartofyourcoversheet,somakesure thatyouusethecorrectversion.

• ***OnlineSubmission:***MostassignmentshavetobesubmittedviaTurnitin.Pleasecheck theunitplansforsubmissionrequirements.Itisyourresponsibilitytoseekadvicefrom theunitcoordinator,tutor,ITstafforlearningconsultantsifyouareunsurehowtouse Turnitin. Instructionsforelectronicsubmissionaregenerallyprovidedontheunit Blackboardsite.Youcanalsolookatthe*TurnitinHelpCentre*.Please**keepproofof yoursubmission**,i.e.screenshotoremailconfirmationbyTurnitin.

• ***DueDateExtensions:***Pleaseattachdocumentationregardingyourassignment extensionifyouhavebeengrantedanextension,e.g.emails,signedextensionformsor medicalcertificates.

• ***WordCount:***Allwords,irrespectiveoftheirsize,arecountedtowardstheword  
limit.

**A leewayof10%eitherway**isallowed.Thewordcountdoes**notinclude**the  
following:

* Titlepage;
* Tableofcontents;
* Tablesandfigures(includingtheirtitlesandcaptions);
* Directquotations;
* Referencelist;
* Appendices.

***Note:***In-textreferences**areincluded**inthewordcount!

Ifthewordlimithasnotbeenmetorisexceeded,penaltieswillapplyasfollows:

* Ifyouare**morethan10%above**thewordcount,a**deductionof5%**ofthetotal assignmentmarks**forevery10%overthelimitthereafter**willapply.
* Ifyouwriteless,i.e.**morethan10%below**thewordcount,itisunlikelyyouwill havecoveredallaspectsoftheassignmentandyouwilllosemarksaccordingly.

Example:Anassignmentisworth30marks(30%ofthetotalassessments)and  
setat1500words.Astudentsubmitsa1930wordspaper.Theallowedrange  
wouldbe1350to1650words(10%of1500=150).Thestudentis280words  
abovetheallowed10% (1930–1650=280),whichisroughly20%oftheoriginal  
1500words.Therefore10%of themaximummarkwillbededucted,i.e.3marks.

**GeneralGuidelines**

• ***AssessmentPolicy:***Bothstudentsandstaffarerequiredtoabidebythe*Courseand UnitDeliveryandAssessmentPolicy*(point4.3to4.9,p.3-6).Thisisaverycomplex documentsoyouareadvisedtorefertotheMyStudiesintranetsite*StudyAdvice Assignments*.Onthatsiteyouwillalsofindmanyusefulresources(forms,Referencing Guide,AcademicTipSheets,etc.)

• ***AcademicMisconductandCollusion:***EdithCowanUniversityregardsacademic misconductofanyformasunacceptable.Academicmisconduct,whichincludesbutis notlimitedto,plagiarism;unauthorisedcollaboration;cheatinginexaminations;theftof otherstudent’swork;collusion;directcopyingandpastingofmaterial;inadequateand incorrectreferencingwillbedealtwithinaccordancewiththe*AcademicMisconduct Policy.*

***Note:***Self-plagiarism,i.e.there-useofyourownworkisalsoconsideredas  
plagiarismif used**across**units.Youmayuseyourownworkwhenre-  
submittinganassignmentina previouslyfailedunitthatyouarerepeating.  
Pleasediscussthiswiththeunitcoordinator.

• ***AssignmentExtensions:***Ifyourequireanextensiontocompleteanassignmentyou must:

* applytotheunitcoordinatorusingthe*ApplicationforExtension*form;
* ensureyouapply**before**theassignmentduedateaslateapplicationswillnotbe considered;
* attachdocumentaryevidence(e.g.medicalcertificate)tosupportyourrequest.

Unitcoordinatorscangrantanextensionofuptooneweek.Ifyourequireonebeyond thatdateyouneedtoapplytothecoursecoordinator.

Pleaserefertothe*CourseandUnitDeliveryandAssessmentPolicy*(Attachment5, p.21).Normaloccupationalcommitmentsandextracurricularactivitiesarenotaccepted asgroundsforgrantingextratimebecauseyouareexpectedtoplanahead.Examples forvalidgroundsareillhealthorinjury,compassionategroundsandrepresentingthe university(sportsorculturalevents).Ifyousubmitanassignmentaftertheduedate withoutanagreedextensionorbeyondthedateofanagreedextension,youwillincura penalty.

Thepenaltyforlatesubmissionwithoutapprovaliscalculatedasfollows:

* A**deductionof5%ofthemaximumassignmentmarkforeachworkingdaylate** (Notethat5%doesnotequateto5marks.Saturday,Sundayandpublicholidaysarenotcountedasworkingdays)
* **Ifanassignmentismorethanfiveworkingdayslate,amarkofzero**willbe givenfortheassignment

Example:Assignmentworthamaximumof30marks(30%ofthetotalassessmentin

theunit),dueonaThursday.Thelatepenaltyis5%of30(themaximummarkpossible)=1.5marksforeachworkingdaylate.Astudentwhosubmitstheassignmentonthe followingMondaywithoutapprovalistwoworkingdayslate(SaturdayandSundayare notregardedasECUworkingdays).Thelatepenaltyis2x1.5marks=3marks.Ifthe studentisawardedanoriginalmarkof18/30,thefinalmarkwillbe18-3=15.

• ***Gradingandmarking:***Lecturersandtutorsstrivetoprovideyouwithhighquality feedbackonassignments.Thisfeedbackmayassistyouindevelopingyourwritten work;therefore,itisimportanttoreviewallassignmentsformorethanjustthegrade. Responsesmayinclude(butarenotlimitedto):

* commentsandcorrectionsinthebodyoftheassignment;
* indicationsofstrengthsandweaknessesandsometimesalternativesuggestions;
* requestsforfurtherinformationinrelevantsections;
* commentsandcorrectionsonreferencingstandards;
* asummary,notingaspectsdeterminingthefinalgradeand;
* anumericalscoreorgradeletteraspertheuniversityguidelines.

ThegradingsystemmostcommonlyusedatECUconsistsofthefollowinglevels:

80–100% HD HighDistinction

70–79% D Distinction

60–69% CR Credit

50–59% C Pass

0–49% N Fail

ForclinicalpracticeunitsthegradewillbeP(pass)orF(fail)only.

• ***SubmissionandReturnofAssignments:***Pleasechecktheunitplanforthespecific requirementsforsubmissionofassignments.Thedateforsubmissionoffinal assignmentsinanyunitwillbenolaterthanoneweekpriortotheexaminationperiod. Pleasenotethefollowing:

* Makesurethatyoukeepacopyandabackupofyourassignmentsincasean

assignmentislostorstolenoryouarehavingITissues.

* Youmustkeepproofofyourassignmentbeingreceivedbythetutororunit coordinatorortheelectronicsubmissionsystem,e.g.Turnitin.
* Surfacemailingofclinicalpracticumdocuments(NCAS)requireproofofmailingwith thedatestampfromthepostofficevisibleontheenvelope.
* Clinicalpracticumdocuments(NCAS)mustbedatestampedonthedayof submissionbythedate/timemachineattheSchoolofNursingandMidwifery receptiondesk,unlessposted.
* Markedassignmentswillbeavailableforreviewfromanominatedtimeanddate throughtheTurnitinportal.
* Studentswillbeadvisedbytheunitcoordinatorwhenmarkingwillbecompletedand gradesareavailableonMyGrades.

• ***AppealingAssessments:***Ifyouhavereasontoappealyourmarkyouhave20working daysfromthedatethemarkismadeavailabletostudentstodiscussthiswiththepersonwhomarkedtheassignmentasaninformalappeal.Youmayonlyappealyour markonapprovedgrounds.Forthisyoufillinan*InformalResultsQuery*form.Ifyouare stillnotsatisfiedwiththeoutcomeyoumaysubmitaformalappealviaStudentCentral.