

Academic Essay Writing Checklist

Have you:

- **Got a title?**
- **Defined the question or scope of the topic that you are going to write about?**
- **Discussed the literature you have used critically or have you just repeated what you have read?**
- **Referenced material correctly using the Harvard System (see course handbook and/or library guide)?**
- **Avoided using excessively long quotes?**
- **Avoided the use of too few/many quotes?**
- **Checked that the material you have used is relevant eg Teaching and Maslow or teaching and the Hawthorn Effect?**
- **Linked and used the literature to explain and explore your findings/argument?**
- **Considered how your own bias has impacted on the essay?**
- **Discussed one point at a time and linked the various issues discussed with phrases such as “In the above section I considered the motivational impact of transformational leadership. In this section I explore how transformational approaches to leadership can be used to exploit staff”?**
- **Do your conclusions and/or recommendations flow naturally from your findings?**
- **Commented on any areas of the assignment that you think would benefit from further investigation?**

- **Consistently used simple clear language and small words to explain your ideas?**
- **Checked that each paragraph only discusses one issue or topic?**
- **Checked that the meaning of any sentence over 20 words is clear and that it can't be split into two sentences?**
- **Avoided the over use of bullet points?**
- **Avoided jargon and defined what you mean by all technical terms?**
- **Used a single recognised typeface with a minimum font size of 12?**
- **Double spaced your work except for quotations over three lines long which should be single spaced and indented?**
- **Provided a list of references using the Harvard system?**
- **Reread the assignment (preferably out loud) approximately 10 days after you finished it and then given it a final edit and polish?**
- **Asked a critical friend to read and comment on it?**
- **Included the word count on the front sheet? (Note assignments must not exceed the word limit by more than 10%).**

Hints on Writing

Accurate, Brief and Clear

Accuracy, brevity and clarity are the three 'watchwords' for effective writing.

Accuracy means:

- getting the facts right
 - why am I writing this?
 - who will be reading it?
 - how much do they need to know?
- getting the grammar and spelling right
 - keep grammar simple and check spelling!

Brevity means:

- sticking to the point
 - not using more words than you need to
- KISS - keep it short and simple, use short words, paragraphs and sentences.**

Clarity means:

- expressing yourself simply and clearly
 - using an appropriate 'ton' and 'style'

Tone: depending on the outcome required, think about how your writing 'sounds' - helpful? pushy? ineffectual?

Style: the overall impact of your writing

The structure, words and grammar used will influence both 'tone' and 'style'.

- using a logical structure
 - plan your writing
 - use headings/paragraphs/numbering, etc to assist the readability