School of Health & Life Sciences

Student Guidance for the Presentation of Assessed Written Work

This document provides you with guidelines on the style and format of written work you will produce over the course of your study. This guidance is based on best practice and inclusive principles for written material and has been devised to help you appreciate the expectations of your Course Team. Please use the following guidance when presenting your academic work.

General Style
All written assignments should be in clear and concise English. Academic writing is usually written in the third person, avoiding 'I' or 'you', and passive, not active, voice (i.e. the patient's temperature was initially measured at 37°C not I measured the patient's temperature at 37°C). The one exception is when you have been asked to write a piece of reflective writing, which is much more personal, so will involve you talking about your own feelings and experiences. Advice on academic writing is available from the Subject LibGuides (http://libguides.tees.ac.uk/learning_hub)

Type and Font Size for Written Assignments
- Produce documents in clear print (minimum font size 12 pt).
- Use a linear sans serif font (e.g. Arial, Verdana and Tahoma) as these are easier to read. This document is in 'Arial – font size 12'.
- Using normal weight text and bold for emphasis will improve legibility.

Layout
- Use 1.5 (one and a half) or 2.0 double spacing between lines.
- Margin sizes should be the default ones used in Microsoft Word (usually 2.54 cm left and right, 2.54 cm top and bottom).
- Left align text as justifying the text can make it difficult to read due to the straight right-hand margin and uneven spaces between words).
- A clear gap should be left between paragraphs to make it clear where they start and end, e.g. extra line space.
- Do not indent the start of paragraphs.
- Each page should be numbered in the bottom right-hand corner. Ideally page numbers should be formatted as, for example, 'Page 1 of 10'.

Word Limit

Within the assignment criteria, you will normally be informed of the maximum number of words available for the piece of work e.g. a 3,000-word essay means no more than 3,000 words in length (a 3,000 word limit).

The word count does not include the following:
- Title page.
- Contents page (if required).
- Text included within a Table or Figure.
- Text included within Table or Figure titles and legends.
- References.
- Appendices.

Therefore, the word count begins from the start of the introduction and finishes at the end of the conclusion of the written work. In-text citation, other than that associated with table and figure legends, are included in the word count.

Please be mindful of the word limit. Word limits are set for a reason and part of the assessed task is for you to complete the written work within the available words. You are expected to have selected the material you think is most relevant to the set task. Your tutors do not want you to write everything you have read on the topic. They want to see how you have prioritised material for inclusion and synthesised the information from multiple sources.

If you submit a piece of work below the word limit you may be penalising yourself as the work may not contain the academic breadth and depth to your argument/answer. However, where you have addressed the identified assessment criteria (with appropriate academic breadth and depth) through writing in a focused and concise way the work will not be penalised for being under the word count.

In some types of written assignment, such as portfolios or coding projects, it may not be possible to provide you with a word limit. In these instances, you will be provided with alternative guidance, such as the number of pages, to make you aware of what is expected from you.

Referencing and In-Text Citation

All your written assignments should be supported by references and you should indicate within an assignment the sources of the information you have included by in-text citation. References and the in-text citations should be formatted in accordance with the Harvard System as described by 'Cite them Right' (http://www.citethemrightonline.com/). All references must have an in-text citation.

The end reference list starts on a new page.

Written Assignment Structure

Written assignments will typically have a specific structure and consist of a number of defined sections which vary depending on the assignment type. Guidance on the structure and specific sections to be included in differing assignment types will be found in Module Handbooks.

Title Page

Written assignments, irrespective of type, should include a Title Page. This should carry the following information:

- Name of your course (and pathway if applicable).
- Your name, preferably in a slightly larger font size and bold.
- Your student number.
- Module title (exactly as identified in your module guide or specification).
- Module code (exactly as identified in your module guide or specification).
- Module leader.
- The assignment title.
- The date of submission.
- The word count of your essay (this is the actual number of words used within the word limit).

Tables and Figures

In some written work you will be able to use tables and figures. Figures include graphs and images such as diagrams, schematics, flow charts and photographs. Tables and figures should be referred to in the text prior to their inclusion. Tables should be referred to in the text as Table 1. Figures should be referred to in the text as Figure 1 and multipart figures should be labelled (a), (b), etc. Tables and figures should appear as close to their introduction as possible but should not be broken across pages. Table titles and legends should precede the table. The figure title and legend should be placed below the figure. Tables and figures should be broadly comprehensible without reference to the text. Ideally, when you are presenting information derived from other sources, your tables and figures should be self-generated and should not be exact reproductions of those which have already been published in the literature. You should attempt to compile tables and figures which draw on information present in multiple sources. In these circumstances, you should include in-text citations as part of the legend to indicate the sources of this information.

Abbreviations

The use of abbreviations is common in academic writing, especially for long technical terms and it can be a way to make your writing flow more smoothly. You should not, however, assume that even well used abbreviations are standard and have only one meaning, as terminology changes over time. Always give the term in full at the first use and show the abbreviation in brackets. For example, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) regulate health, social work and psychological professions. Once a term has been abbreviated, use the abbreviated form consistently from then on. For example, always use HCPC and not hcpc or Hcpc. Try to use

accepted abbreviations, such as HCPC rather than making up your own. Please note, abbreviations of SI Units do not, at the first mention, need to be preceded by the term in full.

Only use abbreviations where you are using the term frequently throughout the text as the reader may find it hard to remember abbreviated terms that are used fewer than three times after their first use. Take care not to litter the work with numerous unfamiliar abbreviations. When you are considering whether to use an abbreviation, remember that abbreviations should make it easier for your users to read your work. If numerous abbreviations or acronyms cannot be avoided, provide a glossary of the abbreviations used that the reader can refer to.

Biological Species Names
The scientific name of a biological species is normally comprised of two words and is, therefore, called a binomial term. The allocation of a species name is normally done on the basis of the organism's taxonomic classification with the name of the genus followed by a second term which identifies the species. When you are writing taxonomic names, always italicise the generic and species names (e.g. *Escherichia coli*). Within a written report the first usage of a species name should give the full species name (e.g. *Homo sapiens*). Subsequently, the species name can be shortened by abbreviating the genus name to a single letter (e.g. *H. sapiens*).

The naming and classification of viruses is less advanced than for cellular organisms. The names of viruses do not use the binomial system (there is no genus or species component to the name) and, hence, the names are not italicised (e.g. Human Immunodeficiency Virus, ΦX174).

Units and Compound Units
For measurements, you should use the International System of Units (IS Units). When expressing a value and the unit of measurement you should normally use a space between number and unit, e.g. 5·4 kb not 5·4kb; 10 000 *g* not 10 000*g*. There are a number of notable exceptions i.e. 37°C not 37 °C; a right angle is 90° not 90 °; 75% not 75 %. When you are using a compound unit for measurement, use µg mL^{-1} not µg/mL; 10 µg ampicillin mL^{-1} not 10 µg mL-1 ampicillin. The use of a space between units allows the compound unit m s^{-1}, a measure of speed, and ms^{-1}, a unit of frequency, to be distinguished.

Concentration
Concentrations should be given in g L^{-1}, etc., or molarity, M, not normality, N. The term '%' should be defined as 'w/v', 'v/v' or 'w/w' if this is necessary to avoid ambiguity.

Appendices
You may be asked to include Appendices as part of a written assignment, these should be clearly numbered and referred to in the text as Appendix 1, 2. etc. You should not include information that is essential to the assignment in an appendix. Module Leaders will advise you if appendices are expected as part of an assignment. Appendices should start on a new page and come after the References section.