



Why do we have assignments?

Part of the learning process involves validating what actually has been learned. In many cases, we use workplace assessments to give you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and skills relevant to a particular area of learning. In others this is not so easy, especially when working in a regulatory or compliance environment.

In those cases, we look to alternative methods for you to show that you know your work. We are particularly interested in material that is work based. Our study guides have been designed to help you learn, to relate your learning to your work and to satisfy the requirements of our accrediting bodies. We are looking for more than the “text book response” and hope that you will find this an easier way of demonstrating your knowledge.

So, our answer to the question “why do we have assignments” is that we need to be satisfied that you have reached the required level of competence set for the area of learning in which you are participating.

Getting Started

Before you start writing your assignment, work out what you want to say about the topic. Do you agree or disagree with its proposition. This becomes your argument or hypothesis i.e. what you intend to prove in your discussion.

Use simple clear language that effectively conveys your meaning. Your writing does not have to be artificially complex, but should get to the point within the word limit set for the task.

If additional directions specific to the assessment task are needed, then they will be provided in the Unit of Competency study guide for the Unit of Competency.

Make sure that you have carried out all the tasks required for the assessment. This means planning in advance. As an example, some Units of Competency require you to conduct interviews prior to completing a written task. This means that you need to find an interview subject to assist, arrange a suitable time, make sure that you have recording equipment available and make sure that you have a clear understanding of the interviewing model that needs to be followed.

Make sure that you do what is asked!

Too many students submit excellent work that is deemed as being “Not Yet Competent” simply because they have allowed their submission to drift away from the set task.

A simple analogy is that if you leave your car at a workshop to have its brake pads replaced, then that is what you expect when you return. If the technician has rotated and balanced the tyres and given it a wheel alignment, then it doesn't matter how well this task was done. You still need the brake pads replaced.

Just as you would not pay for work that you did not need or want, the assessor will not deem your submission to be competent if it doesn't comply with the requirements set for that assessment.

This starts with making sure that you comply with the format required for the written assignment. Some will be in tabular form. Others will ask you to follow sub-headings as you form your response. Others will take the form of short answers. Finally, you may be required to prepare a lengthy written response which is designed to test your capacity in other ways.

In most cases you will be asked to provide a short overview of the incident on which the assignment is based. It is not part of the assignment that will be assessed to determine competence, so don't copy information from existing reports prepared for your employer and expect that this will satisfy the assessment requirements. This is just to put your reader in the picture and let them know what happened. The assessor will be examining your work to determine your level of competence and to see whether you satisfied the task required in the Unit of Competency Study Guide for the assignment.



Essay writing

To assist you further with your assignment I have included some tips below.

Introduction

This should provide an overview of the assignment. You might consider:

- what your argument is;
- how you are going to prove that it is right; and
- some of your key points.
- It should be about 10% of your essay.

It should be written in conjunction with specific instructions provided in the Unit of Competency.

Body

- Address the topic, don't just summarise your notes and readings. Remember, this is the most important section of the paper that convinces the reader of the validity of your argument. It forms the bulk of the paper.
- Construct your assignment by linking the points together in a logical sequence. Support your points with explanations, references, and quotations.
- Where you are asked to comment on a particular model or process, then use each of the components of that model as sub-headings for your work.
- When you are asked to apply a concept to something that you have done or will be required to do in the workplace, then make sure that you actually do it. Make sure that what you write actually conveys what you intended.
- Ask yourself if you have actually satisfied the assessment task. This means that you need to frequently refer to the assessment/project instructions as you are preparing your submission.

Conclusion

This will dovetail with your introduction. Draw together your argument and make your concluding remarks. It will be about 10% of your essay.

References

Attach a list of references to the end of your essay in accordance with the examples provided earlier in this Subject Outline.

Annexures & Appendices

Where you are required to submit copies of documents or other material specified in the study guide for the Unit of Competency, you should list them as a separate annexure to the assessment task itself. There is no need to suppress names if these matters have become a matter of public record unless they are otherwise restricted by court or other tribunal, or otherwise protected by privacy legislation.

In some cases it will be helpful for you to include additional material for the benefit of your reader. This additional material may be virtually anything that is necessary to support your submission. Generally speaking, it should include material that your reader will not be expected to be able to reasonably access.

Examples might include photographs or plans prepared for a brief of evidence, transcripts of interviews, copies of specific policy documents. The important issue here is that you need to show the reader why this material has been included and how it relates to your submission. If you have not demonstrated relevance, then why have you included this material? The reason



for listing the material as an annexure or an appendix is that its format cannot easily be incorporated in your written submission or that it is a serious diversion to your argument.

Either way, you should identify each annexure or appendix, provide a list of included material and make sure that you refer to it through your discussion at appropriate points. Do not rely on your reader making these links for you.

Editing

This is only your first draft. You will need to re-read, check spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Try to avoid long sentences and remember to set out your essay into paragraphs. It is a good idea to get a partner or friend to read your essay before making the final draft. They read it with a different view and may be able to show you where ideas are not clearly expressed and where spelling or other errors that you may have inadvertently overlooked remain.

It is far easier to pick up these errors by printing your assessment task, rather than trying to correct them “on-screen”.

Once you have edited your work, repeat the process.

Assignment Length

Where a specific word length is set, you are allowed latitude of 10% above or below that figure. A paper that falls outside this range is deemed to either not cover the topic in sufficient details (too short) or is not concise, with irrelevant information included. The word limit has been set taking into account your operational workload, to establish a fair standard for you as a student and to reduce fatigue on the part of your marker.

Prior to Submission

Check the study guide to see that you have included everything needed for the task. Returning to the interviewing assessment, have you included?

- A copy of the interview?
- A transcript?
- Any other material specified in the study guide?
- Have you provided a signed assessment coversheet declaring that everything in the assessment is your own work?

Assignment Layout

- We recommend that you bind your assignment by a staple or paper binder in the top left corner of the page.
- **Do not use ‘display’ folders.**
- Use good quality white paper and **print only on one side of the paper.**
- All completed assignments are electronically scanned prior to return to you.
- Use 1.5 lines spacing for the text of your assignment.
- Any direct quotations should be single spaced and indented, with the author’s/s’ name/s, year of publication and page included at the conclusion of the quotation.
- Leave a 2.5cm margin around your work. If you use a spine make the left-hand margin 5cm.
- Separate paragraphs by two 1.5-spaced lines.
- Use a simple, plain typeface (e.g. Times or Arial 11pt or 12pt) when printing your assignment.



- Use **bold** or *italics* for emphasis only.

Referencing

It is a well-established practice to acknowledge the source of all information that is not your own original product. At the least, failure to do so shows a lack of attention to detail. At worst, it is plagiarism or the theft of the intellectual property of another.

All that is asked is that you give due credit to the source from which you obtained the information that you include in your work.

Even if you do not quote the precise words from your source, but provide a summary, you should still acknowledge that source in your work.

- A comprehensive reference list is to be provided at the end of the assessment task which must include all works cited.
- Use the Author/Date/Page, or Harvard style of referencing. Endnotes and footnotes are not to be used.

Briefly stated, the Harvard system requires that you provide, in parentheses, the surname/s of the author/s together with the year of publication and page number of the work from which you have obtained the quotation or information used.

An example is: "chiefs have discovered that programs are easier to conceive..." (Kelling & Moore, 1988:11). There is no need to cite information regarding title, place of publication or publisher when using the Harvard system as this is to be included in your reference list at the conclusion of the paper.

Sample Reference List

Walsh, P., Matlok, G. & Magee, B. (2006), *PSPREG425 Consolidation of Brief of Evidence-Study Guide*, Em-Four Pty Ltd, Goulburn, Australia
(Study notes, also used for book with multiple authors)

Enders, M. (2003), 'Public Perceptions, Policy and Police: Giving the People What They Want', *Proceedings of the First National Conference on Perceptions of Justice*, School of Justice Studies, Faculty of Law, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane
(Conference paper)

Galvin, M. & West, P. (1998), *A Changing Australia: Themes and Case Studies (3rd edn)*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney
(Book - two authors)

Juvenile Justice Advisory Council of NSW (1993), *Future Directions for Juvenile Justice in New South Wales*, Green Paper, Sydney
(Parliamentary paper)

Kennedy, Les (1995), October 18, 'Rogerson 'caught taking a drive'', *The Daily Telegraph Mirror*, p. 3
(Newspaper article - if no author is identified, put the article title first)

City of Sydney Council (2005), *Ranger Unit Standard Operating Procedures for Animal Control*, City of Sydney Council, Sydney
(Corporate/Government author)

Oxland, J. (1993), *Criminal Justice*, Blackstone Press, Sydney, Australia
(Book - one author)

Reser, J. P. (1992), 'The Design of Safe and Humane Police Cells: A Discussion of some Issues Relating to Aboriginal Persons in Police Custody', in *Research Paper No. 9: Deaths in Custody 1980-1989*, eds. D. Biles & D. McDonald, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra



(Article in an edited publication. If page numbers are available they are placed after the place of publication, i.e. at the end, in the following style: pp. ?-?)

Ruane, J. (Director) (1990), *Death in Brunswick* [video], Meridian Films, Australia
(Audio-visual publication)

Temby, I. (1989), 'Preventing Custodial Deaths: A Systematic Approach', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, December, 1980, no. 22, pp. 193-201
(Article in a journal (if no author is identified, put the article title first))

Costa, M. (1996) "Working with victims of crime" [World Wide Web] <http://www.nvc.org>
National Victims Center, Washington, D.C. downloaded via Netscape, 20 March 1999
(article retrieved from World Wide Web)

NOTE: THE UNDERLINED INFORMATION IN PARENTHESES IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION; IT DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE REFERENCE LIST.

Source: Australian Government Publishing Service, 2003, *Style Manual For Authors, Editors and Printers*, the author, Canberra

A final comment

The nature of your work means that you will be under some pressure to learn what is required to do your job **and** to complete your studies with Em-Four Pty Ltd.

All of the company directors and its contractors have been in exactly the same position as you are. You will probably find that your managers and supervisors have all been in this position as well. We all have been under the same pressure to meet deadlines, work full-time, raise families and meet the other challenges that life throws at us.

If you are having problems meeting the academic requirements of the course in which you are enrolled, we ask you to contact us by e-mail or telephone. We are more than happy to provide advice and assistance to help you satisfy those requirements.

This is a much better alternative than asking one of your colleagues for assistance. Frequently, this has led people to take illegitimate short cuts including copying the work of other students and submitting it as their own. Where this is detected, your work will be deemed as "Not Yet Competent" and the matter will be brought to the attention of your employer to act upon as they deem fit.

In light of the work being accompanied by a signed declaration of authenticity, it casts serious doubt over the integrity of the person who submitted it. This is something that must place the continued employment of the person in a regulatory or compliance capacity in serious jeopardy.

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