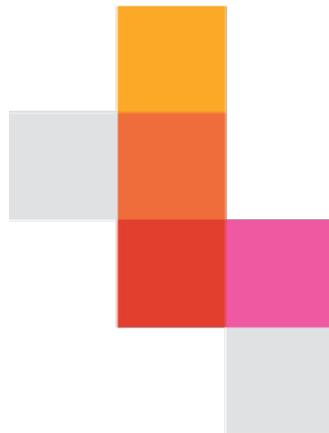


Academic Writing Guide

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Academic Writing Guide Overview: This guide provides explanations, examples and advice on the different aspects of academic writing, including assignment types, grammar and research writing.

Welcome to the UTS Academic Writing Guide

1. Why do I need this guide?

The aim of this guide is to give you a place to come and find explanations, examples and advice about different aspects of academic writing. When you have a question about your assessment task you can refer to different sections of the guide for help.

For example, the guide can tell you what is meant by academic tone; how to write an annotated bibliography (Assignment Types – 7 Annotated Bibliography); the way to structure an essay (Academic Writing – 3.3 Structure), or add variety to your writing (Grammar – 2. Linking Words).

The guide is in four sections:

1. [Academic Writing](#) – what it is and how to do it.
2. [Assignment types](#) – what's the difference between a report and a literature review?
3. [Grammar](#) – a nuts and bolt guide to building academic sentence, using reporting verbs and transition signals, etc.
4. [Research Writing](#) – how to do a literature review, write an abstract writing, submit and give a conference paper.

2. Why do I need to do assessment tasks?

Assessment tasks are your chance to show your teachers your ability across a range of skills. Becoming proficient in these skills is an academic and professional necessity. During your course you will be asked to perform different tasks requiring different skills.

No matter what assessment task you are doing the following checklist applies:

- Always make sure you clearly understand what is required. If you are unsure, ask your lecturers and tutors to explain.
- Analyse the question before you start researching or writing. Make sure you understand what the instruction words are asking you to do, what the keywords are, the scope, etc.
- Look at the assessment criteria for each task and make sure you meet them in the task.

Assessment tasks include:

- Multiple-choice questions
- Written answers (eg. essays, reports)
- Exams
- Group projects

Assessment is an essential part of teaching and learning.

- It lets your teachers know if their teaching is effective and their students are learning.
- It lets you – the student – know if you have really understood the course materials and can carry out the skills of your profession.
- Each faculty, subject and course will have a series of learning aims and objectives. In order to graduate you must be able to show that you have achieved these aims and objectives. You will do this by successfully completing assessment tasks.

Some important reasons for assessment:

- It directs your learning. The assessment task clearly tells you what you will be able to do by the end of the unit.
- It measures results. An academic degree is proof of a high level of knowledge and skill. Your marks show you and your lecturer whether you have achieved the required level.
- It defines and protects standards. Universities have regulations outlining how much work students need to do and assessments comply with these standards.

3. Why am I doing this assessment task?

Before you start an assessment task it's important to understand why you are doing it.

Ask your tutor/lecturer/supervisor questions.

- Which skills and Program Learning Objectives are being tested? – If there are a number of skills ask which one will be the most important. This will help you to plan and structure your essay and focus your research.
- What is the objective of this question? – Are you collecting information, analysing it, or creating something original?
- How does it relate to what you have been learning in this subject? – Have you already been using some of these skills?
- What resources are relevant to this task? – What should I use? Where should I look?
- Is there a model answer/sample exam?
- What criteria will be used for marking? – Make sure you know what the criteria mean and which ones are most important in each task.

Assessment tasks are easier to do if you are interested in what you are learning. It helps if you:

- Attend classes.
- Ask questions.
- Talk to your classmates about things you are learning.
- Keep up with the readings that your lecturers and tutors set.
- Follow the subject's issues in the media and professional journals.
- Think about what you are learning; about what has happened, about what might happen. Consider different scenarios.
- Ask yourself questions; how does this subject relate to other things you know and are learning.
- Try to find the answers through your reading and in your classes.

The big picture: Graduate Attributes

When we get to uni, we do assessment tasks or sit for exams and go for good marks and grades. But how do these numbers help us with our development as individuals and our readiness for the real world? At UTS we try to help students develop important 'Graduate Attributes', to become well-rounded professionals whatever that may be. These are not just about knowledge and skills but also qualities like being sensitive to others points of view, caring about being honest in the work you submit and being able to give clear and engaging oral presentations. Some examples of these skills might be: Communication and Interpersonal skills; Attitudes and Values; Practical and Professional Skills; Research and Critical Thinking; and Innovation and Creativity. By focusing on how you are developing these attributes rather than just the marks or grades, you will get a better understanding of what you are good at and also what area of your learning you might want to improve...so that you are relevant and ready for the professional world (or further study) the moment you walk out the door!

4. How are the marks worked out?

Grading schema for coursework subjects at UTS

Grade	Mark Range	Description
High Distinction	85-100	An outstanding performance. Indicates that the student has demonstrated a high level of understanding across the entire content of the course by means of criticism, logical argument, and interpretation of materials.
Distinction	75-84	A superior performance. Indicates that the student has demonstrated demonstrating a sound grasp of content, together with efficient organisation and selectivity.
Credit	65-74	A good performance. Indicates that the student has demonstrated the ability to think analytically, and contextually about the course and its assessment requirements, and to understand/present alternative points of view/perspectives and supporting evidence.
Pass	50-64	A satisfactory level of performance. Indicates that the student has addressed the assessment requirements of the course and has demonstrated an acceptable understanding of the issues entailed.
Fail (X)	50+	Unsatisfactory performance in a compulsory component of the subject.
Fail	0-49	Unsatisfactory performance, below the minimum expected level. This grade characterises work which shows a significant lack of understanding of the topic or its context.
Other grades/codes		
E		Grades not submitted.

Q		Results pending Result pending the completion of a project, clinical practicum or field excursion where the student has not completed assessment task(s) by the end of the teaching period.
T	45-49	Formal supplementary examination to be completed within a designated examination period before a grade can be awarded.
W		Withheld Result withheld. Used to indicate that not all assessment tasks have been assessed.
Withdrawn		Granted withdrawal from a subject without academic fail after the due date.
Withdrawn /Fail		Withdrawn after the due date.

Adapted from:

La Trobe University, *Understanding The Task: Assessment Criteria*, LASESL, La Trobe University, accessed 18 January 2013,

http://tlweb.latrobe.edu.au/ctlc/allu/dae/writing/03utt_assess.html