A black and white photograph of a young woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a puffer jacket, looking down at a tablet computer. She is sitting at a desk in what appears to be a classroom or library, with other people blurred in the background. A blue brushstroke graphic is in the top right corner.

ASSESSMENT, RESEARCH &

STYLE GUIDE

EQUALITY * DIVERSITY * UNITY
EQUALS.EDU.AU

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I. Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to EQUALS Style Guide!

This Style Guide is a resource to help you write academically with confidence. It also helps you understand how EQUALS expects students to present and submit assessment tasks. It's important that you understand what academic writing is all about so that you can submit assessment tasks that are accurate, meaningful, authentic and demonstrate your learning.

Please use this as a guide during your time at EQUALS and refer to it whenever you need information on how to:

- Understand an assessment question
- Write academically and stylistically
- Format a particular assessment type
- Research and reference
- Submit assessment tasks
- Request an extension
- Check for grammar

Please also see our Student Centre on EQOnline for links, resources, and further readings:

<http://eqi-elearning.mywisenet.com.au/course/index.php?categoryid=143>

How to use the Style Guide

Refer to the contents page for particular sections and topics throughout the style guide. It provides a quick reference to key topics to assist. Please refer to the specific requirements outlined in your unit outlines, as they vary by level and unit.

Please use this guide as tool for completing assessment tasks, covering everything from how to:

- read the question or task
- conduct research
- plan the assessment task
- write academically and stylistically, with practical formatting
- reference.

II. Starting an Assessment task

Tips for Writing Assessment tasks

Different assessment methods are applied to each unit. The assessment tasks are key to help you focus on the important concepts and learning outcomes of your study.

It's important to plan your assessment task before you start. It's best practice to ensure that you familiarise yourself with the assessment task due dates as written in your unit outline. Doing this will help you effectively manage your time throughout the study period. It is also important to note that late submissions may incur an academic penalty or may not be accepted.

EQUALS adopts the ten-step approach by AIB (Australian Institute of Business) in writing assessments as follows. It is strongly recommended that you follow this in chronological order.

1. *Read, understand and address the assessment question.*

By doing this, you know what you need to do, how to do it, and whether you need assistance to complete the assessment. It's also important to check the word count. Further, consider your audience. Do the instructions suggest that the assessment task should be aimed at a specific group or individual? If not, assume that the teaching staff is the audience. Whoever the reader is, aim the assessment at your audience and keep in mind their requirements and knowledge.

2. *Do background reading and write down notes.*

Start with your textbook and do some brief background reading around the topic. Write down the main concepts and ideas that are relevant. Is there any relevant history related to your topic? Is there any important detail that will be of high significance to the future? Are there any important people involved? Knowing such details will give you a better idea as to how to start and finish your assessment.

3. *Organise your assessment.*

Make a tentative, organised list of headings, sub-headings and important topics to be addressed. Use the 'insert table of contents' option in Microsoft Word or any other word processing application. Learn how to update this automatically as you make progress. Remember that organisation is key to any written document. It not only gives you direction to write, but it also adds professionalism to your paper.

4. *Collate information and note your sources for proper referencing.*

Gather information from articles and other credible sources, preferably from peer-reviewed journal articles or books. Take notes and write down reference information about your sources. Make sure you collect all that information when you first have your hands on the source of information. Collecting all the necessary information for proper referencing as soon as you find the source will save you precious time during the course of your writing. The list will also come in handy if you want to double check information.

5. *Organise your notes bearing in mind the marking criteria.*

Organise your notes and finalise the outline with its headings, sub-headings and topics. Consult the assessment instructions/guidelines and the marking criteria for your assessment (with the weightings for various criteria). Bear these in mind as you plan and write the assessment. Comparing your outline with the assessment details will let you know if you have covered everything that the assessment requires or if you have included something that is irrelevant. It will give you a chance to finalise your outline before proceeding with the actual writing.

6. *Start writing the assessment.*

Then, and only then, start writing the assessment in the appropriate format. EQUALS assessments are often written in a standard report format. Remember to note the sources of information as you write; after all, you have to ensure you place appropriate in-text citations in your report. We recommend you

use the Office Word Format/Font command set to Arial or Calibri 11 point, and the Format/Paragraph command set to 1.5 line spacing, unjustified.

7. *Re-read and re-write the assessment.*

Re-writing is essential. Make sure you add or delete appropriate words or paragraphs and check the spelling and grammar. Prior to re-writing, read and re-read your draft. Check whether the flow of thoughts is clear and maintains continuity. Check for any grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and/or improper use of full stops, commas or question marks. Make sure you read your assessment carefully to check for errors or omissions. Also have a trusted colleague for whom English is a first or proficient language read through to check, correct or help edit your language or logic for anything you may have missed. (Not to re-write content or do your work for you, as it must be your own work.) Lastly, ensure that you adhere to the required word count, and add/delete words as necessary.

8. *Write the Executive Summary.*

Now write the Executive Summary. This is the summary of the entire assessment. Include only main points of your assessment. It is called a summary because it is supposed to be brief and comprehensive.

9. *List the references.*

Add the alphabetical list of references, listed as per this Style Guide.

10. *Submit the assessment.*

Submit the assessment to EQUALS in PDF format. Remember to keep an eye on the word count. The word count includes all text from the 'Introduction' section through to the beginning of the 'References' (that is, do not include the title page, Executive Summary/Abstract, table of contents, References or Appendices in the word count).

Tips for Exams

Exams are summative assessments that ensure you have retained information and gained knowledge over the duration of a course. It is a significant assessment component in most units, thus, it is important to prepare well for the exam and to ensure you write effective exam answers. Some of the following information in this section are adopted from AIB Style Guide.

When preparing for exams, consider the following:

- Make sure you have noted the correct date, time, duration, method and place for the exam, as well as other exam details such as open/closed book and what materials are recommended in the exam.
- Prepare answers to likely questions. An effective way of preparing answers is to make up a plan in note form, to outline how you would answer a likely question, using headings and sub-headings. It is best to also identify a range of examples that you can use in exam answers to demonstrate 'application'.
- Remember to bring your photo ID to the exam. You will not be allowed to sit the exam without your ID.

During the exam, make sure you plan your time well to ensure that you complete all questions.

Reading time

- Read the exam paper instructions carefully.
- Then, read all the questions.
- If there is an element of choice, decide on the ones you will answer.
- Allocate your time for each question, and for each part of the question if marks are allocated to separate parts.

Exam writing time

- Once reading time ends, start your answer with a very short introductory paragraph that relates the topic to a more complete background.
- Try to follow your answer plan and write some headings through your answer – they show the examiner you have a structured mind.
- Have a paragraph (of at least three or four sentences) to cover each point and try to link the paragraphs with a linking word in the first sentence such as 'Moreover', 'However' and 'As well'.
- End each answer with a short concluding paragraph that summarises the main point you have been arguing for. Answer the easiest questions first; it makes you feel better.

Please be sure you paraphrase any of the open book resources you use to demonstrate your understanding of the material. All exams will be submitted through originality checking software to be compared with other written work.

Try to adhere to your time allocation.

- If you run out of time, note that you will usually get more marks by writing something about a new, unanswered question than you will by writing final 'tidbits' to an answer that you have already spent the allocated time on as the examiner already has a good idea of how much you know about it. In other words, part answers to two questions will usually get more marks than a finished answer to one question.
- It is ideal to leave time to re-read your answers and do some final editing and correcting.

Tips for Other Assessment Types

This section outlines the different types of assessments required for you to do, as well as how to truly understand an assessment question to begin your research.

Different assessments aim to assess a student in different areas on different key learnings. Depending on which type of assessment you are completing, you are required to present and answer a question in a certain manner. For example:

- Written Assessments/Research activity – assesses your skills in research, accesses reputable sources

TIPS: Read through large quantities of information
Accurately present an idea in a succinct and academic manner

- Reflective Journal – test your competence in the industry
TIPS: Take notes when you learn something new
Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and reflect on it
- Short answer questions – assesses your understanding on a certain topic
TIPS: Give a brief summary
Show you understand particular ideas, theories or practices
- Simulation, oral presentations, role plays and group work – test your knowledge whilst also testing your employability skills
TIPS: Write down what you have to say
Express your newly acquired knowledge comprehensively
Practice and come to class prepared
- Practical assessments – test your abilities under ‘real world’ conditions
TIPS: Prepare and study the theories the day before your practical assessment
Ensure that you understand the instructions given
- Work Integrated Assessment – test your performance in the workplace
TIPS: Attend the compulsory pre-placement workshop
Listen attentively during the workshop and ask questions
Conduct yourself in a professional manner when dealing with clients and staff in your designated placement workplace
Communicate with your facilitator

Key Words

Other than the different assessment types, there are also commonly used words in questions that require you to answer in a particular way. We call these Key Words. For example:

- **Compare:** When you are asked to compare, you should examine qualities or characteristics in order to discover resemblances. The term compare is usually stated as compare with, and it implies that you are to emphasise similarities, although differences may be mentioned.
- **Contrast:** When you are instructed to contrast, you should stress dissimilarities, differences, or unlikeness of associated things, qualities, events, or problems.
- **Define:** Definitions call for concise, clear, authoritative meanings. In such statements, details are seldom required, but boundaries or limitations of the definition should be briefly stated. You must keep in mind the class to which the item to be defined belongs, and whatever differentiates it from all other classes.
- **Enumerate:** The word enumerate specifies a list or outline form of reply. In such questions, you should recount, one by one, in concise form, the points required.
- **Illustrate:** A question which asks you to illustrate usually requires you to explain or clarify your answer to the problem by presenting a figure, diagram, or concrete example.
- **List:** Listing is similar to enumeration. You are expected in such questions to present an itemised series or a tabulation. Such answers should always be concise.
- **Relate:** In a question which asks you to show the relationship or relate to, you answer should emphasise connections and associations, usually in descriptive form.
- **State:** In questions which direct you to specify, give, state, or present, you are called upon to express the high points in brief, clear form. Details and examples may be omitted.
- **Trace:** When a question asks you to trace a course of events, you are to give a description of progress, historical sequence, or development from the point of origin. Such questions may call for probing or for deductions.

Note: The word analyse is seldom used directly in essay questions, but the process of analysis is involved in answering most of the listed types. If you are asked to analyse, chances are the question requires you to give reasons, interpret, compare, contrast, define, evaluate, or interpret.

It is important that before you begin to answer a question that you understand exactly what the question wants you to explain.

For a full list of commonly used key words follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/jgu9rjr>

III. Research

Doing Effective Online Searches

Once you have understood what you are being asked to do and in what style, it is time to start doing some research on your topic.

To save time and get more relevant information, it is important to learn how to research effectively and how to use common search sites, such as google or google scholar. For example:

Your question is

Discuss and analyse the key historical events and significant changes in psychology and medicine that led to the reform and revolution of the treatment of people with mental health issues.

The **key words** are 'discuss' and 'analyse' but let us look at what the **key concepts** are. Once we have these, we can begin doing our online research.

Discuss and analyse the key [historical events](#) and [significant changes](#) in [psychology and medicine](#) that led to the [reform and revolution](#) of the treatment of people with [mental health](#) issues.

The usual way we do research is to just type this entire question into a search bar, but this would lead to us getting thousands of results without much relevance. There is a way to use the key concepts and search in a smarter way that will give us fewer and more relevant results. **First**, we take our key concepts and put them into brackets. **Second**, we think of synonyms for those concepts to give us a wider field of possible results. For example:

(mental health + mental illness) **and** (psychology + medicine + psychiatry) **and**
(reform + revolution + updates + improvements) **and** (treatment + care)

Using this method, we can link our key concepts and filter for results that only contain these concepts. Ensure you put your related key concepts in brackets () and join them with an addition sign + as above e.g. (mental health + mental illness) and join the key concept groups with the word '**and**'.

Using this method will give you the most relevant and effective search results.

Evaluating Online Search Results

Now that you have done your efficient search, you would have gotten quite a few results regarding your key concepts. What we need to do now, is work out which of these sites and results are reputable.

When we say **reputable**, we mean that the information you are reading has not originated from sites that are open to the public to edit – such as Wikipedia. That the sites and articles are not outdated or contain information that is no longer current, relevant or in line with the latest best-practice standards. We want you to ensure that the sites and articles you read are accurate and objective. Example reputable data bases might include [Google scholar](#), [Microsoft Academic](#), [Bielefeld Academic Search Engine \(BASE\)](#), [Mendeley](#), and many others.

- Does the page exhibit a particular point of view or bias?
- Is the site objective?
- Is there a reason the site is presenting a particular point of view on a topic?

The University of Illinois (2016) has suggested some questions you ask before you use an online source:

- **How did you find the page?**
 - Was it recommended by a teaching staff or a scholarly peer?
 - Was it an advertised or sponsored page?
 - Was it cited in a scholarly article or journal?
- **Is the information accurate and objective?**
 - How accurate is the information presented?
 - Does the page exhibit a particular point of view or bias?
 - Is there a reason the site is presenting a particular point of view on a topic?
 - Does the page contain advertising?
- **Is the page current?**
 - Is the information provided current?
 - When was the page created?
 - Are dates included for the last update or modification of the page?
 - Are the links current and functional?
- **Does the page function well?**
 - Is the site easy to navigate? Are options to return to the home page, tops of pages, etc., provided?
 - Is the site searchable?
 - Does the site include a site map or index?

Asking these questions of a site means you are critically assessing the sources.

Using your Textbook Effectively

Throughout your studies, your key source of information for your units will be your textbook. You will have pre-readings prior to your sessions and will find the core information on topics here.

Your textbook does not only give you reference on the relevant chapters for the topics you are studying, but also gives you some information on your research. Your textbook is your first reference before doing further research online or using other sources such as journals, articles or other books.

When using your textbook for research, we suggest using your textbook from back-to-front.

- **Index** – This is located at the back of your textbook. The index lists all key terms and concepts found within your textbook and is a good place to start as it lets you isolate key terms that you are searching for. The index is in alphabetical order and consists of all pages where the term is discussed or referred to.
- **Review Questions** – This is located at the end of each chapter. Reading the review questions gives you a clear understanding of what you are meant to learn in that chapter. When you pay attention to these, you can focus on the important ideas.
- **Chapter Summary** – This is also located at the end of each chapter. The chapter summary gives you a brief overview of the chapter. If you read the summary and realise that the information you are looking for is not in that chapter, you have saved yourself time by not reading it.

IV. Formatting and Appearance

Assessment Appearance

Once you have gathered information on your topic and are getting ready to start writing out your assessment task, it is important to think about how you present your work.

EQUALS has set out some guidelines on how you should present your work, including the title page, font used, spacing of content, and an example References page.

Helpful Tips for submitting assessment tasks:

- Use the standard cover sheet found in [EQOnline Student Centre](#) and complete the signed declaration
- Use Arial or Calibri 11, 1.5 line spacing, and unjustified paragraphs
- Use in-text referencing (more details on page 15)
- Aim to meet the set word limit for your assessment activity and do not exceed 10 per cent over or under it.

V. Content and Structure

Report Format (Higher Education)

This section describes the standard report format to be used in your assessment tasks if you are studying a Bachelor of higher degree at EQUALS. At Diploma level or below, it is still recommended to use this format to present your paper professionally. However, you may exclude the Executive Summary.

The following is the basic report format of an EQUALS assessment task. You are required to follow this unless the assessment details for a particular unit specifically ask you to use a different format. This ensures that your assessment task has a logical order.

Title Page
Executive Summary
Table of Contents
Introduction
<Heading 1>
<Heading 2>
...
Conclusion
References
Appendices

Block Format (Vocational Education and Training)

When it comes to writing, it needs a beginning, a middle and an end. In an assessment task, we call these blocks the introduction, the body and, the conclusion. Each block serves a particular purpose, we will look at this in more detail later.

There are also other components to an assessment task, depending on the assessment type.

- If you are creating a research folder, you will need a title page, a contents page, your body of work, and references.
- If you are doing a group presentation, you will still follow the same basic structure, but you should include a section for questions.

Title Page
Introduction
Body
Conclusion
References

Contents

I. Title Page / Cover Sheet (on a separate page)

This is important for teaching staff to identify whose work they are marking, for which unit, and which assessment task. You can find the standard cover sheet in [EQOnline Student Centre](#). This includes the following details:

- Date
- Student name
- Student ID no.
- Unit code
- Unit title
- Assessment no.
- Assessment title
- Lecturer's name
- Signed declaration

II. Executive Summary (on a separate page)

This provides a brief overview of your report and is located after the title page. The executive summary do not include any references or in-text citations and is normally not more than 250 words. There are certain cases of longer executive summary but it is never more than one page in length. This should include the following details:

- What you did
- How you did it
- Your main findings
- Your key recommendations

Tip: Write your executive summary last or when you complete your assessment. Note that the executive summary is **not** included in the word count.

III. Table of contents (on a separate page)

This is a list of all the contents in your assessment task and is located after the executive summary on a new page. This shows the page numbers where the content is located.

Tip: Use the automatic table of contents option. This is found in most word processing application. Remember to update your table before submitting the assessment task. Again, this is **not** included in the word count.

IV. Introduction

This is a brief description of the aim and purpose of the essay or report. The first paragraph usually states your background of the assessment and its purpose. The second paragraph is where you state what you intend to discuss including a brief summary of the sections and any limitations. Your introduction is proportionate to your word limit and is no longer than 10 per cent. For example, if your word limit is 1000 words, your introduction should be no more than 100 words. Below is an example.

V. Body / Essay / Report

In the body/essay of your assessment, the main points stated in the introduction are discussed in a logical sequence and is elaborated. If you are writing a report, you can utilise key headings and subheadings.

The body of your report is where all of your key information sits. This is where you present

information, relevant facts and findings from your research.

VET students are not required to include in-text references; however, it is important for students to include a reference list that shows from where information was gathered. HEd students, on the other hand, are required to include in-text referencing.

This is where the majority of your word limit goes, approximately 80 per cent of your word limit. If your word limit is 1000 words, your body should be at least 800 words.

Tip: Divide your body into different sections with descriptive headings. Provide clear and distinct paragraphs, each paragraph presenting a different topic or idea. Each start with an obvious link to the previous section. Use linking words including also, in addition, moreover, further, consequently, on the other hand, in contrast, however, but, or nevertheless.

VI. Conclusion

A conclusion is simply a summary of your work, it is brief and does not include any new information. It wraps up the content of the essay/assessment and provides your final thoughts. Your conclusion is no longer than 10 per cent of your word limit.

The conclusion may include a brief recommendation based on the findings of the report. Some assessments may require you to give recommendations. This includes specific action to be done and is usually in bullet points.

VII. References

This includes all materials referenced in the preparation of your assessment tasks. In other words, it contains all other sources you read or reviewed as part of your assessment task preparation. It is important to know that the 'References' is required to be listed in alphabetical order according to the author's family name. It is spaced in single line and have a blank single line space between each reference, left aligned and it is in the final page of your assessment task.

Remember that when you use someone's work, whether it is a summary of their ideas, paraphrasing their work or the use of direct quotes and images, it is essential to reference it.

VIII. Appendices

These are additional relevant materials that you want to include in your report. The body of your report refers to an appendix whilst providing a brief outline of its content. This is not a requirement and is **not** included in the word count.

VI. Writing an Essay

Write an essay in 5 steps:

Step 1 – Write a topic sentence

- A topic sentence makes your argument clear to the reader.
- Start by determining the key points you want to cover in your essay, and then write a topic sentence that summarises each point.
- Then, write paragraphs to expand on these sentences.

Step 2 – Brainstorm

- Look through your research for anything relevant to your topic sentence and list these points underneath it.
- Note any links between these points so you can comment on any relationships between them.
Tip: Make sure you make a note of the sources from to make referencing easier later.

Step 3 – Filter

- Remove points that do not relate strongly to the topic sentence of the paragraph or to your overall argument.
- Assemble the remaining points in order to ensure they flow into each other and are not just a random assortment of ideas.

Step 4 – Draft

- Address each of the points you identified in order you determined in Step 3.
- Make sure that it is clear how each point you are making relates to your overall argument and relevant topic sentence.
- Ensure that you do not assume that the reader knows about the topic you are writing about.
- Ensure that your sentences explain your ideas clearly.

Step 5 – Revise and edit

- Read and edit your draft, paying attention to the following:
 - Structure – your points are arranged logically and has a natural flow into each other
 - Relevance – check that everything you are saying is relevant to your argument and to the respective topic sentence
 - Clarity – keeping in mind that what may be clear to you may not be clear to someone who has not researched the topic
 - Supporting ideas – ensure that each point you are making is supported with facts
 - Grammar and spelling – read your essay out loud to see if it sounds correct; errors are often easier to identify when read aloud

Example Essay Plan Template

The following essay template is a useful tool for students to utilise:

Remember to adapt this template as necessary. Add extra paragraphs if you need to and remember to add in-text references and a reference list.

Title

Introduction	General introductory remarks	
	Thesis statement/scope	
Paragraph 1	Topic sentence	
	Support	
Paragraph 2	Topic sentence	
	Support	
Paragraph 3	Topic sentence	
	Support	
Paragraph 4	Topic sentence	
	Support	
Conclusion	Summary of main ideas	
	Concluding remarks/recommendations	

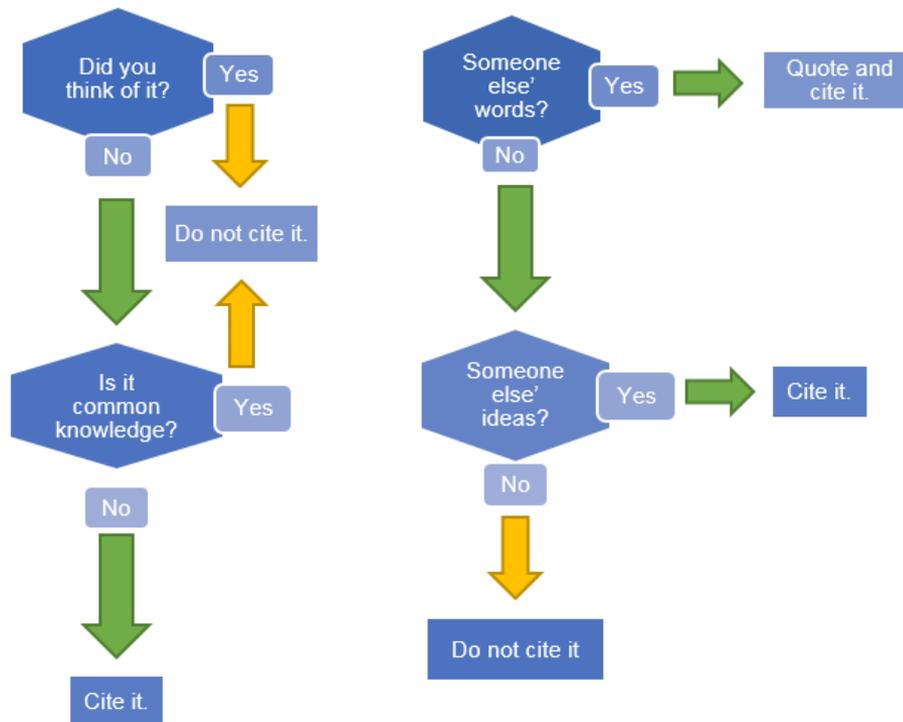
References (in full)

Adapted from the University of Adelaide, 2019.

VII. Referencing

Referencing Flowchart

You can use the below flowchart to guide you when to cite a source. Robert Harris (2001, pp. 155 & 158), as cited in Central Queensland University's Harvard referencing guide, has developed this.



Harvard Referencing Style

Referencing is an important skill in academic writing. It helps you support your academic work by demonstrating that you have read widely and have understand the content of your research. EQUALS recommends using the Harvard Style in referencing. The following UniSA examples to simply state complex rules to help you understand the Harvard style of referencing including in-text and end-text referencing.

Key UniSA links: [What is referencing?](#)
[Harvard Referencing Guide UniSA](#)

How to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is the preferred way of presenting information in your paper from another source. To introduce someone else' theories and ideas in your paper, you need to rephrase them into your own words. The trick here is to use a few words as possible from the original source whilst being mindful not to change the meaning of what you are trying to convey. Remember that as you paraphrase, you also cite the material and reference it appropriately to avoid plagiarism.

EQUALS' Policy on Reusing Work

Self-plagiarism is the reuse of your own submitted work from previous classes or courses without appropriate citation. If you've made a point or conducted research in one assessment task that you'd like to build on in a later submission, you'll need to cite yourself, just as you would acknowledge the work of others (Walden University 2018).

See below for some examples of how to cite accurately.

For guidance on when citing yourself might be appropriate, consult the unit academic teaching staff member and note below:

- During your studies at EQUALS, you might want to write on the same topic as previously. Each assessment task needs to reflect new approaches or insights into that topic to demonstrate your growth.
- EQUALS recognises that there might be some overlap between the requirements, assessment tasks, and inquiry for different courses, placements and demonstrations. In general, you need to use only small portions of documents as background or foundational material for additional development in a subsequent assessment task. Please don't copy and paste substantial sections from one assessment task to another. Any use of prior work is at the discretion of the teaching staff member: you must receive prior approval from the teaching staff member, who may request a copy of the previous work. Fair use laws must be respected for published documents.
- When using your own scholarly work in subsequent research, be sure to cite yourself as a primary author and your previous submitted coursework as unpublished papers

In other words, reuse previous work sparingly, and only use it only with good reason and permission. Then cite it using the EQUALS' Harvard format.

How to Cite Yourself

If you cite or quote your previous work, treat yourself as the author and your own previous course work as an unpublished paper, as shown in Guide. For example, if Susan Over wanted to cite a paper she wrote at EQUALS in 2017, her citation might look like this:

Over (2017) asserted that previous studies on best practices in human services "found that special care provisions included understanding individual preferences and ensuring that services were customised accordingly." (p. 3).

And in the reference list:

Over, S. (2017). An analysis of best practices in human services provision. Unpublished submission, EQUALS.

VIII. Academic Integrity

EQUALS expects students and staff to be committed to academic excellence and high standards of ethical behaviour. It is your responsibility to act honestly, ethically and with integrity in your research and assessment activities to avoid breaching academic misconduct guidelines as outlined in the linked policy below.

EQUALS does not tolerate academic dishonesty or plagiarism. Academic dishonesty is any form of cheating in an academic activity and includes recycling, fabrication of data, collusion, copying, plagiarism, and many others. Plagiarism, on the other hand, means to take and use another person's ideas and/or manner of expressing them and to pass them off as one's own.

It is the responsibility of all Students to:

- a) Ensure that they do not commit or collude with another person to commit academic dishonesty or plagiarism;
- b) Comply with EQUALS' [Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy](#).

Plagiarising can lead to serious penalties. If you're found to be involved in academic misconduct, you'll face disciplinary actions. 'Proper acknowledgement' means that any work that you summarise, paraphrase or quote must be referenced. Failure to do so is seen as an intentional use of someone else's ideas, words or concepts in your assessment task. This is a serious breach of academic conduct and contravenes the EQUALS Student Code of Conduct.

The best way to avoid having plagiarism detected is to acknowledge the sources from which your ideas were drawn. This also refers to other students' work. You must not share your work with another student, nor should you copy any work from another student. This is called collusion and carries the same penalties as plagiarism.

For more details, please see the [Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy](#) on EQUALS' website.

Academic Integrity Course

EQUALS expects all new students to complete the *Academic Integrity: Values, Skills, Action* online course within their first study period. The course explores academic integrity and how you can demonstrate it in your work, study and research at EQUALS.

Developed by the University of Auckland, this self-paced four week course will allow you to:

- Reflect on the meaning and importance of academic integrity as well as the values associated with it;
- Explore how to use the work of others with integrity;
- Identify actions which constitute academic dishonesty and how to avoid it; and
- Develop key study skills which foster academic integrity.

You should enrol in the course after completing EQUALS' orientation or soon after commencing your first study period. You can also expect to provide evidence of completion to EQUALS by the end of your first study period.

Enrol here: <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/academic-integrity>

Online course in [Study Skills](#)

Academic Integrity: Values, Skills, Action

This course will explore academic integrity and how you can demonstrate it in your work, study and research at university.



Join course for free

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IX. General Information

Assessment Submission

Assessment tasks must be submitted by the due date that is set by the teaching staff. All summative assessment tasks are to be submitted online via EQOnline.

If you need an extension for submission of an assessment item, a written extension request letter form may be filled with the legitimate reason for the request which must be submitted prior to the submission due date. The extension request form can be accessed in our Student Centre on EQOnline. The extension may be granted at the sole discretion of EQUALS.

Where no extension has been granted and the assessment item is received by EQUALS after the due date, a penalty is applied.

Please always retain a copy of your assessment tasks, and keep them until marked and returned or for as long as required.

How do we assess?

Assessment tasks are assessed in terms of the following criteria –

- Plan and structure – Assessment tasks follow the format outline in the stated guidelines presented earlier in this study guide.
- Application and content – Assessment tasks communicate ideas and information clearly, include references that are relevant to support or validate the assessment task. Information included in the assessment task is critically analysed, with rationales given and arguments well supported.
- Evidence of reading – Assessment tasks should evidence of reading as reflected in the ‘References’.

Helpful Hints to follow:

- Keep sentences short.
- Use simple rather than complex big words.
- Avoid unnecessary words.
- Use terms that describe the situation you are writing about in the best possible way.

Using Assessment Rubrics

Assessment rubrics, usually in the form of a matrix guide, are provided for you to use and interpret your assessment tasks against. This helps you see what is important and where to focus your learning efforts. It enables you to understand the marking criteria and how different levels of performance earn different grades.

At EQUALS, teaching staff evaluate your performance against the expected performance standards in an assessment criterion found in our rubrics. A rubric helps teaching staff apply consistent standards when assessing qualitative tasks, and promotes consistency in shared marking.

Please refer to Appendix A of this handbook for a sample assessment rubrics.

Grading and Marking

VET

Teaching staff mark assessment tasks within 20 working days. These grades are available on EQOnline. EQUALS releases unit grades at the end of each study period or as otherwise appropriate.

For more information, please see the [Students Result policy](#) on EQUALS' website.

HEd

You will be notified of your final semester grades by email two (2) weeks after exam week. To ensure student confidentiality and compliance with privacy legislation, EQUALS will not discuss your results with any other party or release results over the phone to another party (without written consent from the student).

During each unit, you will be provided with an evaluation of your individual performance with reference to the criteria for each assessment task. Student performance in individual units of study shall be graded in accordance with the following guidelines:

Grade	Definition
High Distinction (outstanding performance) Code: HD Mark range: 85% and above	Complete and comprehensive understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to an outstanding level; demonstration of an extremely high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and excellent achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Distinction (very high level of performance) Code: D Mark range: 75-84%	Very high level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a very high level; demonstration of a very high level of interpretive and analytical ability and intellectual initiative; and comprehensive achievement of all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Credit (high level of performance) Code: C Mark range: 65-74%	High level of understanding of the unit content; development of relevant skills to a high level; demonstration of a high level of interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not fully achieved.
Pass (competent level of performance) Code: P Mark range: 50-64%	Adequate understanding of most of the basic unit content; development of relevant skills to a satisfactory level; adequate interpretive and analytical ability and achievement of all major objectives of the unit; some minor objectives not achieved.
Fail (outright) (attempted all assessments but did not achieve 50%) Code: FO Mark range: below 50%	Inadequate understanding of the basic unit content; failure to develop relevant skills; insufficient evidence of interpretive and analytical ability; and failure to achieve some or all major and minor objectives of the unit.
Non-graded Pass Code: NGP	Successful completion of a unit assessed on a pass/fail basis, indicating satisfactory understanding of unit content; satisfactory development of relevant skills; satisfactory interpretive and analytical ability and achievement in all major objectives of the unit.

Please refer to our Students Assessment policy on EQUALS' website for more information:

<http://equals.edu.au/policies/>

If you would like further information on any part of this document or any other queries related to assessment tasks or assessments activities, please contact our Library staff.

References

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Harris, RA 2001, *The plagiarism handbook: Strategies for preventing, detecting, and dealing with plagiarism*, Los Angeles, CA.

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Definition of Terms

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity can be defined as: 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage (International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2014). Academic Integrity involves using, generating and communicating information in an ethical, honest and responsible manner (TEQSA Guidance Note–Academic Integrity, p.1, 2017).

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct at EQUALS is the breach of Student Partnership principles and EQUALS' Academic Integrity policy. Academic Misconduct means conduct by which a student seeks to gain for himself, herself or another person an unfair or unjustified academic advantage in a course or unit of study and includes, cheating, collusion and plagiarism. It may be intentional or reckless.

Assessment

A process to determine a student's achievement of identified learning outcomes and may include a range of written and oral methods and practice or demonstration.

Assessment Task

Any activity given to assess the student's competence through student's demonstration of essential knowledge and skills.

Cheat/Cheating

Cheating means to seek to obtain an unfair advantage in an examination or written, oral or practical work, required to be submitted or completed for assessment in a course or unit of study and includes the resubmission of work that has already been assessed in another unit.

Collusion

Collusion means unauthorised collaboration on assessable written, oral or practical work with another person or persons.

Formal Assessment

"Formal assessment involves (but is not limited to):

- using specific assessment strategies to determine the degree to which students have achieved the learning outcomes;
- assessment strategies including essays, exams, reports, projects, presentations, performances, laboratories or clinical simulation; resource development, creative design tasks, tests and quizzes, journal writing, portfolios;
- individual and/or collaborative tasks that usually attract a grade or outcome (group work may include both individual and group components)."

Formative Assessment

"Formative assessment is assessment that occurs throughout a course and is seen as the practice of building a cumulative record of student achievement. Formative assessment should incorporate feedback that supports student learning and is prompt, informative and ongoing. Providing immediate and meaningful feedback to the students on their progress enables students to reflect on where they may be going wrong, allowing them opportunities to reflect, modify and reinforce learning. It is critical that students are provided with formative feedback throughout the course to give them these opportunities. Formative assessment also assists teaching staff in modifying or extending their teaching, and adapting their learning and teaching methods to meet the needs of the student(s); formative assessment can include non-graded self-assessment, such as revision quizzes. Formative assessment is also referred to as 'assessment for learning'."

Moodle

EQUALS' dedicated electronic document and records management system. Also known as EQOnline.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means to take and use another person's ideas and or manner of expressing them and to pass them off as one's own by failing to give appropriate acknowledgement, including the use of material from any source, staff, students or the Internet, published and unpublished works.

Proofreading

The process of identifying errors and suggesting corrections to a text. This must not involve rewriting passages of text in order to clarify meaning; amending the words used by the author (except to identify the correct spelling of the word used); rearranging passages of text or code, or reformatting other material; contributing additional material to the original; and checking calculations or formulae.

Recycling

The resubmission for assessment of work that is the same, or substantially the same, as work previously submitted for assessment in the same or in a different unit of study (except in the case of legitimate resubmission with the approval of the examiner for purposes of improvement).

Student

A person enrolled in a formal course or program of learning.

Summative Assessment

"Summative assessment is typically at the end of a course or unit, such as a final exam or major project or essay. Summative assessment is used to make judgements and formally measure student achievement against learning outcomes. It can also be used to assess programme/course/unit and teaching effectiveness (evaluation). Providing timely and meaningful students is also important, however as students will receive this feedback at the end of the course, summative assessment will not assist improvement during the course itself. Summative assessment is also referred to as 'assessment of learning'."

Appendix A: Example of a Simple Assessment Rubrics

EQUALS also uses a 5 and 6-point scale rubrics.

Criteria	Performance standards				Additional comments
	Circle the description that best describes how well the student fulfilled the criteria. (Only circle <i>one description</i> per criterion.)				
Rationale Has the student been able to explain why the work was done?	The student is able to explain the broader context that the work fits into—why it was done and how important it is.	The student is able to explain why the work was done in direct terms.	The student attempts to explain why the work was done but you don't think they really understand.	The student cannot explain why the research was done.	
Content How good is the work that was done?	The work appears to have been completed without errors.	The work contains some minor errors of design or execution that are unlikely to undermine the main conclusions.	The work contains serious errors—the conclusions are cast into serious doubt.	The work appears to be incomplete—it fails to address the stated aims.	
Communication How well is the work presented?	Aims, methods, results, conclusions are all clear. The poster is: <input type="checkbox"/> adequate <input type="checkbox"/> attractive <input type="checkbox"/> attractive, and the presentation is engaging.	Aims, methods, results and conclusions are clear but only after probing. Some aspects of the poster or presentation were poorly considered.	Multiple deficiencies: more than one aims, methods, results and conclusions are not clear.	Taken together, graphical and verbal communication are so poor that you are left unsure what the project is about.	
Q&A How well is the student able to answer questions?	The student listens carefully and answers questions easily and directly—they are clear across the project.	The student is able to answer questions about the project—you are fairly sure they understand what they're doing.	The student attempts to answer questions about the project but doesn't clearly understand.	The student is unable to effectively answer questions about the project.	