



WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- ✓ **PLAN AHEAD: DON'T JUST RELY ON DIARIES!** Use a see-at-a-glance reminder **like our monthly and periodic planners** or a whiteboard to record upcoming lectures, tutorials, labs, meetings and appointments. Include due dates of assignments – never be late with these. If it seems you might be because of extenuating circumstances, explain this to your lecturer **in good time**.
- ✓ **INSTRUCTIONS AND GUIDELINES:** don't simply scan these – **READ THEM PROPERLY, every single word, BEFORE starting!** Understand the key-points. Plan your approach and structure and, while writing, frequently refer back to the instructions to ensure you are not going off track. Take particular note of any suggested format, font, margins, line-spacing, etc. Ignoring these criteria won't help your grading.
- ✓ **BE CONCISE:** provide only what is requested and stick to the point. Justify your position with facts and avoid impassioned monologue. Stay as close to the word-count as possible.
- ✓ **REFERENCES:** insert as many as needed, but no more. Ensure they support your position. While researching, if you can't find sufficient to exemplify your viewpoint, switch to the other camp. Remember – this isn't a crusade, just a grade-maker.
- ✓ **KEY-POINTS:** you'll find them in the guidelines, and they are also needed to **keep your submission on focus**. Unless otherwise suggested, select three: one stating the issue, the argument for and against, and the possible consequences. Number two should present pertinent information on the subject, how the matter has developed over time and should include evidence to support your position versus the opposition. The last wraps up your position and proves it beyond any doubt.
- ✓ **PRESENTATION & FLUIDITY:** these matter. Someone will be assessing your work. If it is disjointed and seems to have been thrown together at the last minute, you won't do yourself any favours. Your assignments have to appear well structured and make easy reading.
- ✓ **WORK ETHIC:** Especially when working at home, use a study-method that suits your situation and isn't at odds with your lifestyle. Reduce stress and eyestrain with regular breaks from work and the computer. Try to introduce a buffer-break when switching from one subject to another.
- ✓ **CHECK & RE-CHECK BEFORE SUBMITTING.** Always give yourself sufficient time to read, re-read and edit your work before submission. Don't rely solely on computer spell and grammar checks – do them yourself. Whenever possible, print a draft hardcopy to be read away from your normal work station: you are likely to find mistakes that were missed on the screen.

For more detailed information on this subject, go to Focus F21 on the [WEBSITE](#)

