

# Undergraduate Diploma in Business Administration/Digital Marketing

## Basics of Academic Writing

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**Date: 6th July 2024**



**Undergraduate Diploma in  
Business Administration/  
Digital Marketing**

## Module– Research and Academic Studies

Help you develop the skills to succeed in the writing task

- Create a creative and innovative business/ digital marketing strategy and set a research proposal
- Engage in the research process through a review of relevant literature and presentations delivered during other modules
- Apply appropriate research methods and methodologies to present a writing project



# Textbooks for this module...

## Core textbooks

- McMillan, K. and Weyers, J., 2013. *How to Write for University: Academic Writing for Success*. Harlow: Pearson.
- Pears, R. and Shields, G., 2019. *Cite Them Right: The Essential Referencing Guide*. 11th ed. London: Macmillan Education.

## Supplementary textbooks

- Bailey, S., 2018. *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students*. 5th ed. London: Routledge.
- Cottrell, S., 2019. *The Study Skills Handbook*. 5th ed. London: Red Globe Press.
- Swetnam, D. and Swetnam, R., 2020. *Writing Your Dissertation*. 3rd ed. Plymouth: How to Books.





## What shall we be addressing in this 1<sup>st</sup> session

- Understand the purpose and importance of research and academic writing
- Identify and describe the key features and common types of academic writing
- Differentiate between the formats of long and short writing tasks
- Recognize and utilise the essential components and standard text features of academic writing
- Construct simple and complex sentences effectively
- Develop coherent and well-structured paragraphs
- Be able to apply most of the above skills through practical writing exercises

## 1.1 Why is writing important in academic studying

### Shows effective communication

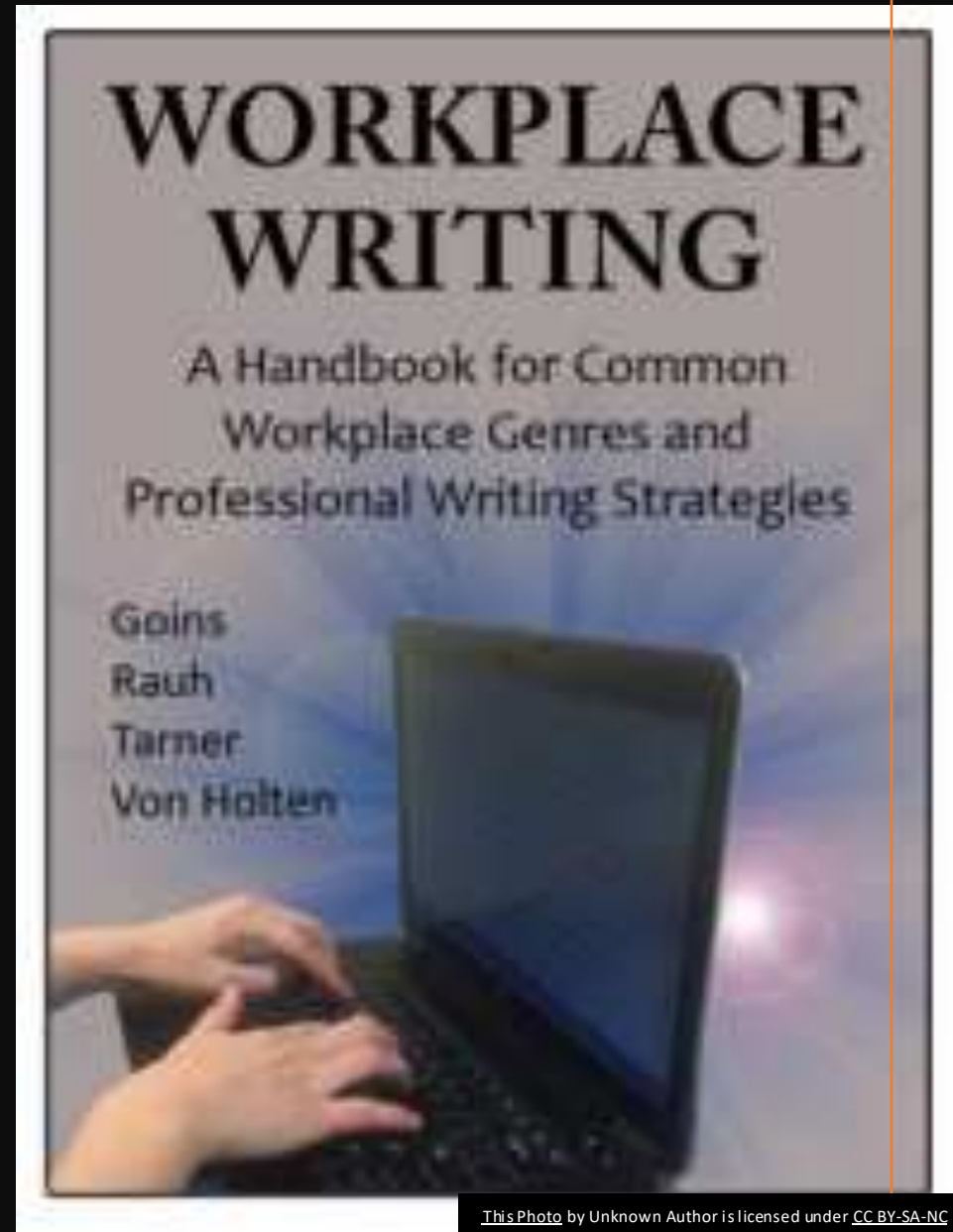
- Articulate: you can express your thoughts in a clear manner
- Organized: Show you are able to draft a thought-out in an argument
- Competent: Able to demonstrate logic and reason



# Why do we need to write at a place of work?

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- Emails– follow up, request
- Letter– cover letter, letter to a client or prospective clients
- Report– summary of report or analysis, a meeting overview
- An academic task





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## Components to Consider:

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- Audience (Who?)
- Purpose: (Why?)
- Clarity: (How?)

# Audience

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## Internal

- Colleague/Superior
- Individual/Groups

## External

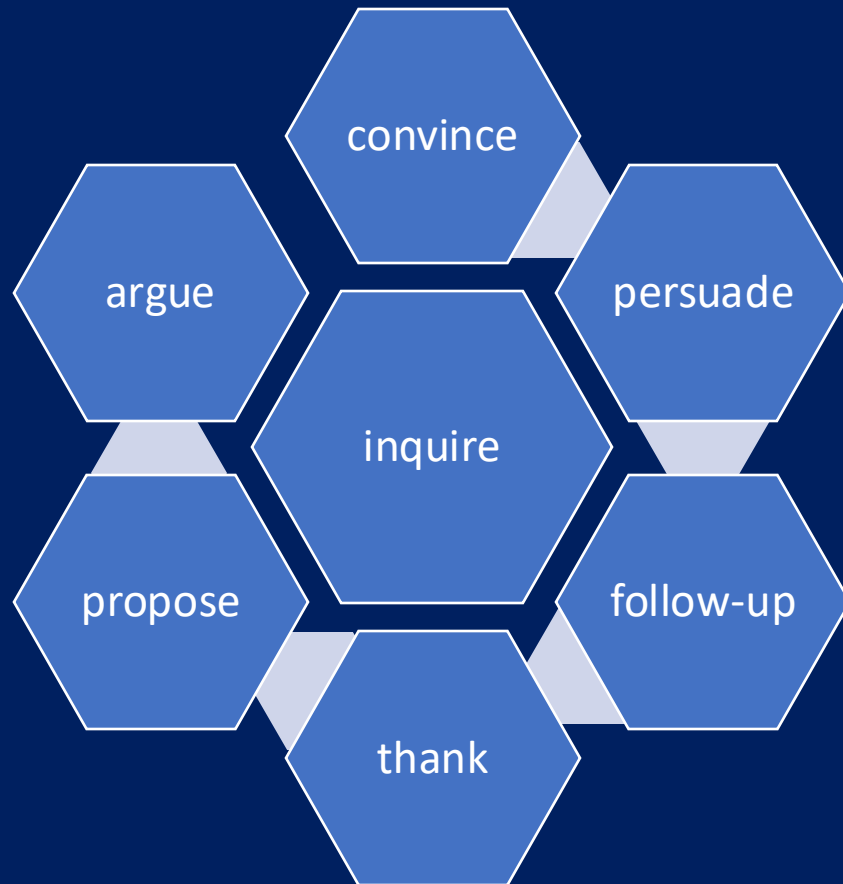
- Consultant/Supplier
- Existing/Prospective client





# The Purpose

## Why am I writing?



What information needs to be communicated?

What questions need to be answered?

What vocabulary and words can I use?



# Clarity

Get to the point and state your purpose

Supporting  
detail

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

Why?

How?

## Clarity...get

Call to action

Who is expected  
to do what and by  
when?

Let's practice how  
to write an e-mail  
which is clear and  
concise

# E-Mail Format

## Starting and finishing

- Acceptable ways to begin an email if you know the recipient:
- Hi Sophie, Dear Sophie, Hello Sophie
- If you have not met the recipient it may be safer to use:
- Dear Sophie Grech, Dear Ms Grech, Dear Dr Grech
- If you need to send an email to a large group (e.g. colleagues) you may use:
- Hi everyone, Hello all

## In all cases to close the message you can use:

- Regards, Best wishes, Best regards
- You may also add a standard formula before this:
- Look forward to meeting next week/Let me know if you need further
- information



# The Main text of an E-Mail

- Here you can use common contractions (I've, don't) and idiomatic language, but the normal rules for punctuation should be followed to avoid confusion.
- Spelling mistakes are just as likely to cause misunderstanding in emails as elsewhere. Always check for spelling and grammar problems before clicking 'Send'.

Note that emails tend to be short, although longer documents may be added as attachments.



## Task 1

In groups, write a short e-mail (first agree on a subject). Write not more than 100 words. Bring out and mark contrasting components. Since you have a different audience, considering the below aspects can help:  
purpose; information given; vocabulary used; any questions needed to be answered; introduction; conclusion; tone of voice

Group 1

Existing/ Prospective client

Group 2

Inferior/Superior colleague

Group 3

Colleague/Superior

Group 4

Supplier/Client

Group 5

Client/Colleague



15 mins



# 1.2 What do you know about academic writing?

Let's work out the quiz individually.....



## 1.3 Common types of academic writing done by the students:

paper

essay

project

dissertation/ thesis

report

notes

1. A written record of the main points of a text or lecture, for a student's personal use

2. A study of something that has happened (e.g., a survey a student has conducted).

3. A piece of research, either individual or group work, with the topic chosen by the student(s).

4. The most common type of written work, with the title given by the teacher, normally 1,000–5,000 words.

5. The longest piece of writing normally done by a student (20,000+ words) often for a higher degree, on a topic chosen by the student.

6. A general term for any academic essay, report or article.



# The purpose of academic writing in our studies

Writers should be clear why they are writing.

The most common reasons for academic writing include:

- to report a piece of research the writer has conducted
- to answer a question the writer has been given or chosen
- to discuss a subject of common interest and give the writer's view
- to synthesise research done by others on a topic



# Features of academic writing

Although there is no fixed standard of academic writing, and style may vary from subject to subject, academic writing is clearly different from the written style of newspapers or novels.

For example, it is generally agreed that:

academic writing attempts to be accurate, so that instead of 'the metal was very hot' it is better to write 'the metal was heated to 65°C'.

What are your ideas on features of academic writing?



# Some common features to keep in mind

- impersonal and objective
- semi-formal vocabulary, lack of idioms
- use of citation/references
- use of both passive and active voice
  
- Now work Task 3 (Features of academic Writing....)



# 1.4. The format of long and short writing tasks

Short essays (including exam answers)

Introduction, main body & conclusion

Longer essays and reports may include

Introduction, main body, literature review, case study, discussion, conclusion, references & appendices

Dissertations and journal articles

Abstract, list of contents, list of tables, introduction, main body, literature review, case study, findings, discussion, conclusion, acknowledgements, references & appendices

In addition to these sections, books may also include

Foreword  
Preface  
Bibliography/Further reading

# Task 4:

Individually or in pairs find the words from the list (just covered in class) that match the following definitions:



# ACADEMIC JOURNALS

There are thousands of academic journals published in English and other languages around the world.

The purpose of these journals is to provide a forum for academics within a specific discipline (e.g. education or civil engineering) to share cutting-edge research.

Most journals publish several issues a year and are often available either online or in a hard copy.

One important feature of journals is that the articles they publish are generally peer-reviewed. This means that when an article is submitted the editors ask other specialists in that field to read the article and decide if it is worth publishing. Reviewers may make comments that lead to the article being modified.

As students you need to get to know the leading journals in your subject.



# 1.5 The Components of Academic Writing

There are no fixed rules for the layout of written academic work. Different schools and departments require students to follow different formats in their writing.

Your teachers may give you guidelines, or you can ask them what they want, but some general patterns apply to most formats for academic writing.

Attempt task 5

Title

Sub-title

Heading

Sentence

Phrase

Paragraph



# Other common text components

a) Reference to sources using a citation: According to Bannerjee *et al.* (2009), some authors looked at slum dwellers . . .

(b) The use of abbreviations to save space: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

(c) Italics used to show words from other languages: Bannerjee *et al.* (= and others)

(d) Brackets used to give subsidiary information or to clarify a point: . . .but others (short-chain fatty acids) come from cheaper sources . . .

(e) Numbering systems (1.1, 1.2) are often used in reports, less so in essays



# Simple and longer sentences

Simple sentences are easier to write and read, but longer sentences are also needed in academic writing

- Clarity is a priority
- Avoid writing lengthy sentences (if needed use **conjunctions**, **relative pronouns** or **punctuation** to link the clauses)
- Let's understand by using an example...



# Dragon Motors – vehicle production 2017–2021

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
135,470	156,935	164,820	159,550	123,075

In 2017, the company produced over 135,000 vehicles.  
Between 2017 and 2018, vehicle production increased by 20%.

In 2017, Dragon Motors produced over 135,000 vehicles **but** the following year production increased by 20 per cent. (conjunction)

In 2019, the company built 164,820 vehicles, **which** was the peak of production. (relative pronoun)

Nearly 160,000 vehicles were produced in 2020; by 2021, this had fallen to 123,000. (punctuation)

Write two simple and two longer sentences using the data from the above data.



# Writing in paragraphs

Discuss the following questions in groups:



5 mins for  
discussion

- What is a paragraph?
- Why are texts divided into paragraphs?
- How long are paragraphs?
- Do paragraphs have a standard structure?

# Organising Paragraphs

- a) A paragraph is a group of sentences that deal **with a single topic**
- (b) The length of paragraphs varies significantly according to text type, but should generally be **no less than four or five sentences**
- (c) Normally, **the first sentence introduces the topic**. Other sentences may give definitions, examples, information, reasons, restatements and summaries
- (d) The parts of the paragraph are **linked together by the phrases and conjunction**. They guide the reader through the argument presented



## ‘Should home ownership be encouraged?’

The rate of home ownership varies widely across the developed world. Germany, for instance, has one of the lowest rates, at 42%, while in Spain it is twice as high, 85%. Both the USA and Britain have similar rates of about 69%. The reasons for this variation appear to be more cultural and historic than economic, since high rates are found in both rich and poorer countries. There appears to be no conclusive link between national prosperity and the number of home owners.



# Analyzing paragraphs

- The rate of home ownership varies widely across the developed world.
  - Germany, **for instance**, has one of the lowest rates, at 42%, while in Spain it is twice as high, 85%.
  - Both the USA and Britain have similar rates of about 69%.
  - **The reasons** for this variation appear to be more cultural and historic than economic, since high rates are found in both rich and poorer countries.
  - **There appears to be** no conclusive link between national prosperity and the number of home owners.
- Introductory/topic sentence
  - Example 1
  - Example 2
  - Reason
  - Summary



# Introducing paragraphs and linking them together

In order to begin a new topic, you may use phrases such as:

- *Turning to the issue of . . .*
- *Inflation must also be examined . . .*
- *. . . is another area for consideration*

Paragraphs can also be introduced with adverbs:

- *Traditionally, few examples were . . .*
- *Finally, the performance of . . .*
- *Currently, there is little evidence of . . .*

In an essay still, each new paragraph begins with a phrase that links it to the previous paragraph, in order to maintain continuity of argument:

- *Despite this* (i.e. the lack of a conclusive link)
- *All these claims* (i.e. arguments in favour or against)



Practice.. in groups

Task 7

Task 8

Task 9

Task 10





# 1.6

## Important Academic Vocabulary

- Prefixes and Suffixes

Prefixes and suffixes are the first and last parts of certain words.

Understanding the meaning of prefixes and suffixes can help you work out the meaning of a word and is particularly useful when you meet specialist new vocabulary.

‘Unsustainable’ is an example of a word containing a prefix and suffix.

Words such as this are much easier to understand if you know how prefixes and suffixes affect word meaning.

Suffixes show the meaning or the word class (e.g. noun, verb).



# Prefixes.....

Prefixes change or give the meaning:

(a) Negative prefixes: NON-, UN-, IN-, IM-, MIS-, DE- and DIS- often give nouns, adjectives and verbs a negative meaning: nonsense, unclear, incapable, impossible, mishear, decrease, disagree.

(b) A wide variety of prefixes define meaning (e.g. PRE- usually means 'before'), hence prefer, prehistory and, of course, prefix!



# Suffixes.....

Suffixes show the meaning or the word class (e.g., noun, verb).

- (a) Some suffixes such as -ION, -IVE or -LY help the reader find the word class (e.g., noun, verb or adjective) station...lonely....privatise
- (b) Other suffixes add to meaning (e.g. -FUL or -LESS after an adjective have a positive or negative effect – thoughtful/careless)

Let's practice.....



## 1.7 What is relevant and reliable for my research task?

- examine the most suitable text types for academic work
- explore ways of locating relevant materials in the library
- explain different reading methods
- introduce a critical approach to potential sources



RESEARCH

# Common written resources used by academic students.....

TEXT TYPE	ADVANTAGE	DISADVANTAGE
Textbook	Written for students	May be too general or outdated
Website	Usually up to date	Possibly unreliable and unedited
Journal article	Often focused on a special area	May be too specialised or complex
Official report (e.g., from government)	Contains a lot of detail	May not be objective
Newspaper or magazine article	Easy to read and up to date	May not be objective and may not give the sources
E-book	Easily accessible	Needs to be read on the screen

Finding  
online  
sources

....

# Finding online sources

How to find background papers for your research paper

# How to choose suitable texts.....

Read title and sub-title  
carefully

Survey text features (e.g.,  
abstract, contents, index)

Skim text for gist-  
Is it relevant?

Scan the text for information you need e.g. terms, phrases..

Read extensively when  
useful sections are found

Read intensively to make notes on key points.....



# Thank you for today!

Next lesson we will be focusing more in detail on further skills in conducting and presenting research findings!



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