



Study Skills Guide

B.H.M.S. 
Business & Hotel
Management School

Foreword

This guide is designed to provide all students with a common framework for undertaking academic work during their studies at BHMS.

BA and Masters students should also refer to the **Robert Gordon University** study guides.

Please read the information carefully and refer to the relevant sections when undertaking your assignments to ensure that you develop your skills in this important area.

Section	Topic
A	Using AI in Academic Writing
B	Academic Writing (Writing Style)
C	Coursework Assignments (Essays, Reports, Presentations)
D	Referencing
E	Study Skills

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Section A: Using AI in Academic Writing

AI refers to computer systems or programs that can perform tasks we usually associate with human thinking, like:

- Solving problems
- Making suggestions
- Creating content like text, images or music
- Autocorrect fixing your spelling while you type
- A streaming app suggesting what to watch next
- Smart replies in your email or messaging app
- A voice assistant like Siri or Alexa answering a question
- A search engine giving a summary at the top of the results page

Generative AI (Gen AI)

is a type of artificial intelligence that can **create new content**—like text, images, or code—based on patterns in the data it has been trained on. Examples include:

- Answering a question
- Summarising an article
- Drafting a paragraph

It can **appear** objective, but remember, it only works on the data it has been trained on, so may be mis-leading or inaccurate.

How to use Gen AI Responsibly in Your Studies

Letting Gen AI do your work for you replaces your own thinking, writing and learning. However, Gen AI can be a **useful study companion**, helping you learn by:

- **Explaining a confusing topic**
- **Summarising a long article**
- **Generating questions for revision**

In these examples, **you** maintain control, using Gen AI to help you understand, plan and reflect.



5 categories of how Gen AI may be used in assessment and how to stay within those boundaries

+1

No
AI

No AI

You must not use Gen AI at any point to complete the assessment. Your work must be based entirely on your own knowledge, understanding, and skills. E.G:

- closed-book exam
- technology free debate, discussion or oral (viva voce) exam
- invigilated practical assessments

+2

Ideas

You may use Gen AI to plan, research, or generate ideas for the content and structure, or on how to improve the work.

However, AI-generated content should not appear in your final submission. E.G:

- searching for literature
- generating ideas, sources/topics to investigate or solutions to problems
- creating structured outlines

+3

Edit-
ing

You can use Gen AI tools to improve the communication and appearance of your work, such as editing and enhancing your original language and presentation.

However, you must not use AI to generate new content. E.G.

- identifying and correcting grammar, punctuation, spelling and syntactical errors
- suggesting alternative appropriate or synonymous terms to help clarify your writing
- rephrasing some sentences for clarity without altering the original meaning
- editing original images using techniques like generative fill or expand

4 **Tasks**

You can use AI to complete certain elements of the assessment task.

This may be optional or a requirement of the assessment. E.G.

- generating content that you then build on in your own work
- comparing your writing with, or critically evaluating an AI-generated content
- including AI-generated content as part of a larger project
- producing AI content on a specific topic or prompt as a basis for an original piece of work, and submitting both the generated and original work

5 **Full AI**

You can use Gen AI throughout the assessment.

This may be optional or required, depending on the task. E.G.

- Actively collaborating with AI and refining its outputs
- using a range of tools to explore ethical or practical issues
- co-creating a finished product with AI, like code or artwork
- co-creating content with Gen AI by actively iterating outputs
- using various Gen AI tools to explore the ethical and practical implications of technology in an area
- continuously using Gen AI to adjust work and shape the final output
- creating finished products or artefacts using Gen AI throughout, such as completed software or entire artworks



When you include Gen AI content in your work, make sure you reference it in the appropriate referencing style (see reference section).

How do I know which category applies to my work?

The Gen AI category or categories will appear in your assessment brief. Your brief will explain:

- The category or categories of AI use allowed
- How you may use Gen AI in the assessment task(s)
- Whether you need to acknowledge how you used Gen AI

Using Gen AI in ways that go against your assessment brief's guidance can lead to academic misconduct.

This includes **false authorship**, which can be:

- Submitting an essay written by Gen AI
- Copying unedited Gen AI content into your work
- Using Gen AI in ways not permitted by your brief
- Using translation tools (like DeepL or Google Translate) to produce English text

To help make sure you're using Gen AI responsibly, ask yourself:

- Have I checked the assessment brief and Gen AI use category?
- Am I using Gen AI to support—not replace—my learning?
- Can I explain what I've done in my own words?
- Have I acknowledged permitted AI use where required?



Important

You should maintain a folder of draft work showing how you developed your assessment as evidence of good academic practice.

You must acknowledge any information obtained using Gen AI with an accurate reference.

Being clear about your use of Gen AI helps you maintain your academic integrity.

If your Assessment Brief asks you to acknowledge how you've used Gen AI, use either of the following templates in an acknowledgement page at the start of your work:

Template 1: Short acknowledgement:

I acknowledge use of [insert name of Gen AI tool(s)] from [url of Gen AI tool(s)] to [insert statement summarising use].

Template 2: Detailed acknowledgement:

"I entered the following prompts on [insert date]: [insert prompts] and [insert description of how the generated content was used]."

Approved tools:



Microsoft Copilot

Copilot is integrated into tools like Word, PowerPoint and Outlook, and can help with:

- Summarising text
- Simplifying complex ideas
- Brainstorming ideas



Turnitin Draft Coach (non-AI writing tool)

If you want writing support without using Gen AI, Draft Coach is available in Microsoft Word online and can help with grammar, structure and referencing.

Getting more from Gen AI

Writing Better Prompts

How you ask Gen AI a question makes a **big difference** to the results. When writing a prompt, try to be:

Specific – What do you want? What format or focus?

Purposeful – Why are you asking? For planning, writing or checking?

Clear about tone or role – Try asking the tool to respond like a tutor, reviewer or explainer

For example:

Less effective prompt – "Explain climate change."

More effective prompt – "Explain climate change to a first-year university student. Keep your response short and include two key causes and effects."

Evaluating AI Responses

AI does not check facts or “think” like a human, so can give inaccurate responses. Common Gen AI issues include:

Hallucinations – Do the responses include quotes, facts, or references that you can't verify through a reliable source?

Bias – Are the responses perpetuating stereotypes or presenting only one perspective?

Lack of critical analysis – Are the responses simply agreeing with you without offering new insights or challenges?



Ask yourself....

....are these results accurate, or should I undertake further research to verify them?



Using Gen AI ethically

AI should **support** - not replace - your learning.

Here are four quick checks to help you use Gen AI responsibly and avoid academic misconduct:

1. **Check your assessment brief** — what kind of Gen AI use (if any) is allowed?
2. **Use Gen AI to support your work** — are you still doing your own thinking?
3. **Be transparent** — could you explain clearly how you used Gen AI, if asked?
4. **Acknowledge permitted use** — have you followed the brief's instructions on acknowledging Gen AI use?

You should also keep in mind some of Gen AI's wider issues:

- Some tools are trained on data that may be **biased, outdated, or copyrighted**
- There are ethical concerns about how this data is collected and how some tools are developed
- Uploading private content to AI tools may put your data at risk
- And Gen AI tools have a significant **environmental cost**. Training large AI models uses huge amounts of electricity and water, producing thousands of tonnes of CO₂.

What to remember when using Gen AI

Before you start using Gen AI



- Check the assessment brief first — it will let you know what's allowed.
- Ask if unsure — your course team is there to help.
- Be transparent — if your brief asks you to acknowledge the use of Gen AI, follow the provided templates and reference accordingly.

Section B: Academic Writing

Academic Terms

The following terms are commonly used in BHMS assessments:

Analyse – To examine part by part. Thus if you are asked to analyse a problem situation you would be looking for the roots of the problem, rather than merely describing the symptoms which are presented. You would normally be expected to draw heavily on ideas and frameworks in the module being assessed in order to identify the root causes. The analysis may be the basis for suggesting possible ways forward and deciding between them.

Assess – To judge the importance of something, or say what it is worth, giving your reasons for your verdict.

Comment – This terse instruction may appear after a quotation or other statement. You are required to respond in a way that shows that you understand the topic to which the statement refers. Thus you might need to define any terms contained, explain the significance of the statement and possibly evaluate it (see below), or state the extent to which you agree and disagree and give your reasons for this.

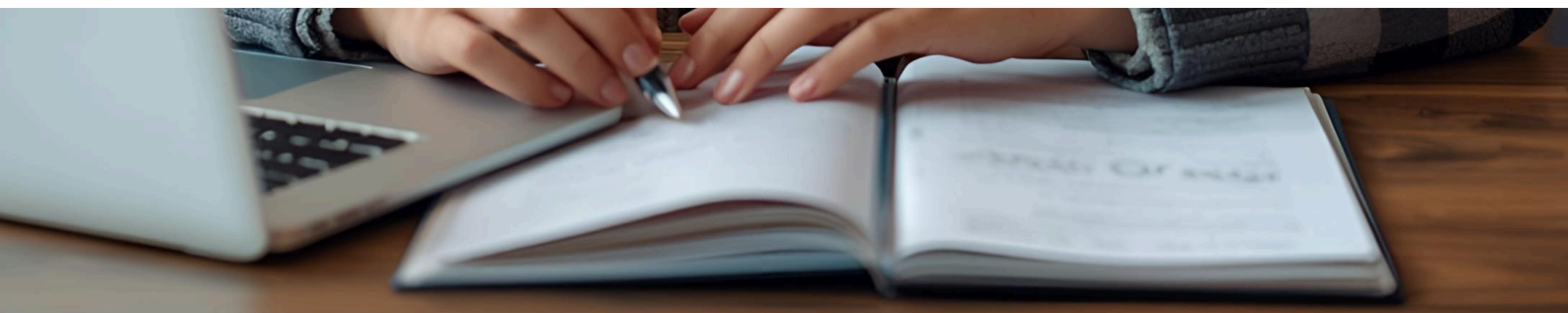
Consider – This has a similar meaning to comment, though the emphasis on evaluation is likely to be higher.

Contrast – A subset of 'compare' (see above), requiring you to focus only on differences between the things mentioned.

Criticise – To judge the merit of a statement or theory, making clear the basis for your judgement. This might be in terms of the evidence on which the statement or theory is based, or its internal consistence, or its theoretical, logical or factual understanding.

Define – To state, precisely, the meaning of a concept. Normally this will be a definition that you have been given in your module. Sometimes there may be competing definitions, in which case you may need to give both (or all, if more than two) and discuss the differences between them. You will often be asked to include examples of the thing to be defined. Even if not asked for, an example may help to convey to the marker that you understand the meaning of the term in question.

Demonstrate – This means you need to show something, usually by giving relevant examples, in order to convince the marker of your understanding of something, or of its relevance or importance.



Describe – To give a detailed account of the thing referred to, again with a view to establishing that you know what is being referred to and understand its significance. Diagrams can often help you describe something and should be included if they add something to your words.

Differentiate – This is similar to ‘contrast’, again requiring you to describe the differences between the things mentioned.

Discuss – To extract the different themes in a subject and to describe and evaluate them. What are the key factors/aspects? What are the arguments in favour of, and against, each aspect? What evidence is there supporting each side of the argument? What is the significance of each aspect?

Evaluate – This means much the same as ‘assess’. If you were asked to evaluate a theory, for example, you would look both at the evidence supporting the theory and at its usefulness.

Examine – This means much the same as ‘analyse’, though it might require a slightly higher proportion of description in relation to evaluation.

Explain - This can mean to make something clear or to give reasons for something, depending on the context. Frequently you would need to do both in order to answer a question. Remember that your explanation, as with all assessment, is intended to demonstrate your understanding of a concept or argument to your assessor.

Illustrate – This is similar to ‘demonstrate’. It requires you to make clear your understanding of an idea or term by giving concrete examples, or by using a diagram or other figure to add to the word(s) and convey the message that you know what you are talking about.

Interpret – This normally means to make sense of something, to make it clear, usually giving your judgement of the significance of the things to be interpreted. You might be asked to interpret a set of figures or a graph, in which case you would need to describe in words the significant features, or messages, contained therein.

Justify – This means that you must give good reasons for something, in terms of logic or evidence. It helps to think of the main objections to whatever it is and then show why they are not valid, as well as thinking of the plus points.

List – This needs to be treated with caution. Strictly it means to give single words or phrases. But sometimes the assessor wants you give a brief description rather than merely a single word. If in doubt, ask, if it is a written assignment. In an exam, make a reasoned guess from the proportion of the marks allocated to this part of the question and any subsequent instructions. For example, ‘List.... Select two items from your list and describe them in detail’ clearly does mean a list pure and simple.

Outline – To give a brief description of the most important features of whatever it is.

Refute – The converse of ‘justify’, requiring you to make the case against something.

Review – To go over a subject carefully, giving as much as you remember or unearth of what is relevant, though as concisely as possible.

Summarise – Write briefly the main points of something – very similar to ‘outline’.

Trace – This requires you to track a sequence of events which led to specified state. (Multiple cause diagrams may be helpful here if there is more than a single ‘track’.)

.....? – This means a questions which seem to invite the answer ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, e.g. ‘Do you agree?’ after a statement. It is extremely rare for the assessor to expect such a simple answer. It is more often the expectation that you will discuss the statement and evaluate it.

Writing Style

The style of writing used for academic purposes is different from many other forms of communication. Academic writing is formal and follows some standard conventions that will be explained in this section. Each academic discipline has its own specialist vocabulary which you will be expected to learn and use in your own writing as you develop your academic writing skills.



What is the point of academic writing?

Academic writing is a convention by which writers engage in academic debate and/or present new evidence-based research. The substance of academic writing must be based on solid evidence and logical analysis, and presented as a concise, accurate argument. This is very important, as nearly every argument has the potential to be challenged.

Students need to demonstrate the ability to identify, analyse and contextualise key arguments and issues in a given topic by writing essays and/or reports.

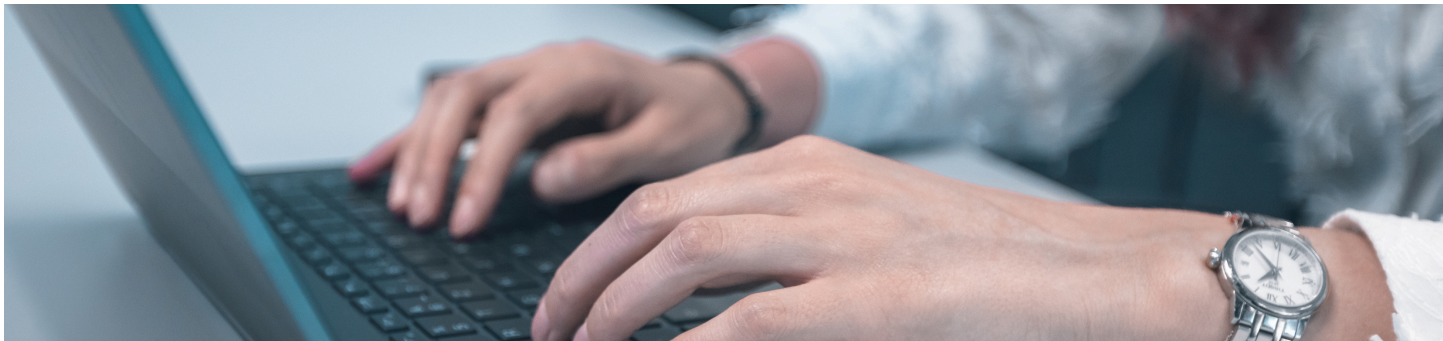
How is academic writing different?

Academic writing aims for precision: paying attention to detail and saying exactly what you, or the writer you are paraphrasing, actually mean. It is important not to use unnecessary words or to waffle. Make every word count.

Avoid abbreviations and contractions

Abbreviations and contractions are informal, and are best avoided in academic writing. Abbreviations and contractions should be replaced by their full written form like in the following examples:

Incorrect	Correct
dept	department
doesn't	does not
can't	cannot
isn't	is not



Avoid slang words and phrase

Informal and slang phrases should not be used in academic writing. Compare the sentences in the first and second columns below. In the first column, you will immediately recognise the sentences as being informal in style. The second column shows how the same ideas can be written in the correct format avoiding informal style and slang.

Incorrect	Correct
Switzerland's tourism industry has grown a lot thru the years.	Switzerland's tourism industry has grown a lot over the years.
Thanx to technology developments, the process of booking rooms is much easier.	Thanks to technology developments, the process of booking rooms is much easier.
It's kinda hard to understand why more people do not have an iPhone coz they are totally cool .	It is quite hard to understand why more people do not have an iPhone as they are very fashionable .

Be Impersonal

In most academic disciplines, writing in the first person is not acceptable as it is believed to be too subjective and personal. Lecturers prefer impersonal language to be used in assignments, unless you have been given specific instructions otherwise (for example, a personal reflection or diary).

First person sentences use the pronouns 'I' and 'we'. Use of first person pronouns can be avoided by using impersonal constructs like in the following examples:

Incorrect	Correct
We have seen that ...	It has been observed that ...
I will be using various websites to conduct my research.	Various websites were used to conduct the research....
In my opinion, this is not true, because.....	This does not appear to be true because.....



Avoiding Plagiarism

Introduction to academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is a broad term, but students should be aware of three types of closely related academic misconduct in particular: **plagiarism, collusion and personation**.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when an individual gives the impression that someone else's work is their own — including the work of published authors and other students. Plagiarism can happen intentionally (deliberate cheating) or unintentionally (when a student is unaware of how to reference the work of others). It can include copying or cutting and pasting text, photographs, illustrations, tables etc. from the Internet, as well as copying from books or other material without acknowledging the author by providing a correct reference (Celt 2005). An accusation of plagiarism can result in serious academic disciplinary penalties.

One of the best ways to avoid is to ensure that you always reference your sources accurately (whether text or images, published or unpublished). Please refer to the section on **referencing** for the correct format.



Section C: Coursework Assignments

As part of your program, you will undertake a variety of assessments across different modules.

The main written assessments will be in the form of essays or reports while some modules also require oral presentations which all should follow the guidelines below.



Format Guidelines

Coursework Word Count

If a word length for coursework is specified, the assessment will take account of any substantial deviation (i.e. +/- 10%) from the specified word length. The overall grade for coursework that exceeds or falls short of the specified word length will be reduced by one grade point.

Font, Spacing and Layout

You should use Arial, Calibri or Times New Roman font, size 11 or 12. Use 1.5 or double spacing as this makes it much easier for the lecturer to make notes and corrections on your work.

Use bold only on the titles when you want to note a different topic or theme.

Your report or essay should be justified on the left hand side only. Leave a space between paragraphs and do NOT indent paragraphs on the next line.

All written assignments should be submitted with a cover sheet which clearly states.

- Your name
- The title of the assignment
- The module code and name
- The lecturer's name
- The date of submission





Writing Essays

Essays generally follow a clear structure and are normally written in continuous prose without section headings. A good basic structure for an essay should include:

- Introduction
- Main Body
- Conclusion
- Reference list

When structuring an essay you should aim to present information in a clear and logical order. The way you shape the content of an essay will depend on the task and specific question. The structure needs to be logical, with one paragraph building smoothly onto the next. The length of your essay is usually set by your lecturer, but bear in mind that as a general rule, introductions and conclusions should each be about 10% of the total word length.

Introductions

Introductions signal to the reader what the topic of the text is about and how it will be addressed. An essay introduction will normally begin with a general statement about the topic to be discussed and then narrow down to the specifics of what will be looked at in the essay.

Main body

The main body of an essay discusses the main points in a series of linked paragraphs. The elements you need to include in the main body and the way you organize the essay depends on the question you are set. Make sure you read through the question to make sure you know exactly what you need to cover. Often looking at the structure of the question can help you structure your essay.

Conclusions

Conclusions signal the end of the essay, recap what has been discussed and present a conclusion based on an analysis of the information. Depending on the essay, conclusions may also:

- Suggest a result or consequence
- Make a prediction
- Suggest a solution or recommendation

Writing Reports

There are many different types of report, from analysis of a company or part of its business, or proposals for new ideas, through to case studies.

When writing a report it is important to keep in mind:

- **why** the report is being written (e.g. to provide information, to make a request or to influence decision-making)
- **what** it will cover (the focus, themes and issues) and
- **who** the audience is (e.g. what does the audience already know about the subject area, what do they want/need to know, what is their likely opinion).

Report Structure

The structure of reports varies according to the subject matter, and different modules may have different report formats, so the following should be used as a guide only.

Title page

Executive summary

Contents page

1. Introduction
2. 'Topic review'
3. Results and Analysis
4. Conclusion and Recommendations
5. References
6. Appendices

In business- style reports the sections are numbered and it is up to the writer to structure and label the different sections according to what is appropriate for the contents and/or assignment instructions.



Presentations

Presentations offer another way of communicating ideas and demonstrating ability and achievement. Presentation skills, once learned, can be a valuable asset both in an educational environment and in employment.

General Guidelines

Presentations usually require the preparation of slides. The following should be noted when preparing slides and your talk:

- Limit the amount of text and make sure it can be read by your whole audience
- Use colours, pictures and photographs to highlight key points, not distract from your topic
- Make sure you keep to the time limit given
- Be prepared to answer questions on your topic
- Make sure you have addressed the QUESTION or purpose of the presentation (see [Academic Terms](#))
- If you are presenting in a group, make sure everyone knows their role and is prepared

DO NOT READ from notes: make sure you make eye contact with the audience. Make your presentation interesting and capture the audience's attention.

Planning

What is the PURPOSE of your presentation?

To communicate information: will be largely factual. You are educating, informing, explaining or advising the audience.

To propose a plan, new idea etc: should give your ideas supported by argument and explanation. The aim is to win over the audience and persuade them or 'sell' the idea to them.

To inspire and motivate: the aim is to entertain and create enthusiasm based on new ideas or factual material.

Who is your AUDIENCE?

The size and nature of your audience, along with their knowledge of the subject you are going to speak about, will shape the content, language, structure, tone and delivery of your presentation.

Audience size will influence the degree of familiarity you can achieve and the audience involvement that you can expect. Normally, as group size increases, there is a greater need for formality.

What is your CONTENT?

Make a list of **key points**. Develop your ideas and put your points in order. Make sure ALL are relevant – remember, a small number of key points means:

- you will find it easier to remember all your ideas when giving the presentation.
- your audience will be able to remember what you've said.
- your presentation will be clearer.

Think about **activities and handouts**: should your presentation be interactive? How can you manage this? Would handouts for the audience help support your presentation?



Think about structure. A general rule is:

- Tell them what you're going to tell them (**Introduction**)
- Tell them (**Main body**)
- Tell them what you told them (**Ending**)

How LONG does the presentation have to be?

Divide up the time available to you between each of your main points and any activities you have planned. Remember to include time for your introduction, summing up and any questions the audience may have.

How are you going to DELIVER it?

Consider your tone, pace and volume as you speak as well as your body language.

Tone: is the inflection, or up-and-down movement, of your voice when you speak. A monotone delivery suggests that you lack enthusiasm for your topic; consequently, your audience may also lose interest quickly. Use the full range of your vocal and facial expressions – do NOT read from notes as this leads to monotone!.

Pace: do not speak too quickly and make sure you fully pronounce words so your meaning is clear.

Volume: speak loudly enough so your audience at the back can hear everything.

Eye contact: should be made with your audience throughout your presentation. Do not turn your back on the audience to look at your slides.

How should VISUAL aids be used?

Visual aids such as flipcharts, whiteboards and Microsoft PowerPoint® offer the presenter a range of possibilities that can introduce variety and help maintain interest in your presentation

PowerPoint slides are useful for:

- Emphasising key words, central themes and ideas
- Summarising main points
- Presenting supporting information in a visually appealing way (in the form of text, pictures, graphs, charts and diagrams)

When putting together PowerPoint slides for a presentation:

- Use large text: at least 30-32-point size
- Avoid putting more than six bullet point items per slide
- One PowerPoint slide should accompany every 2-3 minutes of talk

Practice Your Presentation

It can be difficult to master all the ideal presentation techniques on the first try — the trick is to keep working to improve those areas where you feel less confident. Confidence comes with practice!

Marking Criteria and Feedback

Each module has a module shell on eCampus or RGU Campusmodle which provides details of the module content and the assessment methods. Make sure you read this in the first week of each module to make sure you understand the requirements and timings.

Marking criteria are shown for each assessment, for example:

Component	Percentage
Introduction, including scope/aim of the assignment	15%
Main body, including evidence of research and analysis	60%
Conclusions	15%
Presentation and referencing	10%

Grading Bands

The following grading bands apply to all assessments (excluding examinations).

A / 70% +

1. The question/issue/problem is clearly understood/defined and there is an excellent grasp of relevant concepts, expressed clearly, and appropriately demonstrated.
2. There is a substantial depth of critical and logical analysis, evaluation and understanding of material and issues, displaying a high level of imagination and systematic evidence of independent thought. A wide range of relevant source material including journals is used and extensive reading is in evidence together with excellent referencing.
3. The work is presented in a logical, coherent, cogent and succinct format. The work is interesting to read and not overly complex.
4. There is a clear and unambiguous conclusion, which links both the analysis and evaluation of materials to the question/issue/problem.

B / 60–69%

1. The question/issue/problem is clearly understood/defined and there is a very good grasp of relevant concepts, expressed clearly, and appropriately demonstrated.
2. There is a substantial depth of critical and logical analysis, evaluation and understanding of material and issues, displaying some partial imagination and frequent evidence of independent thought. A good range of relevant source material including journals is used and broad reading is in evidence together with excellent referencing.
3. There is evidence of at least three of a logical, coherent, cogent and succinct format. The work is interesting to read and not overly complex.
4. There is a clear and unambiguous conclusion, which links at least one of the analysis and evaluation of materials to the question/issue/problem.

C / 50-59%

1. The question/issue/problem is not always clearly understood/defined and the grasp of relevant concepts is not demonstrated in great number, clarity, and/or is partial and/or superficial.
2. There is little substantial depth of critical and logical analysis, evaluation and understanding of material and issues, with very limited evidence of originality or evidence of independent thought. A restricted range of not always relevant source material, typically textbooks, is used and there is little or no evidence of consultation of journals or specialist monographs. Referencing is basic.
3. There is evidence of at least two of a logical, coherent, cogent and succinct format. While generally interesting to read, the work may have an uneven flow of argument, and a tendency towards simplicity and/or over-simplification.
4. Conclusions are simplistic, largely unclear and potentially ambiguous and not for the most part linking analysis and evaluation of materials to the question/issue/problem.

D / 40-49%

1. The question/issue/problem is generally not clearly defined and/or understood and there is a failure to identify and grasp all but a small number of relevant concepts which are generally poorly explained and presented in outline and superficial form.
2. There is an absence of all but rudimentary critical and logical analysis, evaluation and understanding of material and issues with little or no indication of originality or independence of thought. There is little evidence of consulting relevant source materials which are absent or simplistically summarized, and there is reliance on too few sources, mainly textbooks. Referencing is limited or not present.
3. There is evidence, but only partial, of a logical, coherent, cogent and succinct format. The work is generally not interesting to read, being prone to regurgitation of received wisdom. The work has an uneven flow of argument (or little/none at all) and is highly simplistic.
4. Conclusions are absent in all but skeletal form or are simplistic, largely unclear and potentially ambiguous and not for the most part linking analysis and evaluation of materials to the question/issue/problem.

E / 35-39%

1. The question/issue/problem is not clearly defined and/or understood and there is a failure to identify and grasp minimal relevant concepts which are generally poorly explained and presented in outline and superficial form.
2. There is an absence of critical and logical analysis and minimal evidence of independence of thought. Very limited resources used to inform discussion. Referencing is limited or not present.
3. There is only minimal evidence of a logical, coherent, cogent and succinct format. The work has little structure and is highly simplistic.
4. Conclusions are minimal and have no depth and extremely limited analysis and evaluation of materials to the question/issue/problem.

1. The question/issue/problem is not defined and/or understood and there is barely any grasp and/or understanding of relevant concepts or such grasp/understanding is entirely absent.
2. There is a complete absence of critical and logical analysis, evaluation and understanding of materials and issues with absolutely no indication of originality or independence of thought. There is scant or no evidence of consulting relevant source materials and where scant, source materials are summarized poorly or inaccurately. Work may be plagiarized. The material used is actively misunderstood and/or explained.
3. There is little if any evidence of a logical, coherent, cogent and succinct format. The work is generally not interesting to read, being prone to regurgitation of received wisdom or plagiarized. The work has minimal or no meaningful flow of argument and is highly simplistic.
4. Conclusions are absent or irrelevant; there is no explanation of any use to others.

Feedback grades and feedback (**feed-forward**) on assessments is provided to students within a maximum of 20 working days weeks of submission. Make sure you understand this feedback as it is aimed to help you in future assessments.



Section D: Referencing

Academic assignments draw on information taken from various sources, and it is a requirement that you acknowledge when you use ideas or information from other people's work. Every time you quote, paraphrase or refer to the work of another author you need to (a) provide a citation in the body of the text and (b) provide a full reference at the end of your assignment. By including references in your assignments you make it clear that you are not plagiarising (see [Avoiding Plagiarism](#)).



There are different ways of referencing information. At BHMS we use the **Harvard** (RGU) style (also known as the author/date style) for all undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

Why Do You Need to Reference?

There are some common-sense reasons why you should acknowledge where your information comes from:

- It is good academic practice to use information (quotes, facts and figures, ideas and opinion etc.) from expert sources which can strengthen your point of view and make your argument more convincing.
- You can demonstrate wider reading on a topic.
- Readers can use the reference list or bibliography to follow up texts you have referenced.
- To avoid accusations of plagiarism.

When Do You Need to Reference?

1. For **direct quotations**: when you use the exact words from a source.
2. When you **refer** to information, ideas or opinion belonging to someone else, e.g. by paraphrasing or summarising information.

Direct quotations

Carefully selected direct quotations can add weight to the arguments you present in your assignment. Bear in mind that it is important to give some explanation of the topic dealt with in the quotation. This will show that you have thought about and understood the issues surrounding the quotation.



Avoid over-long quotations where possible, and do not use too many quotations in your assignments. Instead, you should try to paraphrase what you have read.

Look at the examples below. In the first example the author gives little in the way of information about the quotation:

In contrast, the second example gives a fuller description of the subject and puts the quotation in context:

Example 1	Example 2
Several pieces of guidance are given to new scientists: “Perhaps the most important action you can take to help your career advance is to find one or more mentors” (Busch-Vishniak 2022 p. 65).	Climbing the career ladder can be daunting and bewildering for new scientists. However, advancement in a chosen area can seem more manageable with the guidance and assistance of a more experienced scientist: “Perhaps the most important action you can take to help your career advance is to find one or more mentors” (Busch-Vishniak 2022 p. 65).

Referring to Information

When writing your assignments you should present ideas or information by paraphrasing the original author. This involves putting the meaning of the text into your own words.

Paraphrasing is often preferable to quotations because by putting ideas or information into your own words you will show that you have an understanding of the subject matter. See the example below:

Paraphrased version:



An individual who has had success in their field may act as a mentor to less experienced staff who are keen to develop their careers. Mentors may support their charge by providing favourable opportunities for skills development and career advancement. It is beneficial for developing staff to have a number of mentors from a variety of relevant areas (Busch-Vishniak 2022).

Where Do You Reference?

There are two places where you need to acknowledge your sources in a formal piece of writing such as an essay or a report:

- 1. In-text Citation** in the body of the text where you actually use the information or material. This is referred to as a citation. Usually you need just the author’s surname and a year of publication for their work (Harvard RGU style), but if you’ve quoted them directly, you must also include a page number relating to the quoted material or data.
EG:
MacDonald (2021) proposes that without good referencing skills, students will struggle academically.
- 2.** In full, in an alphabetical reference list at the end of the piece.
MACDONALD, A., 2008. Referencing made easy. Edinburgh: Canongate.

How Do You Reference?

In-text citation (in the main body of your report or essay)

Citations are supposed to interrupt the flow of your writing as little as possible. With this in mind, a citation contains the bare minimum of information: the author's surname and the date of publication (with page number for a direct quotation) in brackets. The reader can then look at the reference list at the end of your work for the full publication details.

The way you use your citations in the main body of the text affects how you insert your citation.

Citation: Example 1

Paraphrasing: the citations shown below acknowledge that information has been taken from someone else's work and expressed in the writer's own words. It contains the author's surname (or surnames — there may be more than one author) and the date of publication enclosed in brackets. This kind of citation is very common. Below are some examples.



A brief examination of the issues involved (Smith and Jones 2023) reveals a worrying gap between theory and practice in the application of immigration legislation in the UK.



Several studies undertaken in the early 2010s (Adams 2011;, Gregor and Thomas 2012; Willis 2010) pointed to a strong trend towards the growth of budget hotels.



Both approaches pioneered at this time, online booking (Bell 1999;, Murray 2006) and travel agency reservations (Sorrley and Matt 2002;, Proud 2003), were not effective in increasing hotel occupancy for the company.

Citation: Example 2

Paraphrasing: similar to the examples shown above, the citations shown below also acknowledge that information has been taken from someone else's work and expressed in the writer's own words. However, in these examples the writer has chosen to include the author names within their writing. This might be done if the writer wants to make a particular point about an author, or to compare information or points of view from two different authors. Note: because the authors' names are already part of the sentence, they do not need to go into the citation as well. Below are some examples.



Steinberg (2019) provides a clear analysis of the role of technology in modern government.



In an attempt to achieve better efficiency, Finnegan and Xander (2002) pioneered a new method of organising housekeeping staff.



Anaphylaxis is the abrupt onset of an acute sensitivity reaction, the symptoms of which are "...fascinating in their variation, rapidity and potential intensity" (Crusher 2024 p. 24).

Citation: Example 3

A direct quote: here the **exact words** from the original sources have been used by the writer, indicated by quotation marks. The citation contains the same items as the examples above, but this time also includes a **page number**, indicating exactly where in the original source the quoted text can be found. Below is an example.



Anaphylaxis is the abrupt onset of an acute sensitivity reaction, the symptoms of which are “...fascinating in their variation, rapidity and potential intensity” (Crusher 2024 p. 24).

Keep in mind that if quotes are too long, it can look like plagiarism in disguise! (i.e. not bothering to work out how to put it in your own words).

Citation: Example 4

Referring to authors who are cited in the work you are using: in this case you should refer to the original author(s) **AND** the author of the source you are using. In such cases, you only need to list the source you have used in your reference list. Below are two examples:



The importance of people in the services marketing mix should not be underestimated (Kotler, 2020 cited in Swarbrooke and Horner, 2023).



While the last decade has seen an unprecedented growth in social media usage, Kotler (2020, cited in Swarbrooke and Horner, 2023) believes that traditional marketing channels will also have a role in the next twenty years.



Reference List at the End of Your Assignment

A reference list contains the full reference for every source that you cite in your assignment. It is arranged **alphabetically** by author/editor in a single list at the end of your work (in reports, appendices generally come after the reference list).

The information contained in the full reference for a source will vary depending on whether the material consulted was a book, journal, online source etc.

Take care when referring to the guides, and follow the formatting you see in the examples exactly — be particularly careful with punctuation and italics. All lecturers allocate at least some marks to your referencing, so it is worth spending some time getting it right.

An example of a reference list is shown below:

References

Dimmock, N., Easton, A. and Leppard, A. (eds) (2022) *Introduction to modern virology*. London: Wiley.

Google Bard (2025) Bard response to Amanda Grayson, 18 August.

Open AI ChatGPT (2025) *How can hoteliers use AI to help improve RevPar?* ChatGPT response to MichelleThmpson. Available at: <https://chat.openai.com/share/94b5f581-dd73-41f5-8f22-f90b7bd08cbf> (Accessed: 02 August 2025).

Nelson, A. (2019) 'Learning from the past, looking to the future: exploring our place with indigenous Australians.' *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 56(2), pp. 97-102.
Available at: <https://ezproxy.rgu.ac.uk/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=ccm&AN=166098134&scope=site> (Accessed: 30 Jan 2024).

Ravetz, A. (2024) 'News from home: reflections on fine art and anthropology.' In: A. Grimshaw and A. Ravetz, eds. *Visualising anthropology*. London: Intellect.

QAA (219) *Subject benchmark statement: events, hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism*. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/subject-benchmark-statement-events-leisure-sport-tourism.pdf?sfvrsn=c339c881_11#:~:text=This%20is%20the%20Subject%20Benchmark%20Statement%20for%20Events%2C,studies%2C%20and%20describes%20the%20nature%20of%20the%20subject. (Accessed: 22 September 2025).

Smith, W. (2017) *Leadership in the 21st Century*. Berlin: Springer

Zandi, S. (2020) 'An exploration of key worker motivations: a case study of Hong Kong'. *Journal of Human Resource Research* 32(2), pp. 65-71.



Difference in Referencing Various Sources

In the previous example, note the differences between the information included for a book, a journal article, an edited book and a website. These are shown in detail below:

Referencing a Book



Wallis, B. (2022) *International Tourism*. 4 Ed. London: Cengage.

Author's Surname(s) (there may be more than one author)
INITIAL(s) of the author's first name(s)
(Year of publication) in brackets
Title of the book (in italics)
Edition (if not the 1st)
Place of publication
Publisher

Referencing a Chapter from an Edited Book



Decker, D.M. (2019) 'Personality and hospitable behaviour.' In *Handbook of Hospitality Management*. 4 Ed. London: Pearson.

Author's Surname(s) (there may be more than one author)
INITIAL(s) of the author's first name(s)
(Year of publication) in brackets
Title of the chapter in the edited book (in '...')
Name of the book
Edition (if not the 1st)
Place of publication
Publisher

Referencing a Journal Article



Charters, S. and Perry, J. (2022) 'Leadership styles in Swiss hotels'. *Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 89(2), pp. 4-6. Available at: <https://ezproxy.rgu.ac.uk/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=ccm&AN=166098134&scope=site> (Accessed: 30 Jan 2024)

Author's Surname(s) (there may be more than one author)
INITIAL(s) of the author's first name(s)
(Year of publication) in brackets
Title of the article
Name of the Journal, Volume(Issue)
Page numbers
If accessed online ... provide the URL

Referencing a Website



World Tourism Organisation (2021) *Climate change and tourism*. Available at <http://www.unwto.org/climate/index.php> (Accessed 17 May 2024).

Organisation

(Year of publication) in brackets

Title of the information (in italics)

Available at 'website address' (full)

Last accessed date

Referencing Videos



UNWTO (2024) . *Best tourism villages 2024*. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/WorldTourismOrganization/videos/unveiling-the-best-tourism-villages-2024-step-into-a-world-where-tradition-meets/455102630545119/> (Accessed 17 May 2025).

Organisation

(Year of publication) in brackets

Title of the video / information (in italics)

Available at 'website address' (full)

Last accessed date

Referencing a Blog



The Verge (2025) *Books that changed our lives*. 22 September 2025. <https://www.theverge.com/tech/774085/books-that-changed-our-lives> (Accessed 22 September 2025).

Organisation / Author

(Year of publication) in brackets

Title of the blog entry in italics

Full date of the bog entry

Available at 'website address' (full)

Last accessed date

Referencing Gen. AI Text: with shareable link



Open AI ChatGPT (2023) *How can AI help hoteliers improve room revenue?*
ChatGPT response to Heather Robinson. **Available at:**
<https://chat.openai.com/share/94b5f581-dd73-41f5-8f22-f90b7bd08cbf>
(Accessed: 02 August 2023).

AI source used
(Year of search) in brackets
Query submitted to AI (in italics)
AI source response to author (your name)
Available at 'website address' (full)
Last accessed date (in brackets)

Referencing Gen. AI Text: with no shareable link:



Google Bard (2025) Bard response to Amanda Grayson, **14 June.**

AI source used
(Year of search) in brackets
AI source response to author (your name)
Date of search

Referencing Gen. AI Graphics



Open AI Dall-E (2024) Infinite pile of books [Digital art]. **Created for Andy Smith, 29 September.**

AI source used
(Year of search) in brackets
Question asked to AI
Created for (author -your name), exact date

Note: do NOT hyperlink your web references in your assignments.

If in doubt, consult your lecturer.

Section E: Study Skills

Revision

Before you start your revision it helps to get organised first. For example you could:

- sort out the materials you have for each subject
- use folders and coloured dividers or sticky tabs to organise your notes
- have different coloured pens to hand so you can colour-code information
- draw up a revision timetable
- aim to study in bite-sized chunks rather than tackling everything at once
- identify a good environment for studying so you won't be distracted

Memorising Information

There are some basic principles that help people memorise material:

- If you need or like something you are more motivated to remember it
- Material that you can link to knowledge you already have is more meaningful and hence easier to remember
- Learning by doing is more effective than abstract learning (this can include actively making notes, testing yourself and practising exam questions)
- Things that stand out are easier to remember. Underline, highlight and find other ways to make important information stand out for you. If you find you easily confuse two or more things, find a way to increase the difference between them.
- Beginnings and endings are easier to remember (e.g. the first and last lines of a poem). Split up what you need to learn into small chunks to create more beginnings and endings. Create section headings and leave breaks between each section.
- If you are interested in the topic rather than just focused on passing an exam it's easier to remember for longer. Try applying your knowledge to practical problems and/or discuss the topic with friends or colleagues.
- Learn and understand material as thoroughly as you can.



Study Tips

When and where to study

Draw up a study plan for each semester, taking into account when and where you study best: do you concentrate better in the morning, afternoon or evening?

Avoid studying when you know you will be tired or lacking in concentration. Remember: several shorter study periods might prove more productive than one or two over-long (all-night!) sessions.

Find a quiet place to study where you will not be disturbed, preferable sitting upright at a desk or table. Reading academic texts propped up in bed or in front of the television might be comfortable, but are unlikely to be the best way to concentrate and take notes.

Distractions

Distractions can cause difficulties with concentration. Internal distractions include tiredness, boredom and anxiety. External distractions include noise, discomfort, phone calls, demands on your time, or activities such as watching television or surfing the Internet. Breaking the task down into manageable chunks can help. Set yourself reading and writing goals, taking breaks if need be.

Sometimes external distractions can be beyond our control, but there are steps that you can take to minimise them. Set up a physical space that is your regular study area, with all the equipment you need close to hand. Turn off devices that could make it difficult for you to concentrate (television, music, mobile) and communicate your study timetable to the people around you so they know not to disturb you when you are trying to study.

Sleep

Make sure that you allow sufficient time for sleep. Everyone has different sleep patterns, so it is a matter of finding what works best for you. But do not be tempted to skimp on sleep in order to get more done. A good night's sleep is an important part of processing the day's learning.