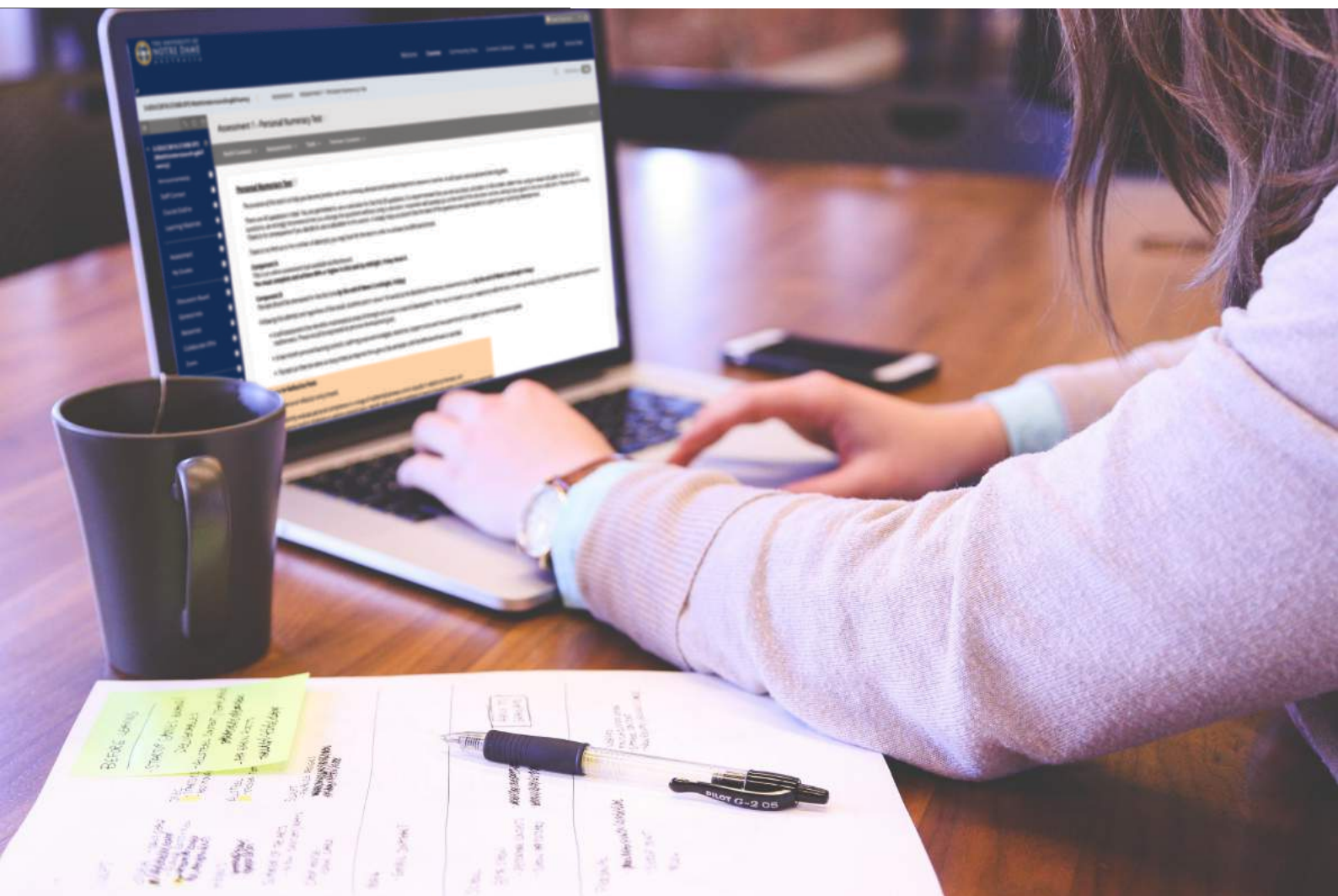


Getting your head around assignments



Before beginning to write any assignment, it is important to take time to understand the task and to develop an effective plan to support your writing.

This companion resource supports the *Getting your head around assignments* presentation, which uses authentic examples to look at ways to:

- Understand the task
- Get the key points out of the task
- Use the key points to plan your response



Step 1

Getting hold of the question

Record the due dates

Before any writing or planning starts, it's important to make sure you know when your assessment tasks are due. One of the first things you should do each semester, is to put all of the due dates in your calendar.

The best place to find this information is in each of your course outlines.

5. Assessment (see also Section 10 - Academic Integrity)

Students must ensure they have read and understood University information relevant to assessment. The primary source is the [Policy: Assessment in Higher Education Coursework, ELICOS and Enabling Courses](#) and the [Procedure: Assessment in Higher Education Coursework, ELICOS and Enabling Courses](#). It also includes but is not limited to, the [General Regulations](#) [Chapter 6], relevant School Regulations and any other policies, guidelines and procedures relating to assessment which appear on the University's website.

5.1 Assessment Structure

If not included in this outline, further details on assessment requirements and marking rubrics will be provided to students as additional documents which can be accessed from the course sit on Blackboard.

Item N ^o .	Assessment Type and Description	Weighting %	*Due Date	Related to Learning Outcome N ^o (s)	Related to Graduate Attribute N ^o (s)
1	Task description will be here	35%	4pm, Fri 11 th Sept	2.2	3, 8
2	Task description will be here	35%	4pm, Fri 15 th Oct	2.1	1, 2, 7, 4
3	Task description will be here	30%	4pm, Fri 12 th Nov	2.3	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10

* Students are responsible for checking the due dates of ALL assessment tasks

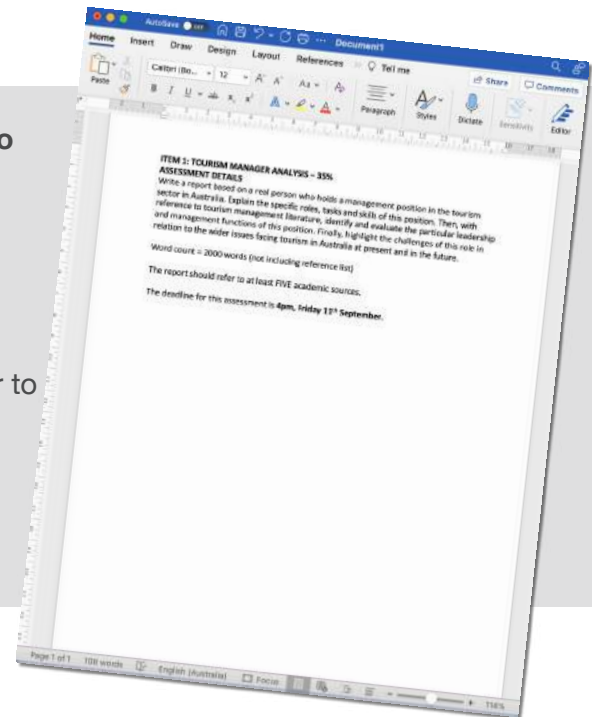
The due date column will be prominent in all course outlines



Paste the assessment question and information into your document

A great tip is to copy and paste the question into the document you will be working on.

It doesn't mean that it has to stay forever, but it will provide a good reference point for you whilst you are developing and responding to the task. Just remember to delete it when you are finished!



Step 2 Getting the key points out of the question

When looking at the assignment question, these are the key points that you need to establish:

- **MAIN ACADEMIC THEORY OR CONCEPT**
that you need to show your understanding of.
- **CASE / ISSUE(S)**
that you need to apply the theory or concept to.
- **KIND OF WRITING**
that you are expected to produce.
- **NUMBER OF WORDS**
that you are expected to include.
- **ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS**
that you need to meet



Locating the key points

Example 1

Write a report based on a real person who holds a management position in the tourism sector in Australia. Explain the specific roles, tasks and skills of this position. Then, with reference to tourism management literature, identify and evaluate the particular leadership and management functions of this position. Finally, highlight the challenges of this role in relation to the wider issues facing tourism in Australia at present and in the future.

Word count = 2000 words (not including reference list)

The report should refer to at least FIVE academic sources.

The deadline for this assessment is 4pm, Friday 11th September.

Here are the key points from the task above:

MAIN ACADEMIC THEORY OR CONCEPT

Management and leadership in tourism

CASE / ISSUE(S)

1. Australian tourism manager's roles, tasks & skills
2. Leadership & management functions of the position
3. Challenges in relation to wider issues in Australian tourism sector now and in future

KIND OF WRITING

Report

NUMBER OF WORDS

2000

ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS

At least 5 academic resources

Example 2

Discuss one barrier to effective communication in social work and the strategies social workers can use to overcome this barrier.

Word count: 1200 words (not including reference list)

Due date: Monday September 14th 11.59 pm

Here are the key points from the task above:

MAIN ACADEMIC THEORY OR CONCEPT

Barriers to Communication

CASE / ISSUE(S)

Social work / One barrier / Strategies social workers can use to overcome this barrier

KIND OF WRITING

Essay

NUMBER OF WORDS

1200

ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS

None stated

DUE DATE

11.59 pm Monday 14th September



Step 3

Using the key points to plan your answer

Tip 1

Plan backwards from the due date

Starting with the due date will help to give you an idea about what you need to do and when you need to do it - because the worst thing is to try to do everything at once at the last moment. That's never going to produce writing of good quality.

Give yourself a day or two to revise your draft at the end, so that you can leave it aside and come back to it the next day. You're bound to improve it.

Plan a week or so to do your writing in a few sessions.

Plan time to do your research - to read and write notes so that you've got something to write about.

This schedule, which could look something like the timeframe on the right, will indicate the best time to start working towards the assignment.

Keep in mind also, that if you have more than one assignment due at the same time, you may need to plan additional time for each step, for each assignment.

Remember also, that some assignments will allow pre-submissions and feedback to check for text similarity. Use this feature to help improve your drafts.

Mon	Analyse & plan
Tue	
Wed	Read & make notes
Thu	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	
Mon	
Tue	
Wed	Write your draft
Thu	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	
Mon	
Tue	
Wed	Revise your Draft
Thu	
Fri	
Sat	
Sun	

Submit your assignment



Using the key points to plan your answer

Tip 2

Use the word limit to find out the number of paragraphs

- An average paragraph with five or six sentences has about 150 – 200 words.
- So, a 2000 word assignment will have 10 to 14 paragraphs.
- Knowing the number of paragraphs is important because these are the building blocks of your assignment and this info will help inform your paragraph plan.

Tip 3

Consider the type of assignment and the case or issues to be addressed

Understanding the type of writing will help in your planning.

Report task example (from page 5)

Typically an academic report has an introduction, discussion section and a conclusion. It may have other sections such as an executive summary, methodology and recommendations as well. It's important to check this for an assignment, as the lecturer or tutor may give you information about the kind of look or the sections they want. This particular question however, is not asking you for recommendations.

So, with your 10 to 14 paragraphs you just need to distribute them among the different sections with the discussion likely to be the biggest part.

Discussion

And to know what to put in the discussion, we then need to identify this part,

which is about the case that we're analysing. In this case, there are two main sections.

1. Role of the manager
2. Challenges

For this report, the discussion would be broken into 2 parts, with the challenges probably requiring more detail.

Essay example (from page 6)

The main concept of this task was communication barriers in the case of social work. Specifically, it calls for the essay to propose strategies or approaches to overcome these barriers.

Considering the key points, for a 1200-word essay, with an introduction and conclusion as well as one paragraph for each concept and issue, it could become a paragraph plan with six to eight paragraphs.

All images in this document are available for use via a Pixabay, Pexels or CC0 public domain licence.

www.notredame.edu.au/current-students/support/academic-support

student.success@nd.edu.au

The University of Notre Dame Australia
© 2022