

WHAT TUTORS EXPECT OF YOU IN ASSIGNMENTS

What do tutors expect of you in assignments? There are five main expectations.

First, and above all, the tutor will expect you to **engage directly with the question or topic** – not just tell all you think you know about it. This central point drives the remainder of the expectations:

- Logical approach and clear structure
- Effective use of sources
- Sound reasoning, argument and analysis
- Good presentation

LOGICAL APPROACH AND CLEAR STRUCTURE

The tutor will look for evidence of planning and organisation of material in the assignment. A good indicator of this is in the rational way the assignment is structured.

The tutor will look for a cascade of ideas: each paragraph or section focuses on a particular topic area, with a logical flow of ideas from one paragraph or section to the next.

SOUND REASONING, ARGUMENT AND ANALYSIS

This usually involves two levels of engagement with the subject: *descriptive* and *analytical*.

Descriptive: demonstrating clear understanding of main theories, ideas, models or practices.

Analytical: involves synthesis and evaluation of ideas; looking for flaws in arguments, exceptions to the rule and awareness of counter-arguments. It also about explaining and justifying in a balanced and objective way, any position you have taken in an assignment.

Both levels of engagement are important, but particularly the latter.

EFFECTIVE USE OF SOURCES

Tutors look for evidence of selective and relevant reading on the topic. This means selecting reliable sources that support points made by you in the assignment. You should not rely on the Internet for sources – the library should be the first, not the last, point of contact for your research.

Accurate referencing (using Harvard Style) is a key indicator for the tutor that you have researched and applied evidence in your assignment.

GOOD PRESENTATION

Tutors expect that you will take pride in the way you present your written assignment. It should be word-processed and **look** inviting.

It must also be well-written. Spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and confusing sentences can interrupt the process of communication between you and your tutor. If an essay or report is hard to follow or understand, it makes it difficult for a tutor to connect with your line of thought.

Good writing is simple, unpretentious and succinct.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Read the Effective Learning Service booklet: 'Effective Writing'