

Tutorial Letter 301/4/2025

**TO ALL STUDENTS ENROLLED FOR
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

DVAALLD

Semesters 1, 2 and year modules

Department of Development Studies

This tutorial letter contains important information about writing essay-type assignments, referencing and academic honesty.

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Dear Student

This tutorial letter contains technical advice on how to prepare assignments. In particular, it focuses on the skills required to produce an essay assignment of a high quality. It furthermore outlines a logical and organised approach to completing an essay assignment.

The quality of an assignment also depends on factors that are **not** discussed in this tutorial letter. Such factors include your depth of understanding of the topic in question, your ability to argue intelligently and to engage effectively with the literature, your ability to use ideas correctly, your originality and your awareness of the real world. However, to combine all these factors effectively, you should use the basics outlined in this tutorial letter.

An essay-type assignment is one of the most important tools of communication between you and your lecturer. When you do an assignment

- you get the chance to write about a topic directly linked to your studies in Development Studies
- you get practice in improving your writing style and in arranging your thoughts logically and systematically on paper

However, an essay assignment is also an important communication tool for your lecturers. When your lecturers mark your assignments

- they can see whether you understand the questions and the tutorial matter (i.e. the particular sections of the study guide and the prescribed and recommended reading material on which the questions are based)
- they get the chance to communicate with you as an individual when they write comments on your assignments
- they can identify problem areas in your answers and suggest ways in which to solve those problems
- they get the chance to point out the good sections, or strengths, of your answers

It is not easy to write an essay assignment. This tutorial letter explains what your lecturers will expect from you and provides hints on how to plan, write and round off an assignment technically so that it meets all the requirements of an academic essay.

All the assignment questions for the modules for which you are registered are contained in Tutorial Letter 101 or on the module site on myUnisa. In most cases, you have to write a full-length essay of a specified length (usually five pages, or a bit more in the case of honours students). Certain principles apply when one writes an essay assignment. These principles are explained in this tutorial letter.

BA HONOURS DEVELOPMENT STUDIES STUDENTS

The Honours Degree in Development Studies is an advanced course that will require you to develop higher-level skills and knowledge in the discipline and advanced analytical and communicative skills. This implies that the reading, research and writing tasks expected of you in formative and summative assessments are at an advanced level.

Be warned that this degree entails inexorable deadlines and exacting effort. Apart from reading the material suggested in the Tutorial Letters 101 for the modules, you are expected to undertake independent research, making full use of library resources. Please visit <http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/development-studies>.

Plan your studies well. Procrastination is a grave mistake. This means that you cannot leave reading, writing and reflection until the last minute. Extensions on due dates are only granted in exceptional circumstances. Only one postponement per module per year will be considered. Your essays will be assessed on the basis of your ability to master the material; your ability to provide your own interpretation; your ability to demonstrate that you undertook independent research; your ability to master the technical matters of an essay format; your ability to reference sources and to compile a list of references (or a list of sources, as some people call it) as outlined in this tutorial letter; and your ability to avoid any form of plagiarism or academic dishonesty.

To assist you in writing in your own words (and voice), you will be required to submit your assignments to a similarity detection programme called Turnitin before you submit them for marking. Turnitin generates a report that will show you where your work is original and where you copied from sources. Copying from sources without acknowledging them is known as plagiarism (see section 2.4.3 below). The Turnitin report will give a similarity index for your assignment, in other words it will show how similar your assignment is to sources that are available electronically. It will also show where the sentences or paragraphs in your assignment match other sources. When you work through the report, you will see where you need to paraphrase and where you need to use quotation marks (inverted commas) to show you are quoting from sources. When you submit your assignment for marking, make sure it is a clean copy and not the one that contains the full Turnitin report.

1 PLANNING ESSAY ASSIGNMENTS

1.1 General

One of the first things you should do when you get the tutorial matter for a module is to quickly read the table of contents. This will give you a feel for the module and an idea of what the content covers. You could also read the introduction and the conclusion of each study unit.

You will now be ready to start working on your assignment. Here are a few guidelines on how to go about the task:

- Read all the assignment questions carefully and decide which one you will attempt.
- Underline the **keywords** in the question and make sure that you understand exactly what you need to do. If the question has assessment evidence or other instructions, read these carefully too.
- The keywords also tell you what the **boundaries** of the assignment are. You must be very careful to stay within those boundaries. An assignment is **not** an opportunity for you to write everything you know about a topic. An assignment answer must be of a stipulated length (i.e. number of pages or words) – see Tutorial Letter 101 and your module site on myUnisa. You must therefore include only relevant and necessary information in your answer.
- You then need to collect all the information you might need. Do this by studying as many of the sources listed for that assignment in Tutorial Letter 101 and on your module site as possible. The sources (the study guide, the prescribed book, the reader, e-reserves and recommended sources) will provide practical information and examples that will help you answer the assignment.
- Read the information sources you have collected attentively. Concentrate while you read and make sure that you understand the arguments. Keep a good dictionary at hand and if you are unsure about the meaning of a word, look it up. Recommended dictionaries are the *Collins English dictionary* and the *Collins COBUILD advanced learner's English dictionary*. You can also use a free online dictionary, for example <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/>.
- Identify only the information that is relevant to the assignment topic. Obviously, not all the information in the sources you read will be relevant. Therefore, keep the assignment question and the keywords (and boundaries or assessment evidence) in mind while you are doing the required reading. This will help you to keep your mind focused on the central theme of the assignment question.
- Make notes while you read. Summarise important arguments in your own words. Take note of differences in the views of authors. Write down your own ideas and arguments on the topic (use coloured pens so that you will remember later which ideas belong to you and which ideas belong to authors). Also make notes of the books and the page numbers from which you take information in order to acknowledge the sources in your assignment (these are your source references – this is explained in section 3 of this tutorial letter).

1.2 Action words

Here are examples of action words you may encounter in assignment and examination questions and an explanation of their meaning:

- **Analyse**
Consider a theme or topic carefully to find out what it consists of (i.e. its components or elements) to indicate the relations between the elements and to identify the principles in terms of which the elements are organised.

- **Compare**
Point out similarities and differences between aspects. Students often make the mistake of indicating only similarities while ignoring differences or vice versa. A good comparison also provides reasons why aspects can be regarded as similar or as different.
- **Contrast**
Point out differences.
- **Criticise**
Make a judgement (either positive or negative) about theories or opinions and give reasons or evidence to support your judgement.
- **Define**
Explain the meaning of a term in no more than a sentence or a short paragraph. You may have to consider a number of definitions before arriving at a substantiated decision on the precise meaning you will attach to the term in the relevant assignment.
- **Describe**
Give an account of the characteristics or properties of an issue in such a way that the reader can recognise it. A description tells the reader what the issue or phenomenon "is like". When you describe an issue, your statements must be systematic, clear and logical.
- **Discuss/critically discuss**
Consider a matter from various points of view or explanations and give supportive evidence. This often involves weighing up arguments for and against something.

If an assignment question asks you to discuss something critically, you should provide a written debate that demonstrates your skill at reasoning, backed up by carefully selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument, or point out the advantages and disadvantages of a given context. Such evidence should be taken from a wide range of sources that both agree with and contradict an argument. Come to a conclusion, basing your decision on what you judge to be the most important factors, and justify how you have made your choice.
- **Discuss this statement**
Follow the same guidelines as provided under the action word "discuss". However, in this case it is essential that you regard the statement as part of your answer. You therefore need to refer to it continuously throughout your assignment.
- **Distinguish**
Show the differences between two or more aspects.

- **Evaluate**
Either make a value judgement based on criteria that are supplied, or criteria that you think are important. You have to state the grounds for your value judgement. Evaluation usually implies comparison and should always be substantiated, that is, based on soundly formulated reasons. An evaluation usually contains a concluding summary.
- **Examine**
Deal with the topic in detail and investigate the implications.
- **Explain**
A complete and clear answer is required. Your answer must clarify, interpret and explain the topic in question. Concrete examples are very useful for explaining a topic.
- **Identify**
Recognise a phenomenon, matter or concept as belonging to a specific category.
- **Illustrate**
Explain and clarify an issue or a topic by using concrete examples.
- **Indicate**
Give proof or evidence in support of some or other matter or point of view. Your answer should contain a logical and systematic presentation of supportive evidence or proof and you should draw appropriate conclusions.
- **Justify**
Show sufficient grounds for your decisions or conclusions.
- **Name**
Draw up a list of names or items of information in a specific category (e.g. the elements of primary healthcare). No discussion or explanation is required.
- **Outline**
Give the main features or general principles of a subject, leaving out minor details and emphasising structure and relationships.
- **Substantiate**
Give reasons for your arguments or statements. Prove that what you are saying is so.
- **Summarise**
Give a short account of the main points of a matter, leaving out details and examples.
- **Trace**
Present events or stages of a process in order.

1.3 Critical reading and close reading

An assignment question may ask you to discuss a statement critically, based on prescribed reading material or your own research. Whatever the case may be, the target of your enquiry will require the same scrutiny you give the assignment question itself. This requires you to use a technique referred to as *close reading*. "Close reading entails slowly and carefully thinking about how a piece of writing is constructed in order to better understand what impact it is trying to have and what meaning it wants to convey" (Brouillette 2008:1). Essentially, a "close reader" plays the role of a detective, dissecting every clue – in this case, the clues are sentences and paragraphs. You search for meaning and weigh it against your knowledge of the field in question. Do the parts work cohesively? Is there something in the text that does not quite fit or is based on faulty reasoning? If you ask these kinds of questions, you are thinking critically.

Keep in mind that every reader has biases and prior knowledge that influence their reception of a text. As a critical reader, it is vital that you acknowledge these biases and (in some cases) set them aside. In other words, knowing yourself will be useful. Furthermore, close reading also requires you to suppress assumptions about particular kinds of texts and examine only what is in front of you. It is easy to miss important clues if you go too quickly and do not see each and every word.

2 WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

2.1 An essay

Development Studies is a subject that has many debates (i.e. arguments with opposing sides). It has hundreds of examples of development efforts, and a huge amount of literature describing the situations and contexts that might need development. There are debates because the real world is complicated and there are disagreements about facts, about how to analyse facts and about the best way forward. One consequence of this is that students can enter these debates with some confidence, because often there are no fixed answers.

➤ **Essays are a way of demonstrating understanding**

You are a student beginning to get into this information and these debates. The Department of Development Studies uses essay assignments to judge your ability to do so. To understand means to be able to express ideas in your own words.

➤ **How do you write an essay to show understanding?**

An assignment forces you to develop an argument on a topic. You have to use your own words to write an argument. Through this, you will make judgements about the question and about the information and the debates in the literature. By going through these processes, you will create your answer to the question.

However, to give a good answer you need to engage with the prescribed literature and its debates and information. A good student is scholarly – she/he uses quotations and

paraphrases (all with references!) to strengthen their argument. Therefore, a good essay has a clear, original voice and a dialogue with the points and issues in the literature.

➤ **Different essays, different arguments**

Different essay assignments direct you to different kinds of arguments. If, for example, you are asked to summarise, outline or describe an issue or a topic, you are not being asked to take a side in a debate – you are asked to present material. However, you must still write an essay in which you present your own argument. Your introduction and conclusion should consist of your words alone as you explain what you are doing with the topic. The arrangement of your sections and the order of your paragraphs must follow your own argument, making up an organised answer to the question. Your presentation of points from the reading material should also be mostly in your own words as you condense and organise material and as you use your own neat phrases to summarise points. You may also include a number of quotes and paraphrases.

If you are asked to discuss, analyse or debate a topic, for example whether or not western-style modernisation, with constitutions, gender rights, capitalism, the English language and global soccer, is good for Africa, the essay should be dominated by your own arguments in which you evaluate and weigh up different options and the opinions of both sides of the debate. In presenting your original discussion/argument, you must continue to be scholarly and constantly strengthen your argument by referring to the literature in the proper way.

➤ **Learning to use your own voice**

Learning to write an argument in your own voice and using your own words can be difficult. Students who are not fluent in English might find it challenging to express their own ideas. Never feel that your opinion or your voice is unimportant or that your essay should be a direct copy of the phrases and sentences in the study guide and the reading material.

You must start writing original, scholarly essays, which are argued in your own words and strengthened by appropriate quotations and paraphrases. Each paragraph should contain a central point that furthers your argument in a logical way.

Once you have done the necessary planning, understand what activity you need to perform and have done the required reading, you will be ready to take the first step in answering the assignment.

2.2 Setting up a framework for an assignment or essay-type answer

Compiling a framework will help you to

- arrange your ideas in a logical and systematic manner
- make sure that you do not leave out any of the core aspects

Using the keywords you identified earlier, make a list of points you need to cover in the assignment. You will be able to build on this list after you have done all the reading. Some assignment questions contain assessment evidence that guides you to the major sections to be covered in your answer.

Decide which ideas will be the main ideas in your assignment, and which will be secondary or supportive ideas. List these ideas (they will probably end up being the headings in the body of your essay) and decide how you want to arrange them.

Leave enough lines between each of these main ideas or headings in your rough draft so that you can add further ideas and information. You are now ready to write the first rough draft of your assignment. You will do this by including a few components.

2.3 The components of an essay assignment

You were probably taught in school that an essay consists of an introduction, the essay itself (i.e. the body) and a conclusion. This was good advice, and you need to apply it in answering assignments as well. To meet all the requirements of an academic and scientific essay, you need to add four components to an assignment:

- a title page
- a table of contents
- references to sources
- a list of references used

In the sections that follow, we explain what we mean by each of these components.

2.3.1 The title page and the table of contents

Write the title of the assignment on the first page of the assignment – page (i). You could formulate your own title with reference to the assignment question, but we suggest that you write down the assignment question. By doing this, you will be reminding yourself of the full implications of the question and what is expected of you.

You could write the table of contents either on the same page or on page (ii). This table of contents will probably be similar to the framework that you compiled earlier. It is a list of the final main headings and subheadings of your assignment. Next to these headings, list the page number on which each heading appears in your essay (and **not** all the pages where the discussion is found). Remember, you can only finalise the table of contents once you have finished your assignment.

The table of contents is important because it gives your lecturers an overview of the information covered in the assignment. It also gives them the chance to evaluate the structure of your answer and to see whether the headings follow logically and systematically.

Example of a title page and a table of contents:

ASSIGNMENT 02																						
Student number: _____																						
Name: _____																						
Module code: DVA_____																						
Module title: _____																						
Semester: _____																						
Due date: DD MM YYYY																						
Unique number: _____																						
Title:	Discuss the following characteristics of urban poverty: (a) inadequate housing (b) inadequate social services (c) lack of job opportunities																					
TABLE OF CONTENTS																						
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"><thead><tr><th style="width: 5%;"></th><th style="width: 85%;"></th><th style="width: 10%; text-align: right;">PAGE</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1</td><td>Introduction</td><td style="text-align: right;">1</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Inadequate housing</td><td style="text-align: right;">1</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Inadequate social services</td><td style="text-align: right;">2</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Lack of job opportunities</td><td style="text-align: right;">4</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>Conclusion</td><td style="text-align: right;">5</td></tr><tr><td>6</td><td>List of references</td><td style="text-align: right;">6</td></tr></tbody></table>				PAGE	1	Introduction	1	2	Inadequate housing	1	3	Inadequate social services	2	4	Lack of job opportunities	4	5	Conclusion	5	6	List of references	6
		PAGE																				
1	Introduction	1																				
2	Inadequate housing	1																				
3	Inadequate social services	2																				
4	Lack of job opportunities	4																				
5	Conclusion	5																				
6	List of references	6																				

2.3.2 The introduction

You probably know the saying that first impressions are lasting. In the introduction you have an opportunity to make a positive first impression.

Begin by explaining, in your own words, what the question is all about. This will show that you understand the question. Briefly explain **what** you will be doing in your assignment (i.e. the aim of your answer), **how** you will be doing this, and **why**. You should already have a good idea of what you will be doing because you compiled a framework. An introduction will make it easier for you to revise the content of the essay before the examination. You will also be able to see the core of the answer at a glance.

A good introduction is brief, directly aimed at the question and sketches the main argument briefly.

A useful hint: Be prepared to rewrite the introduction more than once before finalising it. Normally, the final version of the introduction is written last because it is only then that you know what you did in the assignment.

2.3.3 *The body of the essay*

Give the main arguments of your answer in the body of the essay. Use the main items of the framework that you compiled earlier as headings to ensure that your essay is logically structured.

Do **not** use the words "The body" as a heading.

Each paragraph should deal with one aspect or topic that is made clear in a topic sentence, which is normally the first sentence of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph must contain all the necessary proof, details and examples to substantiate or illustrate the statement made in the topic sentence. The examples used need not come from the prescribed sources but may be based on your own experiences. A good paragraph indicates how the information provided there relates to the assignment question. Therefore, you constantly need to make your paragraphs relevant to the central theme of the assignment question.

Also, make sure that your paragraphs follow logically after one another and that you present a convincing and systematic argument. The exact way of doing this will, of course, depend on the question asked and, especially, the action word (see section 1.2).

It is no good trying to answer the question by listing unconnected points. Do not number your sentences; avoid bullet-point summaries. Ensure that your answer takes the form of a flowing essay.

2.3.4 *The conclusion*

In the conclusion the essay is brought to a close with a brief summary of the assignment. You must give your final opinion on the topic here and show the reader how all the arguments raised in the body of the essay have led to your conclusion. Do not include new information in the conclusion. Make sure that you address the assignment question directly.

A good conclusion summarises the main arguments and the content of the assignment, focuses on the question and is brief and to the point.

2.3.5 *The references*

At the end of the assignment, you need to list all the sources you used in alphabetical order, according to authors' surnames.

In section 3 we will look at the correct way of compiling a list of references and using in-text references. The list of references is sometimes also called a list of sources. You are welcome to use either term, but we prefer list of references.

2.4 Things to keep in mind

When you answer an assignment, your task is to convince the reader of your views on the topic under discussion. Consequently, you should imagine that the person who will be reading your assignment knows nothing about the topic.

The success of an assignment will depend on whether

- you have the relevant facts at your disposal
- you express yourself clearly by using short sentences and ensuring that every word makes sense
- your essay is compiled in a logical and systematic manner
- you show that you have done and understand the required reading

We discuss three issues below that will help you give proof of the above points. Section 2.4.1 contains advice on how to ensure that your essay is logically structured and well argued, section 2.4.2 deals with the use of quotations and section 2.4.3 deals with plagiarism.

2.4.1 Logical structuring

When we discussed the body of an essay in section 2.3.3 we said that an essay has to be logically structured. This is easier said than done. How can you make sure that your sentences and paragraphs follow logically on one another and that you write a systematic argument in which you answer the assignment question directly? The following book may be useful in this regard:

Du Toit, P, Heese, M & Orr, M. 1995. *Practical guide to reading, thinking and writing skills*. Halfway House: Southern Books.

It is advisable that you use checklists like the ones proposed by Du Toit et al (1995) to evaluate the first draft of your assignment. Du Toit et al (1995) also suggest remedies that you can use should your checklist reveal weaknesses. We have reproduced the two lists in the boxes below so that you can "test" your assignment against these questions before submitting it for marking.

Checklist

1 Does each paragraph have a topic sentence or a main idea?

No – see remedy 1.

2 Does each paragraph have at least one sentence in addition to the topic sentence?

No – see remedy 2.

- 3 Does the topic sentence of the introductory paragraph make a general statement about the content of the essay?
- No – see remedy 3.
- 4 Are the topic sentences of the rest of the paragraphs related to the subject of the essay, as indicated in the introductory paragraph?
- No – see remedy 4.
- 5 Do two or more paragraphs have the same topic sentence?
- Yes – see remedy 5.
- 6 Do the topic sentences of the paragraphs follow one another in a logical sequence?
- No – see remedy 6.
- 7 Does the topic sentence of the concluding paragraph sum up the main argument of your draft, as expressed in the topic sentences in the preceding paragraphs?
- No – see remedy 7.

(Source: Du Toit et al 1995:275)

Remedies

- 1 If a paragraph has neither a topic sentence nor a main idea, you have three options:
- rewrite the paragraph so that it does have a main idea
- or*
- scrap the paragraph entirely
- or*
- move the sentences in the paragraph to another paragraph where they support, illustrate or explain the existing main idea
- 2 One sentence is not a paragraph. You have two options:
- scrap the "paragraph" entirely
- or*
- if the main idea is an essential part of the essay, add supporting sentences to explain, illustrate or add details to the main idea
- 3 Rewrite the introductory paragraph so that it relates more logically to the topic.
- 4 If the topic sentences of the paragraphs in the body of the essay do not follow on from, or relate to, the introductory paragraph, check the following:

- Is the introductory paragraph correct and directly related to the topic? If so, then the rest of the paragraphs could be incorrect and not properly related to the topic. Keep the introductory paragraph; rewrite the rest of the essay. You will need to go back to the research stage to generate relevant material.

or

- Are the main ideas of the paragraphs in the body of the essay correct and directly related to the topic? If so, you need to rewrite the introductory paragraph so that it leads more logically to the rest of the essay.

or

- If the topic sentence of any paragraph does not seem to relate to the subject of the essay, it is probably irrelevant. Eliminate the paragraph.

5 If two or more paragraphs have the same main idea, you are probably repeating yourself.

- See if you can combine these paragraphs into one main paragraph.

or

- Try to rephrase the main ideas so that they state different aspects of, or perspectives on, the topic.

6 If the topic sentences do not follow one another in a logical sequence, you need to re-order the paragraphs so that they develop the argument logically.

7 Rewrite the concluding paragraph so that it is a logical summary of the preceding paragraphs.

(Source: Du Toit et al 1995:275–276)

2.4.2 Quotations

Use quotations sparingly and avoid lengthy quotes. It is important that you put the information across in your own words and use a short quote to substantiate (prove) or illustrate your statements. When you rely too heavily on quotes, the question arises as to whether you actually understand the information. Also, keep in mind that you may not necessarily have access to sources in the examination and, therefore, you will not be able to rely on quotes to answer a question.

2.4.3 Academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Academic dishonesty involves gaining – or attempting to gain – an unfair or undeserved academic advantage. It can take many forms, such as

- cheating, which includes collaborating with other students without the lecturer's permission, or copying from another student, or allowing another student to copy from you
- contract cheating, which includes asking someone else to complete an assessment on your behalf, regardless of whether you pay them to do so. This includes buying an assignment from a paper mill or using a ghost writer.

- using a paraphrasing tool to hide similarities in your work with existing sources
- any attempt to “fool” or “cheat” a similarity detection tool such as Turnitin

One of the most common types of academic dishonesty is plagiarism, which we will discuss in greater detail below.

Plagiarism is the act of taking other people's words, ideas and thoughts and passing them off as your own. It is a form of theft that involves a number of dishonest academic activities.

You are advised to study the *Students' disciplinary code* and the *Policy for copyright infringement and plagiarism*. Go to <https://www.unisa.ac.za/unisarules>.

Consult *Study @ Unisa* for further details.

An assignment must be the product of your study. Writing an essay is not a matter of simply reproducing facts from a couple of books or a study guide. You may not simply combine data from different sources, particularly if this data is copied word for word from the sources.

You need to acknowledge sources when you quote directly from them, when you put the information obtained from sources in your own words or when you use the ideas of authors. If you fail to do this, you are simply stealing the ideas of others and committing plagiarism – one of the most serious offences a student can commit.

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Plagiarism is not only dishonest, but also means that your lecturer will not be able to evaluate your assignment because it is not your own work. If you commit plagiarism you will also be doing yourself a great disservice, because your lecturer will not be able to see whether you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or a particular part of the work.

Moreover, copying a fellow student's work is also a form of plagiarism. Students who copy from sources or fellow students will be **penalised**. We encourage students to form study groups, but each student must prepare and submit their own work.

Penalties for academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Unisa has a zero-tolerance approach to academic dishonesty and plagiarism. The university has several corrective measures or sanctions in place to deal with instances of misconduct. These range from receiving 0% for an assignment or an examination to appearing before a disciplinary committee and being subjected to a sanction, such as being denied an opportunity to reregister for a specific module or qualification.

Therefore, please do not resort to academic dishonesty. Take pride in your own work and, ultimately, in the qualification you will have earned through hard work, dedication and commitment.

2.4.4 "I keep getting stuck!"

You begin writing your introduction and then ... nothing. This happens to the best of us. You could deal with this problem by starting with the heart of your argument (or the answer to the question, depending on what is asked). Start by writing what you believe/know and then adding layers to your argument to bolster it. Expand on each sentiment in that central answer. What you have now is the end goal of your essay. Now every paragraph you write should bring you closer to this conclusion.

Each paragraph should be more and more specific. You can compare this process with piling on the evidence in a trial. You do not want to put the nail in the coffin at the very start – you need to set the stage for maximum impact. Try to achieve a funnelling effect: begin widely and narrow it down to the specific. Following this approach should help you structure your essay. General stuff should float to the top, while the specific stuff should sink to the bottom.

After you have done all of the above, you will know enough to write your introduction. The introduction must introduce the reader to everything she/he is about to read. Do not go into detail and only hint at the ending.

Of course, this method may not work for you – no two writers follow the same process – but it should help you in a pinch.

3 REFERENCES AND LIST OF REFERENCES

If you use information from a published source (i.e. a book or an article) in an assignment, academic integrity requires that you acknowledge its origin. This is essential, whether you use a direct quotation, paraphrase (i.e. write the information in your own words) or simply take over an idea from the source. In the text of the assignment, this acknowledgement takes the form of a reference.

Academics use various reference systems, but we recommend that you use the Harvard system as set out in this tutorial letter.

3.1 Giving references

When you use the Harvard system to refer to a source, you have to write the following information in the body of the essay:

- the author's surname
- the year in which the source was published
- the page number(s) on which the information appears

3.1.1 Quoting directly

If you quote directly from a book or an article, you need to use quotation marks (" and ") to show that you are quoting. An example of a direct quotation in the body of an assignment is as follows:

"Development, once a public project, has been redefined as a private, global project" (McMichael 2004:152).

Please note:

- There is no comma after the author's name.
- There is no space between the colon after the date and the page number.
- The full stop appears after the bracket.

3.1.2 Paraphrasing

If you do not quote directly, but paraphrase something that an author said, you will not use quotation marks, but you still need to give a reference. Your reference will then look as follows (we again use McMichael as an example):

McMichael (2004:152) points out that development, which used to be a public project, has been redefined as a project that is private and global.

The author's surname forms part of the sentence and is therefore **outside** the brackets. This is not a direct quote, but a summary of the main point made by McMichael and therefore there are no quotation marks.

An alternative is to write the full sentence and to refer to the author's surname only at the end:

Development is now a private and global project (McMichael 2004:152).

3.1.3 References to articles

Let us pretend that we have read an article called "Feeding Africa's cities: the role and potential of urban agriculture" by CM Rogerson. This article appeared in a journal called *Africa Insight*. The volume is 22, and the issue is number 4 of 1992.

A reference to this article in the body of an essay will be the same as for a book:

(Rogerson 1992:229)

3.1.4 References to contributions in readers

To refer to an article that has been reprinted in a **Unisa reader**, follow the style used for books and articles. In other words, give the name of the author, the date of publication of the reader and the page number(s), for example:

(Webster & Buhlungu 2006:279)

Please note that you must refer to the author of the article and not the compiler of the reader.

You will note that two-page numbers appear on almost every page of a reader – the original page number of the article and the page number of the reader. We suggest that you stick to the page number of the **reader** and therefore give the date of publication of the reader in references and the list of references, and not that of the article.

Important note: In the text of an essay, the ampersand (&) is used only when the entire text reference appears between brackets, as shown in this example. When the names of the authors form part of the sentence, "and" is written in full and the ampersand is not used. Therefore, the reference will look like this:

Webster and Buhlungu (2006:279) argue that

3.1.5 References to study guides

You should refer to the study guide as follows in an assignment (what follows is just an example. You will find the relevant information for your module in the study guide):

Cornwell and De Beer (2004:74) show that poverty

You may refer to a source (in the text and the list of references of an assignment) only if you have consulted it **yourself**. If you wish to use a statement quoted in the study guide (or another source), acknowledge the latter source, for example:

Harrison (in Cornwell & De Beer 2004:109) states: "Hunger and disease chase each other down a spiral that leads to death or life-long handicap."

3.1.6 References to websites

Websites often provide the names of authors and sometimes even page numbers. If this information is known, refer to a website in the same way as you would any other source, for example:

The World Bank (2002:1) argues that poverty concerns much more than income alone.

Note: Referencing Wikipedia pages or Google Search is not acceptable research practice.

Google Search is merely an internet search engine and Wikipedia is an online reference source that is open to author contributions. Students are advised to make use of peer-reviewed, verified sources of information.

In section 3.2.6 we give advice on how to compile bibliographic details for online sources.

3.1.7 *More than two authors*

In the case of three or more authors, mention all the authors when you refer to them for the first time. For any subsequent mention of the same source, state only the first author, followed by the expression "et al".

First reference:

Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1995:234) remark that

Second and following references:

Porter et al (1995:235) mention that ...

Note that "et al" is the abbreviation for "et alia", which means "and others". It should therefore be used with a plural verb ("mention", as in the above example).

3.1.8 *Contributions in a collective work*

Collective works consist of original contributions by different authors, such as conference papers, chapters or contributions in a book dealing with a specific topic. You must provide a separate reference for each contribution you consulted. Let's use the example of a prescribed book titled *80:20 development in an unequal world* by Colm Regan. Regan is the editor of the book and there are authors of each chapter. Even though Regan is the editor, he is also the author of some of the chapters. Therefore, if you provide a reference to a chapter from the book, you must refer to the author of the specific chapter.

If you were to provide a reference to chapter 4 in Regan (chapter 4, Human rights and development – 'a right, not an act of charity', Omar Grech), then the reference in your essay would be as follows: Grech (2012:80).

3.1.9 *Special cases*

3.1.9.1 *Newspaper articles*

If the author of a newspaper report is known, the reference is entered under the author's name, as in the next example.

Unemployment figures of the last month ... (Havenga 1998:5).

If the author of a newspaper report is **not known**, the reference is entered under the headline of the article, as in the following example:

Unemployment figures of the last month ... (New growth in the economy 1998:5).

3.1.9.2 *Government publications*

Refer to a South African White Paper or a law as follows:

(South Africa 1995:112).

3.1.9.3 *Television programmes*

If you use information from a television programme, refer to it as follows:

Desertification is becoming an everyday reality (50/50 2007).

In a typed assignment the name of the television programme must be italicised, while in a handwritten assignment it must be underlined.

3.1.9.4 *Interviews*

In some cases, you may conduct personal or telephonic interviews. If, for example, you had an interview with a Mr B Maluleke of the Department of Public Works, you should refer to it as follows:

According to Maluleke (2008), the delivery of services

3.1.9.5 *More than one work by the same author in the same year*

You may find that you use two or more works by an author that were published in the same year. In this case, you must add "a", "b", and so on to the year of publication, as in the following examples:

Nattrass and Seekings (2001a:472) say that

Nattrass and Seekings (2001b:46) mention the

3.1.9.6 *A series of references should be separated by semicolons*

... (Cilliers 2015:103; Inkeles 2014:12; Johnson 2011:32) ...

3.1.9.7 *When you refer to several different pages in a single source, they are separated by a comma*

... (Johnson 2011:32–35, 70, 90).

3.1.9.8 *When the date of publication is unknown*

If the date of publication is unknown, you can use the abbreviation "nd" – meaning "no date" – for example:

In this regard, Tshabe (nd:10) suggests that

3.2 **Compiling a list of references**

At the end of an assignment you need to list all the sources you used. This is done in alphabetical order, according to authors' surnames. Please note that in each instance the information must be given in the language in which the source was published.

3.2.1 ***Bibliographic details of books***

You need to give the full bibliographic details of all the sources in the list of references. The bibliographic details of a book are as follows:

- the surname(s) and initial(s) of the author(s)
- the year in which the book was published
- the title of the book
- the name of the town or the city where the book was published (not the country)
- the name of the company that published the book

All of this information usually appears on the title and the following page of the publication.

Typical bibliographic entries are as follows:

- McMichael, P. 2004. Development and social change: a global perspective. 3rd edition. London: Pine Ford.
- Picker, M, Griffiths, CL & Weaving, A. 2002. Field guide to insects of South Africa. Cape Town: Struik.
- Segal, L & Holden, P. 2008. Great lives, pivotal moments. Auckland Park: Jacana.

NB: In the first example, the edition number is given. Whenever an edition number is available, you must refer to it. Further, the title of a book must be italicised in a typed assignment and underlined in a handwritten assignment.

Entries for the same author:

- Those with publication dates are arranged by date with the oldest first, for example:
Tshabe, SL. 2010.
Tshabe, SL. 2014.

- Those without dates come after those with dates, for example:
Tshabe, SL. 2014.
Tshabe, SL. nd.
- Single-author entries should precede multiple-author entries, for example:
Tshabe, SL. nd.
Tshabe, SL & Shoba, FM. 1999.

3.2.2 *Bibliographic details of articles*

Let's use the example of an article entitled "The land is the economy: revisiting the land question" by Lloyd Sachinkoye. This article appeared in a journal called *African Security Review*. The volume is 14 and the issue is number 3 of 2005. The bibliographic details of the article must be indicated as follows in the list of references:

Sachinkoye, L. 2005. The land is the economy: revisiting the land question. *African Security Review* 14(3):31–44.

Here you have given the surname and initial of the author, the date of publication, the title of the article, the title of the journal, the volume number, the issue number of the journal in brackets and the page numbers on which the article appears. Note that the title of the journal must be in italics in a typed document and underlined in a handwritten document. The title of the article must **not** be in brackets, italicised or underlined. Here is another example:

Berry, MG, Robertson, BL & Campbell, EE. 2005. Impact of cutting and collecting firewood associated with informal settlement in the south-eastern Cape coastal zone. *South Africa Journal of Botany* 71(2):179–190.

3.2.3 *Bibliographic details of contributions in readers*

If you are registered for DVA3705 and have consulted the article by Webster and Buhlungu in the **reader**, the entry in your list of references should read as follows:

Webster, E & Buhlungu, S. 2010. Between marginalisation and revitalisation? The state of trade unionism in South Africa, in *Empowerment and popular initiatives: a reader*, compiled by MJ Rakolojane. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Note: You must include the title of the article. The title of the reader must be in italics in a typed document and underlined in a handwritten document.

3.2.4 *Bibliographic details of chapters in a book*

Let's use an example from a book titled *80:20 development in an unequal world* by Colm Regan. If you used information from chapter 4, you should reference it as (Grech 2012:80).

However, in the list of references, the entry should be as follows:

Grech, O. 2012. Human rights and development – 'a right, not an act of charity', in *80:20 development in an unequal world*, edited by C Regan. 6th edition. Pretoria & Ireland: Unisa Press & 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World.

Note:

- There is always only one year of publication even though there may be different authors of the chapters.
- If there is an editor of the book, the phrase "edited by", followed by the initial(s) and surname of the editor, must be included after the title of the book.
- If the book is a new edition, the edition must be included before the place of publication.

For a second example, consider the book *Introduction to development studies*. H Swanepoel and F de Beer are the editors of the book, but there are different authors for the different chapters. If you used the chapter by Anso Kellerman, you would refer to it as follows in your list of references:

Kellerman, A. 2000. Health and development, in *Introduction to development studies*, edited by F de Beer & H Swanepoel. 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Note that you should refer to the editors only at the end and that their initials should appear in front of their surnames. The title of the collective work must be italicised (in a typed document) or underlined (in a handwritten document) and not the title of the chapter.

3.2.5 Bibliographic details of study guides

You also need to acknowledge study guides in assignments. The names of the authors appear on the inside covers. Follow the same method as you would for an ordinary book. In a list of references, you would, for example, refer to the third-level study guide as follows:

Du Plessis, GE & Kotze, DA. 2010. *Development Policy and Strategies*. Only study guide for DVA3703. Pretoria: Unisa.

The title of the study guide must be in italics in a typed document and underlined in a handwritten document.

3.2.6 Bibliographic details of websites

In the case of published works, you can normally trace a work if you know who the author, the title and the publisher are. When using a website, you seldom have such information available. You therefore need to provide the full URL address of a website from which you downloaded information. Because information on websites changes so often, you also need to provide the date on which you downloaded a document. Here are some examples:

- Africa Union Commission. nd. Southern African Development Community (SADC). Available at: <http://www.au.int/en/recs/sadc> (accessed on 6 October 2009).
- Grant, K. 2008. Concentrated solar power in South Africa. Available at: <http://www.eprg.group.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/concentrated-solar-power-in-south-africa.pdf> (accessed on 6 October 2009).
- Nweshd.net. 2012. Hope for new treatment of brain disease. Available at: <http://www.newshd.net/brain/467/hope-for-new-treatment-of-brain-disease-2/> (accessed on 6 October 2013).
- Todani, K. 2008. Commentary: capital flows, current-account adjustment and monetary policy in South Africa. Proceedings of the conference on challenges for monetary policy-makers in emerging markets, 29–31 October 2008:101–105. Available at: <http://www2.resbank.co.za/internet/Publication.nsf/> (accessed on 10 December 2010).
- World Bank. 2002. Voices of the poor: listen to the poor. Available at: <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices/listen-findings.htm> (accessed on 29 July 2002.)
- Xingwana, L. 2010. Parliamentary media briefing by the Minister for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, Ms Lulu Xingwana. Cape Town, 17 November. Available at: <http://www.gov.za/parliamentary-media-briefing-minister-women-children-and-persons-disabilities-ms-lulu-xingwana-cape> (accessed on 6 October 2011).

3.2.7 Bibliographic details of more than two authors

In the case of three or more authors, all the authors must be mentioned in your list of references. It is not acceptable to use "et al" in the list of references. You must list all the authors, as in this example:

Hammett, D, Twyman, C & Graham, M. 2015. *Research and fieldwork in development*. Oxon: Routledge.

The same applies to study guides, as in the next example:

Ndlovu, S, Ndlovu, M, Makhubedu, K, Sentime, K, Maphosa, B, Mazibuko, S, Du Plessis, G & Zulu, N. *Introduction to Development Studies. Only study guide for DVA1501*. Pretoria: Unisa.

The title of the guide must be in italics in a typed document and underlined in a handwritten document.

3.2.8 Bibliographic details of books produced by a group, a corporation, an organisation or an international conference

The name of the group, corporation, organisation or conference convenor must be used, for example:

Soweto Trust for Nursing Clinical Training. 2005. *Primary clinical care handbook*. 4th edition. Houghton: Jacana.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. 2010. *Maximizing synergies between foreign direct investment and domestic investment for development: enhancing productive capacities*. Geneva: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

3.2.9 Bibliographic details of special cases

3.2.9.1 Newspaper articles

If the author of a newspaper report is known, enter the report under the author's name:

Havenga, C. 1998. New growth in the economy. *Star*, 27 April:5.

If the author of a newspaper report is not known, enter the report under its headline:

Commemoration after closet-torching. 2010. *Monday Paper*, 24 October:2.

New growth in the economy. 1998. *Star*, 27 April:5.

Note that the title of the newspaper must be in italics (in a typed document) or underlined (in a handwritten document) and that the specific date of the article and the page number (where available) must be given.

3.2.9.2 Government publications

Refer to a white paper as follows:

South Africa. 1979. *White paper on part 1 of the commission of enquiry on labour law*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Bills, draft bills, laws, regulations and statutes normally have lengthy official titles. It is general practice to give the shortened title, number and year (the year of the law, not the publication) of such works. If the shortened title cannot be established, the full title must be used. For the date of publication, use the date of the latest update of the consolidated law and not the Act itself. Look at the following examples:

- Department of Science and Technology. 2007. *Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research Bill [Draft]*. Pretoria: DST.
- Malawi. 2003. *Public Procurement Act 8 of 2003*. Zomba: Government Printer.
- South Africa. 1995. *Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995*. Cape Town: Government Printer.
- South Africa. 2002. *Labour Relations Amendment Act 12 of 2002*. Cape Town: Government Printer.
- South Africa. 2010. *Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, as amended. 2010*. Durban: Butterworths.

Things to remember in respect of other government publications:

- Use the official name of the country, followed by the full name of the relevant government department, as the name of the author. However, in order to avoid a long list of references under "South Africa", shorten the references to just the name of the department. The corresponding in-text citation may be shortened (except in the first instance) if there is an identifiable abbreviation in common use, for example DEAT for the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. Examples are as follows:

Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. 1999. *White paper on environmental management policy*. Pretoria: DEAT.

Department of Environmental Affairs. 2010. *National climate change response green paper*. Pretoria: DEA.

- An in-text reference for the first bibliographic entry above would be, for the first reference: "... (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism [DEAT] 1999:6)". For subsequent in-text citations it would be: "... (DEAT 1999:6)". For the second bibliographic entry, your first reference would be: "... (Department of Environmental Affairs [DEA] 2010:iv)". For subsequent in-text citations it would be: "... (DEA 2010:iv)".

3.2.9.3 Television programmes, podcasts and YouTube videos

Look at these examples:

50/50. SABC2. 27 April 2007.

Buzan, T. 2007. *Maximise the power of your brain: Tony Buzan mind mapping* [video file]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlabrWv25qQ> (accessed on 10 December 2014).

Davis, D. 2010. *Re-conceiving the doctrine of the separation of powers* [podcast, 15 July]. Available at: <http://www.law.uct.ac.za/law/news/multimedia/podcasts> (accessed on 10 December 2014).

3.2.9.4 Interviews

Let's again use the example of an interview with Mr B Maluleke of the Department of Public Works:

Maluleke, B. 2008. *Personal interview*. 24 March, Pretoria.

Where it is applicable or available, you can indicate the position of the person:

Maluleke, B. Director, Department of Public Works. 2008. *Personal interview*. 24 March, Pretoria.

3.2.9.5 *More than one work by the same author in the same year*

You may use more than one work by an author or authors that was published in the same year. In this case, you must add "a", "b", and so on to the year of publication, as in the following examples:

Nattrass, N & Seekings, J. 2001a. Democracy and distribution in highly unequal economies: the case of South Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 39(3):471–498.

Nattrass, N & Seekings, J. 2001b. Two nations? Race and economic inequality in South Africa today. *Daedalus* Winter:45–70.

3.2.9.6 *Works universally known by their titles: dictionaries and encyclopaedias*

Certain reference works are universally known by their titles and it makes things considerably easier for the reader if these works are listed under their titles.

Examples:

Collins English dictionary. 2003. 6th edition. Sv "custom". Glasgow: HarperCollins.

Encyclopaedia Britannica. 1964. Sv "optics". London: Benton.

Note that "sv" is the abbreviation for the Latin expression *sub verbo*, which means "under the word".

3.2.9.7 *International conferences*

United Nations. 2009. *Conference on the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development*. New York, 24–30 June 2009. New York: United Nations.

3.3 Harvard referencing technique: a summary

TYPE OF RESOURCE	IN THE REFERENCE LIST	IN-TEXT REFERENCING
Books, general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The names of authors are shown with the surnames appearing first. First names are abbreviated to the initials. <input type="checkbox"/> For three or more authors, give full details in the reference list. Et al may be used only for in-text references. <input type="checkbox"/> The convention is that Italic type is used to indicate a title of a published work. <input type="checkbox"/> The edition should be mentioned, unless it is the first edition. When no edition is indicated, you may assume that the work is a first edition. <input type="checkbox"/> List the first place of publication appearing on the title page. This is always a city or town, never a country. 	<p>Only use the author's surname or corporate names (see examples below)</p> <p>Et al means "and others" and therefore takes the plural verb, for example: Mazibuko et al (2014) argue that...</p>

Book, single author	Abrahamsen, R. 2000. <i>Disciplining democracy: development discourse and good governance in Africa</i> . London: Zed.	Abrahamsen (2000) argues that... "legitimacy is consolidated hence..." (Abrahamsen 2000:76).
Book, two authors	Muthambi, KC & Muthambi, F. 2014. <i>Essentials of information management systems</i> . Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.	Muthambi and Muthambi (2014) argue that... ...are essential principles to consider (Muthambi & Muthambi 2014).
Book, three or more authors	Coveney, M, Ganster, S & King, D. 2003. <i>The strategy gap: leveraging technology to execute winning strategies</i> . Hoboken: Wiley.	First use: (Coveney, Ganster & King 2003) Thereafter: (Coveney et al 2003)
Book produced by a group, corporation or organisation	Soweto Trust for Nursing Clinical Training. 2005. <i>Primary clinical care handbook</i> . 4 th edition. Houghton: Jacana.	(Soweto Trust for Nursing Clinical Training 2005:4)
Government department as author	South Africa. Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism. 1999. <i>White paper on environmental management policy</i> . Pretoria: Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism.	First use: (SA, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism 1999) Thereafter: (SA, DEAT 1999)
Several works by same author in the same year	Fullan, M. 2008a. <i>International handbook for educational leadership and administration</i> . New York: Kluwer. Fullan, M. 2008b. <i>The new meaning of educational change</i> . London: Cassel. Arrange alphabetically by title in the reference list. Place lowercase letters ("a", "b", "c", etc) immediately after the year.	Leadership and change in schools have been major topics of discussion for several years (Fullan 2008a, 2008b) and this study will...
Section or chapter in a book	Shisana, O, Zungu, N & Peze, S. 2009. Poverty and HIV and AIDS. In <i>HIV/AIDS in South Africa 25 years on: psychosocial perspectives</i> , edited by P Rohleder, L Swartz, SC Kalichman & LC Simbayi. London: Springer:89-104.	(Shisana, Zungu & Peze 2009:90)

E-book – online book	Niemann, S, Greenstein, D & David, D. 2004. Helping children who are deaf: family and community support for children who do not hear well. Berkley: Hesperian Foundation. Available at: http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download_deaf.php (Accessed on 3 March 2005).	The researcher found helpful information about deaf children in the work by Niemann, Greenstein and David (2004), suggesting that ...
Journal articles, general	The title of the journal is italicised. In addition, all nouns used in the name of the journal should be capitalised. Give the volume and issue numbers of the journal, followed by the page number. Do not use the abbreviations vol., no., pp. or p. to indicate these elements of a journal reference.	This is mostly the same as for book in-text references.

Journal article – single author	Van Wilgen, BW. 2009. The evolution of fire and invasive alien plant management practices in fynbos: review article. <i>South African Journal of Science</i> 105(9-10):335-342.	(Van Wilgen 2009: 335)
Journal article – two authors	Jiyane, V & Mostert, J. 2010. Use of information and communication technologies by women hawkers and vendors in South Africa. <i>African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science</i> 20(1):53-61.	(Jiyane & Mostert 2010:60)
Newspaper articles	Chauke, A. 2010. SA braces for Google television. <i>The Times</i> (Johannesburg). 19 November: 5.	(Chauke 2010:5).
Conference proceedings	Plaatjie, SE. 2011. Rethinking the discourse of development in the context of the national question in postcolonial Africa. CODESRIA Conference Proceedings. Revisiting the 'National Question' as a continuing African challenge in the 21st century. 5-9 December 2011. Rabat, Morocco.	(Plaatjie 2011).
Acts	South African Government. 2002. Labour Relations Amendment Act 12 of 2002. Cape Town: Government Printer.	(SA Government 2002).
Online document	Grant, K. 2008. Concentrated solar power in South Africa. Available at: http://www.eprg.group.cam.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/concentrated-solar-power-in-south-africa.pdf (Accessed on 10 December 2010).	(Grant 2008).
Unpublished personal communication	Rakolojane, M. 2014. Personal communication with the author.	(Rakolojane, personal communication 2014, 20 May)
Thesis or dissertation	Madziakapita, A. 2008. An evaluation of the impact of food aid on food security: the case study of Ngabu area in Malawi. MA dissertation, University of South Africa. Note: When a dissertation or thesis is not published, the title is not italicised.	(Madziakapita 2008)

4 THE MARKING OF ASSIGNMENTS

4.1 Assignments: what the lecturers/markers look for

When your lecturers assess (mark) your assignment, they look at, in particular, whether you have

- expressed yourself clearly
- avoided vague and contradictory arguments
- answered the assignment question
- studied all the required sources and even gone to the trouble of locating additional sources
- digested and integrated the information from various sources
- presented an assignment that is your **own** work (and not just a copy of the reading material)
- kept within the stipulated length (number of pages or words)
- met all the technical requirements (i.e. structure, layout, use of language, quotes, references and a correctly compiled list of references)

The general comments you receive regarding technical errors and referencing may help you to write better Development Studies assignments in the future. There are standard requirements regarding such issues across all modules. Read the comments carefully when you receive an assignment back from Unisa.

4.2 Online assignments

Students are required to submit their essays online since this may ensure quicker turnaround times for their assignment feedback.

The lecturers use specially designed Adobe tools to assist them in marking assignments. The digital nature of online assignments will result in various changes from the usual paper-based assessment. Take note of the following aspects in this regard:

- Your lecturer will use an online marking tool to mark your assignment. Instead of adding handwritten comments, the lecturer will paste "sticky notes" in the paper (including in a sentence) to leave comments or suggestions. You can read a comment by moving your cursor over the sticky note.
- The lecturer may or may not use the other Adobe tools such as the highlighter to make you aware of mistakes or areas that must improve.
- When the lecturer has finished marking your essay, they will allocate a mark out of 100 and press the "finalise" button.
- All comments that were added (or pasted) in your essay will now appear in a list at the bottom of your essay and will be numbered in the order they were pasted into the assignment. The lecturer will then put your essay in an outbox, from where your essay will go directly to your Unisa myLife inbox. You will also receive your mark by SMS.

Here is an example of how an essay will look when it is returned to you:

Introduction

This essay aims to explain the Social Impact Assessment (SIA), its purpose and then analyze how SIA has been used in South Africa. The historical background and problems of SIA in South Africa will be discussed in detail. Also the essay will discuss the principles and practices of SIA that should be used in the countries of the South. ✓

Definition and purpose of SIA

There are various definitions in literature that seek to define the Social Impact Assessment (SIA). A few definitions below provide some understanding of what SIA is. Social Impact Assessment is a method of identifying, analyzing and evaluating the impacts actions may have on the social aspects of human existence. ✓ According to Pisani and Sandham (2009), SIA can also refer to the efforts to assess in advance the social consequences, whether intended or unintended, positive or negative, that are likely to follow from specific actions, projects, policies and programme. ✓ SIA involves characterizing the existing state of such aspects of the environment, forecasting how they may change if a given action alternative is implemented and developing means of mitigating changes that are likely to be adverse (US General Services Administration 1998). ✓ A social impact has been defined as a significant improvement or deterioration in people's wellbeing or a significant improvement in an aspect of community concern (Dietz 1987). ✓

Typically, a Social Impact Assessment is a specialist study conducted as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment with the aim of developing an understanding of the current social environment and assessing the potential impact of the project on the social environment. Within the more limited aims of a scoping exercise, an environmental scan aims to map the most significant patterns and stakeholders in the social environment. ✓

The purpose of the SIA is to assess the impacts on society of certain development projects and programmes before they go ahead. Also, the purpose is to estimate the effects of a proposed

COMMENTS

1	Dear student, thank you for your impressive effort. Have a look at the comments I made in your essay as well as the feedback comments at the bottom of your essay to see how you can improve your essay for the exam. Please note that currently your essay is far to long. You are going to have to see how you can shorten it, without leaving out valuable information. Follow my tips to give you an idea of what is NB. Furthermore, please take note that I had to subtract 3% of your mark due to incorrect referencing. Take note that you actually committed plagiarism by giving secondary references. Please don't let this happen again in essay writing. Nevertheless, you made a stunning effort and I am sure you can do very well in the exam if you follow my advice. Good luck!
2	Neat presentation, thank you
3	<p>IMPORTANT ISSUES TO TAKE NOTE OF BEFORE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS</p> <p>Before you attempt to do an assignment, you must read the appropriate unit in your study guide as well as the prescribed literature in the reader. You will find guidance to this in your Tutorial Letter 101/3/2013 at the particular assignment question. A big part of your mark is based on how well you integrate the information from all your prescribed material into a sensible discussion. In your Tutorial Letter 101/3/2013 you will also notice that you have recommended reading for the assignments. You could get a very good mark if you are able to integrate the insights from these materials into your essay. Take note though, that they are hard to get hold of as the Library has limited copies. Consequently they are not compulsory and you will not be penalized if you don't make use of them. When you start planning your essay, take note of the meaning of the action words in the assignment title. The action words for assignment 2 will be, for instance, "define", "explain", "analyse" and "discuss". You will find the meaning of these words and the others in Tutorial Letter DVAALLD/301/4/2013 (pages 6 to 8).</p> <p>Next, you must have a look at the assessment criteria for each assignment. This will help you identify the most relevant information in the reading material and serve as a guide to structure your essay. You will find these guidelines in Tutorial Letter 101/3/2013 by your appropriate assignment question. Lastly, but definitely not the least, you must acquaint yourself very thoroughly with the contents of Tutorial letter DVAALLD/301/4/2013. It sets out the University standards for essay writing. The prescriptions are extremely important to adhere to. If you don't, you will commit plagiarism inadvertently and lose a lot of marks unnecessarily.</p>
4	page nr?
5	Good
6	Thank you for the extensive reading!
7	Be careful not to repeat yourself. Also take note that you have to cover a lot of ground in this essay. So you don't have to write so much in your first chapter. You have explained SIA good enough so far.

Take note of the following important factors before you send in an assignment:

- Convert your Word document to a PDF file before you send it. To do so, click on "File" and "Save as", and then choose "PDF". The lecturers can mark only PDF files.
- Do **not** convert Acrobat files to read-only documents that the lecturers cannot mark.
- Do **not** submit a scanned assignment.

Make sure that you submit your essays correctly. If you submit an assignment with the wrong assignment number or module code, it will be cancelled and returned to you unmarked.

5 TO SUMMARISE

Remember to follow all these guidelines on the components of an assignment, techniques for making an assignment logical and clear, and techniques for referencing sources and compiling a list of references. If you do so you will have the foundation on which to build an assignment of quality in which you show depth of understanding of the topic, intelligent argument, intelligent engagement with the literature, a clear understanding of concepts, originality and an awareness of the real world.

We trust that you will find these guidelines useful and that they will help you to perform to the best of your abilities. Try to do as many assignments as possible. You will only master writing skills by practising them regularly.

6 IN CONCLUSION: HELP WITH STUDY PROBLEMS

If you experience any problems with your studies, do not hesitate to make use of the following resources:

6.1 Your lecturers

Your lecturers are there to assist you. You are welcome to contact the relevant lecturer if you are in any way unsure about how to interpret a question. Consult the myUnisa site of your modules for the names and telephone numbers of your lecturers.

6.2 Directorate: Counselling and Career Development

You are also welcome to contact Unisa's Directorate: Counselling and Career Development (<http://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/About/Service-departments/Counselling-and-Career-Development> or e-mail counselling@unisa.ac.za) if you have trouble with your studies in general. This directorate will give you good advice on your studies, how to write assignments and how to prepare for and write examinations.

6.3 Tutor programme

Unisa offers tutorial support by means of e-tutors and face-to-face tutors. Online tutorials (e-tutoring) are available to students registered for modules at the first- and second-year levels. Log on to myUnisa to find out if any of the modules that you are registered for fall into this category.

To receive details on your tutor group, look out for an SMS informing you about the group, the name of your e-tutor and instructions on how to log on to myUnisa in order to receive further information on the e-tutoring process. Free online tutorials are conducted by qualified e-tutors appointed by Unisa. All you need to be able to participate in e-tutoring is a computer with an internet connection. If you live close to a Unisa regional centre or a telecentre contracted with Unisa, you are welcome to use the internet facilities there.

Some modules are allocated face-to-face tutors. Tutorials for these modules take place at the Unisa regional centres. The broad aims of the face-to-face tutorial programme include

- giving students the opportunity to develop a better understanding of their study material
- developing a participatory learning environment
- giving Unisa students the opportunity to meet with tutors and fellow students in order to break the loneliness of distance education
- helping students to develop skills such as communication and writing skills to cope better with distance education
- promoting contact between academic departments and students

Regular, but limited, face-to-face tutorials are held at Unisa's learning centres, depending on demand. Tutorials are usually hour-long sessions where a local tutor facilitates the learning process for those students who request this support at the centres. Students who join this programme pay an additional fee.

If you are interested in joining the tutorial support programme, please contact the Unisa learning centre closest to you. You will find the relevant contact details in the brochure titled *Study @ Unisa*.

Best wishes

Department of Development Studies