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GOROD Optimising your study




Steve Campitelli
Academic Skills Unit




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Session Outline



- MGSE academic expectations – what do lecturers want?
- Time & task management
- Planning
- Study skills: writing & research; note-taking
- Referencing
- Tips
- Resources

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Empathy

- Successfully completed a Masters:
 - 12 years removed from my B Ed
 - By distance
 - With a family
 - 3 kids
 - Under 10
 - With a full-time job
 - Transitioned* from pre-Internet to Net-based studies (*that word has also become a verb in the same period!)
 - Learnt to apply in Masters what I didn't at UG
 - With good grades!
 - *So, if I can do it, so can you!*





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MGSE academic expectations

MGSE expects you to:



- adopt a critical and reflective perspective
- appreciate the importance of **theory** and be able to relate it to **practice**, i.e. provide specific examples and evidence to illustrate *theory in practice*
- write in a 'reader friendly' style: clear, relevant, academic, but accessible
- use the language of the discipline: you will get to know it
- take notes in lectures – develop a system
- manage time: i.e. study (incl. assessment) *and* work load



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Demands on you

- UG vs Graduate: go beyond the book, lift it up
- Tension between being work **AND** study / completing assessment
- It's a balancing act

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Time and task management

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Time and task management

Strategies
Work with the **time you have**:


- You don't necessarily need to 'create more time' or work later into the night: work *smarter* not harder
- Must modify *your* routine, take control of your day
- Know *what* it is you **need** to do
- Have targets (preferably quantifiable), e.g.
 - I'm going to write 250 words today / finish 3 paragraphs / read 3 articles / create my essay plan BETTER THAN*
 - I'm going to do my best today!*
- Think about how much you can *realistically* get done in the time you have set aside: be **realistic** because when you can then over-achieve as a bonus
- Reward yourself (chocolate as a study reward is calorie-free) 

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Time and task management

- Plan ahead of the schedule:** get organised:
 - Get your assessment schedule(s) and note when things are due
 - Write it down** - Use something tangible, i.e. a visual time management planning device to help you:
 - Macro level:** Planner, (wall) calendar
 - Micro level:** Post-it notes; 'To do' list on your computer or workstation
 - Daily reminders:** Ipad; diary
- Follow up and cross out when done: need a way to monitor long term things (e.g. email calendar with 'reminder' settings)

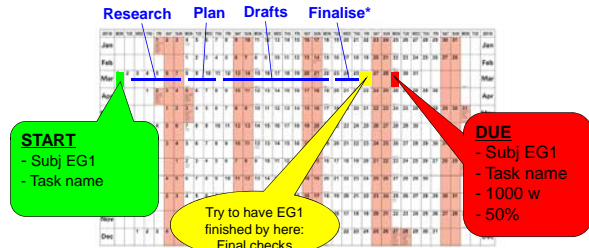


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Planner – get one

- Prioritise assignments by date and % value
- Use a **colour highlight** system to prioritise



START
- Subj EG1
- Task name

DUE
- Subj EG1
- Task name
- 1000 w
- 50%

Try to have EG1 finished by here:
Final checks

* Always check final drafts on hard copy


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Time and task management

Strategies

- Set times aside for study requirements: evenings / weekends, set time limits and **be strong about keeping to this**
 - Daily 'bits' E.g. after kids are in bed (if you have kids), 9.30-10.30 OR
 - Bigger chunks E.g. Saturday afternoons 1-5pm.
- Create optimal conditions by which you can work effectively: time / place / environment
- If you need quiet areas – create quiet conditions; if you need to go somewhere else then go
 - TIP:** Keep a clean work area (disorganisation is an invitation to disaster)
 - TIP:** Don't hoard - Back-up e-files; file what you need; throw the rest




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Time and task management

- Learn to say 'no': watch what you put yourself in for (at uni, home and work) and **don't get sidelined**
- Organise an e-filing system for your assignments, e.g. file by subject
- Prioritise & be ruthless about it:**
 - Know how to differentiate between 'urgent', 'important' & 'want to do it'
 - non-negotiables** (have to do) and **negotiables** (can be done later or not at all)
 - Recognise your limitations

Just Say No




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Staying 'sharp'

Woodsmen's axe metaphor:

- Keeps chopping despite his axe getting more and more blunt and getting increasingly tired because he has not got the time to stop
- "Can't stop too busy"
- Pause to 'sharpen your axe'



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Postgraduate work *can* be isolating.
Plan to avoid feeling disconnected!


Develop a supportive network:

- Peers
- Tutor or supervisor's connections
- MGSE seminars and activities
- Online resources - more later
- Internet based networks (i.e. discussion lists)

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Study skills – writing / researching




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What is academic writing?

What do academics want and expect from you?



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Writing for an academic audience

- Getting the 'H1'; what are 'they' looking for?
 - Use the features of genre appropriately
 - Task responsiveness: **answer the question**
 - A position – you have a clear position stated early in the piece
 - Present theory (research) and respond to it
 - Critical element often necessary

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Writing for an academic audience


- Referenced external information: check faculty recommendation, e.g. Education prefers APA; Arts generally MLA
- Synthesised with 'your voice'
- Conciseness - +/- 10% of the word count
- Clear and logical argument
- **In depth**: academics want you to go beyond the summary; communicate information in depth – biggest single difference to secondary (VCE) writing

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Academic expectations: Critical thinking

What is it? What do you understand by the term 'critical thinking'?



First, what it isn't:

- Critical thinking **isn't** just a simple restatement or description of material
- 'Critical' in this sense does **not** = negative

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Critical thinking requires you to:

1. **Ask** questions: not accept information at face value
2. **Consider** implications & different perspectives
3. **Evaluate** strengths & weaknesses
4. **Analyse** information and interpret it (i.e. not merely *report* it)
5. **Categorise** information into groups and sub-groups
6. **Compare and contrast** – similarities and differences
7. **Synthesise** bring together varied perspectives; make links

BUT: in this process, retain **your voice**; your perspective

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Develop an *argument* in your writing

Argument :

- in academic discourse is **not** necessarily disagreement
- involves the process of establishing a **claim** or a '**thesis**' – the central position of a paper stated early
- The rest of the paper is then all related to this
- **Must** be supported or proved with the use of logical reasoning, external information, examples and research, as well as **your voice**

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Academic writing is ...

- **Formal:**
 - ✗ *it's* vs ✓ *It is*
 - ✗ *like* vs ✓ *such as*
 - ✗ *E.g.* vs ✓ *for example*
- **Objective / Neutral:**
 - ✗ *I will argue that ...* vs ✓ *This paper will show that ...*
- **Signposted:**
 - *Firstly, next, furthermore, additionally*

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Academic writing is genre specific

- Essays
- Reports
- Lab reports
- Critical reviews
- Literature reviews
- Case studies
- Reflective writing
- Tutorial presentations
- Exams: essays; short answer, extended response

Breadth subjects may require you to write in a number of these genres.

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Work to a process

1. Determine the genre
2. Analyse the task
3. Research
4. Plan / organise ideas
5. Draft / Finalise
6. Submit on time

- Can see ASU anytime, esp. pre point 6

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Note-taking: Take clear and clean notes

- Use a system **that works for you!**
- Be selective in what you note
- Make notes sequential / chronological
- Label your notes:
 - date, subject, topic, lecturer
- **Use colour if it helps**

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Charting

Richard Berman, "How hard is it to stop worrying and study the media?"
The Pulse
10/17/2009

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Research

- For reading:
 - have key words in mind and ask questions
 - get to know the structure of academic texts
- Use the most up to date and credible sources
- Libguides on Mel U library site
- When researching annotate notes with:
 - colour
 - symbols
 - comments
- Record source details
- Set yourself limits in your research

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Different types of printed sources

- Popular (★ use with caution, a **big** 'but'):
 - Commercial books and magazines, newspapers
 - Only use for a specific purpose (media)
 - Accessible, **but** intended for the general public, **not** an academic audience
- Specialised periodicals (★★ OK with a 'but'):
 - E.g. *Time*, *Bulletin*, *Financial Review*
 - Topical, but rarely push issues further than the superficial level

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Different types of printed sources

- Internet (★★★ OK with a 'but' ...):
 - Continually expanding range of material, **but** wide variation in useability: make sure it's academic
 - Types of sources include: scholarly journals, whole books, news, specialised periodicals or magazines, advertising, exploitative material, blogs (personal pages) and gossip
- Scholarly / Academic (★★★★ preferred):
 - Journals, textbooks, edited collections, scholarly books
 - Written to present and disseminate academic research
 - Peer reviewed – written for discourse community

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Academic honesty: Plagiarism

- Using someone else's **ideas, words, research or analysis without acknowledging the source**
- Can be intentional or unintentional – still an academic issue regardless
- 'Copy / paste' culture

http://answersto.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/plagiarism-0.jpg

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Forms of plagiarism

- Using material from a source with no acknowledgment
- Quoting directly from a source without indicating this by "quotation marks"
- Paraphrasing, but only changing a few words; organisation and examples remain unchanged
- Copy / pasting sections of the work of others into a new whole
- Presenting an assignment as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with others – this includes handing in others' work as yours

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How to avoid it ...
Simple ...

**Reference
your
sources
ALL of them!**

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Referencing: APA

- 2 elements:
 - In-text** citation and
 - Reference List** at the end of the paper (separate page)
- In-text:**
 - An **in-text (author-date)** system that uses brackets to cite the source of the information
 - In-text citation: Give author's **last name**, **publication year**, and **relevant page number/s** (when direct quoting) only

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Referencing: APA in-text citations

- Examples:
 - This is evident from early childhood (Nguyen, 1990).
Paraphrase, author in brackets + year
 - Berk (2009) asserts that this is the most necessary factor.
Paraphrase, author in sentence, year in brackets
 - Jones and Wills (2004) insist that "the policy is clear and unmistakable in intent" (p4).
Direct quote, authors in sentence, year in brackets (close to authors), page # can go at the end of quote
 - There is clear intent in regard to the policy (Jones & Wills, 2004).
Paraphrase of same info, authors in brackets + year
- Secondary citation
 - Roberts (2001, as cited in Green, 2008) argues that for ...
You found the Roberts citation in Green.

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APA: Reference List

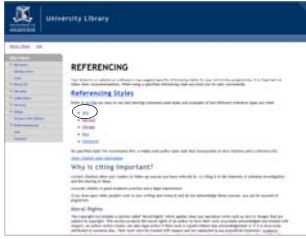
- A reference list contains details of **all** references **cited** in your text (a **Bibliography** is a list of works you have read, whether you have used them or not)
- End of the assignment, separate page
- Your reference list will:
 - contain details of **all** the references cited
 - be in **alphabetical order** - (by surname + initials)
 - be 1.5 line spaced
 - have the name of the *book title or journal name in italics*
 - include the city of publication and the publisher
 - Use a 'hanging indent' to make alphabetical listing more obvious

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APA referencing information

- Mel U Library website:
<http://www.lib.unimelb.edu.au/recite/>
- Murdoch University:
<http://libguides.murdoch.edu.au/APA>
- University of Southern Queensland:
<http://www.usq.edu.au/library/help/referencing/ap a.htm>



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Use available resources

re:Cite university's citation guide

Academic Skills Unit

Or Mel U's website:
<http://academichonesty.unimelb.edu.au/>



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Tips for students

- Use memory aids, such as **mnemonics**, to deal with recurring problems / questions:
 - Verb or noun?? RAVEN:**
 - Remember Affect Verb Effect Noun
 - Can it start a sentence? FANBOYS:**
 - For And Nor But Or Yet So
 - use to join, but generally **not** start sentences

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Be aware of the impact of sentence length

Guide only

Less than 8 words in the sentence (1 line in a Word doc)	Very short sentence	OK, but don't use too many of these; writing can appear short and clippy, hard to read.
8-15 words (1 - 1.5 lines)	Short	✓ OK combined with 15-25.
15-25 words (2 - 3 lines)	Average number per sentence.	✓✓ This length will form the majority of your sentences.
25-35 words (3 - 4 lines)	OK, but becoming long.	✓ Can be effective if the point is worth making in a single sentence; make sure you have control over the idea(s) though and use appropriate connecting / linking words.
35-45 words (4 - 5 lines)	Long	Consider breaking up the idea(s) into two or more shorter sentences.
More than 45 words (+ 5 lines in a Word doc)	Too long	* Avoid this; the point gets lost, control over the language is lessened and chances for errors in form and logic increase.

The length of your sentences, and the language you use, will determine how **readable**, your writing is; i.e. how easily it can be understood: less is more.

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Be aware of 'classic' problems

"Classic confusables"

- Affect / Effect**
 - Affect:** verb to influence smthg / **effect:** noun meaning 'result'
- Imply / Infer**
 - Imply:** suggest smthg (speaker) / **infer:** deduce or think smthg (listener)
- Principle / principal**
 - Principle:** belief or truth / **principal:** school head or most important (adj)
- Inquiry / enquiry**
 - Inquiry:** investigation / **enquiry:** a question
- Tack / tact**
 - Tack:** to attach; direction (of a ship i.e. Change tack) / **tact:** diplomacy

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SOSes

- Secrets Of Success**
 - Maintain Study task-time discipline
 - Enjoy it and learn
 - Use the services available
 - Commit to the program and make decisions
 - Develop a study method that works for you – don't just go at it!

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Resources

- Andy Gillet website for HE students
<http://www.uefap.com/>
- Library:
<http://www.library.unimelb.edu.au/>
- ASU website:
<http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/asu/>
- Courseworks:
<http://www.courseworks.unimelb.edu.au/>
- Postgraduate essentials:
<http://www.gradresearch.unimelb.edu.au/programs/pge/>

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Education Student Centre

- Academic Skills Adviser: Steve Campitelli
cas@unimelb.edu.au
- Individual tutorials (itutes)**
 - Book at **MGSE Student Centre** in person at 234 Queensberry St
 - or 8344 8285
 - 4 X 50 min sessions per semester
 - Book up to 2 weeks in advance
 - Bring the assignment brief and the assignment itself
 - Cancel 24 hours before

Student Centre

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