Presentation Guidelines for Assessment Items in School of Information Studies

The following guidelines provide a scaffold to support and assist you in the completion of assessment items.

When preparing an assessment item your primary goal is to respond appropriately and effectively to the assessment task. Good presentation assists you by placing your work in a form which supports your efforts to clearly communicate your response to the assessment task.

These guidelines are based upon advice provided at CSU’s Learning Skills website at http://student.csu.edu.au/study/learning-support/academic-writing which is more extensive then the information given here. In particular, see the series of downloadable Captivate presentations that are located at http://student.csu.edu.au/study/learning-support/workshops

Structure of assessment items

Assessment items should be word processed.

Use 1.5 or double spacing. Whichever spacing you use, be consistent in its use throughout an assessment item.

Use 2.5 cm margins.

Use 12pt. Times New Roman font is preferred.

Use a footer on each page (except the title page) giving your name, student number and a page number.

You can use headings within your assessment item to clearly and appropriately indicate sections within it. Where headings are used they should structure the content and provide a logical flow that guides the reader. If you were to remove the headings your work should still make clear sense to the reader.

Point form should only be used with caution. It is generally better to express yourself in logically constructed sentences and paragraphs. You will therefore need to use bulleted points with care, and only where it makes good writing sense to do so. In these instances it is best to use full sentences at each bullet point.

In the body of your assessment task use italics for the titles of complete works such as books, journals and films. Use quotation marks for works not published separately, such as articles in journals and book chapters.

It is generally accepted that you should not use first person in academic writing. However, there can be situations where you are asked to provide your personal reflection. Use third person in your writing except where it is clearly appropriate to use first person.
It is important to contextualise your work. You understand the situation you are writing about but your reader may be unfamiliar with it. Ensure you provide the information needed so that the reader appreciates the context within which you are writing.

**Provide a title page**

You should provide a title page for your assessment item. This title page is created by you. It is additional to the (pink) title page provided by EASTS if your assessment item is printed by them for marking purposes.

Your title page should contain your name and student number; the subject code and name; the assessment item number and title; and a word count (excluding your reference list and any appendices).

**Work to word limits and revise your work**

The word limit includes all words within the body of the assessment item including in-text references, but not including works within illustrations, tables and charts. Reference lists and appendices are not included in the word count.

Work to the word limit. However, being over or under the word limit by up to 10% is quite acceptable.

Writing is never an easy task; it is an activity where we try to craft a text that says what we want it to say and sends a meaningful message to the reader. Writing therefore involves rewriting and may even require discarding. Often when we write the first draft of an assessment item we often include words or sections that are not needed. When such aspects are revised the assessment item is more focused, much tighter, and clearer. The revision of writing can be critical to presenting your final version within the word limit.

The following generalisation may assist you in your writing. In the first draft we write for ourselves, as we try to make sense of the whole topic and say something sensible. The second (and subsequent) draft is where we write for the reader, and try to make sure we communicate to that person the message we intend.

It is important that you answer the set question, keep to the topic and include all relevant issues. It is wise to regularly refer to the assessment task and the marking criteria as you write. The marker will systematically use these in assessing your work.

**Proof reading and submission of assessment tasks**

Make sure that you proof read the final document prior to submission for technical aspects such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, missing words, and acknowledgment of sources. Such errors distract the reader, make it more difficult for them to follow and appropriately assess your work, and can reduce the quality of your work.

Don’t rely solely on your spelling and grammar checker. It can miss things. A good idea is to also have someone else proof read your work for you. Others can pick up mistakes that you may have overlooked.

Try to submit only one final electronic version of your assessment item to EASTS. It can be dangerous to submit an assessment item early and then continue to revise and submit new versions. If you believe you have submitted the incorrect version of your assessment item to EASTS, email your subject coordinator and inform them that you have submitted a new version. The last thing
you need is for the wrong version to be marked.

Submit an assignment to EASTS as a single file, not a series of separate files. If necessary, embed charts, tables and diagrams into the document. If there is a specific problem in submitting a single file, e.g. if you are asked to submit a written document and a PowerPoint presentation, then ask your subject coordinator for guidance.

It is essential that you retain a digital copy of the final version of your assessment item so that it is available if necessary or requested.

**Referencing**

In writing your assessment item you need to show that you have consulted a reasonable range of relevant sources such as authoritative online sources, books, and print journal articles. You must give proper acknowledgment for any ideas, quotes and background information that you get from these sources and use correct referencing when doing so. Some students initially feel frustrated and constrained in their writing efforts because of the need to include references. However, correct referencing is an important part of academic writing and plays a critical role in helping you avoid committing plagiarism.

Sources should be identified within the text (in-text references) as well as in the list of references.

Generally avoid direct quotations except short ones used for a particular effect. It is better to express the idea in your own words, demonstrating your understanding of the concepts involves.

References used in your assessment items should follow the APA referencing style. A number of referencing related resources are available for you at Referencing at CSU. These resources include the APA Referencing Summary — the revised CSU guide to referencing, based on the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.).

Other APA guides recommended are:

- For the times when you need a more comprehensive set of reference examples, download Chapter 7, Reference examples, from the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. This electronic version is available in the CSU Library Electronic Reserve collection.
- Search the library catalogue for APA Style Guide to Electronic Resources
- Perrin's Pocket Guide to APA Style (4th ed.). This publication is available from the Co-op Bookshop.
- APA Style.org website resources

Poor presentation of the reference list may be penalised. Download this pdf file for an example of a references list, accompanied by some brief explanations.

**When should you include an appendix?**

An appendix is not a means of circumventing the word limit by using it for material that belongs in the body of your assignment. You should only include an appendix when it is clearly additional material that is of relevance and value. Appendices should be clearly and appropriately referred to from the body of your text.
Appendices are not generally needed in your assessment items, unless you are asked to provide evidence or additional documentation or artefacts to support your work. Examples of items you might have in an appendix include a summary of the raw data or details of the method behind the research; workings which accompany statistical findings; charts or tables that are not essential to but support the research; the questionnaire used in the research; screenshots or images of examples of best practice; an example of a policy document; and so on.

The appendix begins on a separate page and is placed after the reference list. Your assessment item may have more than one appendix; usually each distinct item has its own appendix and each will begin on a separate page. If your paper only has one appendix, label it Appendix, followed by the title of the appendix on a new line, centred, with all major words capitalised. If there is more than one appendix, label them Appendix A, Appendix B, in the order that each item appears in the paper. In the main text, you should refer to appendices by their labels, e.g. see Appendix B.

When preparing your assessment item, evaluate the relevance of the information you may want to include in appendices. If it is central to the work, incorporate it as a paragraph or section. If it is too unrelated, consider omitting it altogether. Consider your audience by asking: Will it add to their experience and understanding of the main text? Will it serve as a useful reference while reading the assessment item?