

GUIDE FOR ASSIGNMENTS

TACKLING ASSIGNMENTS



STEP 1. MYNGI



STEP 2. UNDERSTAND
THE ASSIGNMENT



STEP 3. GET
INFORMATION



STEP 4. DRAFT YOUR
ASSIGNMENT



STEP 5. PROOFREAD



STEP 6. REFERENCING AND
REFERENCE LIST



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1 Introduction

There are many ways to show that you are competent and have mastered the outcomes of your qualification. Sometimes you are required to do this under examination conditions as that tests a particular set of skills. At other times you are required to research a topic by reading what others have written and organise that information to answer a question you have been assigned. These are called assignments, and they can be in many forms from an essay to a project or presentation.

In terms of our Assessment Policy and assignment is *an assessment done independently that should not take a student more than ten hours to complete and that includes a theoretical component although it can also have an application of the theory. Mark allocation normally is 100 marks* (NGI004 Assessment Policy Sept 2022).

The purpose of assignments is to ensure that you have mastered what you need to master to move on to other work AND to be able to use this knowledge in the world of work, so they are for you and for us to assess your progress and evaluate your understanding of the module content.

There is no need to be overwhelmed if you follow a systematic path of tackling assignments by breaking them down and tackling each step and phase in a logical sequence.

2 Background information to assist you.

The following are available on the myNGI e-library and will give you the skills to tackle the steps correctly.

1. **Academic Integrity and ethical behaviour** – *this will guide you through the rules and conventions related to original work, plagiarism and how to ensure you meet academic standards when presenting your work.*
2. **EDS (EBSCOhost) training** – *this shows you how to use the library resources and broader resources to find quickly and efficiently what you need.*
3. **Information literacy** – *this provides direction on how to go about making sense of information you find.*
4. **Referencing** – *this teaches you how to reference to show you have mastered all the required skills.*

3 The journey to successful assignment completion

3.1 Sourcing the requirements on myNGI

Assignments can be found on the module page on myNGI – remember that they must all be completed to pass the module.

At the start of the module have a look at what assignments and tests and exams are built into the module. Assignments can take on different forms and can include essays, research papers, presentations, group projects, and reports. By understanding everything you need to do you can plan your time properly.

Refer to the **myNGI user guide** for detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to access your assignments.

3.2 Understand the assignment.

The assignment documentation will tell you:

- The purpose of the assignment
- The connection to your module
- The required format and other technical information
- How the assignment will be assessed
- Where to start (normally your textbook or other prescribed material)

Your lecturer should discuss these with you in class – if they do not, please ask.

Use the skills that you learned at school to “unpack” the requirements – highlight the key words and important concepts and how the assignment wants you to tackle those.

Do not start looking at literature until you are sure you know what the key words and concepts are. This will make a big difference to how successful your search of literature (information) will be.

It is suggested that you work with a friend (or group at this stage) – a short discussion about what the assignment requires from you will help you be sure you are on the right path.

3.3 Information gathering.

Remember that the purpose is for you to show what you have learned and understood and how you can gather and present required information.

Before you begin your reading decide how you are going to:

- Make notes and reference them.
- Create reference lists that contain all required information.
- Find the same source later if you want a quote from it.

There are tools that are online that can help you but for most undergraduate assignments it is enough to keep these records in a document. Be sure though to keep notes and references of everything you read – it saves time and ensures you avoid plagiarism.

Reading and gathering information is your starting point.

The Bridge (our information centres/ libraries) is the first place to start:

- Talk to an information specialist (librarian) about your topic and where to find good resources.
- You can access our resources such as the e-books and journals by accessing EBSCOhost anywhere – the advantage of doing it the first few times in The Bridge is that you can get help when you need it.
- Start with what you were given: Your prescribed textbook, manual, or learner guide. Your module guide also provides you with recommended reading that can be used for assignments. You can then do topic searches using the discovery services in the library (if you do not know what these are go and ask – you will be amazed).

Take notes while reading the information you have gathered.

While you are reading keep your topic in mind and as you read organise your notes against the analysis of the topic you did in the first step – don't spend a great deal of time on material that does not help you answer the question.

Organise your notes as you read – save yourself stress later.

3.4 Framework of your assignment.

Follow the required format – most of the following are normally required and this is a good standard format if you were not given one.

Organise your notes against the framework before you start to write.

3.4.1 Reference list.

Type up a full and complete reference list and include in it the way you will cite (use) that reference in your text – you can delete that part later, but it is much easier to cut and paste a

standard reference and just add page numbers. Or use something like Mendeley. The reference list should be done first - not last. You can always add to it.

3.4.2 Title or cover page.

- Title/Topic of the assignment
- Programme
- Module code
- Name and Surname
- Student number
- Date of submission
- Declaration that the assignment is your original work – this must be included.

3.4.3 Table of contents.

If you are typing up your assignment and use the autonumbering from MSWord, you can generate a table of contents that is complete and accurate when you are done – it is worth spending time working out how to do this.

3.4.4 Introduction.

The introduction gives a summary of what the assignment is about based on the information provided to you. Always refer to the topic of the assignment. The introduction provides the reader with an understanding of what the assignment is about and how you will address it. All the important words and concepts and instructions from your assignment topic must be in your introduction.

Master tip: An assignment is a sandwich – the introduction tells the reader what you will do, the body includes evidence that you did what you said you would and how you did it, the conclusion summarise what you intended to do, what you did and what all of that means.

Example: *“In this assignment I will briefly explain three major theories of motivation which can be used by managers to ensure that staff are productive. I will then discuss for each one their strengths and limits when being used to manage staff in a retail environment. Based on my discussion of the strengths and limits I will then describe which one of the theories I consider to be most useful for managing retail environments in South Africa and I will give my reasons for this choice.”*

3.4.5 Body

The body of your assignment is where you carry out the promises you made in the introduction. Each part of it could have a subheading if the assignment is long enough and this makes it much easier to read.

For the example above your headings may be:

1. *Definition of motivation and why it is important for management.*
2. *Description of what the particular issues are for management in retail environments.*
3. *Summary of Theory 1*
4. *Strengths and weaknesses of Theory 1 for retail management*
5. *Summary of Theory 2*
6. *Strengths and weaknesses of Theory 2 for retail management*
7. *Summary of Theory 3*
8. *Strengths and weaknesses of Theory 3 for retail management*
9. *Discussion of why Theory 1 /2 /3 is the best one for retail management*

The body of your assignment is where you present your argument and support it with information and facts. These must include sources and must be in-text-referenced.

Master tip: as you know there are two types of reference – the list at the end which is the full detail of each source you used and then the specific references in your text (called in-text or in-line references). Your reference list tells the reader which journal article to go to, your in-text reference takes them to the chapter and page as proof of what was said.

3.4.6 Conclusion.

The conclusion is the last paragraph of the assignment and summarises your conclusion based on what you had to argue in the assignment. It also serves as a check if you have done what you have stated in the introduction.

3.4.7 Reference list finalisation. (Also known as a bibliography).

Use the training guide on *Referencing* to help you. This is available on myNGI in the e-library.

Make sure that every reference you have used is on the list and ensure that every reference on the list has been used in at least one in-text reference. Add references if you missed some at the beginning.

3.4.8 Addendum

If you need to add information (such as a copy of a questionnaire) you do so in an addendum which must be numbered and included in your table of contents.

4 Some technical help

4.1 Basics of what works well.

- Use an easily readable font and font size.
- A good option is Arial font with font size 11.
- Select your line spacing on 1,5
- Include the required sections (Introduction, body and conclusion)
- Use auto numbering for your headings and subheadings.
- Include page numbering.
- Be sure to do a spelling and grammar check before you hand in.

4.2 Writing your assignment format in MS Word.

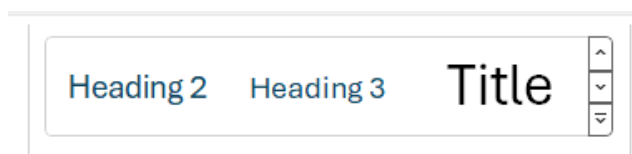
As part of your MS Office licence, you have access to MS Word.

MS Word provides you with the option either to create a new blank document or choose from various templates.

Using the heading style tools in MS Word helps you to organise your document with main headings, subheadings and sub-subheadings. It is easy to navigate through your assignment and ensures consistency throughout your assignment.

Using heading styles helps you to easily create the table of contents once you are done typing your assignment.

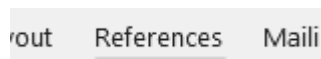
Heading styles – MS Word provides heading styles on the 'HOME' tab (for example Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.)



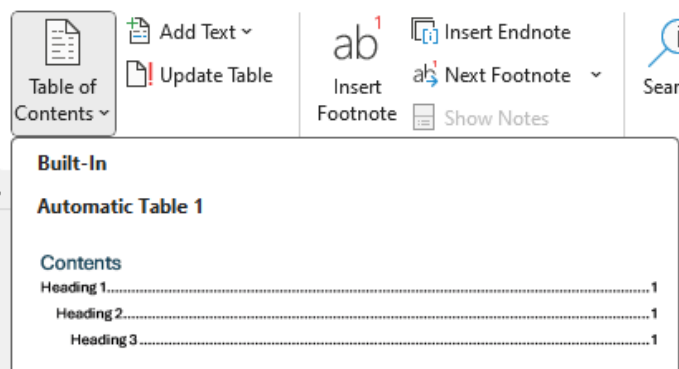
Select the appropriate heading style (main heading, sub-heading or sub-subheading) for the sections of your assignment that you want to include in your table of contents. Number each heading and subheading.

Insert the table of contents – After your cover page, insert the table of contents.

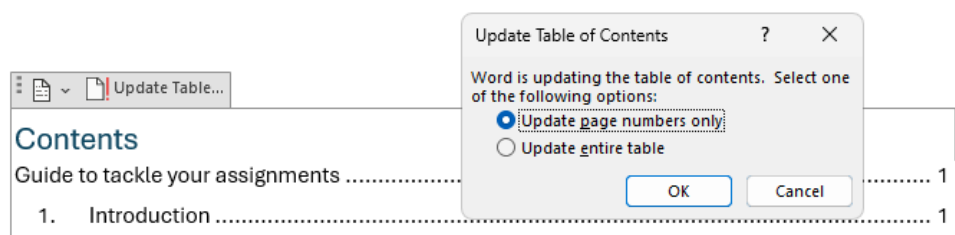
Click on the 'Reference' tab in the Word toolbar.



Choose one of the automatic table of contents in the dropdown menu



Update the table of contents – after inserting the table of contents and you have made changes to your assignment; you need to update the table of contents to reflect the changes.



4.3 Plagiarism checker

We have an institutional plagiarism checker – it helps you identify where you have not referenced sufficiently, and it also shows places where you could have plagiarised. If you are required to submit a plagiarism report with your assignment it will not be marked if you have not done so.

4.4 Proofread

Once you have drafted your assignment in the desired format, proofread your assignment and edit it as needed. Make sure you have achieved the outcome of the assignment or if you need to add information, facts, and evidence to achieve the outcome.

Have you answered or argued the topic and provided enough information with suitable evidence to support your argument.

Then run it through the spelling and grammar checker but check that these are set to UK English.

Use the spelling and grammar checker in MS Word to improve your writing.

4.5 Referencing and reference list

Have a good understanding of plagiarism and referencing. This includes in-text referencing and a list of the references you have used.

The training on *Referencing* and *Academic Integrity and Ethical Behaviour* will ensure that you are well equipped with this.

5 Declaration

In every assignment you do, please ensure that you include as an addendum the following declaration. A copy of the declaration is available on the assessment page of each module.

DECLARATION

I hereby confirm that the following work is my own. I have referenced direct quotes and ideas that are not my own accordingly with a full bibliography. I have not provided my work to another student nor received others.

I acknowledge that failure to do so can result in disciplinary action.

Signature: _____


6 Submitting your assignment

Some assignments might require you to hand them in to your lecturer but normally assignments are submitted through myNGL.

Refer to the **myNGL user guide** for detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to submit your assignments.

Always keep a copy and keep proof for yourself of the date and time that you submitted.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

Nº	ACTIVITIES	
1	Cover page	
2	Table of Contents	
3	Headings (numbered)	
4	Introduction	
5	Body	
6	Conclusion	
7	In text referencing	
8	Reference list	
9	Declaration	
10	Page numbers	
11	Arial font	
12	1.5 line spacing	
13	11pt font size	
14	Plagiarism report	
15	Upload on myNGI	