



**Department of
Management**

Writing Style Guide

**A Guide to Writing, Referencing,
Report Writing and Continuous
Assessment Assignments**

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1. Introduction

Anytime you write a piece of work (such as an essay, report, etc.) you should provide references to the resources you used. This is a simple statement of the details behind the information you are using in the piece of work.

Within the text, you make a brief reference to the source of the information. This is called a *citation*.

At the end of the text, you provide a little more information about the source. This is called *referencing*.

This writing style guide aims to inform students of the ITT Dublin Department of Management about the expected conventions for authorship and the appropriate use and acknowledgement of all forms of intellectual material. In other words, it will outline how to find information, use this information within a piece of work correctly and avoid plagiarism.

The style guide will also provide guidelines for report writing and formatting, as well as assist students in their understanding of assignments through the clarification of terms/task descriptors. Finally, it will provide guidelines for students on how assignments are assessed and to help students achieve the best grade possible in assignments.

All students are required to read this Style Guide and make themselves familiar with its contents.

It is also recommended that you consult the ITT Dublin Library online tutorials on research information, citing and referencing, and how to avoid plagiarism.

Please note that this is a guide only. Lecturers may prefer a different style of formatting and referencing. The hallmark of a good style in both formatting and referencing is consistency.

If you are ever in doubt, just ask your lecturer.

2. Plagiarism

2.1 Plagiarism Explained

Academic work demands that you read widely and consider the work of other writers and researchers when you are preparing your essays and other assignments. Using this work without acknowledgement is to steal the ideas of other people and is called plagiarism.

It's not acceptable that you pass off other peoples' work as your own. Here we will show you how and why it is unacceptable.

The Institute of Technology Tallaght upholds the principle of academic integrity which is achieved through appropriate referencing and citation practice for all academic work. The purpose of this policy is to allow for a consistent approach to the treatment of plagiarism in the Institute of Technology Tallaght and to promote a culture of academic honesty and best practice. Globally, plagiarism is recognised as an academic offence and as such has serious consequences. Plagiarism is the reproduction, in all or part, of work prepared without giving recognition to the original source.

Plagiarism can include the following:

- Failure to cite authors or sources.
- Representing work authored by a third party (including other students, family, friends and work purchased through internet services).
- Presenting large amounts of copied work from any source or medium without reference.
- Taking a passage of text, or an idea, and summarising it without acknowledging the original source.
- Self plagiarism which is presenting a piece of one's own work without reference to the original material.
- Passing off collaborative work as your own.

Note: These forms of plagiarism apply to all forms of media (print and electronic).

While we understand plagiarism can be unintentional, all instances of plagiarism will be subject to the policy.

2.2 ITT Dublin's Approach to Plagiarism

Your attention is drawn to the Institute's strict rules on plagiarism and assessment conduct. These are available in the Institute's Regulation Handbook (ITT Dublin) and on the website at www.ittdublin.ie.

Plagiarism is not acceptable and is treated very seriously at ITT Dublin.

2.3 Plagiarism Detection Software

A Continuous Assessment (CA) - in the form of essay, project, report or any other written format - submitted to a lecturer may be scanned using *Turnitin* software. *Turnitin* searches millions of online sources (reports, journals, newspapers, books, previously submitted essays from academic institutions the world over, etc.) to highlight the percentage probability that plagiarism has occurred in any particular submitted CA. Copy and pasted information from the Internet is particularly highlighted. On the other hand, properly referenced quotes may be excluded from the search (depending on the settings the individual lecturer has selected in *Turnitin*). A CA that is scanned using *Turnitin* is then stored online so that future searches include the CA as a reference.

Please note that by submitting your CA you are giving your permission for your CA to be held online in the database of the *Turnitin* software for future searches. **If there is confidential or sensitive information (such as an individual's name or organisation name), you should discuss this with your lecturer in advance of submitting the assignment in order to maintain the confidentiality of the information submitted.**

3. How to Cite and Reference Sources

3.1 What Does Citing and Referencing Mean?

It is very important that you acknowledge ideas and opinions as belonging to a particular author, as they are considered to be that author's intellectual property. You should cite and reference your sources as accurately as possible. By doing this you are enabling readers to locate the source material that you have used. Further, it is good research practice to do so.

3.2 The Benefits of Citing and Referencing

Firstly, one cites and references work in order to avoid the charge of plagiarism. As mentioned above, plagiarism is a serious academic offence and is treated very seriously in ITT Dublin. Citing and referencing also makes it clear that:

- You have evidence for the points you make from other sources.
- You have not taken the opinions and claimed them as your own either intentionally or unintentionally.
- Finding your source is easier. Since published items are all classified using standard pieces of information - author, year of publication, etc. - using this method ensures that another reader will be able to understand and locate the sources using your references.

3.3 Citing Within a Text

This involves acknowledging within the text the contribution of an author(s) or organisation as a source of a particular statement, view, argument or decision. You 'cite' the author and the year of publication for any source you use and the page number if appropriate. You include the page number when you are using a particular section of the source or a direct quotation. You do this at the point where you use the source within the text of your essay (in-text citation). Section 3.6 outlines the conventions to be followed when referencing throughout the text.

3.4 Referencing at the End of a Text

By providing a reference section at the end of your essay/report/project you ensure that the sources cited within the text can be fully identified. Although the convention used among some authors is to provide this information in footnotes, the references will normally appear at the end of your essay/report/project. This is the case with the Harvard convention which is outlined in the next section. The same format, including punctuation and abbreviation, should be followed every time you write a reference. All the references should be listed in alphabetical order of author's surname, under the heading 'References'. This allows your reader to trace your sources for interest or further examination and also credits the original author(s). Section 3.7 outlines the conventions to be used for the reference section.

3.5 Systems of Referencing: The Harvard Method

There are different systems of referencing and different disciplines usually have a preferred format or style of referencing their publications. Some of the most widely used systems are the American Psychological Association (APA) system and the Harvard System. The Harvard author-date system of referencing is the most widely used method in business and the social sciences (Anderson and Poole 1998: 130). However, even within this method there are often minor differences, usually in punctuation.

Whatever system of referencing is used, the important issue is to be consistent and to include all of the critical information (author, year of publication, title, publisher's name, place of publication etc.) when referencing. The Harvard method, since that it is the system most widely used in the social sciences, is the form outlined below.

3.6 Referencing Throughout the Text

When referencing, it is important to be consistent. Please see the examples below. (Note that the boxes surrounding the examples are for illustrative purposes only and would not appear in your report/essay).

Direct quotes must appear in inverted commas, and a citation to the author must be made.

In this particular company, one employee noted that: “the sole management focus was on profits not people” (Simpson 1990: 45).

Indirect quotes/paraphrasing (see below) do not need inverted commas, but do require a citation referring to the original author.

Simpson (1990: 45) reported that the management focused solely on profits rather than people.

The figures after the name indicate the year (1990) and the page number (45). If the quote runs to more than one page, use the following format:

Simpson (1990: 45-46) notes that ...

Quotes of less than one line of text should be included in the normal flow and font size of text.

O’Farrell (1986: 144) describes entrepreneurship as an “elusive concept” and one that requires further study.

Quotes of more than one line should be indented by one tab space, and the text size should be reduced to font size 10. Such quotes are always single-line spaced (1.0). Inverted commas ARE still required.

“The potential reward for devising a successful method of screening for entrepreneurship is so great that continual improvement is likely even if complete success cannot ever be attained.”

(Casson 1982: 212)

Italics should only be used to indicate where *emphasis* has been placed.

Others have noted that the move towards a balance sheet valuation model is “an attempt to adopt an *economist’s* definition of income” (Brennan and Pierce 1996: 25 emphasis added).

Page numbers may be excluded when referring to an entire published work.

Other researchers, including Simpson (1990), have conducted research on the topic of managerial focus.

Page numbers are not required when referencing material from on-line sources.

Many firms had failed to anticipate the impact of technology on trading practices (Grossman 2005).

Paraphrasing may also be considered plagiarism

Paraphrasing is when you write the thoughts and ideas of someone else in your own words. You still need to cite and reference the source when paraphrasing.

For example, the following passage taken from *The Welcome Business* by Glenn Mehta:

Original extract:

“The origins of tourism lay in the necessity of the people of the ancient world to travel, whether for business or leisure as well as military reasons.”

Poor paraphrase:

The beginning of tourism was a result of the need for ancient peoples to travel for trade, holiday and military purposes.

This is inadequate as the words have just been changed by words with the same meaning.

Correct paraphrasing:

According to Mehta (2007: 48), the beginning of tourism was a result of the need for ancient peoples to travel for trade, holiday and military purposes.

or

The beginning of tourism was a result of the need for ancient peoples to travel for trade, holiday and military purposes (Mehta 2007: 48).

In the correct example, you have correctly cited the author.

3.7 The Reference & Bibliography Section at the End of a Piece of Work

As discussed in section 3.4, all sources used throughout your essay/report/project must be brought together at the end and listed alphabetically based on the first author's surname. The reference section included all sources cited in the body of the assignment, while the bibliography section includes all sources that you have consulted during the preparation of your work.

The following conventions should be used for this section. Note that the numbers and headings (e.g. 3.7.4 An edited book) are for illustrative purposes only and would not appear in your report/essay.

3.7.1 A book (one author)

Alasuutari, P. (2007) *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*, London: Sage Publications.

3.7.2 A book (two authors)

Alasuutari, P. and Reilly, D. (2010) *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*, London: Sage Publications.

3.7.3 A book (more than two authors)

Alasuutari, P., Daly, G., and Reilly, D. (2008) *Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies*, London: Sage Publications.

3.7.4 An edited book

Bennett, T., Mercer, C. and Woollacott, J., eds. (2005) *Popular Culture and Social Relations*, Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press.

3.7.5 Chapter in an edited book

Koiranen, M. (1995) 'North European Metaphors of 'Entrepreneurship' and 'An Entrepreneur' ', in Bygrave, W.D., Birley, S., Churchill, P., Gatewood, E., Hoy, F., and Wetzal, W.E. (eds.) *Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research*, Waltham, Massachusetts: P&P Publications.

3.7.6 A journal article

Brunhouse, J. (2011) 'All Aboard! Berlin's new bus No. 200', *International Travel News*, 16: 11, January, 118-124.

3.7.7 Newspaper or magazine article

Harrison, B. (2001) 'How to cut costs while holding appeal', *The Irish Times*, 8 November, 18-19

3.7.8 Unpublished thesis

Byrne, G.J. (2009) *Culture and its Relationship to International Marketing (Towards an Understanding of Performance in International Marketing)*, unpublished thesis (PhD), University College Cork.

3.7.9 **Web address**

Grossman, M. (2013) *Technology and Diplomacy in the 21st Century*, [Online], U.S. Department of State, Available from: <http://www.state.gov/p/6580.htm> [accessed 21 May 2014].

3.7.10 **E- journal article**

Myers, M.P., Yang, J. & Stampe, P. (2008) 'Visualization and functional analysis of a maxi-K channel fused to green fluorescent protein (GFP)', *EJB: Electronic Journal of Biotechnology*, [Online], 2: 3, Available from: <http://www.ejb.org/content/vol2/issue3/full/3/index.html> [accessed 21 May 2011].

3.7.11 **CD ROM**

Economist Intelligence Unit (2004) *Investing, Licensing, and Trading*, [CDROM], London: Economist Intelligence Unit.

3.7.12 **Interviews**

Fitzgerald, P. (2007) Interview conducted on the premises of Radox Laboratories, Belfast, January 12th.

3.7.13 **Radio/Television - Interview or Contribution**

Ahern, B. (2003) *Interview on: Six One* [television], RTE 1, 18 Dec, 18.00 hrs.

3.7.14 **Weblogs (Blogs)**

Dunphy, P. (2012) The EMU and Ireland, *EuroComm Blog*, Weblog [Online], 3 March, Available from: <http://www.eurocomm.eu/blog/120303> [accessed 5 May 2012]

3.7.15 **Wikis**

Daniels, G. (2012) *Strategic Plan 2012-2016* [Online], Available from: <http://www.wikiplaces.org/commtech/plan3> [accessed 10 September 2012]

3.7.16 **Social Networking Sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)**

Jackson, H. (2014) *Government to approve urban renewal plan* [Twitter] 10 May, Available from: <http://twitter.com/@healthguru> [accessed 20 October 2014]

Note: In references where weblinks/URLs appear, it is not appropriate to leave these as a full hyperlink if the report is printed (as the above examples show). For such printed reports, the link may be shortened a relevant page (e.g. homepage).

However, if the report is submitted in electronic format (e.g. emailed, uploaded to Moodle or a website) then you DO leave the full hyperlink as the following Twitter reference illustrates:

3.7.16 **Social Networking Sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)**

Jackson, H. (2014) *Government to approve urban renewal plan* [Twitter] 10 May, Available from: <http://twitter.com/@healthguru> [accessed 20 October 2014]

4. How to Structure a Report

4.1 *Summary of the Main Contents of a Report*

Please note that individual lecturers may require a report structure that deals with the specifics of individual assignments. However, unless specified otherwise, reports should contain the items listed below in the order as shown:

- Front Page
- Table of Contents
- List of Figures
- List of Tables
- Executive Summary
- Terms of Reference
- Main Body of the Report (including an introduction, findings, conclusions and recommendations)
- References and Bibliography
- Appendices.

4.2 *Front Page*

The front page should contain the following items:

- Report title
- Date on which the report was presented
- Name(s) of the writer(s) of the report and student number(s)
- Name of the person, department or organisation to whom the report is submitted
- A declaration that the report is solely the work of the writer(s) of the report except where indicated otherwise.

4.3 *Table of Contents Page*

This page lists the main sections as they appear in the report and gives the associated page number for each. Sections of the report should be numbered using standard numerals (Section 1, Section 2 etc.) and not roman numerals (Section I, Section VIII, etc).

Please ensure that the headings in the contents page are the same as those in the text. Page numbers should be set in a neatly aligned column on the right hand side of the contents page.

4.4 *List of Figures*

This contains a list of all the figures included in the report. Figures should be listed in accordance with a standard system of numbering. For instance, Figure 1.1, Figure 2.3 etc.

4.5 List of Tables

This contains a list of all tables included in the report. As with figures, tables are listed in accordance with a standard system of numbering. For instance, Table 1.3, Table 2.1 etc.

4.6 Executive Summary

This is a summary of the main findings provided at the beginning of the report. Note that the Executive Summary is more than an introduction to the report.

It is intended to give the busy executive who may not have time to read the full report itself a general idea of what it contains. It should summarise all key sections of the report. The Executive Summary makes a brief statement about the objectives of the report and goes on to outline the main findings, conclusions and recommendations. A good rule of thumb is that each section including conclusions and recommendations is covered in one or two sentences.

Unless specified otherwise, the Executive Summary should not be presented in bullet point form. It should be written in paragraph format.

The executive summary is always single-line spaced (1.0).

4.7 Terms of Reference

Five or six lines will suffice for the terms of reference. It should provide details of who commissioned the written project and why. It is different from the Bibliography and References section. A simple paragraph such as the following examples would suffice.

Academic

This report was commissioned by the lecturer on the Management Research Methods module as part of an assessment for that module within the Bachelor of Business Degree in Management at the Institute of Technology Tallaght. It accounts for 30% of the final marks and.....

Business

This report was commissioned by the CEO of ABC Corp, Mr. N. O. Body, as a strategic review of the current key marketplace of the corporation, and was compiled by.....

The terms of reference is always single-line spaced (1.0).

4.8 Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to provide information about the nature of the report and how the writer went about the task.

It should introduce the main topics of the report and should also:

- Explain the objective of the report / study.
- Provide relevant background information.
- Explain the procedure used in collecting data.
- Acknowledge help given by others.
- Indicate the main sources of information.

4.9 Main Body of the Report, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This is where the vast majority of marks are awarded in an academic report, and where most attention is focused in a business report, and so it will be the largest section of the report. One must ensure that this section deals with all of the criteria outlined in the assessment guideline, problem statement or research question.

Findings

This section presents the information or results of the research. It should be set out in clear, logical sequence. The findings will contain a number of main sections and sub-sections dealing with different aspects of the report. The number of sections depends on the subject matter, but the structure should not be so complex that it is confusing. Section and sub-section headings should be short enough to give a clear indication of the content to follow.

If a set of statistics, map, diagram or chart is essential to an understanding of the report, then it should appear in the main text as a table or figure. This is particularly true for research based reports that need supporting charts or diagrams to highlight key findings.

Conclusions

Conclusions identify problems, opportunities or issues. They assess the evidence, reiterate the most important points and make deductions from this. All conclusions must be reasonable, persuasive and consistent with the findings of report.

Recommendations

The recommendations should not be confused with conclusions. Conclusions identify problems, whereas, recommendations indicate how they may be solved.

Recommendations should be:

- Specific proposals regarding further action.
- Phrased as strong suggestions rather than as orders.
- Listed and numbered in order of importance.

Your recommendations should be objective as possible. You should take as wide a view as possible and be aware of the political dimension of your recommendations. But do not be afraid to make specific recommendations regarding a definite future course of action. Furthermore, you should not be swayed by the displeasure of one interest group or another.

The conclusions and recommendations sections are a very important part of the report. The writer of the report is expected to demonstrate analytical capabilities by discussing a wide range of issues and their implications. This discussion should be rounded off by bringing all the points of the main body of the report to conclusion, and by recommending a future course of action for the scenario in question. The detail in these sections very much depends on the CA requirements or the research objective, but in all cases, the writer is expected to bring the report to a logical conclusion.

4.10 References and Bibliography

The References should include a list of all material quoted from (directly or indirectly) in the report. The Bibliography includes a list of all material consulted but not quoted or cited from in the report. In academic reports, these should be kept to a minimum. Wherever possible, refer specifically to works consulted and cite your source.

4.11 Appendices

Appendices should include supplementary background materials that are relevant, but their inclusion in the main body of the report would interrupt the flow of the discussion. Examples of such material include the following:

- Visuals such as graphs, charts, maps or diagrams.
- Summaries of other reports.
- Copies of questionnaires or other research instruments.
- Transcripts of interviews.

A list all abbreviations used in the report should appear in an appendix. The full meaning of the abbreviation should be provided in the first instance that it appears within the report.

Appendices should be labelled alphabetically and there should be clear reference to them in the text. Information provided in the appendices should be relevant to the findings. If it is of no use or interest to the reader then it should be omitted.

5. Report Layout and Format

5.1 *Font*

The font Times New Roman or similar (e.g. Trebuchet MS or Arial) should be used. All text (except the front and contents pages) should be justified along the left and right margins.

Ensure that the font style is consistent throughout the entire document. The font size varies depending on type of heading or main text as follows:

- Front page - larger font (20+).
- Section Headings - font size 14.
- Headings within each section - font size 12 bold.
- Subsection headings - font size 12 italicised.
- Main text - font size 12.

5.2 *Headings*

Headings help to signpost different topics, break up large blocks of text and catch the reader's eye. The following are some guidelines with regard to headings:

- Section headings must be bold, underlined, with font size 14.
- Headings within each section should be bold and font size 12.
- Subheadings should be bold, italicised and font size 12.
- Headings and subheadings of equal value should be set out in the same style.
- Headings should be short and give a precise description of what is to follow. If possible, avoid headings such as 'Miscellaneous' or 'General Remarks'.
- Long unbroken passages of text should be avoided by appropriate use of headings and sub headings.

5.3 *Spelling*

Students should perform a complete spell-check on the document before submission. However, often that is not enough. It is advised that someone else (who was not involved in writing the document) should read it. They are more likely to spot mistakes.

Documents should not include any slang, 'SMS text language' or 'Americanisations'. Ensure the dictionary on MS Word is set to 'English - Ireland' or 'Hiberno-English'. This will reduce the amount of American-English spellings in the document. You should also conduct a search and replace for words such as "Organization" which is perhaps the most commonly used Americanisation (should be spelled "Organisation" - using 's', not 'z'.)

5.4 Page Numbering

All pages in the report should be numbered (apart from the cover page). It is important to note the following:

- There should be no page number on the front cover page.
- The contents page, list of tables and list of figures, terms of reference may be numbered using small roman numerals in sequence i.e. i,ii,iii,iv etc. Alternatively, you may start page numbering from after the cover page using standard numerical format (page 1, page 2).
- The introduction, main body, conclusions and recommendations should be numbered in standard numerical format (page 1, page 2 etc.)
- It is important to ensure that the page number position is consistent on all pages. It is recommended that the page number is placed at the bottom of each page aligned to the right hand side.

5.5 Margins and Line Spacing

The main body of the report should be typed in 1.5 line spacing (unless advised otherwise). The entire report should use the default Microsoft Word margin settings. These are:

- 3.17 cm (Left and Right)
- 2.54 cm (Top and Bottom)

The executive summary and terms of reference are always single-line spaced (1.0). Similarly, indented quotes of more than one line that are given their own paragraph are always single-line spaced (1.0).

Lecturers may specify other formats. Students can use the formatting tools in Microsoft Word to preset the margins and line spacing to the required size.

5.6 Word Count

The lecturer will assign a word count or page count. This generally excludes the cover page, contents page, executive summary, terms of reference, and bibliography and references. Therefore, the word/page count applies only to the introduction, the main body/findings of the report and the conclusions and recommendations.

5.7 Graphs and Pictures

Graphs and pictures should be included electronically - i.e. copied, scanned or downloaded into the document. All graphs and figures should be labelled appropriately.

5.8 Other Presentation Guidelines

Students should ensure that their reports are professionally presented and clutter free. In particular, the front page should be neat in appearance, maintain a good balance between black and white spaces. Images and pictures should be kept to a minimum.

With regard to the use of colour, it is advisable to use it tastefully in order to ensure that it does not detract from the professional image of the document.

The Institute is currently trying to minimise the use of plastic material, so unless you are otherwise instructed by your lecturer, please do not bind your report in a plastic cover. A simple stapled report is adequate.

Further, where practicable, print on both sides of the page, unless otherwise requested.

6. Clarification of Terms

6.1 Task Descriptors

Throughout the course of exams and continuous assessments, students are asked to perform various exercises and respond to certain tasks. The following guide may help students by providing a simple clarification of terms and task descriptors. However, students should refer to their individual lecturer's guidelines with regard to assessment descriptions and requirements.

Compare

Look for similarities and differences between; perhaps reach a conclusion about which is preferable.

Contrast

Set in opposition in order to bring out differences.

Criticise

Give your judgement about the merit of theories or opinions; to point out the shortcomings and flaws in the arguments of other. This judgement will incorporate a discussion of evidence or reasoning involved.

Define

Set down the precise meaning of a word or phrase. Show that the distinctions implied in the definition are necessary to examine different interpretations.

Discuss

Investigate or examine by argument and debate, give reasons for and against. Also examine the implications.

Describe

Give a detailed or graphic account of an issue or phenomenon.

Evaluate

Make an appraisal of the worth of something; to provide information that will assist in the decision making process regarding performance and/or effectiveness.

Explain

Make plain, interpret and account for. Give reasons for, which may be empirical (e.g. historical evidence) or logical.

Illustrate

Give instances or examples of to make clear.

Outline

Give the main features of, or general principles of a subject omitting minor details and emphasising structure and arrangement.

Relate

Show how things are connected to each other, and to what extent they are alike, or affect each other.

State

Present in a brief, clear form.

Trace

Follow the development or history of a topic from source point of origin.

Summarise

Give a concise account of the important points of a matter, omitting details and examples.

Interpret

Derive meaning from presented material or evidence.

7. Assessment Criteria and Grade Determinants

7.1 *Assessment Criteria*

Cognisant of student level, the following are some of the issues that lecturers may consider when deciding on the appropriate grade for written assignments (e.g. reports, essays, etc).

- Relevance to the brief - the issues raised and discussed should be pertinent to the objective of the report.
- Development of thought - logical progression throughout the report.
- Conclusions and recommendations - logical conclusions and clear indications of what should happen next.
- Understanding of the subject - ability to articulate the main concepts and principles; analysis and level of argument.
- Practical relevance - ability to illustrate an understanding of a topic with relevant examples.
- Format and presentation - professional style; adherence to guidelines provided.
- Literary expression - ability to use clear, concise business English.

Marks may be attributed for each of the above. The relative importance of the criteria listed above may vary between subject areas and assignment type as well as the level. For example, higher levels of analysis are required at level 7 and 8 compared to level 6. Individual lecturers may specify their own criteria and allocation of marks.

7.2 *Grade Determinants*

Mindful of student level and the nature of the topic, the points listed below summarise the factors that lecturers may consider when determining grades for written assignments. These grade determinants are based on the grading scheme (excellent, very good, good etc.) as stipulated by the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (HETAC 2001: 35) in Table 1 of their 'Marks and Standards' publication.

Grade A 80% - 100% Excellent

Sophisticated, critical and innovative presentation of both conceptual and practical issues. Excellent clarity of expression and argument leading to logical conclusions. Discussion includes consideration of issues independent of class work and textbooks. Overall, an exceptional and excellent piece of work.

Grade B+ 70% - 79% Very Good

Thorough grasp of topic and an awareness of broader contextual issues. A very well stated document that includes critical and decisive analysis of

issues. Wide-ranging and in-depth research in evidence. Overall, a very good discussion leading to reasoned judgements regarding alternative viewpoints.

Grade B 60% - 69% Good

Comprehensive coverage of topic illustrated with relevant examples. A well stated discussion of opposing concepts and practices. Critical analysis of issues and possible solutions to problems. Overall, a well organised and structured document that illustrates a good understanding of the topic.

Grade B- 55% - 59% Above Average

A clear presentation of the relevant issues but limited critical and conceptual analysis. Tendency to rely on the arguments contained in secondary sources. Some good research is evident with the use of examples to illustrate well stated points. Overall, an above average piece of work.

Grade C+ 50% - 54% Fair

Some critical and conceptual analysis, but an over reliance on the work of others. Reasonably well stated. Some research evident with examples and discussion that illustrate an understanding of the main features of the topic. Overall, an average piece of work.

Grade C 40% - 49% Pass

Shows considerable reliance on easy and readily available solutions. Minimal research results in a lack of supporting evidence for points made. Organisation and presentation are reasonable. Adequate literary expression with minor omissions or errors. Overall, a pass grade is awarded on the grounds that the document illustrates a basic understanding of the topic.

Grade D 35% - 39% Poor

Extensive reliance on easy and readily available solutions and material. Valid points are made but some are not directly relevant to the topic. Little evidence of research. Superficial treatment of topic. Organisation, presentation and literary expression are acceptable. Overall, a compensatory pass mark is awarded based on evidence of a rudimentary familiarity with topic.

Grade F 1% - 34% Fail

Insufficient material, superficial, restricted and flawed. Poorly presented and organised. Contradictory or uncertain findings and conclusions. Poor literary expression is compounded with grammatical and punctuation errors. Overall, the document illustrates a lack of understanding of the basics of the topic.

8. Reference Section

8.1 References

Anderson, J. and Poole, M. (1998) *Assignments and Thesis Writing*, New York and Chichester: Wiley.

ITT Dublin (2008) *Marks and Standards*, [Online], Available from: http://www.it-tallaght.ie/contentfiles/Documents/Registrar's%20Office/marks%20&%20standards/marks_standards.pdf [accessed 12 June 2012]

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Piers, R. and Shield, G. (2010) *Cite Them Rite: The Essential Guide to Referencing and Plagiarism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

9. Further Reading

9.1 Sources for Further Reading

Anderson, J. and Poole, M. (2001) *Assignments and Thesis Writing*, New York and Chichester: Wiley.

Fisher, C. (2007) *Researching and Writing a Dissertation - A Guidebook for Business Students*, Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Harvey, N. (2006) *Effective Communication*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

McClave, H. (2004) *Communication for Business*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2003) *Research Methods for Business Students*, Harlow: Prentice Hall.

10. Online Tutorials

Click on any of the following links for further online resources that you may find useful. Log in may be required.

10.1 How to Research your Assignment

<http://elearning.it-tallaght.ie/moodle/file.php/162/moddata/scorm/81/research1.htm>

10.2 How to Reference your Sources

http://elearning.it-tallaght.ie/moodle/file.php/162/moddata/scorm/131/index_lms.html

10.3 How to Avoid Plagiarism

http://elearning.it-tallaght.ie/moodle/file.php/162/moddata/scorm/132/index_lms.html