

BLUEPRINT

Education and Training Services Limited

How to pass your assignments



Simple rules for passing assignments

1. Make sure your work meets ALL the assessment requirements - the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria
2. Answer the questions fully - don't avoid things because you are uncertain or don't do something in your job
3. Link theory and practice together
4. Write in a clear and succinct manner
5. Use subheadings in your answers to make it easier for readers and signpost how the assessment requirements have been met
6. Write in your own words - be authentic
7. Keep to the word count
8. Don't plagiarise

Understanding Learning Outcomes & Assessment Criteria

All assignments will include several learning outcomes. To successfully pass an assignment, your work will need to cover every learning outcome.

Next to each learning outcome, there is a series of Assessment criterion which provide more information on how you are **expected** to meet the learning outcome.

You must cover every one of these assessment criteria in your assignment.

So, 100% of the Learning Outcomes must be passed by covering 100% of the Assessment Criteria

Here is an example of the learning outcomes for Unit 5001

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
<i>The learner will:</i>	<i>The learner can:</i>
1. Be able to assess and plan for personal professional development	1.1 Identify the importance of continual self-development in achieving organisational objectives 1.2 Assess current skills and competencies against defined role requirements and organisational objectives 1.3 Identify development opportunities to meet current and future defined needs 1.4 Construct a personal development plan with achievable but challenging goals
2. Be able to plan for the resources required for personal professional development	2.1 Identify the resources required to support the personal development plan 2.2 Develop a business case to secure the resources to support the personal development plan
3. Be able to implement and evaluate the personal development plan	3.1 Discuss the processes required to implement the personal development plan 3.2 Evaluate the impact of the personal development plan on the achievement of defined role requirements and organisational objectives 3.3 Review and update the personal development plan
4. Be able to support and promote Staff Welfare	4.1 Discuss the relationship between staff welfare on organisational objectives 4.2 Explain the process for assessing staff welfare 4.3 Explain the actions to be taken by the manager in dealing with a staff welfare issue 4.4 Describe how to communicate responsibilities for staff welfare to the team 4.5 Discuss records that may be maintained to demonstrate that staff welfare is supported

Every assignment brief will include a table of Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criterion.

By answering all the assessment criteria (bullet points) you will cover the learning outcome.

By answering all the learning outcomes in the assignment, you will then be able to pass the assignment.

Assessment Criterion (AC) are written in a particular way.

They are sentences that contain an assessment command verb, and an object that you will apply the command verb to, along with its context.

Let's look at how that works in practice using some assessment criterion from unit 5001:

Command Verb	Object	Context
1.1 Identify	the importance	of continual self-development in achieving organisational objectives
1.2 Assess	current skills and competencies	against defined role requirements and organisational objectives
3.2 Evaluate	the impact	of the personal development plan on the achievement of defined role requirements and organisational objectives

The command verb is important because it tells us what is expected - whether to identify or evaluate for example.

Evaluation requires a much more detailed approach than simply identifying something.

To evaluate you need to arrive at a judgment supported by a consideration of features of the object such as advantages/disadvantages or benefits and limitations or even positive/negative impact.

If you are asked to evaluate or assess something and you just give a description you will not pass the assessment criterion.

The object is the "thing/subject" that you apply the command verb to.

For example, AC 3.3 requires you to evaluate the impact

So, if you were to evaluate the format or style of your plan this would not be correct.

The context gives you the general setting for the object. So, in the case of AC 3.1 the impact to be considered is the impact the PDP will have on achieving role requirements and organisational objectives.

Note the two elements of role requirements and organisational objectives, unless both are covered you will not meet the assessment criterion.

Take another example:

AC 1.1 Identify the importance of continual self-development in achieving organisational objectives

Command word "Identify" means: ascertain the nature, origin or definitive characteristics of something. Selectively identify valid and relevant information from a range of sources to do this.

Objective: "the importance" means significance or value

Context: "of continual self-development in achieving organisational objectives" requires consideration on the significance and value of PDP to achieving organisational objectives - not personal ones.

In the Student Resources Section of the i-cademy portal you will find a list of the command verbs and what they mean. You should download this and keep it with you when you are writing your assignments.

How your tutor marks your work using the Learning outcomes and assessment criterion.

Your tutor is required to:

1. Assess your work against the learning outcomes and assessment criterion
2. Ensure your work is suitable for the academic level of the qualification.
3. Is your own authentic work and there is no plagiarism
4. Has complied with any submission rules - formatting and wordcount.

All elements must be present to pass.

What your tutor will do:

1. They will check the authenticity of your work
2. They will check for plagiarism
3. They will check you have met formatting and word count requirements
4. You tutor will complete a marking and feedback form which will list every LO and AC for the unit.
5. They will scrutinise your work for correct coverall of ALL Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criterion.
6. They will make a pass or refer decision against each AC and record this on the feedback form
7. They will give clear feedback on what needs to be done to pass any referred AC

Your tutor must ensure your work is at the correct academic level. You will meet this need if you:

- Pay attention to the AC command words
- Link theory and practice together - don't just describe what you do at work
- Answer questions fully - don't avoid something you don't understand or think is not relevant to you
- Use examples (real or made up ones) to illustrate what you mean.

Effective assignment writing

An effective assignment is one that passes and writing style plays a large part in succeeding.

If your tutor does not understand what you have written or “sees” where you have passed Assessment Criteria then they cannot pass your assignment.

Make assignments easy to understand

Assignments are easy to understand if they are written

- In plain English
- In a simple style
- In a logical chronological order

Plain English and simplicity comes through the words you use and the format you present information in.

Compare the following examples:

1. It is of considerable importance to ensure that under no circumstances should anyone fail to deactivate the overhead luminescent function at its local activation point on their departure to their place of residence, most notably immediately preceding the two day period at the termination of the standard working week.

2. Always turn the lights out when you go home, especially on a Friday.

Simple positive language is easier to understand and uses less words so you can meet the word count limits.

Paragraphs should always deal with one topic or idea to avoid confusing the reader.

Sentences should be short and simple.

Paragraphs should be in a chronological order so the reader doesn't have to go back and forth to see what you are saying. An assignment on baking a cake would not start with the method, then the oven setting, how to decorate and then the ingredients. Be logical to make things flow.

Bullet points/numbered lists can help illustrate complex steps or processes.

For example:

Getting to university on time for a 9.00am lecture involves following a number of steps. First of all you have to set your alarm – you will need to do this before you go to bed the previous night. When the alarm goes off you will need to get out of bed. You should next take a shower and then get yourself dressed. After getting dressed you should have some breakfast. After breakfast you have to walk to the tube station, and then buy a ticket when you get there. Once you have your ticket you can catch the next train to Stepney Green. When the train arrives at Stepney Green you should get off and then finally walk to the University.

The following is much simpler and clearer:

To get to university on time for a 9.00am lecture:

- 1. Set alarm before going to bed the previous night*
- 2. Get out of bed when the alarm goes off*
- 3. Take a shower*
- 4. Get dressed*
- 5. Have some breakfast*

The examples above are extracts from:

Improving your Technical Writing Skills, Version 5.1, 7 October 2009 by Norman Fenton

You will find a copy of this in the student resources are on the i-cademy portal.

Make it easy to see how you cover the assessment criterion

You tutor must also be able to “see” that you have met the assessment criterion. They are not allowed to guess what you mean or might be hinting at, so you must be positive and clear.

Signpost where you have covered assessment criterion.

You can do this by:

1. Using sub-headings to show where you are dealing with a topic covered by the assessment criterion. Example subheadings for unit 5001 could include:

The importance of personal development
My current skills assessment
Development opportunities

2. Use the technique of “mirroring” in your assignment. This is about reflecting the assessment criterion in your writing. Do this by:

Using the words used in the assessment criterion e.g. development opportunities, role requirements etc,

Start sentences in a way that relates to the assessment criterion. “ I would evaluate the impact my PDP will have on my job role as.....”

Being authentic and avoiding plagiarism

Being authentic and plagiarism are linked but not the same.

Authentic work

Tutors can only mark authentic work. This means work that is original to you - your own thoughts and ideas.

For example: if you use a table or diagram or text extract from another source in your answer that is not your work it will not be marked.

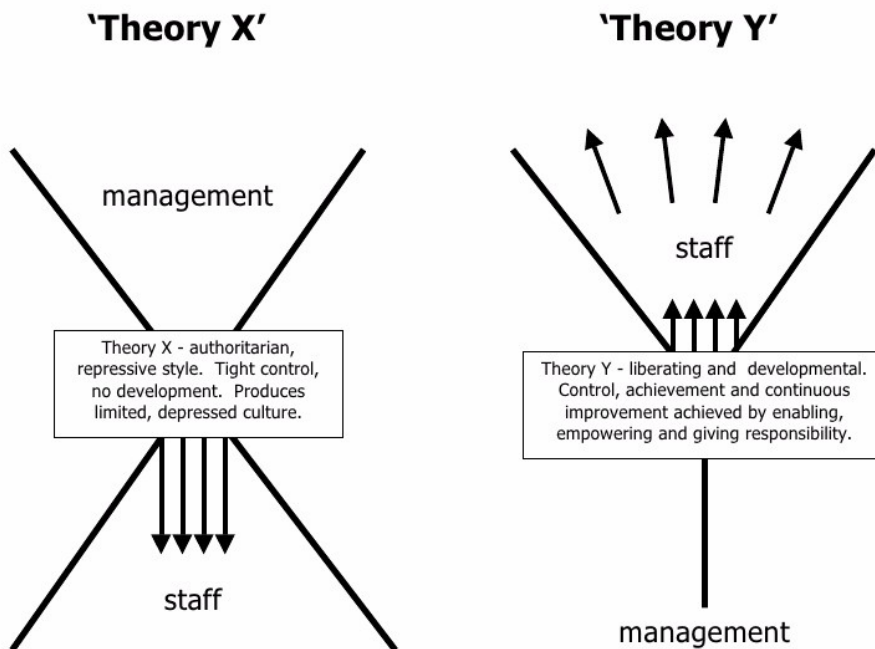
In terms of authenticity it does not matter whether you have referenced it or not.

Generally, you will be using a diagram, table or extract to support a point you are making. For example:

The major disadvantages with theory X in respect of motivation include:

- Point 1
- Point 2
- Point 3

This is supported by the following diagram



source www.businessball.com

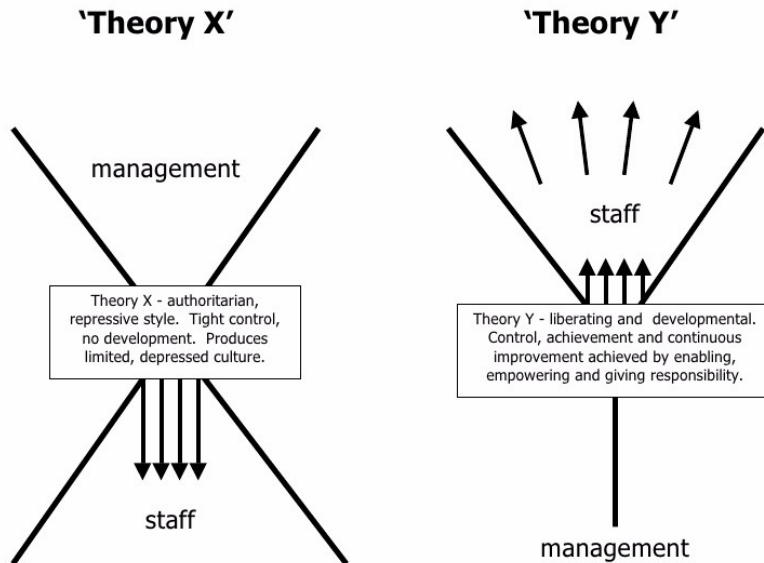
Here the diagram has been used to SUPPORT points made. The content in the diagram is not marked - only the points made by the student are marked.

The diagram is NOT the original work of the student.

The points made by the student is their authentic work and is marked.

If the student had answered in a different way. For example

The diagram below shows why theory x is not good for motivation:



source www.businessball.com

No authentic (original) work has been produced.

There is nothing for the tutor to mark.

Being authentic is not about referencing its about whether the work is original and yours.

Just changing a few words in a text extract or paraphrasing is not work that is yours, so it cannot be marked.

If you do not reference you will be plagiarising as well.

Avoiding plagiarism

Plagiarism is against the law. It is both a criminal and civil offence.

Plagiarism is cheating in your assignments by using other people's work or ideas without showing that you are doing it, so that it looks as if you are the one who created the work.

If you learn anything from a resource you read, you must show where you found it out from, even if you are not using the same words as they used.

Paraphrasing or changing the words slightly can still mean plagiarism, since it covers ideas as well as words.

The majority of our tutors are also authors and contributors to many books and online sources, and they tend to recognise their own words.

We use plagiarism checker software on assignments as well. These can also tell if your work has been cut and paste from another source even if words are changed.

You can use free on-line plagiarism checkers to help you check your own work. Better one's charge fees which are quite small.

Examples of plagiarism include

Copying exactly	Using other people's words as if they are your own. Short referenced quotes can be used. You must use quotation marks.
Word switching	Changing the odd word to make it look different. Using too many words from the original source is plagiarism even if you provide a reference. You are stealing their idea/thoughts. It is also not authentic so does not contribute to your mark.
Self-plagiarism	Re-using work from another assignment without making it clear you have done so. Do not cut and paste from previous assignments.
Collusion	You must work on your assignments alone. Do not show others your work. Do not use other people's work.
Concealing sources	Not making it clear where you are drawing on somebody else's work will be regarded as plagiarism. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using another's ideas and putting them into your words without telling us where you got the ideas.• Using a source several times, but only pointing it out once.

Even if you reference the source you can still commit plagiarism. Accidental plagiarism can occur if:

1. you forget to identify or reference where you found the information
2. you do not reference where your material(s) came from when paraphrasing (put other writers' ideas into your own words)
3. you use the exact words of another person without quotation marks even though you've referenced where the information came from

You sign to say that your assignment is authentic and not plagiarised in the assignment submission forms.

Your tutor checks your work for both plagiarism and authenticity.

They only assess authentic work. They will refer work where there is evidence of plagiarism

We will follow the Policy on Plagiarism which includes notifying the Institute.

Policies on plagiarism can be found on the i-cademy learning portal. There are guides to show you how to reference on the i-cademy learning portal.

Comply with formatting requirements.

Assignment documents will give you formatting instructions. These will be about:

1. Putting your name on your assignment
2. Putting the unit number on the assignment
3. Using page numbering
4. Having a heading for each question - i.e. Question 1
5. Having a reference list/bibliography
6. Word count for the assignment

Assignments can and will be rejected if these very simple requirements are not met.

You must not exceed the word count, so write in a simple style and make use of tables where possible. There are instructions on how to use tables properly on the i-cademy portal.

If you do not reference you will:

- Have almost certainly plagiarised
- Not undertaken any research or introduced theory into your assignment as required

Don't understand the assignment question?

Check out the assignment help notes

Ask your tutor for a telephone tutorial.

So finally,.....

1. Cover all the assessment criterion
2. Show you know theories and concepts and can apply them
3. Write clearly and succinctly
4. Produce authentic work
5. Don't plagiarise
6. Stick to the wordcount

References

CMI Level 5 Management and Leadership Syllabus 2016
Improving your Technical Writing Skills, Version 5.1, 7 October 2009 by Norman Fenton
<http://www.businessballs.com/mcgregorxytheorydiagram.pdf> viewed July 2017