



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Academic Skills and Assessment Guidance 2026-2027

Early Years Education and
Care

Contents

Before you start.....	1
Glossary	1
Presentation of your assignments	5
Submitting your assignments	5
Turnitin.....	5
OneDrive	6
Submission deadlines.....	6
Late submission:.....	6
Extenuating Circumstances (EC):	7
Technical difficulties:	7
Assessment requirements	7
Using Artificial Intelligence for assignments (AI)	8
Marks and assessment feedback	9
Support and guidance when preparing assignments	10
Academic Skills	11
Reading and research.....	12
Lecture attendance	12
Being in class	13
Time Management.....	13
Referencing	13
Written assignments.....	14
Writing skills.....	14
Oral assignments.....	15
Group presentations	15
Some common grammatical errors to be avoided:	16
Misuse of the apostrophe (')	16
Dates	16
Comma (,).....	16
Their, There, and They're	17
Singular/plural agreement.....	17
Contractions, clichés, and slang.....	18
Some clichés and slang phrases to be avoided.....	18
Using acronyms.....	18

Using Initialisms	19
Being cautious.....	19
What do we mean by...?	19
Synthesis	20
Words to use when showing synthesis (adapted from Morely, 2014, p.17):.....	20
Being critical.....	21
Some top tips for a better learning experience:	22

Before you start

Make sure you can access the internet and have a working laptop/computer. There is a bursary for cost for digital devices. [Please see the website for more information.](#)

Know how to [contact HWB](#) – this is your first point of contact for any issues. This is the first page on the website but you can contact them here:

Email: hwb@uwtsd.ac.uk

Phone: 0300 131 3030

It is important that you complete the Infoskills training page on Moodle. [Course: Library Infoskills | Home](#). If you have any problems with these skills, please contact infoskills@uwtsd.ac.uk who can help you

There are several digital skills tools and technologies that you can use whilst here. Please visit [Digital skills for students - DigiCentre | University of Wales Trinity Saint David](#).

If you are worried about using a computer or any digital skills then please contact digitalskills@uwtsd.ac.uk who will be able to help you.

If you have a specific issue with logging in, your laptop, issues with Moodle, then please contact our IT department directly on: The main IT support for students is via the IT Service Desk on our campuses. All IT problems and requests should be logged via the IT Service Desk.

Sometimes it is quicker to phone them on: 0300 500 5055

The phone line is staffed around the clock, including weekends. You can phone us 24/7.

Glossary

Academic Office - the University department responsible for quality assurance procedures. Applications for extensions (additional time for assignments) are processed/decided by Academic Office (not lecturers).

Analysis/analyse - looking at a topic at a deeper level. Breaking down a topic into smaller components and investigating each component to make informed conclusions.

Annual Programme Review (APR) - This is an annual review of all aspects of the programme based on feedback from students, external examiners and data.

Blended learning – delivery of a programme on campus AND online via Microsoft Teams. Both modes of delivery will be face-to-face.

Block timetable – students will study one module at a time, usually on a four week basis.

Contractions – shortened versions of words (for example, *don't* instead of *do not*). Contractions MUST NOT be used in assignments.

Credits – each module is worth 20 credits. Students will study 6 modules per level (120 credits at Level 4, 120 credits at Level 5 and 120 credits at Level 6).

Critique - a Level 6 requirement. An in-depth analysis and/or evaluation.

et al. - a Latin phrase that means 'and others.' The phrase demonstrates that several authors have contributed to writing/creating a source. When using *et al.* in assignments, italic font must always be used, and a full stop must be placed at the end.

Exam board - a committee made up of representatives from the University that confirms students' results/degree classifications, students' eligibility to progress and makes decisions based on academic regulations.

Extenuating circumstances (EC) - events beyond students' control that affect their ability to complete/submit an assignment. As a result, students may be eligible for additional time. Guidance on how to apply for an extension can be found via students' MyTSD portal account and the Hwb.

External examiners – experts from other Universities, appointed to ensure academic standards and processes are maintained.

FTF- Fast track Flexi students on the 2-year accelerated degree studied during the evening.

Harvard – the referencing style students must adhere to when submitting/presenting assignments. Students can access the [University's Harvard Referencing Handbook](#) online.

Hwb – available on campus and online, [the Hwb is where students can access information and support](#)

IT Helpdesk – 0300 500 5055 – 24 hour IT helpdesk for technical issues.

Level 4 – the first year of an academic degree.

Level 5 – the second year of an academic degree.

Level 6 – the third year of an academic degree.

Modules – University programmes are made up of modules. Modules are usually separated into topics and are worth 20 credits each. Students will study six modules per level.

Moodle – a ‘virtual learning environment’ where students can access essential material for their studies. This material includes: module handbooks, lectures, additional reading, media clips and so on. Feedback and marks for assignments are shared with students via Moodle.

MyTSD – students’ portal account where information related to their programme can be accessed.

OneDrive – a ‘cloud storage service’ used by lecturers and students to store and share information. Students will be required to upload and share certain assignments, such as recordings of presentations and digital scrapbooks. OneDrive can be accessed via Hwb.

Panopto – software used by lecturers to record information, such as guidance for assignments. Links to Panopto recordings can be located on Moodle and/or Microsoft Teams.

PcET (PGCE/PCE in Post Compulsory Education and Training) - a recognised qualification required for teaching 16+.

PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) - a required qualification to become a teacher.

Plagiarism – presenting/submitting others’ work as their own. This is an academic crime and has serious consequences, such as failing an assignment, having to attend an Unfair Practice Panel and/or having to leave the University.

Reference list – a list of all the sources included in an assignment. A reference list MUST be submitted with EVERY assignment.

Registry – the University department that supports students with applications, enrolment and student records.

Student representative – elected by their peer groups, student representatives are required to attend Staff-Student committees to provide feedback on the academic experiences of their fellow students.

Student Services – This is where you can find information about support for wellbeing, money support, disability support, learning support, careers advice and Student Hwb [Student Support & Wellbeing | University of Wales Trinity Saint David \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk)

Synthesis/synthesize - a Level 5 requirement. Combining several sources and ideas. Drawing information from a range of academic sources and establishing links.

Teams (Microsoft Teams) - a communication hub used for online lectures and meetings.

Turnitin – a programme that allows lecturers and students to check the similarity of content in assignments. Turnitin enables lecturers to identify potential cases of unfair practice (plagiarism). It also allows you to see your feedback and marks after submission.

Presentation of your assignments

The general format for written assignments is:

- 1.5 line spacing;
- 12pt Arial or another [Sans Serif font](#)
- [Align your text to the left of the page \(left justified\)](#)
- Your student number, the module code and the word count of your work (not including the reference list) should appear in the document header;
- [Page numbers must be included.](#)

Some written assignments will have different requirements (for example, academic posters, briefing papers). Check your module handbook for details and if you are unsure, ask your module lecturer for clarification.

Guidance for recording oral assignments can be found in your module handbook and will be discussed by the module lecturer.

Individual or group presentations may be recorded, presented on campus or through Microsoft Teams. Details will be included in your module handbook and may vary from module to module.

Guidance videos are available on the early years' homepage on Moodle.

Submitting your assignments

Turnitin

Written assignments are submitted to Turnitin; submission links can be found on module pages on Moodle. You will see that there may be several Turnitin links on the Moodle page; it is your responsibility to make sure that you submit to the correct link. The links are clearly labelled (draft, final, day, FTF, re-sit and so on).

Draft link: You may submit up to 3 drafts to check your similarity percentage. Submitting, checking and adapting your draft versions may avoid issues with plagiarism therefore it is highly recommended that you use the draft link.

Final link: This is the version that will be marked by a member of the module team. You cannot add or change this version once it has been uploaded so check carefully before uploading.

Turnitin will provide you with a receipt once your assignment has successfully uploaded. Keep this receipt as proof of submission.

OneDrive

Some oral presentations will be recorded and uploaded to the OneDrive. Guidance will be provided in the module handbook and by your module lecturer. You will need to share the file with the module team (details in your module handbook). Usually you will be asked to submit a reference list to Turnitin as well as uploading a video file to the OneDrive; this may also be the case for oral group assignments. This is an integral part of the assignment and must be done promptly.

Videos can take time to upload to OneDrive, please ensure you factor this in when working towards your deadlines. Lecturers will not be able to help you on the weekend with any IT problems so for issues with this please contact the [24 hour IT helpdesk on 0300 500 5055](#).

Submission deadlines

Submission deadlines are shown in the module handbook and will be confirmed by your module lecturer in the first lecture of the module. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct information regarding your own submission deadline. Please note that submission deadlines will vary for students who have differentiated deadlines or extenuating circumstances that have been approved by the Academic Office.

It is your responsibility to submit promptly. Do not leave it to the last minute before uploading your work as it can take some time to upload, depending on how busy the system is or on the size of the file being uploaded. If your upload is late then it will be marked as a late submission

Late submission:

You can submit your work up 7 days after the submission deadline. The work will be assessed but your final mark will be capped at 40%.

Work submitted after the 7 day late submission limit will not be assessed and you will receive a mark of 0% for the assignment.

Academic staff cannot approve extensions for assignment submissions.

Extenuating Circumstances (EC):

If you are unable to complete your assignment in time, you could apply for extenuating circumstances. You will need to complete the relevant form through [Hwb](#) and provide evidence to support your application. If the EC are approved by the Academic Office, you will be given a new submission date and your mark will not be capped. Guidance and the EC form can be found on your Student Hwb and My TSD. You will need to sign in to My TSD to request an EC. Here is the guidance for this:

[MyTSD Form Extenuating Circumstances STU Guide 23-24.pdf \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](#)

Technical difficulties:

If Moodle or Turnitin are experiencing technical difficulties during the submission period, you should email a copy of the finished assignment to your module lecture (copying in moodle@uwtsd.ac.uk). This will provide proof that the work was completed by the submission deadline and your mark will not be capped. Once the system is working you can submit as usual.

If you have technical difficulties due to your own device you should contact the [IT Helpdesk \(24 hour support provided\): - 0300 500 5055](#) or use the link on your Student Hwb. **Technical difficulties are not generally accepted as grounds for EC.** Make sure you save more than one copy of your assignment.

Assessment requirements

Details and guidance about all aspects of the assignment can be found in the module handbook and the Panopto recording provided on Moodle. Your lecturer will discuss the assignment in detail during the first lecture of the module. It is important that you attend this lecture.

Details of the task including the marking criteria are listed in the module handbook. Each marking criteria has specific marks so you need to ensure that you fulfil the requirements of each criteria to avoid losing marks unnecessarily. For example, if there are 10 marks for referencing and the reference list, but you have not included these then you will be awarded 0/10 for this criteria.

Read through the **Common Assessment and Marking Criteria** in the module handbook so you understand the requirements for attaining specific marks. This will help you identify the difference between marking classifications (30%, 40%, 50%, 60% and so on) and could help you identify areas for improvement and development.

Each assignment has specific requirements regarding the word count or time allocated for presenting your work. You must keep to these requirements as failure to do so will affect your final overall mark as detailed below.

Using Artificial Intelligence for assignments (AI)

You can find the AI in Assessments policy on the Early Years Homepage which will help you understand it further:

UWTSD Policy: [AI in Assessment](#)

Each assignment will have its own instructions related to using AI. You can find this in the handbook for each module and on the assessment guidance Panopto's for each module. It is important that you follow these and seek guidance if you are not sure as using AI when it is not allowed may mean that you will be committing academic misconduct. Each module will tell you what is acceptable from the list below and your lecturer will guide you on its use.

Please remember that if you can use AI to research your work, that you need to read and check the references used as some AI webpages use false references. If you do not check and you are seen to use fake references this will be seen as academic misconduct.

RESEARCH	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to support you in research, including searching for bibliography, using tools to summarise, compare and interrogate materials.
STRUCTURE	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to support you in structuring your submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings, etc.
PROOFREADING	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to check your own text/creation for grammatical and syntactical mistakes, including rephrasing of your own work within specific standards.
WRITING	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to create text for submission.
CREATIVE	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to create creative materials, such as images.
PROGRAMING	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to create and check code.
NONE	For this assessment, you are not allowed to use any type of Generative AI support. This includes research support, structure support, writing/proofreading support and creative support.

Marks and assessment feedback

The pass mark for your modules is 40%.

All marks are provisional until confirmed by a Discipline Exam Board.

If you fail a module or modules you may be entitled to a re-sit. This will be decided by the Discipline Exam Board and will depend on a number of factors. More information about re-sits can be found in the [Academic Quality Handbook](#) on the UWTSD webpage.

In accordance with UWTSD requirements, your mark and feedback will be released within **20 working days** after the submission deadline. This does not include public holidays or University closure days. Details of return dates can be found in the module handbook. Marks may be released earlier at the discretion of the module team. You will receive a notification from Moodle when the feedback is available

Your assessor will be a member of the module team will not necessarily your module lecturer. This includes assessors from our Birmingham campus.

Detailed feedback is provided, identifying areas of good practice and areas for development. Please read the feedback carefully and adopt a reflective approach.

The module team follow a process of standardisation and moderation to ensure a consistent and fair approach to marking. **You cannot challenge your mark** just because you disagree with your mark (see 4.2 of the appeal policy below), but if you would like to discuss the feedback in order to improve and develop future assignments, you should contact the lecturer who assessed your work to arrange a tutorial. If you think there are other reasons that you would like to appeal your mark, you can find more information about grounds for appeal in this policy – section 4.

[Procedures for Academic Appeals, Complaints and Other Student Cases | University of Wales Trinity Saint David \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](http://uwtsd.ac.uk)

Support and guidance when preparing assignments

Academic staff are happy to support you when working on your assignments, however, in order to manage expectations please take note of the guidance below:

- **Academic staff do not look at or comment on draft assignments.** Please book a tutorial to discuss your ongoing work if needed.
- Panopto guidance is available for all modules. This is a recorded video that should be used to clarify your understanding of the assignment requirements, alongside the task description and marking criteria in the module handbook. You must access these resources before you start working on your assignments or attend a tutorial.
- Assignments are discussed in detail in the first lecture of modules. Make every effort to attend this lecture so you can ask questions about the assignment. Tutorials are not used to go through assignment briefs. They are used to ask questions and gain advice.
- General questions about the assignment should be asked during lectures so all students receive the same information. If you are not confident about asking questions in lectures you can email your **module lecturer** and they will respond during the next lecture.

- All questions or queries about your assignment should be addressed to your **module lecturer**. You should not contact other members of the module team about the assignment unless your lecturer is unavailable for more than **2 working days**.
- Individual or group tutorials are offered according to the requirements of specific modules. This will vary from module to module; details of planned tutorials can be found in the module handbook.
- **You need to plan carefully before attending tutorials.** Consider specific questions or issues that you would like to discuss in order to make the most of the tutorial.
- All students may request an individual tutorial with their module lecturer; this will be arranged at a mutually convenient time.
- The module lecturer will respond to emails within **2 working days**; please note that this does not include weekends or bank holidays. You should contact your module lecturer during the working week and not expect staff to respond at weekends or when on annual leave. University closure days or out of normal working hours (9.00-5.00pm). If your module lecturer is on annual leave, contact the module lead.

Academic Skills

Acquiring good academic skills is important for you as a student. These skills are all about being an effective learner, gaining skills, getting good marks, and becoming a valuable member of your future workplace.

Studying at university level is probably different to what you will have done previously, either in school or in a further education college. The scope of your study is much wider, and you will be expected to take a great deal of personal responsibility for your studies. You will be expected to organise and manage your own study time.

We have prepared this guidance to help you get the most out of the academic side of your time as a student. If you follow the guidelines outlined here, you should do

better in your assessments than you would without this guidance, and you will enjoy being a successful learner.

Reading and research

You may have heard the expression 'reading for a degree'. You will be expected to:

- read more than you probably do now
- read widely from a range of different sources (specialist journals, books, magazine and newspaper articles, and so on)
- read at a challenging level. You may sometimes find that you are reading things that you find difficult to understand.
- Our experience tells us that students who read widely and at an appropriately challenging level, do better in assessments than those who do not.

Lecture attendance

You must attend your lectures. Lecturers will inform programme leads of any student not hitting the 80% attendance for each module and you will be required to have a Teams meeting with the programme lead to see if we can support you to attend.

Students are active partners in their education. They are expected to engage in the full range of academic activities and are expected to attend and engage with all timetabled teaching events and other scheduled activities subject to any reasonable adjustments.

There is evidence that students who attend lectures regularly get better marks. Lectures have been carefully prepared to lead you into the area of study and often include anecdotal information that you would not get if you rely on obtaining notes from Moodle.

Please see our Engagement Policy for information about your responsibility to attend lectures.

[Engagement Policy \(uwtsd.ac.uk\)](http://uwtsd.ac.uk)

Being in class

We recognise that for some people, sitting down and concentrating for long periods of time is difficult. This may mean some people will act differently in class than you. We will make every effort to take frequent short breaks and welcome you standing up, moving around and taking your own short breaks if needed. We will accommodate any needs within our classroom environments and help you to feel comfortable. Please make sure that you let us know so we can support you in the right way.

Time Management

All students must manage time. Some students manage difficult and conflicting demands on their time. You will have to balance:

- academic work (lectures, reading and independent study, assessment preparation, placement and voluntary work)
- social life, relationships, family
- paid employment
- some fun now and again, including sleep!

Learning to manage your time effectively is an important skill to and will be a crucial part in your life both before and after graduating.

Referencing

You **must** support all your assignment work with appropriate referencing. You **must** follow the conventions for referencing which are outlined in detail in your UWTSD Harvard Referencing Handbook (see link below – Academic Info Skills). This shows some simple ways to reference your work. You can also use the Cite them Right online essential referencing guide for support

[UWTSD Academic Info Skills Training](#)

[Cite them right : the essential referencing guide. - University of Wales Trinity Saint David \(uwtسد.ac.uk\)](#)

Appropriate referencing means using appropriate websites and resources. Please do not use generic websites like Simply Psychology and Twinkl in your work.

This is an essential resource for all students, and you should download a copy of the handbook so it is always to hand when working on your assignments. Oral as well as written referencing is required. If you ignore these conventions, you will be breaking the rules of academic study. You will not only lose marks, but you will limit the depth and range of your work.

Check that you have given references for every author/source and idea you cite or quote directly in your assignments. Examples of how to reference and how to present your reference lists can be found in the referencing handbook.

[Study Skills Support](#) is also available to all students in the university. The team can help you with referencing. Please make sure to book a suitable time which includes evenings on certain days.

Written assignments

Written assignments are an important part of university education. They give you a chance to exercise your skills at assessing evidence, developing and evaluating arguments and presenting this information appropriately. Academic writing is not easy. It requires research, reading, deciphering information, time management, prioritising, and discipline.

Writing skills

The presentation of information is an integral part of your success as a student. You are expected to write clearly and accurately. Punctuation, spelling, and syntax (that is, the way sentences are constructed) are important. Poor spelling and bad grammar distract the reader. Your good ideas and hard work will not be appreciated if we, as readers, cannot understand what you are trying to say. [Study Skills Support](#) is offered to all students at the university. Make sure to book on to these if you are worried about your writing skills

Always read over your final draft before presenting your work.

Everyone's work is improved by time set aside for critical editing, so you should leave some time for this before handing in your work. Submitting drafts of your work to Turnitin will enable you to ensure that you have used your own words, thus avoiding plagiarism. Plagiarism is a form of stealing. It is taking other people's work and passing it off as your own. It is a serious matter. Persistent plagiarism could mean that you are asked to leave the course.

Oral assignments

Most people get nervous when they have to talk in front of friends and colleagues. This is usually because we are afraid of making a mess of things. Nerves are often the most likely cause of a poor performance.

Building confidence in your skills at oral presentations is part of the assessment values of the Early Years programmes. We want you to be able to share your knowledge, your understanding, and your interest in a topic with an audience and to do so with confidence and conviction. If you follow the guidance from tutors on the feed-back sheets, your presentations will improve significantly over time.

Oral presentations, whether in-person or recorded, individual or group, must be presented professionally. As with academic writing, you need to ensure that your vocabulary is appropriate and that you express yourself clearly. As with written assignments it is important to plan and structure your work logically.

Group presentations

Some modules are assessed through paired or small group presentations. These will require you to work with other students on your presentation. Working together is an essential skill for employability. It will help you develop several skills which will be useful for the workplace, for example: leadership, time management, team working, negotiation, and motivation. These skills also support future employability. Good communication will be important, so the group members could share phone numbers and student e-mail addresses (where appropriate); many students set up groups on social media sites such as WhatsApp or a group on Microsoft Teams to share information. You can also save documents on the OneDrive that all members of the group can access. The group will work well if you go through set stages:

Familiarisation	getting to know each other, sharing important information such as contact details
Preparation and planning	discussing the subject, setting a timetable, identifying strengths, skills and interests, agreeing tasks
Research and review	coordinating who is doing what, arranging regular meetings, sharing information
Completion and presentation	writing up in preparation for the presentation, agreeing format for PowerPoint, editing and checking for accuracy, practising and timing

Some common grammatical errors to be avoided:

Misuse of the apostrophe (')

Use an apostrophe to show ownership of something.

This is Anwen's computer. (the computer that belongs to Anwen)

These are the player's things. (things that belong to the player)

Note: For nouns in plural form, put the apostrophe at the end of the noun.

The students' timetables will be sent to them. (timetables that belong to the students)

These are the players' things. (things that belong to the players)

Dates

There is no apostrophe in a decade as there is nothing missed out and there is no possessive, for example 1960s **not** 1960's.

Comma (,)

1. Use a comma to show a pause in a sentence.

We should, perhaps, have thought of that before writing to him.

However, it is a good idea to read over your work first.

Siân, as always, is a stickler for accuracy.

2. Use a comma with quotation marks to show what someone has said.

"I can come today," she said, "but not tomorrow."

3. Use commas for listing three or more different things.

Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport are the biggest cities in Wales.

Rhian, Tracey, Elonwy, and Bethan are on the Welsh course.

4. Use commas around relative clauses. These are clauses that add extra information to a sentence.

Sally Thomas, who is part of the Early Years team, is a wonderful lecturer.

Llanelli, which is sometimes called *Tre'r Sosban*, is still very Welsh speaking.

Box of chocolates, cup of tea, and a good video - my idea of a perfect evening.

Their, There, and They're

They're is always a contraction of "they are." If you've written "they're," ask yourself whether you can substitute "they are." If not, you have made a mistake. Remember *they're* is a contraction of the words *they* (pronoun.) and are (verb)

They're always late for lectures because they never get up in time.

"Don't touch those books!" said Siân, "they're for the third year students."

Their means relating to them for example:

Their names were on the register

Students studying children should always be concerned for their well-being.

Both Vygotsky and Piaget had their work published in languages other than English.

There means "in that matter, respect, or relation" (adverb). It is the one most difficult to decide, but anything that is not *they're* or *their*, is *there*!

There are plenty more fish in the sea

The flat was a mess. There were coffee cups all over the place.

There are basic principles of good practice in early years education. Allowing children freedom to explore **their** environment is one. Children, as **they're** young and vulnerable, are also entitled to adult protection.

Singular/plural agreement

Nouns, verbs, and pronouns must correspond. If the noun is plural, then the verb and the pronoun must match that by being consistent with the plural. This is an inaccurate example:

The purpose of outdoor play are to enhance children's learning. When a child plays outdoors, they also gain in confidence. X

This is accurate:

The purpose of outdoor play is to enhance children's learning. When a child plays outdoors, s/he also gains in confidence.

Remember: this and that are singular, **these** and those are plural.

Contractions, clichés, and slang

Academic writing style is more formal than other forms of writing. It is not like everyday conversations, and it is certainly not like texting or e-mailing. You should never use slang or contractions in your essays.

Not acceptable	Acceptable
can't, won't, wouldn't, it's, I've	cannot, do not, would not, it is, I have

Some clichés and slang phrases to be avoided

Really nice	At the end of the day	No time like the present
Pulling punches	Better late than never	Time and again
Piece of cake	Up for grabs	Over the top

Using acronyms

The most important rule for using acronyms is to introduce them properly. The first time you use an acronym, provide full terminology followed by the abbreviation in brackets:

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), there are a number of ...

After you have introduced it, you can simply use the shortened version:

Article 31 of the UNCRC indicated that...

There are some exceptions such as BBC which is known more broadly by its acronym than its full name.

Using Initialisms

Initialisms (abbreviations that are pronounced letter by letter) are almost always written in caps (UNESCO, UNCRC, BBC). Again, there are some exceptions like DoE (Department of Education (England), WiFi). It's best to check online to make sure these are correct.

Being cautious

When writing assignments, it is worth being cautious with views and opinions (especially your own). Use words to show that you cannot be sure for certain.

Use words like “should, might, may, possibly, might, suggests, appear, seem to, could, would” etc. rather than “will, is, definitely” etc.

For example:

The study **may** show a correlation between children's reading ability and their social skills.

This **could** prove that teachers need to understand early years development in more depth...

A possible explanation for this **might** be that

What do we mean by...?

By the end of your studies you will be able to analyse and enquire, to understand arguments, differences, evaluate evidence from research, critique assumptions, understand abstract ideas, make judgements, and identify solutions. To do this requires a range of skills when you write, think and read. Here are some of the main aspects we look at when we are marking your work.

Morely's (2014) *Academic Phrasebank* can be found on the [Early Years Homepage](#). It has several excellent suggestions in how to start sentences to help you achieve the best results in your academic writing. Here are some of the most used phrases in assignments to show your understanding.

Synthesis

At level 5, we will look at your synthesis skills. Synthesising in assignments means *bringing it together*. When synthesising, you bring together similar ideas or similar arguments from different sources. Sources mean academic books, articles, websites etc.

In your assignments it can look like this:

Afshordi and Liberman (2020) and Bronfenbrenner (1981) highlight the importance of relationships and friendships in a child's micro system to positively support their development.

However, according to Welsh Government (2020) and Welsh Government (2022a), The Curriculum for Wales Framework will provide a child centred education for all children

Words to use when showing synthesis (adapted from Morely, 2014, p.17):

Similarly, Tinney (2019) found that X In the same vein, MacdDonald (2022) notes

This view is supported by Rees-Edwards (2020) who writes that **Smith (2022) argues that her data supports O'Brien's** (1918) view that

Bilton's (2020) work on **X is complemented by** Smith's (2022) study of

Almost every paper that has been written on X includes a section relating to

Unlike Smith, Jones (2013) argues that **In contrast to** Smith, Jones (2013) argues that

A broader perspective has been adopted by Smith (213) who argues that

Conversely, Yen (2021) reported no significant difference in research studies between X and Y.

Smith argues that Al-Masry (2003) sees X as **Similarly**, Jones (2013) **asserts that** **Likewise**, Wang (2012) holds the view that

Some writers (e.g. Smith, 2002) have attempted to draw fine distinctions between

Some authors / many studies/ research shows that... (Smith, 2022; Jones, 2020, Khan, 2019; Chen, 2022)

Much of the available literature on X deals with the question of Others (**see Jones, 2003; Brown, 2004**) question the usefulness of

Others have highlighted the relevance of However, Smith (2008) is much more concerned with

Waters (2020) states children's development is X, Darby (2022) is more concerned with ...

Being critical

Being critical is important when reading and thinking about the sources that you use. By level 5 and 6 you must be able to question what you read and not necessarily accept it to be correct or true. You must find a sources to "back up" your arguments and reference them. You will see the words **critical evaluation** in assignments and this will mean you need to find benefits and limitations / positives and negative about certain topics.

For example:

Pitman (2022) believes that children need strong role models in schools to help them when they are having emotional difficulties. Ahmed (2021) believes that role models are predominately teachers, **however** there are a number of studies that show this not to be case and that anyone can be a strong role model in schools (Thomas, 2020; Jones, 2022; Welsh Government, 2022). **However, there are some difficulties** in recognising the right person to be a role model for children. Smith (2022) states that... XYZ is an issue for children...

Other ways to show critical evaluation (adapted from Morley, 2014 p. 36)

A major criticism of Smith's (2018) work is that

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether ...

A serious weakness with this argument, however, is that

One of **the limitations** with this explanation is that it does not explain why... .

One criticism of much of the literature on X is that

The **key problem** with this explanation is that

The existing accounts **fail to resolve** the contradiction between X and Y.

However, there is an inconsistency with this argument.

Smith's argument **relies too heavily** on qualitative analysis of

Jones (2021) interpretation of the study **overlooks** much of the historical research

Many writers have **challenged** Jones' (2021) claim on the grounds that

X's analysis **does not take account** of **nor does** he examine

Another **problem with this approach** is that it fails to take X into account...

Perhaps the most serious **disadvantage** of this method is that

Nevertheless the strategy has **not escaped criticism** from governments, agencies and academics...

However, there are some serious **limitations / weaknesses / disadvantages / drawbacks**...

You can find more information on synthesising and critiquing your work in our video called [Assignment Structure - Building an Argument on the Early Years Homepage.](#)

Some top tips for a better learning experience:

This list was compiled by lecturers who recognise common mistakes:

- Read through the assignment handbook on Moodle before the start of the lecture
- Attend every lecture

- Check your feedback on Turnitin
- Ask questions related to the assignment during lecture time and took note of other's questions and answers.
- Catch up on any missed lectures by accessing Moodle and looking at the extra resources added by lecturers on Moodle.
- Read the excellent resources on the [Early Years Homepage](#) which has guidance on building an argument, how to synthesise, how to reference, how to use OneDrive, how not to plagiarise, how to use Turnitin and more.
- Successful students are proactive and accept when they need extra help with academic writing and referencing. Book extra study skills sessions with [UWTSD Study Skills Support](#)
- Read through the briefing of the assignment and listened to the Panopto.
- Make a list of questions to ask **before** any tutorial so that the tutor is not using the time to repeat what is on Panopto and PowerPoints.
- Print out/ save the [UWTSD Harvard Referencing Handbook](#) and use it in every assignment to check how to reference.
- Contact [Student Services](#) if your wellbeing is being affected
- Use the link in Student Hwb above to apply for Extenuating Circumstances if needed.
- Italicise *et al.* throughout your assignment and in your referencing list
- Read the piece of work out loud to make sure it makes sense. You can use Word to read your work back to you. Highlight the assignment in Word > Review > Read Aloud
- Add the word count to the heading as well as student number and module code (markers pick up on this and it is usually omitted because the word count is over or under so they will double check!)
- Read enough to synthesise information.
- Read enough to produce an argument or find limitations (critique) (level 5 & 6)
- Use quality resources like books, research and academic articles when referencing.

- Realised that Reggio Emilia is a place not a person!
- Ensured each point is referenced.
- Limited your direct quotations to one per page as a maximum.
- Checked the marking criteria.
- Contacted my lecturer/academic tutor if I am struggling
- Checked my university email regularly.

