

Study Skills Booklet

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Introduction to Moodle

Moodle is the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The VLE is used to support learning and teaching. It can be accessed by **enrolled** learners from anywhere in the world using the internet and a web browser.

Some of Moodle's features allow students to:

- Access course materials
- Facilitate communication between students and tutors
- Consolidation workshop tasks
- Take online assessments with automatic marking and feedback facilities

Moodle can be used for administration tasks such as:

- Displaying announcements e.g. venue/dates changed
- Submission of assignments electronically
- Administration of online surveys, such as module questionnaires

How to Access:

Navigate to <http://uwtsd.ac.uk>

Click Quick Links (top left side of screen)

Select Moodle from the Carmarthen/Lampeter/London links

Log in using your Network username (student number) and password (the one you set up initially).

If you have problems finding resources (timetables, lecture notes, assignment briefs etc.) please contact the lecturer that delivers the course/module.

If you encounter any issues with accessing Moodle, could you please contact Lowri Harris or Ann Beaumont in the first instance, they will ensure that your query is dealt with appropriately.

For any technical issues or error messages contact the helpdesk:

Tel: 0300 500 5055

Email: ITServiceDesk@uwtsd.ac.uk

In any correspondence please include your name and student number: (e.g. 0244056)

Introduction to the Learning Resource Centre

All students have access to information literacy and research skills support to assist them in their studies. For further details and contact information please go to the Library and Learning Resources website at <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/>

Identifying, accessing and evaluating resources

- Library and Learning Resources website
- Library and Learning Resources catalogues
- Accessing e-resources and databases
- Using the Internet for academic purposes

Literature Reviews

- What is a literature review
- How to do a literature review

Staying Legal

- Using other people's information
- Plagiarism: what it is and how to avoid it
- Copyright
- Using images, film and sound

Organising and managing your information

- Keeping up with developments in your subject area
- Using information management tools

Assistant / Subject Librarians

Assistant / Subject Librarians act as a contact point between students and the Library and Learning Resources service. Please feel free to contact a Librarian if you need help with finding information for your assignments, or advice on locating, accessing or searching library resources in both print and electronic formats. Further details of all libraries and contact information are available from the Library and Learning Resources website at <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/>. Please also follow the Library and Learning Resources Facebook and Twitter feeds for up-to-date news, service developments and information on new resources.

- The Griffith Library at Dynevor
- Owen Library, Mount Pleasant
- Swansea Business School Library
- Townhill Library
- Carmarthen Library
- Lampeter Library
- London Library

Introduction to Student Services

All students have access to study skills support to assist them in their studies. Details of provision are available from Student Services.

Topics covered include:

- Developing effective study strategies
- Planning and writing assignments
- Preparing presentations
- Planning for seminars
- Preparing for exams

Drop-in study skills sessions are available on both the Carmarthen and Lampeter campuses during term time – no appointment necessary.

Distance learning students are also able to access the Study Skills Distance service using e-mail, telephone or Skype.

Please see the Student Services webpages for further details: <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/student-services/>

Where am I with academic writing?

Self-evaluation: Knowledge, skills and attitudes

Activity: Self-evaluation

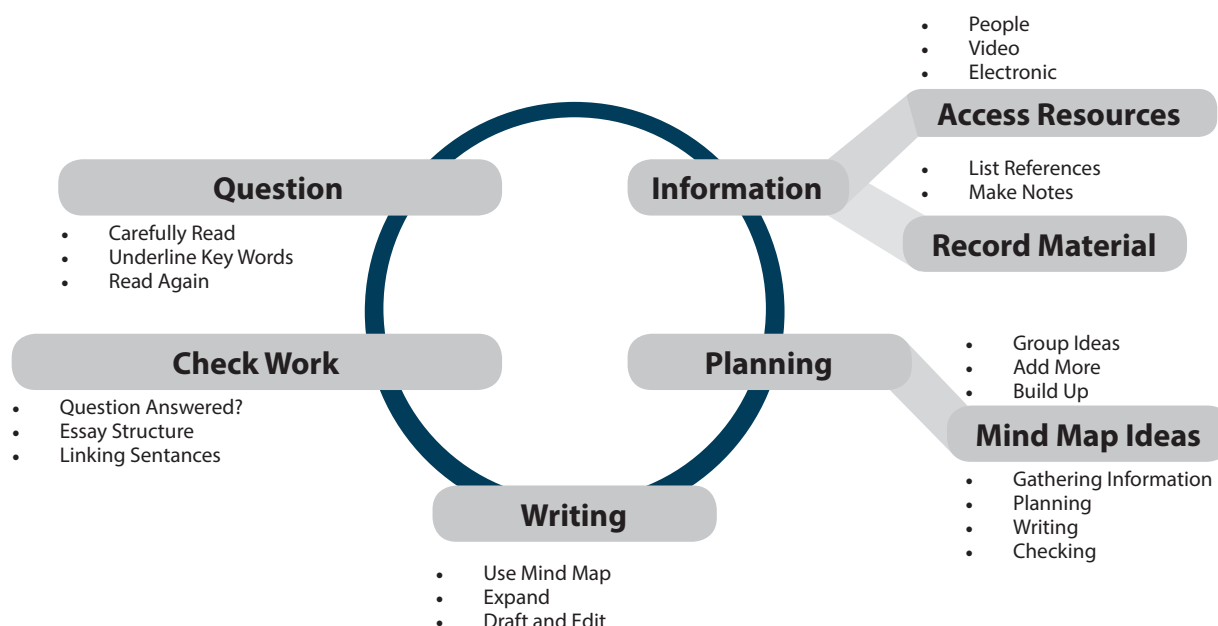
For each of the following statements, rate your responses as outlined below. Note that 'strongly disagree' carries no score.

4 = 'strongly agree' 3 = 'agree' 2 = 'sort of agree' 1 = 'disagree' 0 = 'strongly disagree'

	Rating 4-0
1. I feel comfortable pointing out potential weaknesses in the work of experts	
2. I can remain focused on the exact requirements of an activity	
3. I know the different meanings of the word 'argument' in critical thinking	
4. I can analyse the structure of an argument	
5. I can offer criticism without feeling this makes me a bad person	
6. I know what is meant by a line of reasoning	
7. I am aware of how my current beliefs might prejudice fair consideration of an issue	
8. I am patient in identifying the line of reasoning in an argument	
9. I am good at recognising the signals used to indicate stages in an argument	
10. I find it easy to separate key points from other material	
11. I am very patient in going over the facts in order to reach an accurate view	
12. I am good at identifying unfair techniques used to persuade readers	
13. I am good at reading between the lines	
14. I find it easy to evaluate the evidence to support a point of view	
15. I usually pay attention to small details	
16. I find it easy to weigh up different points of view fairly	
17. If I am not sure about something, I will research to find out more	
18. I can present my own arguments clearly	
19. I understand how to structure an argument	
20. I can tell descriptive writing from analytical writing	
21. I can spot inconsistencies in an argument easily	
22. I am good at identifying patterns	
23. I am aware that my own up-bringing might prejudice a fair consideration of an issue	
24. I know how to evaluate source materials	
25. I understand why ambiguous language is often used in research papers	

Assignment – Part A – Graphical Overview

The Process of Essay Writing



Assignment – Part B – Structure

- Ensure that you consider all the learning outcomes stated above and in the module descriptor.
- Ensure that you structure your assignment well

Structure

Introduction (Tell them what you're going to tell them)

- Open the doors to your discussion
- Explain the implications of the question
- Define any key terms
- Outline how you propose to answer the question ie identify the key headings or topics within your discussion
- Keep it general

Main body (Tell them)

- Make your points in order
- Link them to form an argument
- Illustrate your ideas through using quotations/back up your points with academic sources
- Keep referring back to the question at key points

Conclusion (Tell them what you've told them)

- Sum up what your discussion has proved
- Don't be afraid to admit that some issues cannot be solved
- Make your (evidence-based) opinion clear

Bibliography

- Ensure that you collate your references and bibliography from the start (Please refer to the module handbook guidance notes for further assistance.
- Referencing – (in the main text and in the bibliography) – please use the Harvard Referencing System. See handout or Moodle for further guidance.

Appendices

You are welcome to include appendices, however only be where necessary for items such as tables and diagrams to support/illustrate the main body of the text. You will not be awarded any marks for work included in the appendices, and please do not use the appendices as an alternative location for work that should appear in the main text. It is not recommended that you include published secondary information such as annual reports and company literature, etc. within the appendices.

Writing the assignment

- Unpack the question and identify lines of enquiry
- Collect evidence from texts
- Select and order material
- Consult criticism
- First draft
- Final version

Essay Instruction Terms

Writing Assignments - what's required?

Assignments require learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and/or skills related to the topic being studied. They usually take the form of written instructions around the approach to be taken to address the assessment criteria. It is important that learners understand what they are being asked to do, as the misinterpretation of instruction terms can lead to the wrong approach and ultimately failure to meet the assessment criteria. Sometimes even experienced students get it wrong and can become confused between terms like “analyse” and “assess”.

Glossary

We hope that the following glossary of commonly used instruction terms will help you to understand the approach to take when completing your assignments.

Instruction term	What's required
Analyse To examine something in great detail in order to understand it better or discover more about it.	Begin by breaking an issue into its constituent parts. Then look closely at each part, considering how they are linked. Use relevant evidence and supporting arguments (for and against) to back up your overall view of the issue or subject.
Assess To examine something in order to judge or evaluate it.	Examine closely, in a balanced way the strengths and weaknesses of a theory/practice or situation. State your conclusion, and justify your judgment clearly.
Compare and contrast To look for similarities and differences between two or more things.	Present the similarities and the dissimilarities between two or more things – these may be theories or practices or approaches. Identify and consider reasons for significant similarities and differences. Note: Compare and contrast often feature together but may be asked for separately.
Consider To think carefully about something in order to form an opinion.	Look at the topic from alternative viewpoints and express your own opinions based on relevant evidence and your personal experience.
Critically evaluate To question information and opinions in the text in order to evaluate or judge its worth overall.	This involves considering research texts, propositions and statements and the extent to which they are valid and/or the extent to which you agree with them. It is important to look at evidence taken from a wide range of sources which both agree with and contradict an argument. You should come to a final conclusion which must be based on your judgment about the most important factors, and which you can justify.
Define To give a precise meaning to something .	Clearly express and/or describe what is meant by something, and discuss any limitations of the definition.
Demonstrate To show, explain or describe how something works or how to do something.	You may be asked to demonstrate a skill by performing a task under observation. This could also involve providing a written explanation or description of how something works or how something could be done. If asked to demonstrate through writing it is useful to provide concrete and practicable examples.

Describe To give an account of something	You may be asked to briefly describe or to give a detailed description of something or some event. Take note of how much detail is required and provide information about what something is, or what is done and how it is done, as appropriate.
Discuss A written consideration of a topic	Think of discussion as a written debate. Present arguments for and against a proposition or advantages and disadvantages of a given approach. You will need to show that you can present a reasoned argument backed up by evidence and you must include your conclusion/s.
Evaluate To assess the value or worth of something	This involves looking at how well or successfully something has been done or carried out. This could refer to theories, policies or practice. Use qualitative and quantitative data and independent assessments as measures of success where appropriate.
Examine To inspect or study something in detail	Look at the topic closely in order to establish the most important facts and information related to it. Explain why you think these are important and also acknowledge any possible alternative interpretations of the facts.
Explain To make the meaning of something clear	Give an account of something with sufficient clarity and detail to be understood by someone else. You may be asked to briefly explain or give a detailed explanation, but the overall aim is to help the reader to understand. Focus on the how and why, define key terms, and clarify context. Break down complex procedures so that they can be understood. It is sometimes useful to give an example to provide further clarity.
Explore To make a careful investigation or study of something	This involves consideration of a range of views, and raising questions about them. It is not always possible to come up with definitive answers, but, if possible, draw conclusions based on the weight of supporting evidence.
Identify To be able to determine what something is	Usually asked for in the context of identifying key features or characteristics of something. Unless specifically asked to do so, do not simply produce a list as you need to state the relevance and/or function of the thing/s you have identified.
Illustrate To clarify through the use of explicit examples or comparisons	If you are asked to illustrate your answer, you are required to clarify something by providing concrete example/s. These are used to show how something works or happens in reality.

Outline To convey the main points of a topic	Provide a general account or plan of something, concentrating on the main features or points and inter-related themes, but ignoring fine detail.
Review To look at something critically	This could involve studying and assessing something e.g. books, articles, and presenting an opinion on them. It could also involve surveying past (and/or on-going) actions, performance or events to measure outcomes and success. Reviews should not be merely descriptive, but should be a critical assessment of the topic
State To express clearly and briefly	Write in clear terms the key points related to the subject. Be factual rather than descriptive and avoid adjectives.
Summarise To concisely state or re-state the main points of something	Provide a brief statement of the key facts or points of the subject, avoiding unnecessary information or detail. You might be asked to summarise something that you have covered in detail earlier in an assignment. A summary is often used at the beginning of a substantial report to provide a shortened version of what has been written.

This list is not exhaustive. If you are unsure of what required of you, speak to your tutor who will provide clarification for you.

Assignment – Part C – Things you need to know

Academic Quality Handbook

Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the Academic Quality Handbook which contains all of the University's regulations. <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/academic-quality-handbook/>

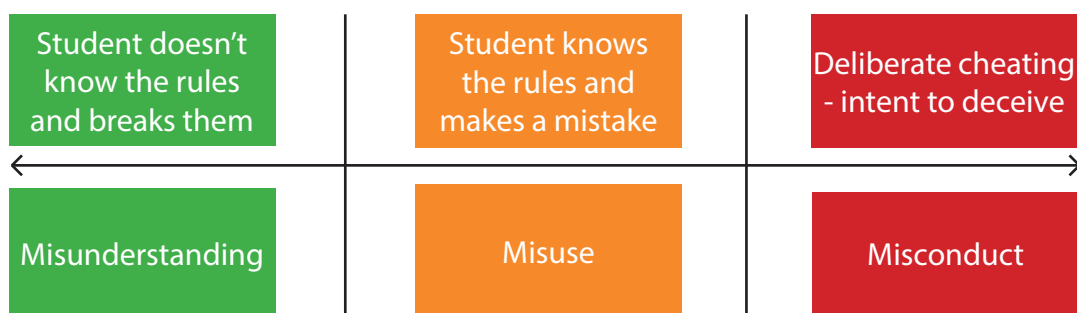
Plagiarism

Plagiarism is treated very seriously.

“uses words, ideas or work products, attributable to an identifiable person or source, without attributing the work to the source from which it was obtained, in a situation in which there was a legitimate expectation of original authorship, in order to obtain benefit, credit or gain”. Fishman, 2010

Fishman, T. (2010) cited in Fearn, H. 'Is it plagiarism? Well it is rather difficult to say.' [Online], Available: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/412292.article> [29 April 2013]

A spectrum of plagiarism



Here are some examples of plagiarism:

- Copying without showing it is a copy
- Paying someone to do it for you
- Not showing your sources [words and work] transparently enough
- Working closely with others and not acknowledging the shared work

Full details of the University's procedures and penalties for dealing with issues of plagiarism can be found in Chapter 13 of the Academic Quality Handbook, which can be seen on the University website or obtained from the Faculty Offices. These details are also summarised in the *University Regulations – Undergraduate Student Guide* which is published on the Academic Office section on the University's website: <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/university-regulations-student-guide/>

Avoiding Plagiarism

Coursework, dissertations, or creative work are meant to be your own original work. Obviously you will use the work of others. Not only is this inevitable, it is expected.

All scholarship builds on the work of others. The important thing to remember is always to acknowledge your sources. Your School will provide sessions on referencing and plagiarism but as a general rule of thumb observe the following guidelines:

- Anything that is copied or quoted from another source, including electronic sources such as the internet, must be in quotation marks and attributed to the original author. This may be in the body of the text or as a footnote. Full details of a source should be contained in a bibliography. Whatever method is used, always acknowledge your source and give full details of it (i.e. author, date, page number).

- Synthesising the work of others involves putting their ideas into your words. These are fine, but again, acknowledge your source. This can be done in a number of ways depending on the context. For example: 'Hart (2003, 52) maintains that...' 'Hart (2003, 52) provides evidence for...': 'It is argued, or submitted by Hart (2003, 52) that...' Then give the source of the original work.
- Where you are generally indebted for your ideas to one or two main sources, this can be a bit trickier. If the ideas or the way they are presented come from one or two sources make this clear. Do the same if they come from lectures. It is important not to claim originality where it does not exist but to indicate in general where the information comes from.
- Full citations in timed unseen examinations are obviously not expected, but you should indicate general indebtedness and always credit any quotations you have managed to remember.

The golden rule is; **'if in doubt, provide references'**. Consult your tutors if you have any problems, in particular with the method of citing books and articles, which may differ from subject to subject. There are no penalties for asking for advice and guidance; there are severe penalties for plagiarism and failure to reference means your work could be considered to be plagiarised.

Other types of Unfair Practice

There are other types of unfair practice, including, but not limited to producing work as a group where it is an individual task (called collusion), fabricating data or making false claims to have carried out research, using the service of an essay bank/essay mill, having an unauthorised source of information in an examination, prohibited communication during an examination. The same regulations, procedures and penalties apply to all types of unfair practice.

Presentation

Structure

Your assignment must be well structured. Please see 'Assessment' section for further guidance.

Word count policy

Learners must adhere to the word count specified for the assignment within a margin of $\pm 10\%$ of the total word count.

Font

Please use the Arial font. Text must be no smaller than font 11.

Spacing

A minimum of 1.5 spacing must be used.

Assessment Deadline Dates

The University of Wales Trinity Saint David has strict deadline dates that must be adhered to. Please check with your tutor what your deadline is.

The University's procedures for determining compensatory measures for students with a long-term impairment and the University's procedures for handling claims where extenuating circumstances have adversely affected a student's performance is available on the University's website at: <http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/>

Confidentiality

Where candidates are using information that deals with sensitive material or issues, please anonymise using numbers so that the information cannot be attributable to the persons or organisations involved.

Referencing

Learners must identify and acknowledge ALL sources, methodologies, theories, quotes or applications used.

The Harvard referencing style must be used within the main body text as well as within the bibliography. Please see Moodle for further assistance on how to reference the following: -

- Books
- Electronic books
- Journal articles
- Electronic journals
- Websites
- Publications by governments and other organisations
- Newspapers
- Television / radio programmes
- Film / Video / DVD
- Conference papers and presentations
- Email

Submission process

Electronic Copy

Learners must send an electronic copy of their assignment to wbl@uwtsd.ac.uk. A sample of submissions will be put through plagiarism software. Acceptable electronic file types are .doc .docm .docx .rtf .pdf.

Methodologies and Theories

Here are some examples of different theories and models for a variety of themes.

Reflection and learning

- Gibbs – Reflective Cycle – Learning by doing
- Kolb – Theory of experiential learning
- Dewey – Theory of Experiential Education
- Richard Boyatzis theory of self-directed learning
- Schön – Reflective Cycle – Reflection ‘on action’ and reflection ‘in action’

Communication

- Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham - Johari’s window
- Albert Mehrabian - Mehrabian’s communication model
- 7 C’s of communication

Team related theories

- Dr. R. M. Belbin - 9 types
- Bruce Tuckman - Forming, storming, norming and performing
- The Colour Works model (devised by Insights Learning & Development)
- Myers Briggs

Motivation

- Abraham Maslow - Hierarchy of needs
- McClelland’s Human Motivation Theory
- Herzberg’s Motivators and Hygiene Factors
- Dr David Sirota - Three-factor theory

Leadership

- John Adair
- Douglas McGregor - Theory X and Theory Y
- Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid
- Hersey-Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory

Change

- Kurt Lewin - Unfreezing, Change, Refreezing
- Beckhard and Harris’ Change Equation
- Kotter’s 8-Step Change Model

Management

- Henri Fayol’s 14 Principles of Management
- Mintzberg’s management roles

Assignment – Part D – Getting a good mark

(Taken from: Cottrell, S. 2013. The Study Skills Handbook. 4th Ed. Palgrave, Hampshire.)

What

- An essay is a piece of writing with a structure
- Usually written in a formal, academic style
- Keep strictly to the learning outcomes / essay title

Why

- Explore a topic in detail
- Develop and organise your own ideas through writing
- Develop your writing skills
- Express your views about a topic
- Engage with critical debates in your subject

How to get a good mark?

Good marks are awarded for work which: -

- Meets the set criteria (learning outcomes in the module descriptor) and follows appropriate conventions
- Shows understanding of the key issues and reflect on them
- Is well structured and organised
- Demonstrates good background reading
- Develops a strong argument and presents a clear position on the issue
- Uses evidence and examples to support arguments, points and conclusions
- Indicates the relationship between issues and concepts within the subject area
- Reveals some thought and reflection
- Is succinct, well-expressed, properly referenced and error-free

Even better marks for these in addition to the above:

- Engages actively with subject-related debates in a thought-provoking way
- Demonstrates a deeper and more subtle understanding of the significance of the issues and evidence, drawing out complexities or nuances
- Synthesises material well.

Critical writing V's descriptive writing

Descriptive writing	Critical writing
States what happened	Identifies the significance
States what something is like	Evaluates strengths and weaknesses
Gives the story to far	Weights one piece of information against another
Outlines the order in which things happened	Makes reasoned judgements
Instructs how to do something	Argues a case according to the evidence
Lists the main elements of a theory	Shows why something will work (best)
Notes a method used	Identifies whether something is appropriate or suitable
States when something occurred	Identifies why the timing is of importance
States the different components	Weights up the importance of component parts
States options	Gives reasons for selecting each option
Lists details	Evaluates the relative significance of details
Lists in an order	Structures the information in order of importance
States links between items	States links between items Shows the relevance of links between pieces of information
Gives information or reports findings	Evaluates information and draws conclusions

Questions to consider in an essay

In general, when working in a critical way you will be asking questions such as those below.

1. Why?
2. How far?
3. How much?
4. How often?
5. To what extent?
6. How do we know this is true?
7. How reliable is this source?
8. What could be going on below the surface?
9. What do we **not** know about this?
10. Which is preferable
11. For what reasons

Good and bad critical reflection

(Taken from: Cottrell, S. 2011. Critical Thinking Skills. 2nd Ed. Palgrave, Hampshire.)

Aspect	Good Critical Reflection	Poor Critical Reflection
1. Experience	Draws on personal, group or workplace experience as a means of testing out theory or learning new lessons, looking at experiences with a critical eye.	Assumes 'experience' is an end in itself; that one's own experience is typical of others' without good evidence that this is so; that experience equates to 'insight', without bringing a critical eye to it.
2. Personal responsibility	The best critical reflection demonstrates integrity both in focussing on one's personal role, such as the assumptions brought to a situation or actions taken or omitted, and in taking responsibility for the consequences of these.	Poor critical reflection finds ways of deflecting blame onto other people or the context itself for the way events unfolded. Alternatively, personal responsibility is addressed in a superficial way, so that the relation of action and consequence is not considered in depth. It is also poor practice to assume personal responsibility and guilt for matters that are not simply down to oneself.
3. Focus	Selects a focus such as a particular time-period, set of events, specific kids of incident or examples of interactions.	Rambles around or covers too many dimensions so it isn't clear what is the focus of the reflection.
4. Scale	The focus is broad enough to offer challenge and meaningful insights but can be reasonably explored in the timescale and word limit.	Is either too narrow to provide the insights needed or too broad to look at things in any depth.
5. Direction	However it may start, good critical reflection beings to take direction as the person starts to identify, and then focus on, selected themes for closer attention.	Rambles or hops about rather than finding a direction.
6. Depth	Delves below the surface: it picks up on initial thoughts and insights, analysing these further with the aim of gaining deeper insights or broader applications.	Is superficial. It doesn't demonstrate any interest in burrowing beneath the surface to understand more.
7. Challenge	Usually tackles a difficult area or enters difficult terrain, such as matters that are personally difficult, or issues that are complex and don't lent themselves to easy answers	Tends to stay within safe territory or deals with difficult issues in a superficial way or doesn't seem to take the person forward in their understanding.

8. Theory	Draws on relevant theoretical standpoints, research, or established professional practice in ways that demonstrate how these have helped understanding. Where relevant, it relates the particular incident to broader social and political issues.	Draws only on the person's own ideas experiences and anecdotes, or makes superficial passing references to theory and research.
9. Critically	Brings a searching, critical eye to the focus of the reflection, to emerging insights, and to any theories or sources of information. This critically is used to take the person forward in their understanding of the core emerging issues, such as by challenging their own ideas and actions, or showing how their experiences supports or challenges existing knowledge.	Is preoccupied mainly with describing situations, content or events. May include critical analysis but this doesn't seem to be used in a way that really develops an understanding of the core emerging issues.
10. Insight	The reflection takes the person forward in their understanding, such that they can make more sense of their situation, work or study, manage better within it, do things differently, apply understandings to new contexts etc.	The reflection gives little indication that the person has moved forward in their understanding of the context or issue, or self-knowledge.
11. End-points	The process of reflection may take the person in many different directions. However, by the end, they have stood back, drawn out the key messages of what they have learnt, and summarised these as conclusions or recommendations.	The reflection reads more as description of a process or rambling free association. The lessons learned are not drawn out clearly as conclusions or recommendations.
12. Audience	If this is to be used in academic, work or public contexts, the writing up of reflection demonstrates a sound understanding of ethical considerations and stylistic or academic contentions that may apply. Issues of confidentiality have been addressed appropriately.	The reflection is handed in or made public without all due care being taken to ensure that confidentiality and other data protection issues area addressed; no thought is given to how to make the reflection manageable for others to read.

Critical thinking

Use the following checklist to analyse a piece of writing: -

Critical questions	Analysis of the writing
What is the main line of reasoning (argument)?	
Is the line of reasoning clear both in the introduction and in the conclusion?	
What is the key evidence used to support the line of argument? Is the evidence presented in a way that develops the argument and leads clearly to the conclusion?	
When was the evidence produced? Is it up to date? Is it still relevant?	
Is there sufficient evidence to prove the case? Is the evidence relevant? What might be missing?	
What (if any) would have been a better order in which to present the evidence so as to strengthen the line of reasoning?	
Are there any examples of flawed reasoning? Attempts to persuade the reader through an appeal to the emotions? Is evidence interpreted and used correctly?	
Has the writer given sufficient consideration to alternative points of view? Give examples	