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ACADEMIC GUIDELINES


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OUR PROGRAMMES

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Our Courses are On Campus and Online. Further, we have Full-time and Part-time studies.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SCHOLARSHIP: THE CONTEXT FOR ACADEMIC WORK</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• GETTING STARTED</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ESSAY PAPER</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MULTIPLE CHOICE TESTS AND QUIZZES</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• READING TESTS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CASE STUDIES</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• PRESENTATIONS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• INTERVIEWS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DISCUSSION FORUMS</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY WRITING 14

- GENERAL INFORMATION 14
- THE WRITING PROCESS 15
- TOPIC ANALYSIS AND BRAINSTORMING 15
- RESEARCH: GATHERING INFORMATION 20
- THESIS STATEMENT 21
- ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY REQUIREMENTS 22

## WRITING STYLES 26

- NARRATIVE 26
- DESCRIPTIVE 26
- EXPOSITORY 26
- PERSUASIVE / ARGUMENTATIVE 26
**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**ADDITIONAL SKILLS NEEDED FOR ACADEMIC WRITING** 27

- OBJECTIVE / SUBJECTIVE WRITING 27
- REFLECTIVE WRITING 27
- CRITICAL / EVALUATIVE WRITING 28
- ANALYTICAL WRITING 28

**GENDER IN LANGUAGE** 29

**PLAGIARISM** 30

- WHAT IS PLAGIARISM? 30
- COLLABORATIVE WORK 30

**FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS** 31

- FORMATTING 31
- PAGINATION (NUMBERING YOUR PAGES) 31
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MARGINS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARAGRAPHS</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSIGNMENT LENGTH</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVER PAGE AND COLLATION (ASSEMBLING OF ASSIGNMENT)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE CONTENTS</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEADINGS</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCING</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE GENERAL ELEMENTS IN A REFERENCE</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN-TEXT REFERENCING</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLE REFERENCING</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUOTATIONS</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACRONYMS</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THIS DOCUMENT AND THE INFORMATION THEREOF IS A PROPERTY OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, CORNERSTONE INSTITUTE. Do not modify or use for commercial purpose.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARKING SCHEME</th>
<th>39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• APPENDIX 4 - COMPLETED ASSIGNMENT</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• FACTORS</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• STRATEGIES</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CONCLUSION</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• APPENDIX 5 - REFERENCE EXAMPLES</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
1. INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains basic information about some of the study skills you will need to help you get through your academic journey successfully. This includes information about the different types of written assignments; how to format, arrange and technically structure written assignments; and how to correctly cite and use references in your work. This guide is meant to give you some generic insight into what the general requirements of tertiary education and academic writing are. More specific, individual guidance on assignment writing is provided by the Student Services Department (email sdss@cornerstone.ac.za).

1. Scholarship: the context for academic work

At Cornerstone our goal is to guide you in becoming scholars of your profession and of society. We define scholars as people who have the ability to continuously and independently reflect on the daily lived experiences of people, and then apply their knowledge and analysis to change their immediate environment for the better. This means we want you to be a thought-leader and a leading practitioner in your profession and community - a public intellectual and change leader. This is what we call praxis - to both reflect on and change the world.

So, a great scholar outlines a problem, make sense of it in theoretical terms and then develops and recommends a practical solution to solve the problem. You begin the process of becoming a great scholar by how you learn and exercise skills of reading and writing in a scholarly way, which is what these guidelines will help you with.

1.1.1 Ethics of scholarship: what to never compromise on

To become a great scholar requires you to never compromise on two things, namely to develop and present your own original conclusions and ideas, and to credit whose ideas you have worked with in developing your own. These are the core ethical requirements of good scholarship.

In scholarship we are interested in learning new things, which means we are interested in new perspectives that help us make sense of old and new problems of professions, of societies and of life in general - to only repeat what others already said does not make you a great scholar or change leader.

A great scholar offers real solutions by first outlining what we already know about the problem (what others already said as done in a ‘literature review’), then offering his/her way of making sense of the problem that continues on from what we already know (‘analysis’ of data you collected), and offers new solutions to the problem (‘discussion’, ‘conclusions’ and ‘recommendations’).

If all this seems somewhat theoretical, don’t worry, sections 7 (Plagiarism) and 9 (Referencing) gives you practical guidelines on how to adhere to the ethical requirements of scholarship.

We will assess your writing specifically in terms of these two questions: have you attempted to offer an original idea, and have you referenced properly?
1. INTRODUCTION

1.2. Getting started

Organising your time

Research has shown that the most important factor that contributes to students’ success in higher learning is their use of time. Whether you are studying full-time or part-time, you will need to develop some time managing skills.

Every credit you have registered for equals 10 hours of work (this includes lectures, readings, assessments, etc.). Therefore, if you have registered for 128 credits for the year, you will need to complete a total of 1280 hours for your studies. There is approximately 30 academic weeks in a year which would require 43 hours of study per week. It is important that you plan to have sufficient time to meet this requirement.

1.2.1. Practical suggestions for organising your time:

1.2.1.1. Work out an estimate of the required time for the credits you have registered for. You can do this by multiplying the credits you registered for by 10, then dividing it by 30 academic weeks for the year. Further divide this by the number of days you have available in the week (Be realistic. If you do not have 7 days available do not work on this number). You should now get an idea of how many hours you will need to spend on your studies per day.

1.2.1.2. On a weekly schedule, fill in all the essential activities on which you spend time. The blocks left over are potentially available for studying. Use free lecture periods for small study tasks, e.g. going through lecture notes, or getting books out of the library.

1.2.1.3. The next step is to find out exactly what your commitments are for each course. Find out when tests and examinations are to be written. This information can be found in your module outline for each course. Record all this information beforehand. Try to fit the hours you estimated above into this schedule.

1.2.1.4. Now you should be able to see at a glance when work will be piling up. A lot of time is wasted trying to obtain reserved prescribed books just before an assignment. Planning your assignments well in advance will help you to avoid the rush and save valuable time.

1.2.1.5. Finally, effective time use depends on knowing yourself and the circumstances under which you work best.
1.2.1.6. Below is an example of a weekly schedule for a term.

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A plan is only as good as how effectively it is carried out. Stick to your plan and if you need to, pair up with a peer or request assistance from Student Services to help keep you accountable.
2. TYPE OF ASSESSMENTS

Below is a list of some of the assessment types you will encounter. These are the most common types, however, it is not an exhaustive list as lecturers may choose various other types of assessments for their relevant modules.

2.1 Essay paper
Essay papers are the main form of assessments you will be required to do. Comprehensive guidance on essay writing is provided throughout this booklet.

2.2 Multiple choice tests and quizzes
These tests and quizzes will require that you pay attention in class, read the prescribed readings and have some level of engagement with the topics and materials related to the module. They are usually short quizzes to assess the learning that took place over a certain period of time. Your module outline and the lecturer for each module will guide you on what information the tests and quizzes will assess.

2.3 Reading tests
Some module assessments will consist of a combination of reading tests. These reading tests may take place weekly or a few times throughout the term or semester. The focus will be on specific readings or a set of readings as required by the lecturer.

2.4 Case studies
Depending on the module, you will be required to either construct a case study or do an analysis on a case provided to you. While case studies generally require that you analyse a particular situation or context, there may be specific requirements based on the assignment question. Generally you are expected to provide an understanding of the case, do an analysis based on context and sometimes theory, as well as make suggestions and recommendations pertaining to what the question asks of you.

2.5 Presentations
For some modules you may be required to do individual or group presentations. These are oral assessments requiring you to present your work in front of the class using PowerPoint presentation slides and other forms of media. Presentations are usually based on particular topics covered in the module and may need to be accompanied by an additional summary or reflective paper.

2.1 Essay paper
Essay papers are the main form of assessments you will be required to do. Comprehensive guidance on essay writing is provided throughout this booklet.
2. TYPE OF ASSESSMENTS

2.6 Interviews

Some modules require that you conduct interviews with one or more people. Depending on the assignment question, you will be assessed on your interviewing skills, as well as your ability to answer the assignment question. Interview assessments are often accompanied by a written piece of work based on the interview. You will need to present the findings of your interview, along with providing some analysis and reflection according to the specific assignment requirements.

2.7 Discussion forums

Discussion forums are mainly used in our online modules, however, contact modules may also include these as a form of assessment. You will be provided with a topic which you need to discuss on the FUNDA platform. The extent of engagement in these forums will vary according to the module. Generally, you will have to make an initial contribution of your own in response to the assignment question. You will also need to comment on the posts of others. The module outline will specify the length of each contribution you will need to make.
3. ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY

3.1 General information

Writing an essay/assignment is a process that requires a fair bit of practice and work. As a general rule, written assignments should be properly written to effectively convey the intended meanings of the work. Hence, students are asked to pay attention to the language used, as the level of coherence (consistency) in one's work can greatly influence the final grade of a written assignment. In other words, if the reader cannot understand what the student is saying, then the point will not be made. Below are some guidelines on how to go about essay writing. However, the steps outlined have general application for almost any other assignment that you will be given.

Good essays (or written assignments) are usually the ones that follow the writing process outlined here:
3. ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY

3.2 The writing process

3.2.1 Topic Analysis & brainstorming

To start the writing process it is important to plan the assessment by doing a topic analysis and make use of a scratch outline (such as a mind map). This plan will direct your research and reading and enable you to see if you have forgotten anything important or if you have included any irrelevant material.

Most questions you answer will have words in the title that are intended to show you what kind of response is required. It is also important to work out the content of a question, but this should not be too difficult. What you need to look at very closely are the direction words which indicate how you should deal with the content.

---

Example of a topic analysis:

**Full assignment question:**

Identify the needs which Rogers says drives an individual and explain how these needs shape the counselling process.

**Direction words:** Identify and Explain

**Content words:**

- Needs that drive a person according to Rogers
- The counselling process
THE LIST KEYWORDS & ACTION REQUIRED

The list below is a summary of some of the most common direction words – try to familiarise yourself with them. These words are important for you to understand when analysing assignment questions.

01
KEYWORD: ANALYSE
ACTION REQUIRED:
Find and describe the main ideas, show how they are related and why they are important.

02
KEYWORD: ASSESS
ACTION REQUIRED:
Consider and evaluate the extent which something is true. Provide relevant evidence that supports your conclusion.

03
KEYWORD: CLARIFY
ACTION REQUIRED:
Make a concept, theory or a relationship clearer.

04
KEYWORD: COMMENT
ACTION REQUIRED:
Discuss briefly.

05
KEYWORD: COMPARE
ACTION REQUIRED:
Show both the similarities and differences, emphasising similarities.

06
KEYWORD: CONTRAST
ACTION REQUIRED:
Describe differences.
**07**

**KEYWORD:** CRITICISE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Give your judgement or reasoned opinion of something, giving its good and bad points. Your opinion should be supported by facts and/or arguments. (Remember to criticise does not necessarily mean to attack)

---

**08**

**KEYWORD:** DEFINE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Give the precise meaning of something, with no detail show or prove an opinion

---

**09**

**KEYWORD:** DEMONSTRATE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Write a detailed account in a logical sequence

---

**07**

**KEYWORD:** CRITICISE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Give your judgement or reasoned opinion of something, giving its good and bad points. Your opinion should be supported by facts and/or arguments. (Remember to criticise does not necessarily mean to attack)

---

**08**

**KEYWORD:** DEFINE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Give the precise meaning of something, with no detail show or prove an opinion

---

**09**

**KEYWORD:** DEMONSTRATE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Write a detailed account in a logical sequence

---

**10**

**KEYWORD:** DESCRIBE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Give a detailed account, and provide good and bad points

---

**11**

**KEYWORD:** DISCUSS

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Explore and expand upon an idea or concept

---

**12**

**KEYWORD:** DISTINGUISH

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Show the main differences

---

**13**

**KEYWORD:** ELABORATE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Provide more details

---

**14**

**KEYWORD:** EVALUATE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Discuss advantages and disadvantages, with your opinion

---

**15**

**KEYWORD:** EXAMINE

**ACTION REQUIRED:**
Identify key points and the most important information, while providing reasons for why this information has been identified as the most crucial for the topic
16
KEYWORD: EXPLAIN
ACTION REQUIRED:
Give reasons for something

17
KEYWORD: EXPLORE
ACTION REQUIRED:
Consider different viewpoints and perspectives, by taking a questioning approach to the assignment instruction

18
KEYWORD: IDENTIFY
ACTION REQUIRED:
List and describe

19
KEYWORD: ILLUSTRATE
ACTION REQUIRED:
Give examples to make your meaning clear

20
KEYWORD: INTERPRET
ACTION REQUIRED:
Show the meaning and relevance of data or other material presented

21
KEYWORD: OUTLINE
ACTION REQUIRED:
Give a short summary, giving main points and omitting minor details

22
KEYWORD: RELATE
ACTION REQUIRED:
(a) tell the story, or (b) show the connections between things,

23
KEYWORD: REFLECT
ACTION REQUIRED:
Give your opinion, thoughts and feelings about both the content that you have learnt and how you have learnt it

24
KEYWORD: REVIEW
ACTION REQUIRED:
Similar to critically viewing something. Thoroughly look at various aspects of a subject
Once you have determined the direction and specific requirements of the assignment, you can use this as a framework for brainstorming ideas related to your initial plan based on the topic analysis. By brainstorming ideas early in the writing process, you will have more direction when going into your research and be more focused when doing the necessary reading.
3. ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY WRITING

3.3 Research: Gathering information

Once you have a good grasp of how to deal with the assignment question, you will need to identify appropriate sources of information and conduct your research. The quality of your sources and your critical evaluation of them will have a profound effect on the quality of your document. High quality sources are generally those that were relatively recently published, of an appropriate depth for the nature of the assignment, and are themselves well documented.

There will always be “classic” sources that retain their value even with age (such as the Bible), but generally the older the text the less relevant it is to contemporary issues and the less it has benefited from more recent discoveries and methodologies.

Sources of information:

• For some assignments dictionary articles may prove useful; for others dictionary articles will be too superficial.

• Even with the internet at your fingertips, the library is still a reliable resource with rich information.

• Peer-reviewed journal articles that are pertinent (applicable) to your topic may be helpful sources of information, though the academic quality of journals varies considerably. You will have access to EBSCO which has a range of databases for you to search for journal articles, as well as e-books.

• Evaluating the quality of internet sources is often very difficult; as such sources are frequently the thoughts of an individual that have not been subjected to rigorous academic scrutiny. One must exercise great caution when consulting such sources. A research effort that only consults internet sources is generally inadequate.

• When conducting your research be sure to note the author and publication details that are necessary to give due credit to the source (we call this referencing).

• Remember that dictionary articles should be identified by the contributor (often identified at the end of the article and/or in the introductory pages of the dictionary), with the editor(s) also listed in the reference list.

Reading

When reading you should consider the following:

• Establish the purpose of your reading. Are you reading for a class, discussion or assignment?

• Plan your reading time. Make sure that you break your reading up into manageable parts.

• Focus on the topic for a particular week or the question of an assignment.

• Get direction - know where you need to be going with your reading. What is the destination? Then map out how you will get there.

• In the case of an assignment let your topic analysis and brainstorming be your guide for your reading. Your planning should always direct both your information gathering and your reading.

• Only read relevant information. Be selective about what you read. Always ask yourself if what you are reading will help you to accomplish your goal.
EXAMPLES:

1. Example of an expository (explanatory) thesis statement:

   1.1 The life of the typical college student [topic] is characterized by time spent studying, attending class, and socializing with peers [comment].

   1.2 Research question: What does the life of a typical student look like?

2. Example of an analytical thesis statement:

   2.1 An analysis of the college admission process [topic] reveals one challenge facing counsellors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds [comment].

   2.2 Research question: What challenges do counsellors face in the college admission process?

A thesis statement is not a statement of fact, but a claim that you will endeavour to demonstrate or prove in your paper. It is much more specific than a topic or a title.

The research question is the basic form of inquiry you undertake with your paper.

3. ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY WRITING

3.4 Thesis Statement

You cannot write a good research paper if you have not decided what research question you are writing about. A broad topic is not enough – you must know what particular aspect of the topic your research deals with, and be able to state in clear and specific terms what exactly you will be doing in your essay. It is therefore important that you learn to develop a thesis statement.

A thesis statement is a sentence that explicitly identifies the purpose of the paper or previews its main ideas. It usually appears toward the end of the introduction and explains in some detail what it is that you intend to write about.

At the research stage, you need to have a working thesis, which is a statement of the problem. It helps
Example Introduction:
Maintaining enrolment of a consistent group of students from the influx of freshman to the completion of their degree is a feat most universities have been unable to master (Kemp 2016). Therefore, the topic of student retention will be explored. The exploration will include a description and explanation of factors related to student retention rates. In addition, a variety of retention strategies will be discussed and evaluated. A better knowledge of the factors and strategies of student retention will be gained.

3. ASSIGNMENT / ESSAY WRITING

to formulate it in two parts namely: Topic, comment and research question/problem

• The topic is the subject you are researching.

• The comment is an important point about the topic, the one that you will deal with.

• The research problem/question refers to the question you want to answer with your paper.

Planning outline:
You have to decide how to arrange the information you have gathered. It is very important to decide which information is important and how one piece of information is related to another. Your lecturer wants to see how well you can organise and evaluate material. By creating an outline in the planning stage you will have more direction for your writing and reduce the writing time.

3.5 Assignment / Essay Requirements
The content of written assignments can vary, but basically most written assignments include the following items in the following order:

• Cover page
• Table of contents
• The actual written part of the assignment
• List of references
• If necessary; figures, tables, and appendices
• Plagiarism declaration/Honour pledge

Essay Structure

• Introduction
• Body (arguments/essay content) – use subheadings. Do not simply use ‘Body’ as a heading
• Conclusion

Each of these 3 components are discussed in more detail below:

3.5.1 Introduction
Your essay should begin with an introduction. This is where you briefly introduce the questions/issues, which you will be addressing in the essay. A good introduction will:

• Arouse the reader’s interest
• Set the scene/provide some context
• Make a general statement about the topic
• Explain how you interpret the assignment question
• Define or explain key terms if necessary
• Give a brief outline of which issues you will explore, and in which order
3.5.2 The Body

This is the section where you develop all of the arguments for your position. The body of your essay contains the points outlined in your introduction, divided into paragraphs:

Paragraph 1

- Covers the first thing you said you would address.
- The first sentence (the topic sentence) introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
- Supporting sentences develop the topic.
- Include relevant examples, details, evidence, quotations, and references.
- A concluding, linking or transition sentence should be included at the end of your paragraph.

Paragraph 2 and other paragraphs

- The first sentence links the paragraph to the previous paragraph then introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
- The paragraphs following throughout your essay should generally follow the same structure as the paragraph above.

Example Paragraphs:

In order to explore factors that impact student retention rates in higher education, factors that influence dropout rates need to be addressed. Since adjustment to tertiary education is such a major undertaking, students who experience difficulty adjusting may have a tendency to drop out of university (Sevinç & Gizir 2004). It can be an overwhelming transition, influenced by a variety of factors. These factors, which are directly related to retention, can be categorized into three major groupings namely academic, social, and emotional factors (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt 1994).

Academic adjustment has a relatively high influence on retention rates as this adjustment is directly related to the purpose of a student. A student’s academic ability is a large determining factor of retention (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt 1994). If a student does not have the academic ability to meet the standards of tertiary education, they are very likely to drop out (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt 1994).
## LINKING/TRANSITIONING WORDS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>To indicate a contrast</th>
<th>To provide an illustration</th>
<th>To extend a point</th>
<th>To show cause and effect/conclusion</th>
<th>To show the next step</th>
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<td>however</td>
<td>for example</td>
<td>similarly</td>
<td>therefore</td>
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<td>equally</td>
<td>accordingly</td>
<td>to begin/start with</td>
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<td>in addition</td>
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<td>but</td>
<td>a typical/particular/</td>
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<td>in brief</td>
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<tr>
<td>despite this</td>
<td>key example</td>
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<td>it might be concluded</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>notwithstanding</td>
<td>in particular</td>
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<td>accepting/assuming</td>
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<td>in spite of</td>
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<td>resulting from</td>
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<td>nevertheless</td>
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<td></td>
<td>in consequence of this</td>
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<td>yet</td>
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<td>as a result</td>
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<td>instead</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>consequence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>although</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>owing to/due to the fact that</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.3 The Conclusion

- Draws everything together.
- Summarises the main themes.
- States your general conclusions.
- Makes it clear why those conclusions are important or significant.
- Does not introduce new material.
- In the last sentence, sum up your argument very briefly, linking it to the title. Show how you answered the assignment question.
- Set the issues in a broader perspective/wider context.
- Discuss what you have failed to do – e.g. answers not clear, space was limited.
- Suggest further questions of your own.

**Example Conclusion:**

Since institutions all over the world are facing the challenge of student retention, it is a valuable topic of discussion. Therefore, certain factors impacting student retention were explored in three main areas. Additional factors, not in the three areas, were also discussed. These factors were identified and described in relation to their contribution to student retention. Various retention strategies were also investigated and evaluated. Owing to the fact that little research has been done on multifaceted areas influencing retention, it would be useful to do more in depth research on the subject.

A full essay structure with examples of the above items, is provided in Appendix 4.
4. WRITING STYLES

When writing academically, you are required to have a wide range of writing skills. This includes understanding that different types of assessments serve different purposes and therefore you need to use specific writing styles. Narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive essays are the most common writing styles you will be required to use. However, each of these may sometimes require you to use other writing skills; such as objectivity, subjectivity, reflection and critical analytical thinking.

4.1 Narrative

Narrative writing is a personalised style of writing.

- Include actual lived experiences.
- Take a story telling approach – include the setting, characters and a plot.
- The main aim is to entertain and draw the reader in.

4.2 Descriptive

Descriptive writing does not simply describe for the sake of description. In academic writing, description is used for the purpose of making meaning.

- Describe details using descriptive language.
- Make use of adverbs, adjectives and other descriptive language.
- Make use of imagery to entertain the reader.

4.3 Expository

The main purpose of an expository essay is to provide explanations. This may take the form of various other essays such as comparative, analytical and cause/effect essays.

- Explain the details of a topic.
- Base details on facts and not opinion.
- Present balanced views about a topic.
- Provide support.

4.4 PERSUASIVE / ARGUMENTATIVE

The main purpose is to persuade/convince the reader of your viewpoint in specific ways.

- Present a particular position or viewpoint.
- Include all sides of an argument.
- Be clear about your argument.
- Provide supporting evidence, but include your opinion.
- Persuade the reader of your viewpoint.
5. ADDITIONAL SKILLS NEEDED FOR ACADEMIC WRITING

5.1 Objective/Subjective writing

Academic writing is not simply about giving your opinion on a subject. Depending on the type of assignment or essay, you will need to be objective or subjective. Objectivity is a neutral style of writing, which does not include any of your own views or opinion. You present facts without taking sides. Subjectivity in writing expresses your own viewpoint in relation to the topic. Your writing will be more biased as your personal feelings influences your writing when you are subjective.

5.2 Reflective writing

Writing reflectively is not just about the information you have learnt. Instead it is how you have learnt this information that is essential. Reflective writing is therefore about your experience of the learning process. It is your opinion, thoughts and feelings about both the content that you have learnt and how you have ‘learnt it. Reflective writing is about looking at the good and bad points of the learning process. Thus, reflecting on your strengths and weaknesses is important for this type of writing. It is less evidenced and more personal.

Reflection is about one of two things or both. It is learning that takes place through the process of thinking. It is also your personal response to experiences, situations and information. Reflective writing is therefore your own processing of information. It usually starts with you – you should examine your own thoughts before examining the thoughts of others. It involves examining your knowledge on the topic, previous experiences of the topic and why you think the way that you do. Evaluating your values and beliefs and how they influence your thinking becomes an essential part of this process.

How to write reflectively:

Writing reflectively could be a requirement for part of an assignment or an entire assignment. Below are some general principles for writing reflectively, however, always check your module outline first. Different lecturers require different types of information.

What you need to include:

• How you are able to relate to the topic.
• What your thoughts are – what is interesting, what is difficult, what you agree on or disagree about and why.
• What you view differently from your previous knowledge on the topic.
• Your questions.
• Different opinions to those that you learnt.
• Any new ideas.
• What steps you need to take in your thoughts and actions next.
• Making a connection between what was learnt and your own experiences.
5.3 Critical/Evaluative Writing

The purpose of writing critically is to evaluate a given text.

- While your main analysis will be of the required text, it is necessary to engage with other sources of information as well. This will allow you to reasonably evaluate the main text, with all the important information.
- Critical writing requires that you question the text.
- It does not have to be a negative evaluation of the text. Instead, it should be viewing both the positive and negative points of the main text in relation to other related readings or knowledge. You should explore both the strengths and weaknesses of the text or topic.
- Being critical should demonstrate that you have taken other perspectives, theories or approaches into consideration.
- It should also demonstrate your own stance on the topic.
- You should look at the text in context not just the content. This includes the purpose of the text, its intended audience and the structure. Based on these aspects, you will form a judgement of the text.
- While critical papers are specific assignments you may receive, critical thinking is also a required skill that you will need to demonstrate in most of your assignments.

5.4 Analytical Writing

This requires you to break the information into sections.

- You should segregate the different concepts and understand how they connect to each other.
- Essential to an analysis is viewing the evidence and deciding how convincing or unconvincing the evidence is.
- You also need to provide your own opinion on why you think the text is convincing or unconvincing.
- Analytical writing requires both critical evaluation and reflective skills.

Depending on the type of assessment, you will be required to demonstrate one or more of the above writing skills. More particularly, remember that different essay styles will determine the writing skills that you will need to use.
6. GENDER IN LANGUAGE

Gender exclusive language is generally recognised as inappropriate for academic writing and should be avoided. Below are some guidelines in how to successfully do this.

“A person shows his commitment in their academics by ...” can be dealt with in the following ways:

- Using the plural: “People show their commitment...”
- Using the passive voice: “Commitment in academics is shown by...”
- Eliminating the pronoun: “A person shows commitment...”

Using the forms of “man” (men)
- chairman: chairperson

Male generic forms
- man in the street: average people, people generally
- man-kind: humanity, all people
- forefathers: ancestors, forebears
7. **PLAGIARISM**

7.1 What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the taking of another person’s thoughts, words, judgments, ideas etc., and presenting them as your own.

Plagiarism is not only a form of cheating; it is theft and is thus a serious academic offense. All allegations of plagiarism will be investigated and may result in action being taken against the wrongdoer. All cases of plagiarism get reported to the Dean for our records. A charge of plagiarism, depending on the severity and/or recurrence, may result in a zero mark for the assignment or module, suspension or expulsion.

- Direct quotations, ideas, structures or diagrams from published and unpublished work must be referenced in the proper form.
- Paraphrasing must also be acknowledged and referenced.
- Creators of images and audio-visual presentations must also be acknowledged.
- Students should take particular care when referencing their work.

Generally, plagiarism can result in an automatic deduction of the final mark of the assessment:

- 5% for 1st-year modules,
- 10% for 2nd-year modules,
- 15% for 3rd-year modules and
- 20% for honours-level modules.
- Suspension or expulsion (reserved for repeated offenses).

In the case where a lecturer has decided to give the student an opportunity to resubmit with correction, the maximum amount to be awarded for the assessment upon resubmission is to be 50% (a pass mark).

7.2 Collaborative work

You are not allowed to collaborate on any individual assignments unless authorised by your lecturer. While you may discuss the assignment with your classmates, all work (including research, findings and notes) must be done independently. Unauthorised collaborative work is considered plagiarism as you are passing off someone else’s work as your own.

In the event of group work, such as presentations; the lecturer will indicate the extent of the collaboration and the individual delivery of the output and submitted work.

If you are unsure about how and what to reference you should seek more guidance which is available to you at the Student Services department.
8. FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS

8.1 Formatting
Narrative writing is a personalised style of writing.

- Papers should be typed and submitted in Microsoft Word.
- Papers are to be typed using 1.5 line spacing.
- Use either Arial (11 pitch) or Times New Roman (12 pitch) font.
- Papers are submitted on Funda. On the rare occasion that your paper is printed, this is to be on single sides of the paper only.

8.2 Pagination (numbering your pages)
Narrative writing is a personalised style of writing.

- The first number to appear will be on the first page of the text of the paper (i.e. the Introduction page).
- The number is placed at the top right hand of the paper. It should not be underlined or followed by a full stop.

8.3 Margins
- Margins are to be set at “Normal” (2.54cm all round).
- If you are going to bind the paper in some manner leave extra space on the left for the space lost in the binding.
- Do not type outside the prescribed margins.

8.4 Paragraphs
- Use the justified alignment (block format).
- The first line is not indented, but there must be an extra line between paragraphs to clearly indicate where one paragraph ends and the next begins.

8.5 Assignment length
- Lecturers will indicate in the module outlines a required or approximate length of a paper in the number of words written or number of pages required.
- Such guidelines for paper length are intended to refer to the length for the body of the assignment, not including the title page, table of contents or reference list.
- Include the word count at the end of your paper in block brackets. E.g. [Word count: 1520].

8.6 Cover Page and Collation (assembling of assignment)
- All lines should be centred as indicated in the sample cover page (Appendix 4). Follow the spacing guide on that page.
- The cover page is the front page, followed in order by the Table of Contents, the Introduction, the chapters in order (the body), the Conclusion and the Reference List.
- You are also required to attach a signed plagiarism declaration at the end of every assignment.
- The plagiarism declaration is found at the end of every module outline. Typing your full name and surname as a signature will suffice.
8. FORMAT INSTRUCTIONS

8.7 Table of Contents

- The Table of Contents should reflect the exact headings that are used in the paper. A numbering system is to be used for headings in the paper, with the same numbering system reflected in the Table of Contents.
- The title TABLE OF CONTENTS is bold and centred on the first line. Double space between the heading and the first entry.
- Spacing between further entries should be consistent.
- Reference list should not have a page number on your Table of Contents.
- Refer to a sample Table of Contents in Appendix 4.

8.8 Headings

- Capitalise headings.
- Differentiate headings and subheadings by means of any format tool e.g. bold, caps, italics etc.
9. REFERENCING

There are many different styles of referencing. Cornerstone, as a rule uses a modified form of Harvard, but also provides American Psychological Association (APA) style (for psychology students specifically). You will be required to reference using one of these referencing styles. The most important thing is that you understand the purpose of referencing and use it correctly and consistently, irrespective of the style your programme requires. You will be provided with referencing guides in each of your modules.

The authors of post-graduate publications include a bibliography in their work, which is a list of all sources consulted in their research for their publication, even those they do not directly cite. At post-grad level, students are expected to interact with and integrate a wide scope of material on their subject matter.

At undergrad level however, students are evaluated on which sources they use and how they are used. You will therefore only use a reference list in your assignment. Do not include sources you have not used and cited directly (this would be seen as “padding” your reference list). If you would like, you can include additional material you have consulted in a section labelled “Additional Readings”.

A good reference list is varied in its type of research (dictionary, books and journal articles, monographs) and in authors used. As noted above, all sources—especially Internet sources—must be carefully evaluated as to their quality and appropriateness.

9.1 The General elements in a reference

9.1.1 Author

- Identify the author by surname, followed by a comma and the author’s initials with a full-stop directly after each initial.
- When there is more than one author, follow the examples in the appendix. In some cases the organisation may function as the author, in these cases give the name of the organisation as the author.
- If no author can be found (e.g. Internet site, newspaper article), use “Anon.” in place of the author’s name. This is true even in cases where an editor exists.

9.1.2 Editor

- In edited books, the authors are usually cited either in the chapter they contributed, as one of many contributors to a book, or in an alphabetical list at the beginning of the book. In these instances, reference the author as you usually would (see examples below).
- On the rare occasion when a book is produced by an editor rather than an author, and no author is named, then the name of the editor is used at the beginning of the reference in place of the author’s name, followed by the abbreviation “Ed.” (or “Eds.” if more than one) e.g. Merchant, E.S. Ed.

9.1.3 Date of Publication

- In determining the date of publication, choose the last copyright date listed. If the book is a newer edition, use that date. Disregard dates referred to as reprint dates.
- If the date of publication is unknown, give the abbreviation “n.d.” If the list contains more than one item published by the same author in the same year add lower case letters immediately after the year to distinguish them. For example: 1998a.
9. REFERENCING

9.1.4 Title

- Titles of books are taken from the title page of a book and are written in exactly the same way as on the title page as far as wording and spelling are concerned.

- Subtitles, when present, should follow a colon and space immediately after the title.

- Only the first letter of the title and subtitle should be in uppercase, except for proper nouns e.g. Cape Town and acronyms e.g. HIV/AIDS.

- Titles of books, journals, magazines and newspapers should be italicised or underlined; either method is acceptable, as long as it is consistently applied.

- Titles of articles in a journal, magazine, newspaper, dictionary, or encyclopaedia are NOT italicised or underlined. In these instances, it is the title of the publication that is italicised or underlined.

9.1.5 Edition

- When a book is other than the first edition, the edition should be identified in the reference list after the title.

9.1.6 Place of Publisher

- Give only the first place of publication or the one most important as indicated by typography or layout.

- Add the country of publication for less known locations. If the place is uncertain, give a probable place, with a question mark and enclosed in square brackets e.g. [Johannesburg?): First South African Publishers.

9.1.7 Name of Publisher

- The name of the publisher follows the place of publication in the shortest form in which it can be identified and understood.

For example, refer to sample reference list on Appendix 3

9.2 In-text Referencing

Whenever you use, summarise, paraphrase, comment on, analyse, refer to or quote (etc.) another author’s ideas or words in any way, you must indicate this, in every instance in your text. This acknowledgement is known as documentation.

In-text referencing is necessary for two reasons:

- Firstly, credit should be given where credit is due. This is a matter of honesty. Students should not create the impression that the ideas expressed in their work are their own when they are actually somebody else’s.

- Secondly, documentation gives the reader an idea of the amount and kind of research the writer has done. Documentation enables the markers to see whether a student has done enough reading on the topic under discussion. It also shows them what kind of material the student has read, and enables them to recommend other works that may give different facts or opinions.

The reference will appear immediately following the text cited and consists of three parts: the author’s name, the year of publication, and the page number.
Example:
(Herman, 1998:87)

Please note the following variations:

• If there is no available date for a source – (Herman, n.d.:87).
• For Internet citations there are typically no page numbers e.g. (Majosi & Solomon, 2013).

When the author’s surname is used in the text, the year and page number should immediately follow the author’s surname.

Example:
Erickson (1985:450) argues that...

When citing an author who is cited by another author the text or reference should make clear that this is being done and the citation should refer to the source from which you have taken your information.

Example:
Erickson (1985:94) cites Bruce as saying...
or,
Bruce (as cited by Erickson 1985:94) states that...

When citing a group of authors in the body of your text, be sure to use the whole word “and” when listing them.

Example:
Herman, Karethi, Rogers and Jacobs (2010:77-81) argue that....

However, when listing more than one author in parentheses (brackets), the ampersand, “&”, is used.
Example:

Erickson (1985:94) cites Bruce as saying...
or,
Bruce (as cited by Erickson 1985:94) states that...

When citing a group of authors in the body of your text, be sure to use the whole word “and” when listing them.

Example:

(Simon, Garfunkel & Weber, 1980:311)

9.3 Bible referencing

The Bible, and other religious texts, are considered to be valuable sources for all Theology and Biblical Studies modules, as well as for illustrating and explaining the values and cultural perspectives that are behind an argument. The Bible and other religious texts are not considered to be “academic” sources when a set number of sources have been requested for a particular assignment.

You should write the reference out in full and include the version used. You should only include the version abbreviation if you have used multiple versions. Appendix 2 provides you with a list of abbreviations should you need to use it.

Example:

(Psalm 23:1-4, NKJV)

All in-text references must have an accompanying reference list entry and the information in one should correspond to the other.

For further information and examples of the Harvard referencing refer to Appendix 4.
9.4 Quotations

- Sometimes you may want to quote your source verbatim (word for word). Quotations should be brief and functional, adding authority or insight to your point.
- Quotations must be given exactly as they appear in the source and begin and end with quotation marks.

Example:

“Gender is never static but is produced actively and in interaction with others every day of our lives: speakers are seen as ‘performing’ masculinity and femininity” (Thornborrow & Coates 2005:9).

- Quotations of more than 3 lines in length should use a block-format and be indented 1 cm from the left margin.
- They are single-spaced and should not include quotation marks. Generally, the reference for such quotations comes at the end of the quotation.

Example:

For the college students, experiencing identity crisis may lead them to adopt relativistic thinking about the social world—a pluralistic position in which different choices of behavior and attitudes are possible. Attitudes and behavior are adopted pragmatically by considering how well they will work in a given situation (Chiou, 2008: 138).

Only use a quotation when absolutely necessary, for example, as an item of evidence in support of a point you are making or where the quotation is exceptionally useful. When in two minds, exclude it. In general, quotations should not comprise more than 10% of your entire assignment word count.

9.5 Acronyms

When dealing repeatedly with a long name of an organisation or illness for example, use the full name the first time you mention it followed by the acronym in parentheses. Thereafter you can just use the acronym.
Example:

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has as its mission....
Thus, the WCS insists that....

9.6 Reference List

• A reference list is a list of sources used
• It is attached to the end of a paper or essay
• Be sure to arrange sources in alphabetical order by author’s surname, followed by initials, year of publication, title, place of publisher, and name of publisher
• Do not number or bullet point the entries in your reference list
• The following details are generally required:
  Author - Surname, Initial(s). Year. Title (italicised or underlined). Place Published (City): Publisher. Additional details may also be required, depending on the type of source (See Appendix 4).
• All entries are in justified (block) paragraph format, with a line between entries.
• The entries are in alphabetical order by author’s surname.
• No points or symbols (e.g., *) or numbers are used with each reference entry.
10. MARKING SCHEME

A = EXCELLENT (75% - 100%)
Represents a high level of information gained, ability to use methodology, ability to communicate and evidence of originality.

B = ABOVE AVERAGE (70% - 74%)
Represents an above average grasp of the information and methodology, ability to communicate and evidence of originality.

C = AVERAGE (60% - 69%)
Represents acceptable work, but tends to be mechanical and lacking in originality and depth. It may reflect a lack of concern to excel or an inability to demonstrate insight into the material studied.

D = BELOW AVERAGE (50% - 59%)
Represents unsatisfactory achievement in all areas but is passable.

F = UNACCEPTABLE (below 50%)
Represents work that fails to meet the requirement for a course.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX 4 – COMPLETED ASSIGNMENT (COVER PAGE, TABLE OF CONTENTS, ESSAY BODY, REFERENCE LIST AND HONOUR PLEDGE)

ASSESSMENT 3:
RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A RESEARCH PAPER

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS IN RESEARCH AND STUDY SKILLS
AT
CORNERSTONE INSTITUTE

BY
SARAH MARTIN
19 FEBRUARY 2019

Type the assignment name according to your module outline
This is the type of assignment
State the module name
Include your name, surname and date of submission
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................ 43

2. FACTORS .................................................................................................................. 43

3. STRATEGIES ............................................................................................................. 46

4. CONCLUSION ............................................................................................................ 47

REFERENCE LIST
1. INTRODUCTION

Maintaining enrolment of a consistent group of students from the influx of freshman to the completion of their degree is a feat most universities have been unable to master (Kemp, 2016:133). Therefore, the topic of student retention will be explored. The exploration will include a description and explanation of factors related to student retention rates. In addition, a variety of retention strategies will be discussed and evaluated. A better knowledge of the factors and strategies of student retention will be gained.

2. FACTORS

In order to explore factors that impact student retention rates in higher education, factors that influence dropout rates need to be addressed. Since adjustment to tertiary education is such a major undertaking, students who experience difficulty adjusting may have a tendency to drop out of university (Sevinç & Gizir 2004:1302). It can be an overwhelming transition, influenced by a variety of factors. These factors, which are directly related to retention, can be categorized into three major groupings namely academic, social, and emotional factors (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281).
Academic adjustment has a relatively high influence on retention rates as this adjustment is directly related to the purpose of a student. A student's academic ability is a large determining factor of retention (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). If a student does not have the academic ability to meet the standards of tertiary education, they are very likely to drop out (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). Apart from academic ability, the incentive to learn, as well as willingness to take action in order to meet academic demands, is key to student retention (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). If the student has distinct, intentional goals in mind for their education, they are more likely to stay committed than those who do not (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). The academic environment a student finds themselves in also plays a role. Since these factors are directly linked to the basis of being a student, they have a great impact on retention.

An area which might be just as important as academic adjustment is social adjustment (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). The assimilation of a first year student into their new social environment is critical. Their commitment to the institution is dependent on this assimilation into college life (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). Other factors of social adjustment include obtaining a support system and balancing the new freedoms of social activity (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). A pivotal aspect of retention is homesickness, as students suffering from homesickness are three times as likely to drop out as those who don't suffer from it (Thurber & Malton, 2012:416). Strong social support systems can help to combat social adjustment difficulties, and are therefore of crucial importance. Contact that is informal in nature with faculty members can also function as a form of support for a new student.
Depending on the quality of the contact, this has been found to help maintain enrolment (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). Humans are suited for socializing, and for this reason social aspects play a huge role in retention rates.

Humans can also be highly emotional beings, and because of this, the third area is emotional adjustment. Any significant change has a huge emotional impact on a person. Therefore, it is not surprising that a student in their first year may experience some emotional turmoil (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). This can result from identity being brought into question, along with doubts of self-worth, lack of direction, and relationship uncertainty. A personal crisis could result from the emotional turmoil a student faces (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). Problems in the emotional area of adjustment which can appear, amongst others, include anxiety, low self-esteem, and depression (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). Studies have found that anxiety specifically has been a predetermining factor of student dropout rates (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:281). Due to this fact alone, we can conclude that retention is certainly impacted by emotions brought about during adjustment.

Some factors do not necessarily fit into these categories, but do, however, play a major role in student retention. One such factor is the relations a student has with their parents (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:282). The new found independence a student receives as a first year student, along with separation from their parents, affects all three of the areas of adjustment mentioned above (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:282). Another influence on retention is the unrealistic expectations a student has prior to entering tertiary education (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:282).
These high expectations cause a tendency in students to drop out when these expectations aren’t met (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:282). Another major influence, which is highly relevant in the South African context, is finance. Financial sustainability is not usually something students have mastered. A student’s capacity to pay fees of tertiary education have a direct impact on whether they can complete their degree. For this reason, finances play a huge role in retention. As clearly demonstrated, there are a significant variety of factors that influence student dropout rates, and as a result, student retention rates.

3. STRATEGIES

Strategies have been developed to assist student retention. The predominant retention strategy is counselling (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:286). It has been proven that counselling interventions can dramatically decrease dropout rates. It is important to identify students at risk of dropping out so that prevention can occur (Kemp, 2016:134). Another suggestion made by Kemp (2016:134) is putting formal retention programs as well as progression programs in place in institutions. To ensure continued enrolment, support systems involving faculty and peers should be instituted (Gerdes & Mallinckrodt, 1994:286). This support increases confidence and encourages retention. A good way of implementing a support system
4. CONCLUSION

Since institutions all over the world are facing the challenge of student retention, it is a valuable topic of discussion. Therefore, certain factors impacting student retention were explored in three main areas. Additional factors, not in the three areas, were also discussed. These factors were identified and described in relation to their contribution to student retention. Various retention strategies were also investigated and evaluated. Owing to the fact that little research has been done on multifaceted areas influencing retention, it would be useful to do more in-depth research on the subject.


Plagiarism is inconsistent with several of Cornerstone's core values: inasmuch as it involves academic dishonesty it is contrary to our value of integrity; it does not give due credit to others and thus constitutes a lack of respect; it reflects a lack of thinking for oneself and thus demonstrates a lack of creativity; and it is completely opposite of a commitment to excellence. In recognition of this truth, I hereby declare that:

1. I understand that plagiarism is to use another's work and represent it as one's own, and I know that plagiarism is wrong.

2. I have used the Harvard Referencing convention for citation and referencing. Each contribution to, and quotation in, this essay/report/project from the work(s) of other people has been attributed (to the author(s)), and has been cited (with in-text referencing) and referenced (with full bibliographic details).

3. I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment or essay, or part of it, is wrong, and declare that this essay/report/project is my own work.

4. I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

5. I have read what the Academic Guidelines and Yearbook documents say about plagiarism and understand that plagiarism may result in failure of an assignment, failure of a module, and/or other disciplinary actions.

Signature: Sarah Martin

Date: 19 February 2019

Note that agreement to this declaration does not exonerate the student from Cornerstone Institute’s Academic Integrity Policy.
## APPENDIX 5 – REFERENCE EXAMPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Example</th>
<th>In-Text Example</th>
<th>Reference List Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**TYPE OF EXAMPLE**

**Book – 3 author**

Authors Year. Title: Subtitle. Place: Publisher.

**IN-TEXT EXAMPLE**

(Picker, Griffiths & Weaving, 2002:4-5). or
Picker, Griffiths and Weaving (2002:4-5) commented that...

**REFERENCE LIST EXAMPLE**


**Book – 4 - 7 author**

Authors Year. Title: Subtitle. Place: Publisher.

**IN-TEXT EXAMPLE**

(Boddy-Evans et al. 2006:120). or
Boddy-Evans et al. (2006:120) highlight the following...

**REFERENCE LIST EXAMPLE**

Boddy-Evans, M, Exelby, N, Kuschke, J, Daly, R & Bristow, D 2006. Getaway’s 1001 places to see before you die: Places to go, things to do in Southern Africa. Cape Town: Struik.

**Book – 8 authors or more**

First author, et al. Year. Title: Subtitle. Place: Publisher.

**IN-TEXT EXAMPLE**

(De Young et al. 2003:232).

**REFERENCE LIST EXAMPLE**

<table>
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<th>TYPE OF EXAMPLE</th>
<th>IN-TEXT EXAMPLE</th>
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</table>
**TYPE OF EXAMPLE**

Edition of the book other than the first
After the title, add the ordinal number (2nd, 3rd etc.) of the edition followed by “ed.”

**IN-TEXT EXAMPLE**

(Stuart & Stuart, 2006:3).

**REFERENCE LIST EXAMPLE**


Publication by a corporation or company
Name of company. Year. Title of publication. Place: Publisher

(Soweto Trust for Nursing Clinical Training, 2005:36).

The Soweto Trust for Nursing Clinical Training (STNCT) (2005:36) teaches nurses to...


Newspaper article
Author. Date. Title of article. Title of newspaper. Day Month: page(s).

(Smetherham, 2004:3).

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<td><strong>Encyclopaedia or dictionary article</strong>&lt;br&gt;- online&lt;br&gt;As with online journal. Use the name of the dictionary if no author is provided and n.d. if no date can be found.</td>
<td>(Spry, 1979:705).</td>
<td>Spry, W. 1979. Homestead and exemption laws. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed. 11:704-705. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.</td>
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<td>Classic Works</td>
<td>Qur’an 4:3). (1 John 1:4, New International Version). Note: For the Bible, add the version, e.g. American Standard.</td>
<td>Major classical works, such as Greek, Roman or religious works should only be included as in-text citations and should not be added to the reference list.</td>
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<td>Unpublished lecture notes or slides (i.e. notes that have been handed out, not class notes you have taken yourself.) Lecturer. Year. Description of material. Place: name of institution.</td>
<td>(Joshua, 2012:slide 3).</td>
<td>Joshua, N. 2012. Lecture 3: Widows and orphans [Power Point Presentation]. Cape Town: Cornerstone Institute.</td>
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</table>
Personal Communication (Franciscus, 2002).
Author (e-mail address). Year.
Subject, date sent, recipient (e-mail address).

(Bruce, 1993).

Franciscus, G. (geraldinef@cornerstone.ac.za). 2002. RE: Student Counselling. E-mail, 3 March, to R. Mee (richardm@cornerstone.ac.za).
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Academic Guidelines