Psychology Postgraduate Academic Guidelines Cornerstone Institute

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Introduction

Understanding the Nature of Postgraduate Studies

Postgraduate studies refer to a continuation of academic studies beyond undergraduate level. According to the NQF, all courses obtained at Level 8 and beyond are considered post-graduation qualifications in the psychology field. At Cornerstone Institute, these are the "general" Psychology Honours Degree and the BPsych. Equivalent Degree. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act mandates the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to develop policies and criteria for assessment, after consultation with the Quality Councils (QCs). This framework improves the coherence of the higher education system and facilitates the articulation of qualifications, thereby enhancing the flexibility of the system and enabling students to move more efficiently over time from one programme to another as they pursue their academic or professional careers (CHE, 2009).

The NQF sets boundaries, principles and guidelines which provide a vision, a philosophical base and an organisational structure for the construction of a qualifications system. Detailed development and implementation is carried out within these boundaries. All education and training in South Africa fits within this framework. In general, those who engage in postgraduate studies have already completed an undergraduate degree in a chosen discipline. It is rare for students to undertake postgraduate studies in a specific academic discipline in which they have not already demonstrated a high level of academic competence at an undergraduate level.

Credits associated with each module are a measure of the volume of learning required for a qualification, quantified as the number of notional study hours required for achieving the learning outcomes specified for the qualification. One credit is equivalent to ten notional study hours. Credits represent a measure of all the learning activities engaged in by

the student and include, lectures time, assignments, readings, self-study, projects, examinations among others.

A particular feature of postgraduate studies is that of research. As a first step in postgraduate studies, honours programs aim to broaden the research abilities of students with a view to preparing them for further postgraduate studies both at a Masters and Doctoral level. These guidelines will provide you with a quick guide of how you are supposed to structure and write all your academic papers, including research papers. It is also important to stress that in the psychology postgraduate academic writing, we make use of the **APA 7th edition (American Psychological Association)** system.

NQF Exit Level 8 descriptors as provided by www.saqa.org.za

a. Scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate knowledge of and engagement in an area at the forefront of a field, discipline or practice; an understanding of the theories, research methodologies, methods and techniques relevant to the field, discipline or practice; and an understanding of how to apply such knowledge in a particular context.

b. Knowledge literacy, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to interrogate multiple sources of knowledge in an area of specialisation and to evaluate knowledge and processes of knowledge production.

c. Method and procedure, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate an understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of selecting, applying or transferring appropriate standard procedures, processes or techniques to unfamiliar problems in a specialised field, discipline or practice.

d. Problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to use a range of specialised skills to identify, analyse and address complex or abstract problems,

drawing systematically on the body of knowledge and methods appropriate to a field, discipline or practice.

e. Ethics and professional practice, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify and address ethical issues, based on critical reflection on the suitability of different ethical value systems to specific contexts.

f. Accessing, processing and managing information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to critically review information gathering, synthesis of data, evaluation and management processes in specialised contexts in order to develop creative responses to problems and issues.

g. Producing and communicating information, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to present and communicate academic, professional or occupational ideas and texts effectively to a range of audiences, offering creative insights, rigorous interpretations and solutions to problems and issues appropriate to the context.

h. Context and systems, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to operate effectively within a system, or manage a system based on an understanding of the roles and relationships between elements within the system.

i. Management of learning, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to apply, in a self-critical manner, learning strategies which effectively address his or her professional and ongoing learning needs and the professional and ongoing learning needs of others.

j. Accountability, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to take full responsibility for his or her work, decision-making and use of resources, and full accountability for the decisions and actions of others where appropriate.

Academic Writing

As a postgraduate student you are expected to engage in active learning by challenging, sharing and exploring knowledge and understanding within your subject area. At a postgraduate level you are expected to explore the many and varied theories and opinions expressed in multiple resources. You should aim to become an independent learner able to evaluate information in a sophisticated manner.

Using information responsibly is key to learning, and your success depends on your ability to access and evaluate the opinions of others in the academic community. Your writing at a postgraduate level must demonstrate your ability to understand concepts thoroughly and to evaluate critically the academic voice of others. This means that you will need to interrogate the work of others in a respectful manner that adds to the intellectual effort and community.

You must reference all of the sources used in your paper and must do so each time you use them. Referencing is a requirement in academic writing, and you will be asked to present a list of all the works and authors cited in your paper. It is essential that when using other people's work and ideas, either directly or paraphrased, you must cite the source in the body of your essay (in-text citation) and in the list of references at the end of the work. Using other people's ideas in any academic work without crediting, even when it is not a direct quote, is considered a form of academic dishonesty (**plagiarism**) and treated as fraud, whether intentional or unintentional.

The same applies to Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content. It is not uncommon that students and other scholars may use prompts in AI for ideas, but you should refrain from copying and pasting the generated content and present as your own. Keeping a record of all the prompts is encouraged. You are encouraged to be consistent in citing your sources, being

clear and consistent will help you to avoid plagiarism. Presenting citations of someone else's ideas is important for several reasons:

- By comparing and contrasting ideas, you can build and support your argument.
- Crediting sources helps to avoid plagiarism.
- Applying international standards will facilitate the dissemination of your essay.
- Referencing helps locate the source of your information for researchers.

General Format Instructions for Assessments

Typing your paper aids you in clarifying your thoughts and makes it easier for the lecturer to read, grade and provide feedback on papers. For this reason, you are required to type **all** your papers (unless the educator requests a different format). Typed papers, in the form of a word document will go through a similarity check using **Turnitin** via the **Funda** Learning Management System.

The assessments should be typed in **double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman or 11-point Arial/Calibri**), should give evidence of considerable thought to relevant and, where possible, contextual psychological journals and literature, including of studies conducted in the South African and African contexts. The thought should be guided by references that are credible. Your assessments must show the development of your position in a coherent, logical, and organised way, and must demonstrate thorough engagement with the various topics covered in specific modules.

Papers will be graded using rubrics that will be provided to you in the module outlines and assessment guidelines. Most of the rubrics include the following criteria: clarity and organisation, effort, originality of content, critical engagement with sources of information,

theoretical and practical relevance, integration of knowledge, grammar and writing style and the use of relevant references both recent and contextual.

Adherence to the APA 7th edition guidelines is a requirement across almost all the written assessments. The guidelines provide you with where to include the page numbers, indenting the first line of each paragraph, left justification of content, not leaving lines between paragraphs, no underlining of words for emphasis, starting the references on a new page, starting the appendices on a new page among other formatting styles. As per the APA style writing and referencing guide, please ensure that your assessments adopt bias-free language, that you are familiar with the paper elements and formatting as per the APA guidelines, that you understand effective scholarly writing and that you consult the reference examples.

Avoid plagiarism by referencing accurately, **diligently and consistently**. Acknowledge other people's work. Unless other specifications are requested by your lecturer, you must include a minimum of **15 references (**with most of them being articles from peer-reviewed journals**)** in all assessments. When applicable, you should include and label appendices after listing the references. Each appendix should be labelled and presented in alphabetical order and mentioned in the main body of the assessment (e.g., Appendix A: Measuring tools, Appendix B: Intake form, Appendix C: Consent form, etc). Each appendix must start on a fresh page.

APA Levels of Headings Formatting and Examples

There are five levels of headings in APA Style. Level 1 is the highest or main level of heading, Level 2 is a subheading of Level 1, Level 3 is a subheading of Level 2, and so on through Levels 4 and 5. To customise headings to match the APA style visit Microsoft heading directions.

The number of headings to use in a paper depends on the length and complexity of the work.

- If only one level of heading is needed, use Level 1.
- If two levels of heading are needed, use Levels 1 and 2.
- If three levels of heading are needed, use Levels 1, 2, and 3 (and so on).

Research Methods and Statistics (Level 1)

Results (Level 2 **Flush Left, Bold, Title Case Heading**)

This section….

Descriptive statistics (Level 3 ***Flush Left, Bold Italic, Title Case Heading***)

This section presents descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation…

Group 1 (Level 4 **Indented, Bold, Title Case Heading, Ending with a Period.**). In this section of the paper, descriptive statistics in relation to hypotheses...

Links for major APA 7th edition formatting

- In-text citations (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/citations)
- Headings (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/headings)
- Tables and/or Figures (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/tables-figures)
- Reference List (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/references)
- Appendices setup (https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/paper-format/appendices)

Generic structure of a written essay

Note that research papers have different headings and sections format and content. You are encouraged to consult the module outlines and rubrics provided for each assessment. This will help you formulate your essay appropriate and avoid losing marks unnecessarily.

Unless your lecturer insists, do not begin a paper with an “Introduction” heading; the paper title at the top of the first page of text acts as a de facto Level 1 heading.

- **Introduction**

– States where the paper is headed.

– Sets the scene for your reader.

– Should be a brief overview of that which follows in the body.

– General Orientation.

– General statements/Background information.

– Reference to recent developments on the topic

- **Body** (may include several headings, not necessarily the ‘body’ heading)

– Contains the facts and opinions and is the biggest part

– Your argument or give details about the subject.

- Provides evidence that supports your argument

- **Conclusion**

– Never contains any new information

– Provides a summary of the important points mentioned in the paper

– May refer to your introduction

Research Policies

Academic Support and Supervision

Faculty provides research supervision and support for students in the honours programme. Research support begins with a Research Methods and Statistics (Advanced) module in the first year of study. The psychology department assigns students completing research projects to supervisors, who are responsible to guide students through the research process and ensure that adequate research support is provided to them. The students are

supervised in group format although they write papers on an individual basis. Research supervision includes:

- Assisting students in defining a research topic and appropriate research methodology.
- Assisting students in identifying appropriate literature.
- Advising students in the development of a clear and supportable thesis statement.
- Providing students with feedback regarding the analysis of the literature and data, structure of their arguments and written presentation of their research.
- Monitoring and reporting student progress both for the students and relevant academic committees and/or personnel.
- Completing a final written assessment of the students' research project for review by the moderation and external examination processes.

Examination of Research

Student research proposals must be submitted to and approved by the Research and Ethics Committee of Cornerstone Institute before a student may commence with the remainder of the research project. During the approval process, the committee checks primarily for adherence to all ethical guidelines and appropriateness and feasibility of the research proposals. The assigned research supervisors check criteria such as the suitability of the research project for the qualification, the suitability of the research methodology and the integrity of the proposed research.

Faculty supervisors bear primary responsibility for the assessment of research projects, but honours level research is also subject to internal and external moderation. Final assessment decisions are made by an examination committee, on the basis of recommendations by the faculty supervisor and the internal and external moderators.

Research Ethics

Cornerstone Institute (CI) students and faculty have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with those human rights that have a bearing on academic work. These include, but are not limited to: equality and non-discrimination, human dignity, privacy, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, access to information, and just administrative action. Cornerstone Institute undertakes to work according to its core values by promoting and displaying integrity, respect, creativity and excellence in the research process. Supervisors and students carry the responsibility of being transparent by providing accurate and sufficiently detailed information and by being just and fair in giving others appropriate credit. Supervisors and students are to aspire to the highest degree of integrity in their research by complying with the highest standards of appropriate research methodology, acknowledging the limitations of their research and findings, making no misrepresentations in their findings, not fabricating any information and committing no form of plagiarism.

Data and information gathered should be available to interested parties without violating or undermining confidentiality. Researchers are accountable to the particular academic community and any other communities in which they participate. Therefore, they will consider potentially destructive consequences of their research on communities and will seek to avoid these consequences or put measures in place to reduce the risk of such consequences. Students and staff at Cornerstone Institute are responsible for taking into account other codes of ethics that are relevant to their work such as the codes of ethics of relevant professional bodies, scholarly societies and partner institutions.

Academic integrity

Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all their assignments and examinations. Academic integrity requires that one gives proper credit to one’s sources and

never represents someone else's work as one's own. Violation of academic integrity can take several forms, the primary ones being plagiarism and cheating, both of which will be treated with appropriate penalties. Students should not submit AI-generated content as their own work and ideas.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is committed when a person represents someone else's work as his or her own, whether unintentionally or deliberately. Whenever one quotes directly from another source or uses an idea or structure from another source, that source should be properly acknowledged through the use of quotation marks, reference notes, and bibliographical entries, as appropriate.

- Plagiarism that is deemed to be due to carelessness or negligence will be noted and will result in a lowered grade for the assignment.
- Plagiarism that is deemed to be an intentional attempt to deceive (e.g., copying from the Internet with no acknowledgement of the source) is a serious violation of academic integrity and will result in failure of the module.

The Writing Style

- You should strive to present your ideas clearly and logically. Be precise in your choice of words.
- Get to the point, this is a scientific paper and therefore wordiness is frowned upon.
- Do not use colloquialisms (informal language). This is a formal paper.
- Refrain from making over-generalisations. For example, "Since the dawn of time, man has been intrigued about . . . ."
- Academic papers are generally written in the third person. Although the use of personal pronouns is acceptable (e.g., we, our, I, my), they should be used judiciously: this is, after

all, a formal paper. For example, both “The hypothesis for the experiment was . . .” (third person) and “Our hypothesis for the experiment was . . .” (first person), would be acceptable whereas “In my opinion . . .” would be unacceptable because of the shift in tone from formal to informal.

- The active voice is preferable to the passive voice. For example, it is preferable to say “Participants completed a questionnaire" (active voice) rather than “Participants were given a questionnaire" (passive voice).

Appropriate Citation

Students should provide appropriate credit to the source (e.g., by using an in-text citation) whenever they paraphrase (i.e., state in your own words) the ideas of others, directly quote the words of others, refer to data or data sets, reprint or adapt a table or figure (even images from the internet that are free or licensed in the Creative Commons), reprint a long text passage or commercially copyrighted test item. It is recommended that the students should avoid over citations and under citations to avoid plagiarism and distorting the flow of content. Students should cite primary sources when possible and cite secondary (content first reported in another source) sources sparingly. Click me for detailed referencing examples. The examples include mechanics of style, how to cite single authorship, multiple authorship, periodicals, audiovisual media, reports, books, edited chapters among others. All citations by multiple authors should be presented as et al., even at first mention.

Tables and Figures Setup

It is common that some papers may require the inclusion of tables and/or figures. The most important principle to follow when creating a table is to present information in a way that is easy for readers to understand. All types of visual displays other than tables are considered figures in APA Style. Tables have the following basic components:

Include table number. The table number (e.g., Table 1) appears above the table title and body in bold font. Number tables in the order in which they are mentioned in your paper.

Include the title. The table title appears one double-spaced line below the table number. Give each table a brief, but descriptive, title and capitalise the title in italic title case.

The figure number (e.g., Figure 1) appears above the figure title and image in bold font. Number figures in the order in which they are mentioned in your paper.

The figure title appears one double-spaced line below the figure number. Give each figure a brief but descriptive title and capitalise the figure title in italic title case.

Reference List

A reference list is required in APA Style papers that include what you have cited in the paper. Do not include the work not cited in the paper. The reference list allows readers to identify and locate the cited works. The heading should read as **References** and not as **Reference list** or **Bibliography**. The references should be presented in alphabetical order, double-spaced, hanging ident (Apply a 0.5-in. hanging indent to the whole reference list, which keeps the first line of each reference flush left and indents any subsequent lines 0.5 in) and DOIs and URLs can be either blue and underlined (i.e., the default setting for hyperlinks) or plain text that is not underlined.. You can make use of references management systems for easier in-text citations and listing of references. Mendeley is one of the common references management systems.

An Example of a Rubric

The assessment will be assessed as per the following criteria:

Area under review	Criteria for scores above 75%	Criteria for scores between 70% and 74%	Criteria for scores between 60% - 69%	Criteria for scores between 50% - 59%	Criteria for scores below 50%	Weighting
Title / Topic Background to the study (and abstract)	-The title/topic, scope and aims are clearly defined, contextualised and theoretically grounded and display innovation and originality.	-The title/topic, scope and aims are adequately defined and generally are theoretically grounded. The research is relevant but lacks innovation and originality.	-The title/topic, scope and aims are defined with some theoretical grounding but significantly lacks innovation and originality.	-The title/topic, scope and aims are poorly defined are in-adequately contextualised with little theoretical grounding and little evidence.	-The title/topic, scope and aims are not adequately defined and contextualised with very little to no theoretical grounding.	**/15**
Literature review Logical and coherent demonstration of relevant knowledge. -The review is critical and unbiased, drawing on credible sources. -Consistent application of the theoretical framework.	-Excellent knowledge, expanse, interpretation and application of the relevant literature to achieve objectives.	-Adequate knowledge, interpretation and application of the relevant literature.	-Adequate knowledge of the relevant literature. -Minor shortcomings in the interpretation and application of the literature.	-A basic overview of the literature, with limited interpretation and application.	-Inadequate knowledge, interpretation and application of the literature. -Use of irrelevant literature. Obje ctives not met.	**/15**
Research Methodology	-Demonstrates advanced control, understanding, depth and insight in the application of relevant research methodologies, techniques and analysis. -There is a strong systematic and coherent flow of chapters in that the operationalisation of the variables is perfectly consistent with how the variable has been conceptualised theoretically.	-Thorough knowledge and understanding of the significance of the research. -Demonstrates effective application of relevant research methodology, techniques and analysis. -There is a logical coherence between aims and the findings. -Text is structured satisfactorily, with clear evidence of insight, depth and understanding of variables.	-Adequate knowledge and understanding of the significance of the research. -Good organisation and application of research methodology. -The greater part of the work is coherently structured, and the text is well organised and clearly argued.	-Satisfactory understanding of the significance of the research and a reasonably effective interpretation and application of the methodology. -There is evidence of organisation and structure, but the inadequate coherence reflects lack of insight and understanding. -Lack of logical coherence between chapters.	-The work displays such a low level of research methodology and interpretation that findings can be regarded as unacceptable. -There is almost no logical coherence and progression from the aims to the findings. -The structure and organisation are of poor quality and need considerable restructuring to ensure logical flow.	**/20**
Research Findings/ Discussion/ Conclusion	-Demonstrates advanced levels of understanding and originality in the analysis and reporting of the research findings.	-Demonstrates adequate levels of understanding and originality in the analysis and reporting of the research findings.	-Analysis of the data is adequate enough to make research findings and come to conclusions but lacks new insights and originality.	-A satisfactory understanding of the significance of the research and a reasonably competent interpretation.	-The thesis does not succeed in demonstrating familiarity with basic academic conventions of presenting and	**/40**

	-There is clear evidence of deep, personal insights into the field. -The research findings make a significant contribution to the knowledge base of the field of study. -The conclusions are logical and valid and show a strong awareness of the authoritative published literature. -The conclusions are clearly communicated and evaluated. The final summary is relevant and communicates the purpose and findings of the study in clearly understandable terms.	-There is limited evidence of personal insights into the field. -The research findings make a minor contribution to the knowledge base of the field of study. -The conclusions are logical and valid. -The conclusions are communicated clearly. The final summary communicates the purpose and findings of the study.	-The findings make a minor contribution to the knowledge base of the field of study. -The conclusions are partially logical and/or valid. -They are communicated clearly. The final summary only partially communicates the purpose and findings of the study.	-The conclusions are not in all respects logical and valid. They are communicated with only partial success. -The final summary does not communicate the purpose and findings of the study.	organising findings. -No logical/valid conclusions are reached. -The final summary in no way communicates the purpose and findings of the study.	
Writing style, Referencing and Overall Document	-The writing style and layout of the thesis is very high quality. -There are no or extremely few linguistic and typographical errors, and almost no rectifications are required. -The referencing has been done properly and extensively. -The format and layout of the reference list are correct and in line with APA conventions. -The reference list contains the most important and most recent sources. -This thesis deserves a distinction without reservation.	-The writing style and layout of the thesis is of acceptable quality. -There are less important omissions and linguistic and /or typographical errors. -Editing would improve the text. -The referencing has been done correctly. -The format and layout of the reference list are largely in line with APA conventions. -There are however several inconsistencies. -The reference list contains the most important sources. -This thesis is a very acceptable piece of work but needs extra to turn it into an above-average thesis.	-The writing style and layout of the thesis requires attention. -There are omissions and linguistic and /or typographical errors. -Editing would improve the work and errors should be rectified. -The referencing has been done, but the layout of the reference list is neither consistent nor in line with APA conventions. -Some important and very relevant sources have been omitted. -Seen as a whole, the thesis is of an acceptable academic standard and deserves an average mark. -Less serious revision/editing is required.	-The writing style and layout of the thesis requires serious attention, considering the numerous linguistic and typographical mistakes. -These errors should be rectified. -Referencing is not in line with the standard APA conventions in terms of format or layout. -Numerous important (as well as relevant) sources have been omitted. -The academic standard of the thesis is sufficient to merit a pass mark. The work, however, requires serious editing.	-There are serious, conspicuous and unacceptable linguistic and typographical errors. -The writing style and layout are plagued by serious problems and should be reviewed. -References are of poor quality or have been omitted. -The format and layout are inconsistent and not in line with standard referencing techniques. -Neither important nor the most recent sources appear in the reference list. The thesis does not meet the minimum academic	**/10**

					requirements, and it is unlikely that even large scale revision/editing would bring the thesis up to scratch.	

Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Paper for Students' Assessments

Title of the Paper or Assessment

Your name and surname

Department of Psychology, Cornerstone Institute

PSYC 0000: Research Psychology

Lecturer : Jabulani Chitanga

15 March 2025

Title of the Paper/project

A majority of … experience stress in their daily lives (American Psychological Association, 2017). Thus, an important goal of psychological research is to evaluate techniques that promote …. Two techniques that have been associated with reduced stress and increased relaxation in psychotherapy contexts are guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation (McGuigan & Lehrer, 2007).

Add content in paragraphs format to expand on the topic. Include several citations in each paragraph whenever possible.

Guided Imagery

Features of Guided Imagery

Guided imagery involves a … (Achterberg, 1985; Utay & Miller, 2006). Patients learn to relax their bodies in the presence of stimuli that previously distressed them, to the point where further exposure to the stimuli no longer provokes a negative response (Achterberg, 1985).

*Depending on the nature of the assessment, add more content in the form of paragraphs guided by citations. You can also make use of sub-headings to guide the reader.

These results further support the utility of guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation within the group psychotherapy modality.

Conclusion

Limitations of Existing Research

Research on the use of guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation to achieve stress reduction and relaxation is compelling but has significant limitations. Psychotherapy groups that implement guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation are …

Future research should also examine differences in inpatient versus outpatient psychotherapy groups as well as structured versus unstructured groups. The majority of

research on the use of guided imagery and progressive muscle relaxation with psychotherapy groups has used … (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

Directions for Future Research

There are additional considerations when interpreting the results of previous studies and planning for future studies of these techniques. For example, a lack of control groups and small sample sizes have contributed to …, further research with control groups and larger samples would bolster confidence in the efficacy of these interventions. Despite these challenges, continued research examining. The results thus far are promising, and further investigation has the potential to make …

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Appendix B: Academic Assessment Checklist

The following table presents what must reflect in your academic paper/research paper. You can use this as your checklist before you submit any of your academic papers.

Academic Assessment Checklist
Content, Comprehension and Integration
Definition of Key Concepts Did I adequately define the key concepts as they relate to the assessment?
Reference to Relevant Literature Is there evidence of further reading? Did I refer to a range of credible, recent and relevant sources and examples?
Integration and Understanding Has the reading been appropriately integrated in the assessment? Did I clearly demonstrate understanding of the relevant literature?
Originality Did I show an ability to reflect upon the issue, concept and theory in a meaningful way? Did I demonstrate originality of thought/reasoning?
Critical Reasoning Did I present a logical and coherent argument to substantiate statements made in the assessment? Did I show the ability to reflect critically? Did I adequately demonstrate application of conceptual skills within the particular context of the assessment?
Layout and Presentation Have I completed the cover sheet, and other appendices where applicable? Have I included the table of contents (**optional** for students' assessments)? Where applicable, have I included an introduction, body, conclusion, and references list? Where applicable, did I make use of headings, and subheadings? Have I adhered to the prescribed word count? Did I make use of enough references? Did I include all the relevant appendices? Did I label all the appendices? Did I do a spell, punctuation, and grammar check?
Structure Does my introduction adequately launch the topic to be discussed? Is there an overall sense of flow and direction? Are paragraphs well-structured and informed by several citations? Does my conclusion bring the assessment to a satisfying close?

Academic Writing Style Is my essay written in suitable academic language? Is the use of language appropriate for the subject area/audience?
References & Citation (recent, relevant, correct, concise) Did I apply correct APA format to referencing and in text citations? Have I provided a full reference list?
Application of Skills (if applicable) Did I show evidence of understanding the skills, techniques, and strategies appropriate to the assessment? Did I adequately demonstrate the link between theory and practical application?