



# **ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**

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# 1.0. Introduction

This guide to academic assignments at IBCM explains how you should approach any academic essay, report or thesis you write as part of your studies at IBCM. These guidelines should be taken seriously: failure to adhere to APA style or meet the requirements of an academic paper will result in lower grades.

Please contact the Head of the English Department with any questions, comments or concerns about these guidelines. You should also always consult with your lecturer or mentor if you are unsure about the specific requirements of any given assignment.

## 2.0. Academic assignments at IBCM

Student learning is evaluated through different kinds of examinations and assessments. The requirements for these assignments will change as you progress through the semesters at IBCM. This section will help you to understand what you should expect and what will be expected of you.

### 2.1. Types of academic assignment

#### **Course Assignments (formerly known as Compulsory Assignments)**

A Course Assignment (CA) can take almost any format. You may be asked to conduct research, assess a case-study, write a report, write an essay or give a presentation. Your final grade may also include attendance and participation. The CA of a course makes up 40% of the final grade of the course. Your teacher will explain the details of each CA, together with the weighting of the assignment components.

#### **Interdisciplinary Semester Projects**

Every student has to conduct one interdisciplinary project each semester. In this project, the learning outcomes of all modules are assessed.

<b>Written part 1</b>	Group project, assessed in a group	50% of grade
<b>Written part 2</b>	Individually submitted, assessed individually	
<b>Oral presentation</b>	Group presentations, assessed individually	50% of grade

#### **Final examinations**

Final examinations are conducted at the end of the semester. The final examinations have to cover the learning outcomes for the semester. The final exam comprises 60% of the course grade.

#### **Internship report:**

The internship report is a report prepared at the end of an internship, and is mandatory. The internship report is assessed pass/fail.

#### **AP and Bachelor Thesis project:**

Please see the study regulations for a breakdown of the requirements for the AP and bachelors thesis projects, and consult your mentor for further guidance. The written thesis accounts for 70% of the final project grade, the oral defence accounts for 30% of the final project grade.

## 2.2. Requirements and expectations

The requirements for written assignments vary according to your semester. The below table summarises what (as a minimum) you are expected to produce for your main projects in each semester (not including Compulsory Assignments, which vary in format, and also not including oral presentations).

<b>First Semester</b>	<b>Semester project:</b> Students work in groups to answer straightforward questions (or problem statements) in 5 paragraph essays which include at a minimum: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Main Body, Conclusion, and Bibliography. This is an interdisciplinary project at should incorporate knowledge and skills from at least three subjects.
<b>Second Semester</b>	<b>Semester project:</b> Students work in groups respond to case studies and <u>suggest their own problem statement</u> . Papers should include: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Problem Statement, Main Body, and Conclusion. This is an interdisciplinary project at should incorporate knowledge and skills from at least three subjects.
<b>Third Semester</b>	<b>Semester project:</b> Students work in groups to respond to case studies and <u>suggest their own problem statement</u> . Papers should include: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Problem Statement, Methodology, Findings, Analysis, and Conclusion. This is an interdisciplinary project at should incorporate knowledge and skills from at least three subjects.
<b>Fourth Semester</b>	<b>Internship Report:</b> The internship report should include: a description of the organisation and its products and/or services; a description of and reflection on the intern's tasks; an analysis of the connection between the intern's tasks and the work processes of the organisation; solution proposals for challenges in the student's tasks or the processes of the organisation; a conclusion that sets the report in relation to the final thesis project. <b>AP Thesis:</b> Students conduct an individual research project on an organisation (usually the organisation the internship was completed in). The AP thesis should include at a minimum: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Problem Statement, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Analysis, Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Bibliography. It may also include any of the other elements of an academic assignment as set out in Section 5.0 of this handbook.
<b>Fifth Semester</b>	<b>Semester Project:</b> Students work in groups to analyse an organisation. The research should be secondary and the organisation should not be contacted. This is an interdisciplinary project and should be The project will have its own structure according to the specific project and students should consult their tutor. At a minimum it should include, Cover Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Problem Statement, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Analysis, Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Bibliography.

<p><b>Sixth Semester</b></p>	<p><b>Semester project (EAM &amp; ISM students only):</b> Students work in groups to conduct primary and secondary analysis of a local organisations, contacting the organisation to carry out research. The project is intended as preparation for the BA thesis and should follow a similar structure to the AP thesis. All courses</p> <p><b>Internship “Small Project” (PSM students only):</b> In the small project, the student must demonstrate that they are able to observe the internship placement / workplace in a systematic way. They must apply academic concepts and theory through her/his own observations, analysis, reflection and evaluation of practice. The Small Project should include: Table of Contents, Introduction, Presentation of the institution and its organizational context, How learning objectives / goals have been met, subject / problem area e.g. working environment problems, problem statement, theory and method, analysis, discussion, conclusion, recommendations, bibliography, annex.</p>
<p><b>Seventh Semester</b></p>	<p><b>Internship Report (EAM &amp; ISM students only):</b> The internship report for the second internship should follow the same structure for the internship report completed in the fourth semester, with increased depth of analysis.</p> <p><b>Bachelor’s thesis:</b> The bachelor’s thesis is distinguished from the AP thesis in that it requires a deeper level of analysis and application of learning. This should involve an interdisciplinary approach, using knowledge and skills from all courses. Students should consult with their supervisor to ensure that the problem and research approach are appropriate for degree level.</p> <p>The Bachelor’s thesis should include at a minimum: Cover Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Problem Statement, Literature Review, Methodology, Findings, Analysis, Discussion, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Bibliography. It may also include any of the other elements of an academic assignment as set out in Section 5.0 of this handbook.</p>

## 3.0. IBCM Regulations

### 3.1. Standard pages and the length of your report

- Your teacher will set a maximum length for your assignment, usually a number of words.
- You are allowed to write plus 10% or minus 10% of this number. If the assignment requires a word count of 2,500, the plus or minus 10% rule would be 250 words above or below.
- The cover page, table of contents, abstract, executive summary, references, bibliography and any appendices **do not count** as part of your final number of pages / words.

### 3.2. Plagiarism and cheating

**Plagiarism and cheating are two very serious academic offences, and are not tolerated at IBCM.**

**Cheating (fraud)** is defined as attempts of a student to influence examination results by using non-permitted aids. Permitted aids are specified at the exam paper of every individual exam.

**Plagiarism** is defined as taking, using, and passing off the ideas or words of another person as your own. It includes:

- Presenting or paraphrasing an authors' work without a reference.
- Copying other students' work, including assessed work which is written with other students (without prior permission of your tutor / lecturer).
- Submitting work which has already been submitted for assessment previously in another course (self-plagiarism).

Cases of fraud and plagiarism will result in a fail grade in pass/fail exams/assignments and a -3 on graded exams/assignments, and it will need to be repeated. A warning is issued on the first instance of fraud or plagiarism, and continued cases will result in more serious consequences, including ultimately expulsion from the college. For more information, see the IBCM Study Regulations on the website.

The IBCM has software that is used to detect cases of plagiarism and lecturers will also carefully scrutinize any assignments that they feel may be copied or improperly cited. A student is found guilty of plagiarism when the exam he/she has submitted has a score above 15% of plagiarized material quantity. In case an exam is not checked by the plagiarism software, unreferenced direct quotes of more than 10 words from written sources without the use of quotation marks and a proper reference are considered as plagiarism.

Cases of fraud in examinations and plagiarism are generally referred to heads of departments and the quality assurance officer, who can decide on appropriate course of action for the student.

#### **How to avoid plagiarism:**

- Do not just "copy and paste" from other sources – quote, paraphrase, or summarize their work.
- Always give acknowledgement to the author of the work you are quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing in your assignment.

- Acknowledge an author by referencing fully in APA style (for further instructions, see below)

If you have questions about plagiarism, you can talk with the English lecturers as well as your lecturers. You are also strongly advised to attend the IBCM's Academic English & Study Skills classes, for advice and guidance on how to avoid plagiarism.

## 4.0. APA Style Guide

### 4.1. APA Format

IBCM uses APA format only for essays and reports.

**Font:** Times New Roman

**Font Size:** 12pt

**Spacing:** Double spaced

**Page numbers:** Top right, including the cover page

### 4.2. APA Referencing

References tell the reader where you found the information you have used in your assignment. Proper referencing is essential for avoiding plagiarism, and most of the work you conduct at IBCM (presentations, project report, case-studies, theses, etc) require that you use references. Therefore a clear and accurate understanding of how to reference correctly will assist in the preparation and completion of your work, and ensure that you do not lose marks for not using references properly.

#### 4.2.1. What are references?

One of the key differences between academic work and non-academic work is referencing. Academic work always acknowledges the source of all material that has been documented. In contrast, non-academic work may or may not reference all sources that have been used.

The following extract has been taken from the BBC Science and Nature Homepage website on a page which is entitled: *What is Health Psychology?*

*Health psychologists are interested in how behaviour and attitudes affect our health, with the aim of promoting and maintaining health in the population. But what does it mean to be healthy? In 1946, the World Health Organization decreed that health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." But how many people could count themselves healthy on that definition? This version of what it means to be healthy probably creates an unrealistic goal for the vast majority of people.*

Even though accurate, this is an example of a non-academic piece of work, because there are no references.

The following is exactly the same text but written with **APA referencing** which then qualifies this to be an **academic** piece of work.

*According to Ogden (2008) health psychologist are interested in how behaviour and attitudes affect our health, with the aim of promoting and maintaining health in the population. But what does it mean to be healthy? The World Health Organization decreed that health is, "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organisation, 1946). But how many people could count themselves healthy on that definition? This version of what it means to be healthy probably creates an unrealistic goal for the vast majority of people.*

Bibliography

Ogden, J. (2008). *Health Psychology*, Buckingham: Open University Press  
 World Health Organization.,. (1946). *Basic Documents*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

**4.2.2. How do I write a reference?**

APA referencing is a specific way of acknowledging sources (there are other types of referencing, such as Harvard referencing – be sure not to get them confused). There are 2 steps to referencing properly in APA style:

**a) You must write an in-text reference everytime that you use another person’s words, facts, idea, data, theory, model, concept, etc.**

In brackets ( ) next to your quote, paraphrase or summary of a secondary source, provide the surname of the author and year the source was published.

E.g. The tendency towards longer working hours for much of the labour force in the UK and North America (**Ogden, 2008**), along with escalating numbers of dual-income families and employed single parents (**Office for National Statistics, 2007**), creates increasing opportunities for multiple roles to clash with one another.

\*\*Footnotes should only be used for additional information, not for references\*\*

**b) You must include a full reference for every source used in the reference list at the end of your paper.**

Full references should be formatted in the following way:

<b>Book</b>	Ogden, J. (2008). <i>Health Psychology</i> , Buckingham: Open University Press
<b>Journal article</b>	Petrov, A. (2008). The development and actual condition of industrial relations in Bulgaria as an element of national security in the transition period. <i>SEER South-East Europe Review For Labour And Social Affairs</i> , 239-255
<b>Newspaper article</b>	Meier, B. (2013, January 1). Energy Drinks Promise Edge, but Experts Say Proof Is Scant. <i>New York Times</i> , p. 1.
<b>Online newspaper</b>	Retrieved from <a href="http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/oct/12/older-single-women-new-face-of-homelessness-anglicare-report">http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/oct/12/older-single-women-new-face-of-homelessness-anglicare-report</a>



<b>Website</b>	World Health Organization,. (2015). <i>World Mental Health Day – 10 October: Dignity in mental health</i> . Retrieved 13 October 2015, from <a href="http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2015/world-mental-health-day/en/">http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2015/world-mental-health-day/en/</a>
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**Note:** [www.citethisforme.com](http://www.citethisforme.com) is a very helpful reference and bibliography generator. Just ensure that you have set the referencing style to *APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition* before creating any references.

**Some tips:**

- You do not need to include a source more than once in your bibliography.
- You do not need to write references for commonly known facts.
- You must write a reference every single time that you write something that you haven't arrived at yourself. If you have written a long paragraph that refers to the same source, it is enough to make one reference to that source at the beginning of the paragraph. If you continue in a new paragraph, or make another reference, you must repeat the reference to the first source.

## 5.0. The structure of academic papers

Academic assignments should always be carefully structured. The specific structure required will vary according to the project, so always review the instructions for your project and consult your mentor.

The structure of the paper should be easy for the reader to follow. It's always a good idea to outline the overall structure of your report before you begin to write. This will help you keep control of your material.

<b>You may not need to include all of these components in your academic paper – please check your project guidelines for instructions or ask your tutor.</b>
<b>Cover page</b>
The cover page must clearly state: the title of the paper and the number of words or pages, your student number and your name, and the date of delivery
<b>Table of contents</b>
The table of contents for your report can be automatically generated by your word processing program. By doing this you can ensure that there will not be any mistakes in the page numbering and it will save you a lot of work.
<b>Abstract</b>
The abstract is a short paragraph at the beginning of your paper which summarises the findings of your report. It should be no more than one page long, and ideally half a page long
<b>Executive Summary</b>
An executive summary is an overview of your assignment that synthesizes key points for the reader, saving them time and preparing them to understand the overall content of the paper. It should be no more than two pages long.
<b>Introduction</b>

<p>Your introduction is where you set out your main argument and what you intend to do in the paper. You may also provide some background information or context. You want to make your reader interested in the writing that is about to follow.</p>
<p><b>Delimitation</b></p>
<p>A delimitation section should inform the reader of exactly how you interpret the problem statement or assignment topic and why you have chosen this perspective – e.g. why you have chosen a specific company, a specific product, a specific market, or whatever it is you have chosen to investigate. You will also set out what you will <b>not</b> discuss in the paper</p>
<p><b>Problem statement</b></p>
<p>A problem statement is a clear, concise summary of the main issues and investigative questions that your paper will address. You may be given a problem statement by your teacher or you may have to write your own. You should consult with your</p>
<p><b>Literature Review</b></p>
<p>A literature review should show that you have read and reflected on the existing knowledge and research related to the topic that you are studying, and provide context for the problem being addressed. You should take care to show that you understand the connections between what different writers have said, instead of just listing summaries of their arguments.</p>
<p><b>Methodology</b></p>
<p>Your methodology section should introduce and defend the choice of all the theories and models you intend to apply in analyzing the issues defined in your problem statement. You may also want to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the sources you have used.</p>
<p><b>Findings &amp; Analysis</b></p>
<p>Your findings should contain the results of any primary research you may have conducted. You may wish to use tables, graphs and charts to illustrate these findings. You must also explain your findings. It is important that you are not only descriptive, but analytical, applying methodological theory to your findings, in order to show that you understand the connections and implications of the research results and how they are relevant to your problem statement.</p>
<p><b>Discussion</b></p>
<p>The discussion should consider the entire contents of your project and demonstrate that you can add your own interpretation and analysis, considering the wider implications of your research. Here you can link your findings and analysis to the literature review and methodology, and show how your paper has sought to answer the problem statement.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>
<p>Your conclusion should sum up the issues you have set out to investigate in the paper, in relation to the problem statement. It is more than a simple summary – you are integrating and synthesizing all your ideas and arguments, and restating them in a convincing way.</p>
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p>
<p>The recommendations section is your chance to demonstrate your insight in to the problem or issue you have discussed.</p>
<p><b>References</b></p>
<p>You must always include a full list of all sources used at the end of your paper, including websites, books, journal articles, etc. (see referencing section above).</p>
<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
<p>You may wish to add appendices. An appendix contains any extra materials that you used during the course of your research which might help the reader to understand the work you have conducted. They should appear after the bibliography. Each appendix should be numbered so that it is easy to identify when you refer to e.g. “Appendix A.”</p>

