

# DISCIPLINE OF NURSING

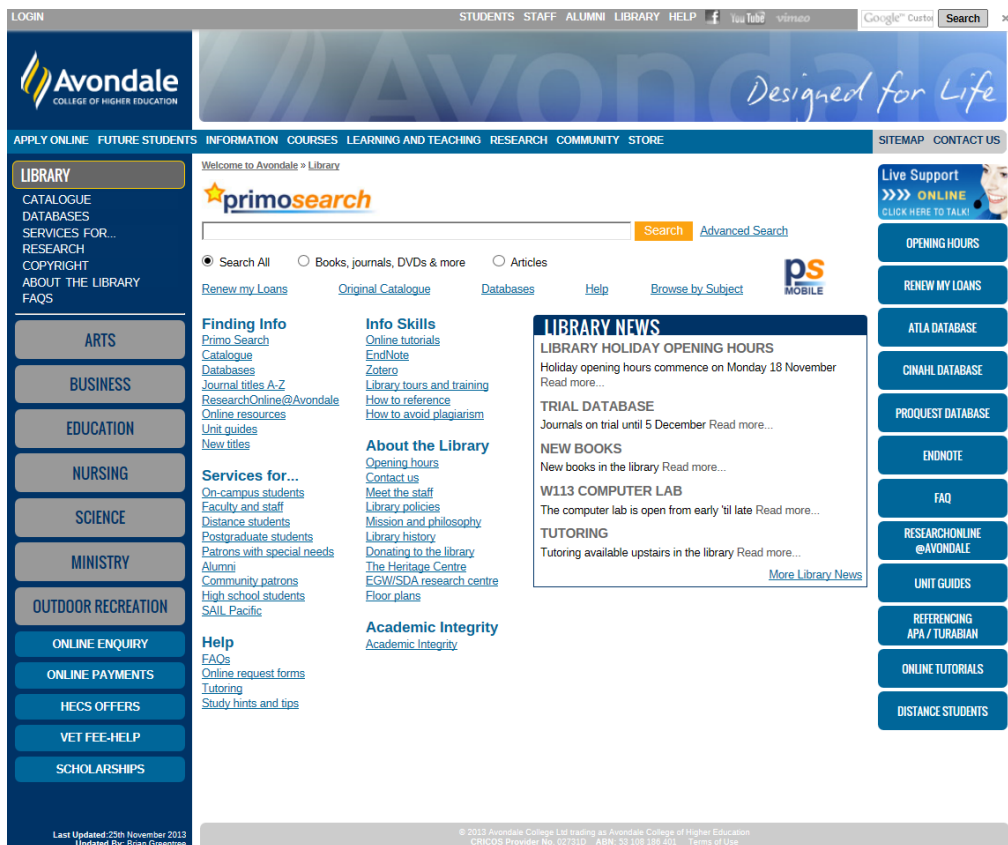
## GUIDE TO ASSIGNMENT WRITING AND PRESENTATION

### Referencing Book

Perrin, R. (2015). *Pocket guide to APA style* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Stamford, Conn. Cengage Learning.

*available from Bookshop*

APA Style to be used for all referencing



The screenshot shows the Avondale Library website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for LOGIN, STUDENTS, STAFF, ALUMNI, LIBRARY, and HELP. Below this is a search bar with a 'Search' button. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- LIBRARY**: A vertical menu on the left with links for CATALOGUE, DATABASES, SERVICES FOR..., RESEARCH, COPYRIGHT, ABOUT THE LIBRARY, and FAQs.
- primosearch**: A search interface with a search bar and options for 'Search All', 'Books, journals, DVDs & more', and 'Articles'.
- LIBRARY NEWS**: A section on the right with several news items:
  - LIBRARY HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS**: Holiday opening hours commence on Monday 18 November. Read more...
  - TRIAL DATABASE**: Journals on trial until 5 December. Read more...
  - NEW BOOKS**: New books in the library. Read more...
  - W113 COMPUTER LAB**: The computer lab is open from early 'til late. Read more...
  - TUTORING**: Tutoring available upstairs in the library. Read more...
- Help**: A section at the bottom left with links for FAQs, Online request forms, Tutoring, and Study hints and tips.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information: © 2013 Avondale College Ltd trading as Avondale College of Higher Education. C110026 Provider No. 007210 - ABN: 35 108 194 421. Terms of Use.

Student .....

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# ASSIGNMENT WRITING and PRESENTATION

There are **three major areas to be considered** when preparing an assignment at tertiary level - **content, format and referencing**. This booklet has been prepared to give you guidelines in content and format. Please refer to the Referencing Book, Perrin, R. (2015). *Pocket guide to APA style* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Stamford, Conn. Cengage Learning., for guidance with referencing, or ask the library staff for assistance.

## 1. CONTENT

When writing a formal assignment, any headings should follow the APA style guide, should not be written in point form, but should follow a series of logical steps. (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>)

### ANSWER THE ESSAY TOPIC:

The first step, when writing an assignment, is to make sure you understand the essay topic and identify the main points to be answered within the paper. Take careful note of the wording of the topic statement and ensure you include the information requested. In particular, note terms such as outline, describe, discuss, contrast, compare, analyse, what?, why?, and present the information accordingly. Establish the points that the question allows you to leave out of the assignment. Matching the assignment question to the marking guide will help you to identify which parts of the assignment are worth the most marks, so that you can adequately meet the expectations of the marker.

### BE WELL INFORMED:

Read widely, using several sources relating to the essay topic. Be sure to look at both sides of any issue, and avoid bias. Choose the material you include in the essay carefully. Do not include material just because it is interesting, rather, make sure that it is relevant to the topic. As a rough guide, a 1500 word paper would usually include at least 10 – 15 references using most current resources where appropriate. These may be sourced from books, journals or reputable online resources. There are a number of options for locating relevant information for your study. This includes not only websites accessed on the World Wide Web in the public domain, but also databases that are accessible to you as a student of Avondale College. These databases are accessed via the Library page on the Avondale website.

The following page give some examples of ways of accessing that information. For some of these sites you will need your student log-in and password.

## Accessing Learning Resources on Avondale's website.

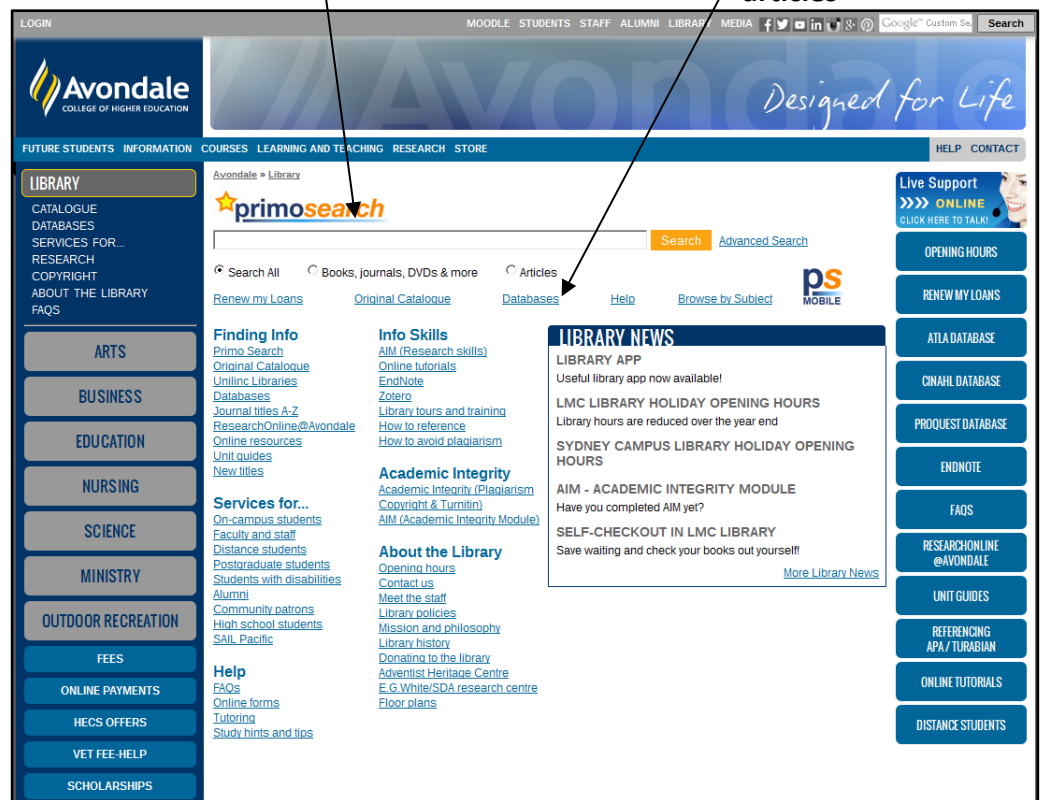
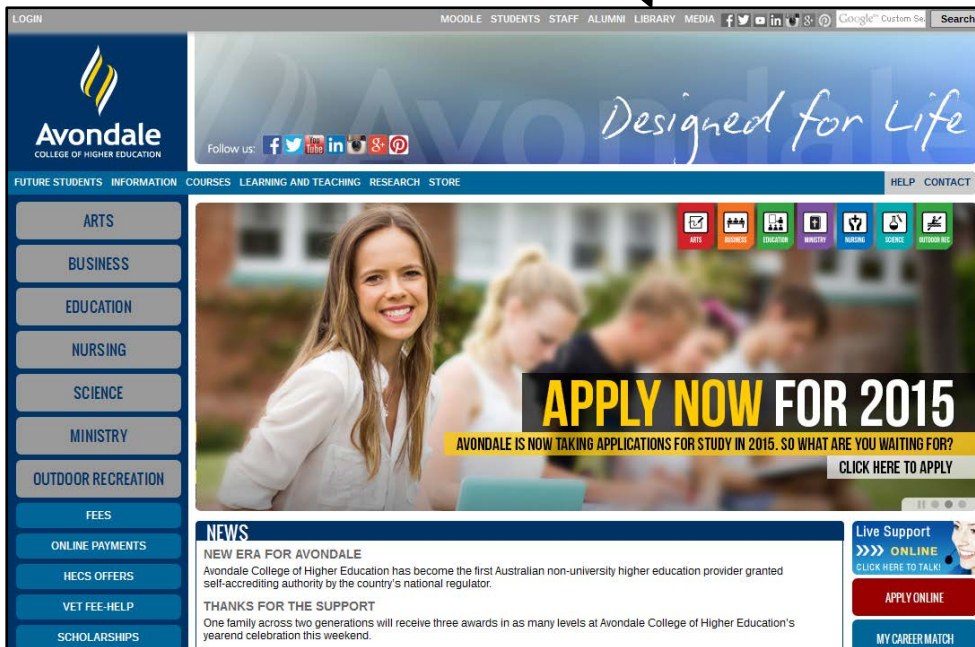
This illustrates how to make best use of the Avondale Library resources. You can access this from any computer that has an Internet connection.

**Step 1: Open the Avondale web page**

**Step 2: Go to the top menu list and select Library**

**Step 3: Select either PrimoSearch (from menu on screen) OR**

**Select a catalogue, database or serials collection for journal articles**



## **BE AWARE OF POTENTIAL TRAPS WITH WEB BASED MATERIAL**

If accessing websites, ensure that the material is from a reputable site. For example if you are researching for diabetes care, a “Google” search will bring up a list of a wide range of sites. This site for Diabetes NSW, a member based charity, <http://diabetesnsw.com.au/> also offers products for sale. The National Diabetes Services Scheme on the other hand, is an initiative of the Australia Government and administered by Diabetes Australia <http://www.ndss.com.au/>

## **ORGANISE IDEAS LOGICALLY:**

Utilising data collected from various sources, present the information in logical steps so that it is easy for the reader to follow your ideas. Link ideas together and ensure that you show clearly how the information presented relates to the overall topic. Do not just take slabs from various references, place them in sequence, and then add a conclusion. Make frequent use of *transitional phrases* to help keep the reader informed of the direction you are taking. Use the marking guide to guide your structure – having the parts of your paper in the same order as the guide will ensure that the marker doesn’t overlook any elements.

## **COMPLY WITH THE WORD LIMIT:**

Make sure you meet the word limit, but do not exceed it. Usually a latitude of 10% either side is allowed. When entering in your word count on the cover page, remember that the total number of words is made up of the actual essay itself and does **NOT** include the title page, abstract, references used in the actual essay, reference list or appendix. Direct quotes are also excluded from this count.

## **ABSTRACT (or Synopsis): Written on a separate page.**

You MAY be asked to include an abstract or synopsis in the assignment. An abstract is a concise and simple statement of the assignment topic and is placed before the actual essay. It usually consists of approximately 100-150 words in length, states the purpose of the essay and provides a clear and brief summary of what is written. As well, it indicates the purpose, direction, main arguments and conclusions of the paper. It is not merely an introduction, nor is it a list of the contents of the paper - it needs to indicate the direction taken, the main themes and the conclusions reached in your discussion of the topic. Remember, it is not a proposal but a summary, therefore it is written in past tense.

Many articles and research papers in journals contain abstracts. Take the time to review these for in so doing you will be able to determine what constitutes an effective abstract. The abstract (or synopsis) is written after you have finished your paper/essay, thus it is a true reflection of the completed work.

## **STRUCTURE THE CONTENT:**

The essay should have an introduction, a body and a conclusion:

**The introduction** forms the first paragraph and it should clarify the topic of the essay, define major terms and outline what **will be** presented in the essay. It should be written in such a way that it encourages the reader to read on.

**The body** of the essay is where the topic statement or question is actually answered. The main points of the topic should be presented in logical order and each point elaborated on separately. Consider the appropriate balancing of main points - at times they may need to be weighted equally within the assignment, at other times some points may need more elaboration than others. Factors such as relevance, word constraints and the purpose of the essay need to be kept in perspective when making such decisions.

**The conclusion** of the essay constitutes the final paragraph and should bring together, in summary, the major points presented in the body of the essay. The purpose is to sum up and reflect on the information found in relation to the topic, therefore no new ideas should be presented in the conclusion. The conclusion should be a concise statement of meaning drawn from your presentation and should show how it has answered the question. In addition, the conclusion rounds off the assignment, so that it does not finish abruptly. Avoid concluding with a quote.

#### **WRITE CORRECTLY:**

Tertiary assignments should be presented as professional papers, therefore you must take particular care with the use of formal language, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling and tense.

**Formal Language:** Use formal language and terms in essays, avoiding jargon, clichés and slang. When identifying people in the text of the essay do not refer to them by first name only. Surnames may be used on their own or first names may be used with surnames, if desired. As a rule, write essays in the **third person**, avoiding the use of first and second person pronouns such as 'I', 'we', 'us', 'our', etc., unless the topic asks you to share your own experience. Use **gender neutral language** as appropriate.

**Punctuation:** Ensure that all punctuation is correct. This also applies to use of punctuation marks when identifying sources and in the reference list. Please carefully follow the guidelines given in the referencing section to ensure that this is done correctly.

Special care needs to be taken with the use of **apostrophes**, especially in relation to their use to depict ownership. Remember to place the apostrophe after the actual owner/s. For example, the nurse's uniform versus the nurses' uniforms. Be aware also of the use of an apostrophe in the word it's. It's refers to "it is", whereas, its refers to "the possessive case singular of it". Take care to also differentiate between your (pertaining or belonging to you) and you're (you are).

**Sentence Structure:** As a general rule, material in tertiary essays should be presented in complete sentences and presentation of information in point form should be avoided. Ensure that correct **grammar** is used, and check that each sentence contains a **subject** and a **verb** and is constructed as a complete sentence.

**Spelling:** There should be no spelling errors in the submitted assignment. Use a dictionary or spell check to ensure that all spelling is correct. Be consistent with the form of spelling used - do not mix American and Anglicised forms.

**Tense:** Avoid changes of tense within an assignment, and certainly within the one paragraph. Write in the tense that is appropriate to the particular topic. For example, an essay on an historical topic should be written in past tense, whereas one which is describing the status quo should be written in present tense.

## **2. FORMAT**

An assignment should be formatted in such a way that makes it a pleasure to read and grade. Untidy presentation and inconsistency in format can reduce the ease of reading the assignment and therefore make it difficult to assess the content. This can result in a reduced grade. The following guidelines should be followed when preparing the final draft for submission.

### **ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION:**

Assignments are to be submitted electronically through Moodle using the Turnitin submission point on the relevant unit page. Use the assignment template available on each Moodle course which includes a Title Page followed by a correctly formatted document that you can type straight into. File names need to be in this format – Surname\_Student ID\_Unit Code\_Assignment Number\_Year. Turnitin automatically records the date and time the assignment was uploaded to verify when it was received. Please ensure you keep a copy of the assignment in case the original fails to arrive.

### **MARGINS:**

A margin of approximately 2.5 centimetres all round, on the left and right edges of the page, as well as the top and bottom, is preferred. The assignment template has the margins already set for you.

### **NUMBERING PAGES:**

Pages of an essay must be numbered. Page one should commence with the first page of the actual essay (after the title page and abstract page).

### **ORDER OF SECTIONS:**

- Title Page
- Abstract (if required)
- The actual essay (commence page numbering here)
- Reference List
- Appendix/ces (if applicable)

### **TITLE PAGE:**

A title page is to be placed at the front of the assignment and is available on Moodle at the front of the Assignment template provided in each Moodle course. Students must sign the INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT when submitting their assignment.

## FONT SIZE AND STYLE:

Font size should be **12**. Font style should be Arial or Calibri.

## LINE SPACING:

Line spacing should always be **double spacing** for typed assignments.

The only exception to this is with quoted material which is 40 words or more in length. Such quotes are to be single spaced, fully justified and double indented ((see following point)

## QUOTES:

All quoted material must be identified as being quoted. Direct quotation occurs when you use “word for word material directly quoted from another author’s work” (APA, 2010, p. 173). There are two methods of doing this depending on the length of the quote.

Where a quote is **shorter than 40 words** in length it is to be included normally in the text of the essay and identified by **double** quotation marks at the beginning and end of the actual quoted material. The source of the quote must also be given within the sentence or at its conclusion. Please note the placement of the full stop – following the bracket - at the end of the sentence. For example:

It is stated that “falls are frequently reported adverse events in the adult inpatient setting” (Perry, Potter, & Elkin, 2012, p. 37).

Alternatively, the author’s name can be used as part of the actual sentence.

For example: (Note also the use of et al as the authors have previously been cited above)

Perry et al. (2012, p. 37) state that “falls are frequently reported adverse events in the adult inpatient setting”.

Quotes which are 40 words or longer in length are to be indented. Quotation marks are not used in this instance. For example:

It is emphasised that:

Assessment of respiratory function is one of the most critical assessment skills because alterations can be life threatening. Routine assessment is essential; changes in respirations or breath sounds can occur quickly as a result of a variety of factors, including immobility, infection, and fluid overload (Perry et al., p. 37). Should be single spaced and double indented!

Quotes should not be used in excess. They should be reserved for such items as definitions, brief extracts that cannot be expressed adequately in another way, or for special emphasis. As a general guide, quotes should constitute less than 10% of an essay.

When quoting, copy the original wording **accurately** and use the same spelling and punctuation as is used in the original. If there is an error in the original this can be identified



in the quote by placing [sic] after the error. When including a quote in the text of an essay, make sure that the sentence is grammatically correct. If it is necessary to include an extra word or phrase in a quote to ensure correct sentence structure, place the word or phrase in square brackets.

If you omit part of the original work within a quote then indicate this with three ellipsis points as such ... with another full stop added if this is at the end of a sentence or between two sentences.

#### **PARAGRAPHS:**

Make sure that you clearly indicate where a new paragraph has commenced. This can be done by putting an extra line space between paragraphs.

Correct paragraph structure is an important part of good essay writing. Look critically at your paragraphs. A paragraph is a group of sentences that develops one main point or idea. Generally, the idea is introduced in the key sentence and the successive sentences explain or illustrate the point that the paragraph is making. Ensure that there is continuity between paragraphs with one paragraph flowing logically on from the previous one. ***Do not have paragraphs which consist of only one or two sentences.*** A paragraph should be approximately 100 words in length, although a range of about 50 to 150 words is acceptable.

#### **ABBREVIATIONS:**

Abbreviations may be used but only after they have initially been identified in full when first used. For example:

.....the blood pressure (BP). His BP was subsequently.....

#### **CAPITALISATION OF WORDS:**

Any proper nouns such as names of medications, ward areas, medical procedures etc. should begin with a capital letter when referred to in the assignment.

#### **NUMBERS AND NUMERALS:**

In the text of the essay, spell out rounded numbers less than 10 and any numbers used to commence a sentence, otherwise numerals are used.

#### **APPENDIXES:**

Material which is deemed necessary to support information in the text of the assignment but which is not considered appropriate for inclusion in the actual essay may be included as an appendix. Generally such items as letters, tables, graphs, questionnaires etc. would be placed in the appendix. Appendixes are placed at the back of the assignment, after the reference list. Each appendix included in the assignment must be referred to in the actual text of the essay.

#### **FOOTNOTES:**

Using the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style, content footnotes are used only for the purposes of providing additional discussion or clarification of information. If

used at all they are to be restricted to explanations which the writer may feel it necessary to make. This does not replace in-text referencing. Copyright permission footnotes acknowledge a particular source for example, when reprinted table or figure is used with permission of the author.

#### **HANDWRITING:**

Handwriting is not acceptable in a piece of academic work (unless specified by the lecturer). Assignments should be submitted as typed papers. The submitted assignment should not contain any cross-outs or liquid paper corrections.

#### **PHOTOCOPIES:**

As a general rule, do not include photocopied material in an assignment. If it is necessary to include such material, ensure that it is referenced correctly. It is usually appropriate to include photocopied material as an appendix rather than part of the actual essay. Please be aware that under **no circumstances** are you able to **copy medical records or patient notes**.

It is important to keep a copy of each assignment you submit. This allows you to refer to the material if necessary and it ensures that a second copy is available if the submitted copy is inadvertently misplaced.

#### **PLAGIARISM:**

Please familiarise yourself with Avondale College [Academic Integrity Policy \[A.01 / VA.04\]](#) on the Avondale website, or view the online [Plagiarism tutorial](#) on the Library page. The APA guide for referencing (APA, 2010) clearly indicates that you cannot present another's ideas as your own. It must be noted that "Whether paraphrasing, quoting an author directly, or describing an idea that influenced your work, you must credit the source" (APA, 2010, p. 172). This infers that the reader should **never** be confused or in doubt as to where the information or ideas have been sourced. It is best to reference more often than not.

Usually, it is more appropriate to paraphrase the information into your own words, avoiding plagiarism by identifying the source of the paraphrased material and by providing a page number or paragraph number (APA, 2010, p. 175).

If you fail to adequately reference in an academic paper, you may be required to re-submit the paper after you receive some educational instruction from your lecturer. Please be aware that academic penalties may apply for a resubmission and increase in severity as you progress through your degree.

Cases of suspected Academic Misconduct will be dealt with through the [Academic Integrity Policy \[A.01 / VA/04\]](#).

### 3. REFERENCING

The Faculty of Nursing use the APA style for all referencing. Your citations and reference list MUST be set out correctly in this format. Please refer to the pocket guide by Perrin (reference below) or download notes on referencing from Library > Info Skills > How to Reference > APA Style Guide for Nurses. If you are using EndNote for your referencing the *Avondale Style Guide for APA Referencing with notes for using EndNote* on the same web page will outline the APA style and how to use EndNote with it.

**Do not rely on the inbuilt APA formatting option which is available with many word processing programs – they do not all meet the requirements spelled out in this document. It is your responsibility to check and adjust any formatting prior to submission.**

#### References

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Concise rules of APA style* (6th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Perrin, R. (2015). *Pocket guide to APA style* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Stamford, Conn. Cengage Learning.

Perry, A. G., Potter, P. A., & Elkin, M. E. (2012). *Nursing interventions & clinical skills* (5th ed.). St Louis, MI: Elsevier Mosby.