

GUIDELINES FOR ESSAYS IN COURSEWORK UNITS

This guide refers to essays within coursework units for all awards of the ACT. An essay in a coursework unit refers to an assessment piece which forms part of the total assessment of a unit, where more than one assessment piece is required. If a unit only has one assessment piece, please refer to *Guidelines for Projects* or *Guidelines for Theses*.

1. Date

Essays are to be completed and submitted to the candidate's institution by the due dates. Failure to complete essays by the due dates may exclude students from sitting for examinations.

2. Presentation

An essay should reveal clear thinking and careful organisation, for while the essay will be marked primarily on content, the format is important. The use of a standard format assists both the examiner and the student. Careful attention should be given to spelling, grammar and punctuation.

The essay should be word-processed (double-spaced), A4 format and in 12 pt Times New Roman font or equivalent. The left hand margin should be at least three centimetres wide. All pages should be numbered consecutively. Students should keep a copy of the essay.

3. General Format

An essay should consist of the following essential features, each to begin on a fresh page.

3.1 Title Page

This should contain the student's ACT number (but not name), course and unit, the full title of the essay, the date and the number of words in the body of the essay.

The essay must keep to the set length, within 10% variation. For example, a 3,000 word essay should be between 2,700 and 3,300 words. This count excludes abstract, appendices, bibliographical referencing (such as endnotes, footnotes, in-text referencing) or bibliography. Essays which fall outside the 10% variation will not be accepted for examination. A limit of 10% on verbatim quotation applies in coursework unit essays.

The title page must also contain the following disclaimer signed and dated by the student—

The following essay, of which I have kept a copy, is entirely the work of the undersigned and all sources of ideas and expressions are duly acknowledged in footnotes, endnotes or in-text referencing.

Any essay to be examined externally should not contain the student's name. The signed disclaimer should be lodged separately with the student's sponsoring college.

3.2 Abstract

This should occupy the second page of the essay and should be a piece of continuous prose, not numbered points, about 150 words long giving a summary of the structure of the argument of the essay.

3.3 The Essay Proper

The essay should contain:

- (i) A clear introduction to the subject setting out the matter to be discussed.
- (ii) The body of the essay setting out in a clear and concise way the subject under discussion.
- (iii) The conclusion summarising what has been said and the findings of the investigation.

The essay should be in the student's own words. Where a quotation contributes to the argument the author's words should be quoted exactly, in inverted commas. Where an author's argument is expressed in the student's own words, acknowledgment should be made.

3.4 Consistency

Consistent use of one convention for acknowledging the source of ideas and quotations should be used in the essay (see #4 below).

If notes are used, these should not exceed 25% of the prescribed essay length. A note should be introduced by a numeral above the line, usually placed at the end of a sentence. Notes may be included at the end of the essay as endnotes (beginning on a new page), or at the bottom of each page as footnotes.

3.5 Abbreviations

Abbreviations for journals or biblical books, for example, should conform to those set out in a recognised style reference work such as *The SBL Handbook of Style*. Biblical books may only be abbreviated when followed by both chapter and verse (e.g., Gen. 5.2; not Gen. or Gen. 5).

3.6 Bibliographies

A bibliography should be included, containing all references cited and important references consulted in the writing of the essay. The items in the bibliography should be listed alphabetically by author's surname.

3.7 Greek and Hebrew

In awards where Greek and/or Hebrew language is a requirement, students should present Greek

and Hebrew text without transliteration in non-foundational units. In other instances transliteration may or may not be required at the discretion of the supervisor and/or examiner of the unit, giving consideration to prior learning and formal pre-requisites.

4. Format for Referencing and Bibliographic Citation

The ACT recommends the use of either the author-date or the note system. As affiliated colleges have the right to set a particular style, candidates should check with the unit provider as to whether a single style has been set as compulsory.

Students should consult one or more of the following sources for all matters relating to referencing and bibliographic citation. If using the *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers*, 2002 (6th edition) pages 187-232 should be consulted. Both the author-date and note-bibliography system of referencing as outlined in this resource are acceptable. For details on the author-date system see pages 188-208. There are less extensive guidelines for the note system on pages 208-215.

In the interests of economy of space, punctuation can be minimised. Use italics instead of using underlining or boldface type. If the author-note system is used, the references can be given in a smaller font size than the main text.

For more information on the note system, students may also wish to consult the following general reference works—

- Turabian, K. L. 2007 *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th edition University of Chicago Press, Chicago, and
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 2010 16th edition University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Students may also wish to consult the following more specialised guide—

- *The SBL Handbook of Style, for Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* 1999 Hendrickson, Peabody.

These works are designed to deal exhaustively with questions students might have with the proper referencing and bibliographic conventions of the style they have adopted. The SBL Handbook has been devised with the biblical, early Jewish and early Christian literature disciplines in mind. It is particularly useful for accepted abbreviations of biblical books and journals.

It is expected that candidates will be consistent in their referencing, adopting and implementing one

of the systems recommended in the standard style guide resources listed above.

5. Format for Footnotes and Bibliography

5.1 Author-date system

Each acknowledgment in the body of the essay/paper/thesis is followed in brackets by the author, the date of the work published and the page number, e.g., (Ehrman 1997:200) or (de Boer 1988:100). Using the author-date system does not negate the need for footnotes.

In the bibliography, the full details of the work are given according to the following schema:

Monographs

author—surname followed by initials, date, title, publisher, place published.

Ehrman, B. D. 1997, *The New Testament, A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, Oxford University Press, Oxford & London.

Journals

author—surname followed by initials, date, "title", journal and volume, page numbers.

de Boer, M. C. 1988, "Jesus the Baptizer: 1 John 5:5–8 and the Gospel of John", *JBL* 107, 87–106.

5.2 Note system

Each acknowledgment in the body of the essay/paper/thesis is followed by a raised number, usually after the full-stop at the end of a sentence, directing the reader to a footnote or endnote. Here, when the work is cited for the first time, the full details are given according to the following order—

Monographs

author—initials followed by surname, title, (place published, publisher, date), and page number.

B. D. Ehrman, *The New Testament, A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings* (Oxford & London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 200.

Articles

author—initials followed by surname, "title", journal and volume, (year), and page number.

M. C. de Boer, "Jesus the Baptizer: 1 John 5:5–8 and the Gospel of John", *JBL* 107 (1988), 99.

Further citations in footnotes/endnotes of the same work are abbreviated.

Ehrman, *New Testament*, 201.

de Boer, "Jesus the Baptizer", 100.

In the bibliography, the work cited is listed by author surname, initials, then in the same manner

in which it was first acknowledged in the essay/paper/thesis.

For students using EndNote the ACT recommends that Chicago 15th A be the style that is followed. Please note that works will appear in footnotes with the initials of the author listed first. However, the bibliography will automatically list the surname of the author first.

Publications found on the internet should be referenced in the normal way with the internet address provided instead of the publisher's name. The date the material was cited should also be included. Internet addresses should not be hyphenated at the end of a line. They can be divided before the "dot" at the end of a line.

For example,
Author-date

Kaye, B. N. 1999, *Head, Heart and Spirit: Shaping the New Millennium*, no pages,
<http://www.anglican.org.au/BNKtalks/>. Cited 8 May 2007.

Note system

B. N. Kaye, "Head, Heart and Spirit: Shaping the New Millennium", 1999, no pages,
<http://www.anglican.org.au/BNKtalks/>. Cited 8 May 2007.



ENDNOTE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS AND STAFF

The EndNote® software enables you to automatically format citations, footnotes and bibliographies to a chosen standard. It is one of the industry standard software tools for publishing and managing bibliographies on both Windows and Macintosh® computers.

The Australian College of Theology recommends the use of either the author-date (aka the Harvard system) or the note system.

Using EndNote, ACT students and academic staff could save many hours of typing and interpreting style requirements of scholarly publications by simply selecting the publication by name and generating a perfectly formatted document.

The ACT has purchased a licence for all ACT students currently enrolled in a higher education award, members of the Board of Directors, the three ACT Departmental Heads, as well as academic staff members and librarians at affiliated colleges, making it possible to use EndNote software. For more information, or to download the EndNote software, please visit our website.

NON-DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE POLICY

This policy has been designed by the Boards of the ACT in order that students at all levels, as well as teachers, examiners and supervisors, will avoid discriminating language. By discriminating language we mean speaking or writing in a way that discriminates against, vilifies or denigrates individuals on the basis of their gender, colour, ethnicity, age, disability, race, or religion.

The recommendations below concerning avoidance of male-oriented language in generic contexts (see section 5) are intended for use in language about people only.

Departures from the policy need to be justified by the student, especially if he or she is writing a thesis or a major project.

1. All people are created in the image of God and all are equally found wanting before the justice of God. This revealed truth should motivate us to respect all people since Christ identified with and died for all. Inspired by the gospel of Jesus Christ, St Paul sought to establish in the church a new vision of humankind in which the conventional social divisions between male and female, slave and free, and Jew and Greek were broken down and overcome (Gal 3:28). Linguistic discrimination, and its more acute forms of vilification and denigration, culpably undermine and compromise the apostolic vision and should therefore be avoided by those who are committed to caring for all people, including Christians who are committed to showing unconditional love.

2. To use language to discriminate in our society is a serious one, which we do well to address, and to do all in our power to avoid and eradicate. Australia's commitment to eliminating discrimination can be measured, for example, by the number of federal acts that have been enacted—including the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act 1986*—to make it unlawful to discriminate against others on the basis of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, and gender.

3. To use language to discriminate, vilify and denigrate, may occur by means of the words used to refer to or address others, and may take verbal or written form. Linguistic discrimination against people may occur in various ways, whether by ignoring their presence, excluding them, portraying them in the light of irrelevant characteristics or in an unbalanced way, or using language that is insulting, harassing, or based on a stereotype.

4. The means by which and the contexts in which this avoidance of linguistic discrimination should be achieved will vary according to the context of language and culture in which speaking and writing takes place. In working with already published works, such as the Bible, the issue of being faithful to the original intended meaning of a text will need to be addressed in the context of the need to avoid linguistic discrimination. The balance and tension between these two valid concerns (i.e. faithfulness to original meaning and avoiding linguistic discrimination) will vary between published works.

5. In relation to avoiding gender linguistic discrimination, it is recommended that women be made more visible in language by avoiding an older linguistic usage in which "male-specific" and "male-identified" terms were used in a generic sense. The use of the word "man" should also be avoided in idioms and phrases when the speaker or author clearly intends to refer to both men and women. The same applies to pronouns such as "he" and "she", occupational nouns and job titles, and other titles and naming practices. Stereotyped images of women or men should also be avoided. It is recommended that a number of alternatives proposed in the *Australian Government Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers* (6th edition, 2002) (see pp. 58-62) ought to be adopted as far as possible.

6. Language which is racist should be avoided, and especially with respect to people who are especially vulnerable in the Australian context, such as indigenous peoples.

7. Further, language which vilifies or denigrates certain ethnolinguistic groups on the basis of their language or ethnic background should be avoided as forms of such linguistic discrimination.

8. Linguistic discrimination and denigration should be avoided also in the case of people with disabilities or for people of certain ages.