The ACEDA Team

ACADEMIC STYLE

- If you are having difficulties seeing the screen or hearing, sign out and back in again.

- Please mute your microphone when joining the session.

- You can unmute yourself when necessary.

Please note, these workshops are interactive!
Please turn on your camera when the session starts.
Message the lecturer if you are unable to unmute your microphone during the session.

Session will start at:
XXXX

The Plan for Today – Aims and Objectives

Understand the purpose of good academic style

Develop your knowledge of six important academic conventions

Practise converting colloquialisms into academic language

By the end of the lesson you will be able to:

Write confidently in an academic style when undertaking assignments

QA Academic Style

Task

1. What are the conventions of academic style?

2. Why are they important in your assignments?

Please post your answers in the chat!

Answer

1. What are the conventions of academic style?

The following six conventions are followed to produce successful university assignments and scholarly publications:

- Formality
- Precision
- Objectivity
- Concision
- Structure
- Caution

Answer

2. Why are they important in your assignments?

The conventions of academic style encourage students to **communicate** their **arguments clearly and succinctly** – signposting where and how the assessment criteria have been fulfilled.
This can result in:

- Improved grades
- The development of critical thinking skills

QA Conventions 1-3

1 **Formality**

A To convey information with accuracy, incorporating relevant detail such as facts, statistics, and discipline-specific vocabulary.

2 **Precision**

B To use impartial language which is not personal, judgemental, or emotive. To avoid exaggeration or bias, respecting the views of others.

3 **Objectivity**

C To communicate in standard English, avoiding colloquialisms and the first person (*unless otherwise told!*).

QA Conventions 1-3

Answer

1 Formality

C To communicate in standard English, avoiding colloquialisms and the first person (*unless otherwise told!*).

2 Precision

A To convey information with accuracy, incorporating relevant detail such as facts, statistics, and discipline-specific vocabulary.

3 Objectivity

B To use impartial language which is not personal, judgemental, or emotive. To avoid exaggeration or bias, respecting the views of others.

Formality

True or false? Formal academic language...

1. Uses colloquialisms such as 'boss' or 'newbie'.

True or false? Formal academic language...

1. Uses colloquialisms such as 'boss' or 'newbie'.

True or false? Formal academic language...

2. Uses idioms like 'cut corners' and 'easier said than done'.

QA Formality

True or false? Formal academic language...

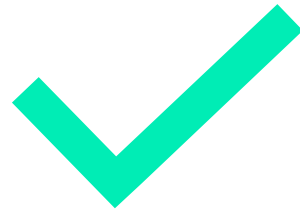2. Uses idioms like 'cut corners' and 'easier said than done'.

QA Formality

True or false? Formal academic language...

3. Avoids contractions, including 'isn't' and 'didn't'.

True or false? Formal academic language...

3. Avoids contractions, including 'isn't' and 'didn't'.

✓

True or false? Formal academic language...

4. Uses 'get / go' phrases such as 'get better' or 'get worse'.

True or false? Formal academic language...

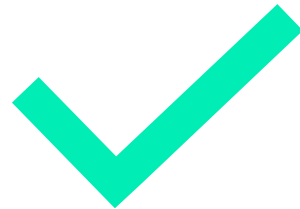4. Uses 'get / go' phrases such as 'get better' or 'get worse'.

QA Formality

True or false? Formal academic language...

5. Avoids multi-word verbs like 'take place' or 'bring together'.

True or false? Formal academic language...

5. Avoids multi-word verbs like 'take place' or 'bring together'.

True or false? Formal academic language...

6. Uses question forms. For example, 'What factors contributed to the decrease in employee wellbeing?'

Task

In your assignments, you should avoid multi-word verbs and phrasal verbs. Can you think of more concise academic alternatives for examples 1 – 6?

Carry on	**Continue**	Leave out	1)
Get bigger	**Increase**	Sort out	2)
Bring together	**Integrate**	Take part	3)
Bring into	**Introduce**	Come before	4)
Take place	**Occur**	Give a speech	5)
Stay the same	**Maintain**	Put forward	6)

Answer

Leave out	**1) Omit**
Sort out	**2) Organise**
Take part	**3) Participate**
Come before	**4) Precede**
Give a speech	**5) Present**
Put forward	**6) Propose**

Task

In breakout rooms, identify and correct the informalities.

1.	This assignment will talk about big issues affecting the digital communications industry.
2.	As children get older, they become really aware of their social background.
3.	But what is the Fourth Industrial Revolution?
4.	While Smith's (2023) investigation backs up these findings, Taylor (2024) says they should be taken with a pinch of salt.
5.	The brains of teens aren't yet fully developed, particularly those areas involved in impulse control.

QA Formality

Answer

1.	This assignment will **discuss key** issues affecting the digital communications industry.
2.	As children **develop**, they become **more** aware of their social background.
3.	**The Fourth Industrial Revolution is…**
4.	While Smith's (2023) investigation **supports** these findings, Taylor (2024) **identifies the potential limitations.**
5.	The brains of **adolescents are not** yet fully developed, particularly those areas involved in impulse control.

Precision

QA Precision

Which example is best? Why?

a) Employees at Organisation x do not like long meetings as they always tune out half-way through.

b) 85% of employees at Organisation x reported preferring meetings under one hour (Appendix A), to enhance engagement and the retention of new information (Soady, 2024).

c) 85% of employees at Organisation x testified to a penchant for meetings comprising a maximum solitary hour in duration (Appendix A), for facilitation and optimisation of oft-lacking communal partaking and the efficacious assimilation of freshly acquired information (Soady, 2024).

QA Precision

To write with precision involves...

✓ A high level of **detail** and **specificity** – integrating relevant facts, statistics, and discipline-specific vocabulary.

✓ Making **deliberate linguistic choices**, which do not allow for misinterpretation.

✓ Incorporating **citations** and **appendices**, using scholarly resources and internal company documentation to evidence your arguments.

Do not confuse precision with writing in an artificial 'overly-academic' style. Your writing should still be **clear** and **easy to understand**!

Objectivity

QA Objectivity

Academic writing is objective and impersonal. Even when writing about your own experiences, you should use impartial language which is not personal, judgemental, or emotive.

1. Is this excerpt from a reflective section objective? Why?

> It was a total waste of time attending the leadership course as the instructor was really condescending and I knew everything already. As such, I felt absolutely demotivated and did not want to continue on the project.

QA Objectivity

2. How could this excerpt be rewritten?

> It was a total waste of time attending the leadership course as the instructor was really condescending and I knew everything already. As such, I felt absolutely demotivated and did not want to continue on the project.

Please unmute or post an answer in the chat!

QA Objectivity

2. How could this excerpt be rewritten?

Continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities should be selected carefully as unsuitable training is likely to demotivate an employee instead of equipping them with valuable skills for the workplace (Campbell, 2023).

QA Conventions 4-6

Task

4 Concision

A To express varying degrees of certainty or uncertainty. Otherwise known as hedging language.

5 Well-structured

B To convey information effectively in as few words as possible.

6 Caution

C To arrange information in a logical and comprehensible sequence.

QA Conventions 4-6

4 **Concision**

B To convey information effectively in as few words as possible.

5 **Well-structured**

C To arrange information in a logical and comprehensible sequence.

6 **Caution**

A To express varying degrees of certainty or uncertainty. Otherwise known as hedging language.

Concision

QA Academic Conventions in Practice

1. **Can you identify the problem areas within this sentence?**

2. **Can you apply academic conventions to rewrite the sentence?**

The thing about AI that is important to note is the way in which the company itself discusses its own in-depth AI research papers and other areas too such as open-source tools that the company has spent its own time on developing.

Please unmute or post an answer in the chat!

QA Conventions in Practice

1. **The previous sentence lacked concision which impacted the structure and clarity of meaning.**

The thing about AI **that is important to note** is the **way in which** the company **itself** discusses its **own in-depth** AI research papers and **other areas too such as** open-source tools that the company has **spent its own time on** developing.

2. Below is an improved version of the sentence.

Meta AI heavily features the company's own AI research, including research papers and open-source AI tools it has developed.

QA Concision

Tip

In your assignments, you should avoid using unnecessary adverbs or phrases.

Common unnecessary adverbs	Common unnecessary phrases
totally, completely, remarkably, surprisingly	In my opinion... As to whether....
absolutely, definitely, certainly	It is important to note... Due to the fact...
probably, actually, basically, virtually	In order to... In spite of the fact...
rather, quite, somehow, perhaps	In the event that... It goes to show...
possibly, commonly	It is possible that... For the purpose of...

QA Concision

1. **In breakout rooms, identify the unnecessary words and phrases.**
   2. **Choose a sentence to rewrite in a more concise manner.**

1.	For the purpose of implementing a new project management methodology, Agile is extremely beneficial.
2.	In the group's opinion, the results were highly inconclusive due to the fact that inaccuracies were found in the data.
3.	In spite of the fact that AI is a powerful new technology, it is important to note that it is successfully driving cybercrime.
4.	There have been many discussions among researchers which support the fact that excessive screen time severely impacts health.
5.	Needless to say, the project was actually delayed, due to the fact that dedicated resource was extremely limited.

QA Concision

1. In breakout rooms, identify the unnecessary words and phrases.
   2. Choose a sentence to improve and rewrite.

1.	**For the purpose of** implementing a new project management methodology, Agile is **extremely** beneficial.
2.	**In the group's opinion,** the results were **highly** inconclusive **due to the fact that** inaccuracies **were found** in the data.
3.	**In spite of the fact that** AI is a powerful new technology, **it is important to note that** it is **successfully** driving cybercrime.
4.	**There have been many** discussions among researchers which support **the fact that** excessive screen time **severely** impacts health.
5.	**Needless to say**, the project was **actually** delayed, **due to the fact** that dedicated resource was **very** limited.

QA Concision

Tip

You can either omit unnecessary words and phrases or use more concise alternatives.

Unnecessary word or phrase	Possible revision
Due to the fact meeting was cancelled...	**As** the meeting was cancelled...
As to whether the company decides...	**Whether** the company decides...
In the event that the deadline is not met...	**If** the deadline is not met...
In order to understand the impact of...	**To** understand the impact of...
In spite of the fact **that...**	**Despite** the fact...

Caution

Which example is best? Why?

a) Yen (2005) proves conclusively that extensive reading always helps students to improve their vocabulary.

b) Yen (2005) suggests that, for a significant proportion of students, extensive reading may contribute to an improvement in their active vocabulary.

Please post your answers in the chat!

QA Caution

Which example is best? Why?

a) Yen (2023) proves conclusively that extensive reading always helps students to improve their vocabulary.

✓ b) Yen (2023) **suggests** that, for a **significant proportion** of students, extensive reading **may** contribute to an improvement in their **active** vocabulary.

In academic writing, an author may not be convinced by the claims being made in their subject area, or perhaps the ideas require further evidence. It is therefore common to use the language of caution or uncertainty (known as hedging language).

Caution

The language of caution or uncertainty can be used for different purposes. The table below provides some examples of language to use when making knowledge claims.

Appearance	Possibility	Frequency	Quantifiers	Evidence	Reporting Verbs
There appears to be ….	Can, could, may, might	Sometimes, rarely	Some…	Based on …	Other studies suggest…
It seems to be…	…has the potential to…	tends to…	a fraction	As indicated by …	Research argues…
This is similar to…	…is able to…	has a tendency to…	The minority /majority of…	According to …	Liu et al. (2024) claim that …
	…has the possibility of…		A proportion of		
			To some extent		

QA Caution

In breakout rooms, use the hedging phrases from the previous table to make these sentences more cautious.

1.	All studies show that AI will improve process efficiencies in the workplace.
2.	Research shows that data driven decision making will always enhance a company's commercial success.
3.	The results clearly show that all employees will benefit from CPD training.
4.	All the evidence shows that employee wellbeing is essential to staff retention.
5.	Notetaking during lectures will always aid memory retention.

QA Caution

In breakout rooms, use the hedging phrases from the previous table to make these sentences more cautious.

1.	**Many** studies demonstrate AI **has the potential to** improve process efficiencies in the workplace.
2.	**Research suggests** data driven decision making **may** enhance a company's commercial success.
3.	According to the results **a significant proportion** of employees **could** benefit from CPD training.
4.	**Studies suggest** employee wellbeing **tends to** impact staff retention.
5.	Notetaking during lectures **appears to** aid memory retention in **some** learners.

Academic Style Conventions in Practice

Task

In breakout rooms, identify the problems areas within this 'academic' paragraph

Lots of people say that leadership is really important for teams being good at collaborating, and you shouldn't underestimate it. It's not fair if some colleagues aren't pulling their weight and if your manager is an authority figure they should be able to sort this out. If you aren't strong enough, it's obvious that some colleagues will take advantage. But I suppose that you can't go too far, or you will upset people. Which of these approaches is right? You have to make your own mind up, I guess. It's very difficult to be a leader.

QA Academic Style

Informal

Answer

Lots of people say that leadership is really important for teams being good at collaborating, and you shouldn't underestimate it. It's not fair if some colleagues aren't pulling their weight and if your manager is an authority figure they should be able to sort this out. If you aren't strong enough, it's obvious that some colleagues will take advantage. But I suppose that you can't go too far, or you will upset people. Which of these is right? You have to make your own mind up, I guess. It's very difficult to be a leader.

Lots of people say that leadership is really important for teams being good at collaborating, and you shouldn't underestimate it. It's not fair if some colleagues aren't pulling their weight and if your manager is an authority figure they should be able to sort this out. If you aren't strong enough, it's obvious that some colleagues will take advantage. But I suppose that you can't go too far, or you will upset people. Which of these is right? You have to make your own mind up, I guess. It's very difficult to be a leader.

Subjective
Answer

Lots of people say that leadership is really important for teams being good at collaborating, and you shouldn't underestimate it. It's not fair if some colleagues aren't pulling their weight and if your manager is an authority figure they should be able to sort this out. If you aren't strong enough, it's obvious that some colleagues will take advantage. But I suppose that you can't go too far, or you will upset people. Which of these is right? You have to make your own mind up, I guess. It's very difficult to be a leader.

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Choose a sentence from this paragraph to rewrite in a more academic style.

Lots of people say that leadership is really important for teams being good at collaborating, and you shouldn't underestimate it. It's not fair if some colleagues aren't pulling their weight and if your manager is an authority figure they should be able to sort this out. If you aren't strong enough, it's obvious that some colleagues will take advantage. But I suppose that you can't go too far, or you will upset people. Which of these approaches is right? You have to make your own mind up, I guess. It's very difficult to be a leader.

QA Academic Style

Answer

Improved example:

Lots of people say that leadership is really important for teams being good at collaborating, and you shouldn't underestimate it.

↓

The importance of effective leadership in fostering collaborative environments within sales teams has been widely noted (Calvin, 2022; Seath, 2024).

QA Academic Style

Answer

Improved example:

But I suppose that you can't go too far, or you will upset people.

↓

An authoritarian leadership style was deemed least popular in a survey of colleagues (Appendix A).

1. You should always write in the first person unless otherwise informed

1. You should always write in the first person unless otherwise informed

2. Writing with precision involves a high level of detail – incorporating relevant citations and discipline-specific vocabulary

2. Writing with precision involves a high level of detail – incorporating relevant citations and discipline-specific vocabulary

3. You should use contractions to reduce your word count

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QA References

Marketing institute (2022) *Meta/Facebook AI: What Businesses Need to Know.* Available at: https://www.marketingaiinstitute.com/blog/how-facebook-uses-artificial-intelligence-and-what-it-means-for-marketers (Accessed: 8 April 2024).

UCL (2023) *Cautious Language and Hedging.* Available at: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe-writing-centre/develop-academic-voice/caution-hedging (Accessed: 6 April 2024).

Walden University (2023) *Precision and Clarity.* Available at: https://academicguides.waldenu.edu/formandstyle/writing/scholarlyvoice/precisionclarity (Accessed: 26 April 2024).

The University of Melbourne (2021) *Academic Style.* Available at: https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/resources/reading,-writing-and-referencing/writing-effectively/academic-style (Accessed: 5 April 2024).

QΛ **Academic Concern?**

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Look on the ACE page for resources (3 formats)

Check the upcoming workshops

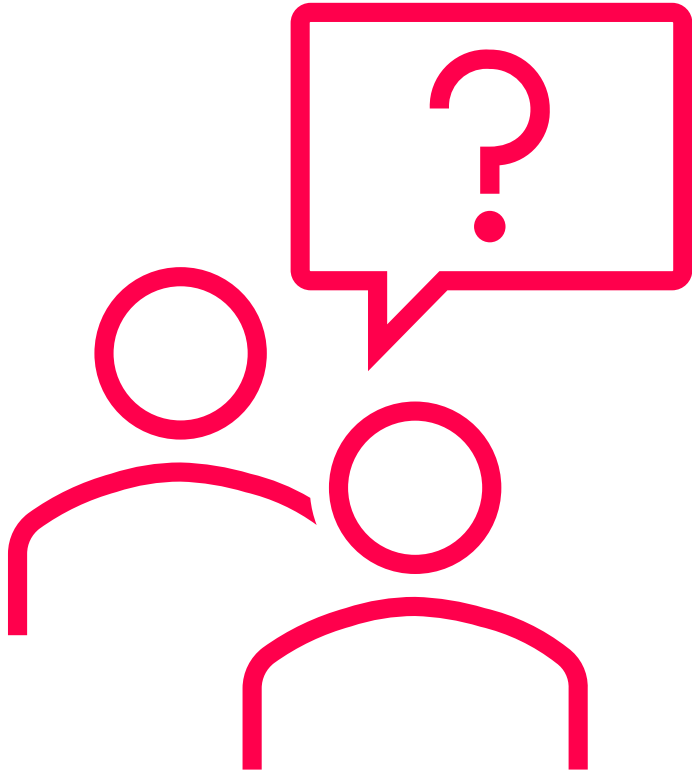If you are still unclear, book in a tutorial

ACE Page

Book a Workshop

Book a Tutorial

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ACE Team Feedback Form

Any Questions?

Thank You!