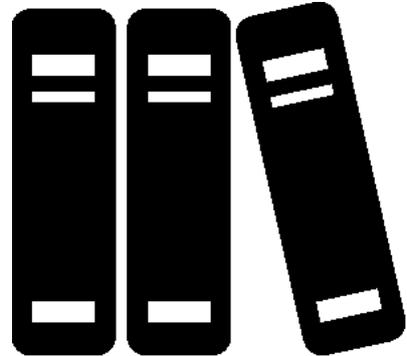


# A guide to planning your assignment

## Creating your own schedule

Before starting your assignment you need to think about what you want to achieve and what is realistic for you to achieve. Here are some assessment materials you should find out:

- What elements are involved in your assessment? For example is it an exam, essay, report or something different
- What is required to pass the course as well as achieve higher grades (Open University, 2009b)



## Find out what is needed

You need to understand what is needed of your assignment, this will help keep you focussed. It is very easy to stray off course when you are writing assignments, partly because you may get 'carried away' with what you are writing about. You need to keep an overview of the assignment writing process while you are working.

## Tips for planning your assignment

- Keep your assignment outline with you so that you can check you're going the right way with your assignment
- Read your assignment outline carefully to see how marks are allocated to each part of the assignment
- Make sure you properly understand the question. If in any doubt, ask your tutor
- If it is a written assessment check the word limit and keep to it

## Talk to your peers

It's a good idea to talk to your peers and friends who are taking the same assessments as you. Particularly when it comes to analysing what the question means and what is expected of you. You must be careful that you do not copy or collude on a piece of work, as this is classed as plagiarism. If you are unsure about plagiarism, read the guide "A guide to plagiarism" available to download from the HE Study Skills section of the College website or speak to your academic tutor.

## Organising what to do

This is the creative part of the process. Take your time, think about how you're going to go about tackling the assignment. Here are some key points to get you started:

1. Gather together your notes and resources that you already have
2. Check the assignment brief and think about the writing style you should use (e.g. should it be written as an essay or in a report fashion)
3. Identify key themes that you need to write about and prioritise these
4. If it helps, create a mind map to visualise your themes – alternatively use post it notes or another method of visualising such as colour coding different themes.

## Ready to write?

Once you have identified what you need to write about and have a clear plan to follow, you are ready to write!

*Remember* your plan shouldn't be set in stone. If part way through you feel you need to go in a different direction, think about it carefully and if you still think it's the right way to go with your assignment, change your plans.

## References

Open university – **need to find this!**