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**Counselling
Department**

Orientation Primer on Writing an Academic Research Paper

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Assignment Guidelines: Research Paper

The following aspects will be considered in the evaluation of your assignment:

- Is the field of study clearly delineated and the reason for the study adequately motivated? *This intellectual exercise requires that you create an umbrella argument - some larger argument under which several observations, perspectives, and recommendations might stand.*
- Does the assignment give a clear indication that the prescribed texts and additional material has been read, understood and used? *Additional research, from additional resources that are applicable to the assignment, must be apparent.*
- Are the explicit or implicit Theological/Psychological theories explored and described? *Applicable theories must be well-chosen and an interpretive summary represented. The theoretical definitions of constructs must be clear, concise, factual, and complete. Theories (larger set of statements) must be connected by logical arguments and hidden or implicit assumptions probed. Implicit/Explicit models must be identified and adequately described. Diverse viewpoints must be adequately presented. Adequate attention must be given to the integration of theological and psychological theories.*
- Your assignment must show that you understand the subject and that you are able to apply the theories, and that you can critically evaluate different approaches. *When you evaluate for an academic purpose, it is important to be able to clearly articulate and to support your own personal response.*
- Your assignment must show that you are able to analyse the data. *This step in constructing an informed argument asks you first to consider the parts of your topic and then to examine how these parts relate to each other or to the whole. When you analyse, you break down a text into its parts. When you synthesize, you look for connections between ideas.*
- Your assignment must show that you can integrate different aspects and that you can formulate it into a new integrative whole. *When you synthesize for an academic purpose, it is important to be able to clearly articulate and to support the connections between ideas. There should be a clear indication that you were able to integrate the knowledge into your own viewpoint.*
- Your assignment must show that you were able, from the theoretical analysis and descriptive interpretation, to reach and present certain conclusions and suggestions. *Findings of theoretical research must be reflectively and hermeneutically related to the existing theological theory and must show theological/psychological integration.*
- Does the assignment make a contribution to the scientific field of study?
- Is the technical presentation adequate? *The assignment must include a title page, content, bibliography, and if appropriate, appendices. The paper must be technically and grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Writing must be unambiguous, clear, and free of colloquial phrases, slang and incomplete sentences.*
- Citations of sources must be in correct APA format (author, date, title, publisher).

The General Rules of Scientific Writing¹

I expect that students in a Masters Course should be able to produce work on a graduate level - this includes the ability to do independent research, reason academically, and compose and produce an academic paper.

Academic or scientific writing is different from everyday, conversational speech and informal writing (such as writing in your diary, writing a letter to someone, or sending an Email). It is a form of technical writing, with its own specific vocabulary and specific set of rules. Mouton (2001) composed twelve general rules for academic writing that you may find useful when starting to write your assignments.

Rule 1: Write clearly, simply and to the point

Students sometimes believe - mistakenly - that writing an assignment means writing long and complex sentences. In their eagerness to impress they resort to using unnecessarily scientific jargon, or exaggerate. This often detracts from the meaning of the sentence. It is not necessary for a piece of writing to be "difficult" in order to be "academic".

- ❑ Do not use words or phrases that are redundant - keep it simple and to the point.
- ❑ Do not repeat yourself.
- ❑ In general, try to keep your sentences simple and concise - sentences that are too long invariably confuse the reader as they have to be read more than once, and the flow of the writing is then interrupted.
- ❑ Keep reader's interested by varying sentence lengths.
- ❑ It never hurts to make your meaning quite clear in simple sentences.

Mauer (1996: 382) has good advice: *Sentences are meant to convey meaning - they are not treasures to be retained at all costs. A sentence that confuses the writer is bound to confuse readers as well. Be ruthless about your own writing. Change it until it says exactly what you intend it to say.*

Rule 2: Use positive constructions

A common mistake made by inexperienced writers is to use negative constructions. Such constructions are invariably more difficult to understand than positive constructions. Compare the following two sentences:

- I do not agree that a convenience sample does not bias the results of a survey.
- I agree that a convenience sample biases the results of a survey.

The second sentence, which is positively phrased, is both clearer and shorter, and therefore conveys the meaning of the writer much better than the first sentence.

¹ *Compiled from a number of different sources (see "Additional reading"), particularly using and augmenting the twelve rules compiled by Mouton 2001*

Rule 3: Avoid passive constructions

Sentences that are written in the passive voice are more difficult to understand. Avoid phrases such as "It was found that..." or "The design that was decided upon..." or "The analyses conducted revealed..." The insistence on using the passive voice has its origins in an old-fashioned (positivist) approach to scientific writing which claimed that such an approach makes the text more neutral and objective. Nowadays it is perfectly acceptable, and even encouraged, to let the author speak! There is nothing wrong with "I found that ..." or "I decided upon a design that ...". This does not mean that one should not occasionally use the passive voice. Use both the passive and the active voice - in the same way that the excessive use of the passive voice becomes boring and presents a false objectivity, the excessive use of the active voice may create the impression of a very self-centered author. The solution lies in finding a balance between these two extremes.

Rule 4: Do not use an indefinite "this"

When you use the word "this" there has to be a clear antecedent. Mauer (1996: 385) uses the following example: "The findings showed that there was a difference between men and women in the completion of the task. This poses a problem." As Mauer points out, the reader cannot be sure whether "this" refers to the findings, the men, the women, the difference, the task, or even the completion of the task. Even more confusing is the use of "this" at the beginning of a new paragraph. "This" confuses more than it clarifies. It is seldom clear to the reader what the "this" is referring to.

Rule 5: Avoid sexist and derogatory language

Language that may be construed as derogatory to any group or individual should be avoided as it may be considered abusive. This does not imply that one should necessarily follow every fad and fashion that is politically correct. However, it is important to ensure that, for example, any form of sexist language be avoided at all times. Different writers attempt to avoid a sexist bias through the use of rather cumbersome constructions such as "he/she", "he or she" or "(s)he". This, unfortunately, can make the text much less readable. The best option is probably to rephrase your sentences in such a way that the personal pronoun is not required. Where this is not possible, it is preferable to use "he" throughout and insert a brief statement of your non-sexist intent in the preface, or on the imprint page.

Rule 6: Avoid colloquial (spoken) language

Spoken, informal language is often inappropriately used in proposals, which should contain more formal writing. Inexperienced scholars often write as they speak. The most common examples of this are words such as *get*, *like* (for making comparisons), and *all* (as in "all (of) the books"). Some synonyms for *get*, depending on the context, are *obtain*, *gain*, *acquire*, *find*. (A thesaurus is a useful tool for helping you find synonyms.)

Rule 7: Structure and organize your argument

Before putting your ideas on to paper (or the computer), check that you know what you want to say. Think through the argument and ensure that the sequence and logic are clear and sensible. Map the route of your reasoning by using outlines and refer back to such outlines constantly while you are writing. This contributes to much easier grading by the professor! The use of an outline at the beginning of your assignment, and dividing your assignment into sections and the use of a heading for each, is strongly recommended. In addition, if you are constructing a lengthy argument, you may want to summarize periodically, as well as indicate how your argument will proceed in the rest of the writing.

Rule 8: Assess alternative perspectives and rival points of view

On a Masters level you are required to support your views and correctly cite the sources used. The construction of a persuasive argument also involves taking alternative viewpoints into consideration. You cannot just give your own opinion - you have to academically engage with the material, research alternative views, and then come to your conclusion. As a scholar, you have to show why your reader (in this case your professor) should accept your interpretation as opposed to someone else's. This means that you have to consider explicitly, and perhaps even partially accommodate, those arguments that may reasonably be raised against your viewpoint. This has the additional value of making you appear reasonable and open-minded!

Please review and avoid the common fallacies of scientific reasoning (see below).

Rule 9: Think through the sort of evidence that would be convincing to a competent reader

On a graduate level academic writing requires that you have to support your reasoning by citing authoritative sources. "Evidence" includes both factual-evidence, as well as your judgements about such facts. However, it is neither convincing nor adequate to state that something is "just my opinion", or to hold that your opinion cannot be criticized because you are "entitled to it". You must substantiate the basis for your position at every turn in your thesis. The stronger your claim is (e.g. causal claims or evaluative claims about the success of an intervention), the stronger the evidence should be to make it rationally persuasive.

Rule 10: Use linking devices

An argument, especially in scientific documents, usually involves citing various kinds of evidence (from the literature, your own data, etc.) and showing how all of this adds up to the conclusions you have reached. Throughout this process you must link various sub-arguments and supporting arguments in order to construct a coherent whole. The central argument should thread through the whole assignment like a golden thread. In this way you will ensure that your argument flows smoothly and logically from section to section, paragraph to paragraph, and sentence to sentence. Linking devices are important tools for ensuring the logical flow of your reasoning. In this regard, use positive and negative conjunctions judiciously and sparingly, but do use them because they are like signposts that guide your reader through your line of reasoning. They also acts as cues to yourself that highlight the organization and structure of your argumentation.

Rule 11: Edit and rework your writing

The advent of word processors and computers has made editing and reworking of texts much easier. It is difficult to be creative and critical at the same time. I find it easier to put my ideas onto the screen immediately and then return to them later and edit, reorder and rewrite. Perhaps you will find that you work best the opposite way round. What is certain, however, is that you are unlikely to produce a finished product in the first draft. It is recommended that you capture your thoughts, quotes (make sure you capture it accurately), sources, etc. in separate files or under differentiated headings as you are busy doing your research. Tip: ensure that you use the correct APA citation and that you add the book/article to your bibliography.

All writing, and this is particularly true of academic writing, requires numerous drafts, continuous checking and editing until you (and your professor/supervisor) are satisfied with the end product.

Rule 12: Check grammar and spelling

Some scholars and postgraduate students at Providence do not have English as their home language. Writing in English, especially "scientific" English, does not come naturally. It requires a great deal of practice. In our haste to get our ideas down on paper we are sometimes more concerned with content than form, with the result that we often make mistakes. Some mistakes are easily discovered during proof-reading, while others, particularly if you are not literary-minded, are not so easy either to spot or to remedy. Most current word processing packages have built-in spell-checkers and grammar-checkers. Get into the routine of applying these facilities after having written the first draft of any text! However, while these tools are useful for initial language screening, they are not foolproof, and your final draft should be subjected to language editing by an expert as well.

Concluding comments:

Course Assignments also have to serve the purpose of preparing the student for further graduate work and especially for writing a thesis or dissertation.

Your assignment/paper is the final milestone in a lengthy process of hard work and intensive scholarship. To a large extent, everything depends on the scientific, linguistic, and technical quality of the assignment/paper.

What are the characteristics of a good assignment/thesis?

- Convinces your professor/supervisor that what you have done is important and worthwhile.
- Presents the results of your research in a logical, systematic and clear manner.
- Makes a contribution to our understanding of the world and, therefore, needs to be taken seriously.
- And, in the final analysis, is a piece of work that you can be proud of

There are three key aspects of quality in assignment/thesis construction:

- The logic or principles of reasoning that must be adhered to in order to make a strong case for your ultimate conclusions or findings
- The rules that underlie a properly organized and well-structured assignment/thesis/dissertation
- The rules that govern a well-written scientific paper

Mouton (2001) concludes:

A final piece of advice: In my experience, the more you read scientific literature, the easier it becomes to develop the skills and style required of a good scholar. The more you read other scientific writings, and especially if you read attentively and reflectively, the more you learn about proper and acceptable forms of scientific reasoning, different ways of structuring your evidence and also ways of presenting such evidence in the most persuasive and convincing manner. In all of this, you should never lose sight of the fact that science and scholarship should be fun and enjoyable. There are few things in life as satisfying as the experience of new scientific insights, the discovery of an interesting and potentially significant new theory or interpretation, and the realization that you have made a worthwhile contribution to our understanding of some aspect of social and natural life.

The objective of the human sciences is the deepening of our understanding of what it is to live a human life (Sullivan, 1983: 304).

The primary intellectual aim of the humanities and social inquiry, quite generally, is to help us to realize what is of value to us in our personal and social lives. What ultimately matters is personal and social progress towards enlightenment and wisdom: all academic progress is but a means to this end (Maxwell, 1984: 73).

Common Fallacies of Scientific Reasoning²

Unsupported generalizations:

Always ensure that you have enough evidence (empirical, experimental, documentary) to substantiate your conclusions. Students very often generalize beyond the range of the evidence that has been presented. Avoid using words such as "all" and "every" unless you are certain that there are no exceptions.

Appeals based on authority:

Claiming that your view is supported by an expert is not always sufficient or appropriate, and only useful if the person or "authority" quoted is generally recognized as an expert in the field.

Impressing by large numbers (the bandwagon argument): Large numbers alone do not tell enough. Claims made on this basis need to be evaluated on their own merits because statistics can be misleading. For example, claiming that "75 out of 100 patients who used this therapy are still alive" does not tell the entire story.

Affirming the consequent or the "post hoc" fallacy:

This faulty reasoning results from a misunderstanding about what causes an event. For example, if you ate cereal for breakfast and then the phone rang, it would be wrong to assume that the phone rang because you ate cereal.

False analogy:

This occurs when you compare a number of cases on the basis of a few similarities and then conclude that they are similar in other respects as well. For example: South Africa and Zimbabwe are both African countries with developing economies, therefore, they must be similar in other respects (political history) as well. Often the dissimilarities between the cases outweigh the similarities. All relevant characteristics of the cases have to be taken into account.

Circular reasoning:

This is when you try to prove a point by just returning to the point itself. An example of this might be: "Stress leads to unproductive behaviour because it is so tedious." "Unproductive" and "tedious" are very closely linked in meaning, so no new information is provided.

Ad hominem reasoning (attacking the person):

This directs attention away from the argument at hand by attacking the personality of the individual involved. The person arguing ignores the issue and instead turns the focus to the credibility of his or her opponent. "Not only does Candidate X support abortion, but he's also been married four times."

Non sequitur reasoning:

Non sequitur means "it does not follow", and it refers to conclusions that do not have logical connections to the evidence provided. In other words, you are assuming a connection between events that are disconnected and unrelated. "Violence in movies has a bad effect on children; therefore, no one should see violent movies."

Red herring argument:

This is when the person arguing brings in a side issue that has no relevance to the point being made. For example: "She is a good doctor; she drives a great car and is really fun."

² Excerpt from: Mouton, J. (2001). *How to Succeed in your Master's & Doctoral Studies*. p119

How to Write a Good Assignment

1. GENERAL PLANNING

One of the main reasons why students submit unsatisfactory assignments is that they don't plan in advance and they don't use their time effectively. The most common mistake is to allow too little time to complete assignments, with the result that the final product is put together without much thought.

Phase 1: 60% of your available time:

Preparation for writing your assignment: planning the basic structure, research and preparatory readings following from you're planning, making summaries, etc.

Phase 2: 30% of your available time:

Writing your assignment in a rough form and making the necessary adjustments.

Phase 3: 2% of your available time:

Rumination; this means you put your assignment aside for a while, and continue with other work. The reason for this is that you can get too involved with a topic with the result that you overlook your mistakes. The brain tends to take for granted certain relationships that are not made completely clear in the written work. If you give yourself a rest period, you'll approach the assignment with a new, fresh perspective and you can then make adjustments based on logic or insight, as necessary.

Phase 4: 8% of your available time:

Make final adjustments and write the assignment in its final form for submission.

With these guidelines in mind you should draw up a schedule to ensure that you allow yourself enough time for completing the assignment.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTION

Understanding the question is extremely important. You need to

- read the question carefully
- identify the key words in the question
- draw up an outline

2.1 Reading the Question Carefully

It is very important to **read the question** carefully and to determine what is expected of you. Read the question several times to make sure that you haven't misinterpreted it. As you read the question, you will need to work out what facts are required.

Remember that your assignment has to focus on the question and it is therefore important to **understand the question**. If the question is difficult to understand, read it through a few times. Rewrite the key words in the question. Since questions tell you exactly what is expected of you, **analyse the action words** to determine what type of answer you need to give. Here is a very short list of some of the action words that you might come across in assignment questions.

Analyse	divide the material into sections or elements and discuss these in full.
Compare	identify the similarities and/or differences between ideas, facts, viewpoints, etc.
Contrast	point out the differences between certain objects or characteristics.
Criticise	point out good and bad characteristics, and give your own opinion after taking all the facts into account.

You could add more action words to this list when you see them in an assignment question. Make sure that you know exactly what each one requires you to do. Once you have analysed the action word/s, you should pay attention to the key words in the question.

2.2 Identify the Key Words/Concepts in the Question

To understand the question clearly, you have to **find the key words in** the question. After you have read the question carefully, underline the **major key words**. Remember that the key words are there to help you to organise your answer logically. From these key words, you can identify the theme of the question.

The next step is to draw up an outline by using key words you have identified as a guide.

2.3 Drawing up an Outline

You should focus on the key words in the question to help you to draw up an outline. An outline helps you to:

- identify the main points which you will develop in your assignment
- organise your writing
- identify specific facts that you have omitted
- identify irrelevant material which does not fit in your outline. Once you have written down the broad outline, you should order the information to enable you to answer the question clearly and logically.

You have now read the question, identified the key words and drawn up an outline. The next step is to begin researching the topic.

3. RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

Collecting information for your assignment can be divided into three steps:

3.1 Finding Information

- Consult the specific instructions in the syllabus and/or study guide to determine the broad outline of your assignment.
- Look for these sections in your required and recommended textbooks to broaden your knowledge base of the topic.
- Also consult the INDEX at the back of each book to guide you to the relevant subject matter.
- Now that you have a general idea about the topic, do additional research - consult the library database and electronic databases to find applicable journal articles.

3.2 Selecting Relevant Material

Once you have determined that a source will be useful for your assignment, start selecting this material from your sources as follows:

- Capture only the material that is relevant to the topic of your assignment. It is important to use correct source citations from the outset.
- Use separate files for notes on the major constructs/aspects of the question.
- Use headings for the different concepts included in each construct and then note down the facts and arguments that refer specifically to that aspect.
- Ensure that you capture down all the details of the source used: the author, title and page numbers.
- In a separate file correctly add all books/articles used to your bibliography.
- Capture quotations accurately, add source in bibliography and cite source correctly.
- Capture own views and interpretations in a comments paragraph as they come to mind during your reading.

3.3 Critically Assessing your Sources

It is important to assess your sources critically. The following guidelines are important:

- Don't uncritically accept everything you read without first analyzing or questioning it.
- Discriminate and differentiate between facts (statements of information generally accepted as the truth), and opinions (perception, point of view, or interpretative belief of the authors).
- Bear in mind that authors often use concepts and constructs differently and hold different opinions about specific topics. Don't be confused by this.
- Decide which author's point of view is the most valid and state your reasons for supporting this view.
- Critically assess electronic sources – is the article peer-reviewed, are the authors and/or publisher (web site) reputable.
- Endeavour to always use primary sources and even though the use of some secondary sources is permitted in graduate work, limit the use of secondary sources as much as possible.

4. PLANNING AND WRITING YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Before you start writing, here are some hints on sentence construction: write short sentences; avoid long rambling sentences, as they seldom express your ideas clearly; make short sentences clearer by placing important words at the beginning and at the end of the sentence (review the general rules of scientific writing). Your assignment should consist of three main sections:

4.1 The Introduction

An introduction is a short statement at the beginning of your assignment, which shows how you understand the question and how you plan to solve the problem. Using the notes you have made as a basis, decide how you're going to approach the question before you write your introduction.

Start by telling the reader what the question requires. This shows that you understand the question, and know exactly what the problem involves. Supply your own personal thoughts on the subject, but save the details for the body of the assignment.

State underlying presuppositions and assumptions that are central and fundamental to your argumentation and essential for the reader to know at the outset. These assumptions are not further explored or defended.

A good introduction is short, delimits the topic, outlines the main argument, focuses directly on the question, and serves a roadmap for the reader. Now refer to your outline again, and determine the main reasons for your point of view and write them down in point form. These reasons will form **the body** of your assignment.

4.2 The Body

The body is the main part of your assignment and will be the longest part of your essay.

Here you should:

- develop your main argument
- analyse - break down a topic into its parts (concepts and constructs)
- synthesize - integrate different aspects and formulate it into a new integrative whole
- supply details and examples
- integrate own views and support your claims stating the relevant facts

Use the main points, as arranged in your outline, and write your paragraphs. Remember, for each main point you should have one paragraph. When you write the supporting sentences that flow from the topic sentence, use signpost words to guide the reader through the paragraph. Throughout this process you must link various sub-arguments and supporting arguments in order to construct a coherent whole

You will use different kinds of signpost words depending on what your purpose is. Goedhals et al. (1990:343-348) list the different types of signpost words and various examples for each type:

Chronological	<i>now; then; first(ly); afterwards; meanwhile; later; subsequently; finally; next; second(ly); before; ultimately; at the same time; while</i>
Cause and effect	<i>because; since; consequently; thus; as a result; so; for this reason; therefore</i>
Comparison	<i>likewise; also; equally; just as; like; both; similarly; as well as; correspondingly; in the same way</i>
Contrast	<i>but; conversely; however; yet; unlike; although; on the contrary; on the other hand; in contrast to; whereas; as opposed to; contrary to</i>

Use these signpost words when you write; they make your writing clear and logical. Finally, summarise the main arguments of your assignment in a conclusion.

4.3 The Conclusion

The conclusion is the last paragraph of your assignment. Here you give your final opinion on the question. Show how all the points mentioned in the body of the assignment have led to your conclusion. Don't introduce new ideas, don't use direct quotations and don't give detailed explanations.

A good conclusion summarises the main argument and content of your assignment, focuses on the question, is brief, identifies shortcoming, and makes suggestions for further exploration or academic research.

5. REVISION AND FINAL ROUNDING OFF

You have now written a rough draft of your assignment. The rough draft is the first version of your assignment, and you would never, of course, submit it to your instructor. As mentioned before, once you have written a rough draft, put it aside for some time - perhaps a day or two. After this rest period, you can return to your writing with a fresh approach.

Now, re-read your rough draft. Revise your assignment and evaluate what you have written and corrected. Now complete the following checklist:

6. ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

	<i>Questions adapted from Condella and Johnson in Van Schoor (1980:96-97).</i>	Yes	No
1	Is my opening stimulating and does it introduce the topic well?		
2	Does the introduction state clearly what the aim of the assignment is?		
3	Does each paragraph link logically with the previous and subsequent paragraphs?		
4	Did I adequately define, describe and evaluate all relevant constructs and concepts?		
5	Have I refrained from quoting one source repeatedly?		
6	Did I use my own words?		
7	Have I avoided repetitions and padding (non-essential filling)?		
8	Does my conclusion rest on facts mentioned in the assignment?		
9	Are all my findings the result of my own insight and research?		
10	Is my assignment clear and does it make sense?		
11	Have I checked for spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes?		
12	Have I correctly cited used sources and quoted my direct quotations?		
13	Did I indent longer quotations and are they typed in single spacing?		
14	Is my Bibliography correctly compiled?		
15	Is the technical presentation adequate? (title page, content, page numbers, bibliography etc.)		

Weblog: Recommended Web-sites



<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>



<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/about.shtml>



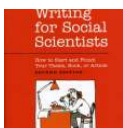
A Guide for Writing Research Papers based on Styles Recommended by The American Psychological Association <http://webster.commnet.edu/apa/index.htm>



http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/research_essays.htm
Writing Research Essays In North American
Academic Institutions – A Guide
+ PowerPoint Slide Show



▣ Selected Study Skills Books in the AU Library and Some Websites
<http://www.athabascau.ca/html/services/advise/ssbib.htm#sec6>



Summary Notes of
Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article
By Howard S. Becker
<http://www.brint.com/papers/writing.htm>

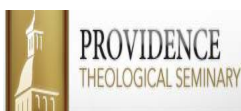



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Writing Tutor Program - Learning Assistance
Centre – Handouts
<http://umanitoba.ca/student/u1/lac/handouts/handouts.html>



Language Center
Writing up Research Using the Literature
<http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/EL21LIT.HTM#what>



How Do I Use a Style Guide / Create a Bibliography? / Research Helps
 "What Do I Have To Do To Get an A on My Paper," by Michael Gilmour

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Academic writing examines, analyses and gives exercises for understanding university readings and for writing many types of assignment. The book also discusses how to approach various kinds of essay topics (e.g. compare and contrast) .
- Lewis, R. & Inglis, J. (1982). *Report writing*. Cambridge: National Extension College.
Report writing is a clear and concise book that demonstrates an approach to writing effective reports for schools or business. The book contains numerous examples and exercises to help the reader interact with the information.
- Mouton, J. (2001). *How to Succeed in your Master's & Doctoral Studies*. Pretoria: VanSchaik
Although aimed at the South African market and providing a resource guide and book for South African Universities, an excellent book that will help all graduate students.
- Mauer, K.F. (1996). The art of scientific writing. In J.G. Garbers (Ed.), *Effective research in the human sciences*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik. In an excellent overview of the issues involved in scientific writing, Mauer begins with a discussion of a number of misconceptions about academic writing commonly held by students. He then discusses some general principles of structuring a thesis, techniques for reviewing the literature, some standards for scientific writing and language usage, and concludes with a section on the use and presentation of tables and figures.
- Strunk, W. & White, E.B. (1972). *The elements of style*. New York: Macmillan. Although somewhat old, still one of the best books on academic writing. The book includes chapters on grammar, composition, and an especially useful one on word usage.
- Turabian, K.L. (2007) *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th Edition*.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Winkler, A.C. & McCuen, J .R. (1999). *Writing the research paper*, 5th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace. A very practical workbook on writing research papers and theses. It is particularly strong on matters of style, referencing and systems of documentation. It includes examples of student papers (from the United States) and covers both the MLA and APA bibliographic and citation styles.