

# MIALS Essay Guidelines

## Assessment

Assessment details are posted on the First Floor notice boards in the Sidney Myer Asia at the beginning of each semester. Each notice will include details on components of assessment and the weighting of each component; due dates for each piece of assessment, penalties, attendance or threshold requirements and student responsibilities.

## Extensions

The time allowed to complete an assignment is an integral part of the task. Students receive the essay topics well in advance of the due date. It is the responsibility of students to plan their work so that everything that is required of them is completed on time. The fact that students have other work to complete for other subjects does not constitute a reason for not handing in work on time. However, circumstances beyond a student's control may sometimes make it impossible to submit work on time. As soon as this is realised the student should seek an extension. This would normally be in advance of the due date. An extension cannot be retrospective. It can only date from the day of application. Application forms for an extension may be obtained from Reception, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Sidney Myer Asia Centre or from the MIALS website. Students will be required to provide evidence to support their request. Any written work submitted after other students' work has been marked and handed back will not be accepted.

It is Institute policy that penalties be applied to all work that is submitted late without an approved extension. It is up to the individual subject coordinator to determine what penalties will be applied. The penalty will be posted on the noticeboard with the other details of the assignment.

## Presentation and Submission of Essay

Essays must be submitted in hard copy, typed with double spacing on one side of the paper with side margins of 4 cm. Essays cannot be submitted by fax, post or by email unless prior permission has been given by the subject coordinator gives permission. Students must complete both sections of the cover sheet and attach it to the essay. The sheets are located on the tables near Reception, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sidney Myer Asia Centre Building or from the MIALS website. Assigned assessment must be submitted by the date and time set by the subject coordinator, and should be placed in the Essay Box located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Sidney Myer Asia Centre unless directed otherwise by the subject coordinator. **The Essay Box is cleared at 5:00pm each day.**

It is expected that the student will submit the final version of the essay. A student is expected to be able to look critically at the work they have done and present a finished product. It is not usual for a subject coordinator to read the preliminary drafts of an essay and is under no obligation to do so. A student who encounters any problems at any stage in the essay writing process should contact the subject coordinator.

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## The Essay

Writing an essay is a process which passes through defined stages:

1. Choosing the topic
2. Planning
3. Research
4. Writing
5. Revising/editing

There are excellent guides to essay writing available both in the Bookroom and in the Library. Particularly recommended are:

John Clanchy and Bridget Ballard: *Essay Writing for Students: A Practical Guide*, Addison Wesley Longman, Melbourne, 1997.

(Particularly good for students who have never written an academic essay, but can be read with advantage at all levels)

Jonathan Anderson, Millicent Poole: *Assignment and Thesis Writing*, John Wiley and Sons, Brisbane, 1997.

(While of benefit to all students, this work is of particular relevance to students beyond the first year of their course.)

Students who, having read these works, are still unsure as to how to proceed should contact the Subject Coordinator.

## Style

Australian English is the written medium of the essay. Poor grammar and punctuation detracts from the strength of your argument. The *Australian Government Style Manual* should be consulted if you are unsure about grammar, punctuation or usage. For spelling you may consult either the *Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary* or the *Macquarie Dictionary*. Always ensure that the spellcheck function on your computer is set to Australian English. However, do not simply rely on the spellcheck function. Remember that the spellcheck will not bring to your attention words that are correctly spelled but incorrectly used.

## Citation

In writing an essay it is important to give credit where credit is due. This means that you must acknowledge the sources of your arguments and your information. It is not sufficient to acknowledge only direct quotations from the works you have consulted. If no acknowledgment is given as to the source of an idea or argument then you are implicitly claiming that idea or argument as your own. If the idea or argument is not your own then you are laying yourself open to a charge of plagiarism.

Acknowledgment of your sources in an essay takes two forms: a bibliography and footnotes/endnotes/included references.

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## Bibliography

A bibliography is a list of all the works that you have consulted and found useful in the writing of your essay. Do not include works that you read but did not use. This list may be presented in a number of ways depending on the material consulted. Some common ways are listed below:

1. Alphabetical order based on author
2. A division of material based on the original language, arranged alphabetically within the divisions
3. A division of material into primary and secondary sources, arranged alphabetically within the divisions
4. A division of material into books, journal articles, Internet resources, arranged alphabetically within the divisions

If you are in doubt as to the most appropriate method of presenting your bibliography, consult the lecturer in charge of your course.

For each book cited you should include the author, the title of the work, the place and date of publication. Articles from journals or newspapers should include the author, title of the article, the journal or newspaper in which it was published, as well as the edition details for a journal or the date for the newspaper. Material taken from the Internet should contain the following:

author's name; title of work or of the list/site as appropriate; access path (Universal Resource Locator, URL); date created, if available; archived at, if appropriate; date on which you accessed the information.

## Footnotes/Endnotes/Included References

The subject coordinator must make clear to students which referencing system or systems (s)he will accept. The information given below is for general guidance. For specific issues consult either your subject coordinator or one of the guides listed above.

The source of quotations, information, ideas, and arguments in the body of the text can be given in three ways: footnotes, endnotes or included references (commonly referred to as the Harvard system). Footnotes are situated at the bottom of the page in which they occur; endnotes are collected together at the end of the essay; included references are embedded in the text of the essay. Footnotes may be numbered according to how many occur on a given page or consecutively throughout the text. Endnotes are numbered consecutively.

For both footnotes and endnotes the first time that a work is cited full bibliographical details should be given as well as the page(s) reference. For subsequent references to the same work one of two systems may be used.

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The traditional system uses Latin abbreviations such as *ibid.* and *op.cit.* Where the footnote is exactly the same as the one preceding, the term *ibid.* (*in the same place*) is all that is needed. Where the footnote is exactly the same as the preceding footnote with the exception of the page reference then *ibid.* plus the page reference is all that is needed. Where there are intervening footnotes referring to other works between the original citation and the subsequent reference, the surname is given plus *op.cit.* (*in the work cited*) plus the page reference. If more than one work by the same author is included in the footnotes, subsequent references should in addition include a shortened version of the title so it is clear which work is being cited. *Ibid.* and *op.cit.* are the two most commonly used expressions in the traditional system there are other useful ones which can be found in the essay writing guides referred to above.

An alternative to the traditional citation method is to use *ibid.* where appropriate and in all other cases to use the author's surname and a shortened version of the title, remembering that full bibliographical details are always required the first time a work is cited.

Where references are included in the body of the essay, only the author's surname is given along with the year of publication and the page number(s). In this system footnotes may also be used to provide additional information on some point in the essay.

There are other referencing methods in use. The lecturer in charge will make it clear to students which method/s he/she wishes the student to use.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious matter. Plagiarism is passing off as your own work that has been done by others. It includes such things as copying from published work without acknowledgment or submitting an essay written by someone else as your own. Students should be aware of the University policy on plagiarism and of the severity of the penalties that can be applied. Please visit <http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/plagiarism/> for further information.

## Return of Essays

Essays are usually returned in class. Some subject coordinators may prefer to hand back essays individually. Students who are not present when essays are returned may collect them from Reception, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sidney Myer Asia Centre. If students wish their final essays to be posted to them, they must provide a stamped addressed envelope at the time of submission.

## Reassessment of Work

No student has an automatic right to a remark. All submitted work (and, indeed, each individual exam question) which is given a failing grade is marked by two examiners. If you consider there is a problem with the grade/mark your essay has been given, you should discuss this in the first instance with the academic who marked your work. If you are still unsatisfied you may make your case for a remark in writing to the MIALS Undergraduate Studies Committee.

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